

Remember Me

Acts 14:22-26

***The false long gone, the Seder Lamb,
Immanuel and Great I AM
Was soon to leave, with one last plea:
Do this in remembrance of Me.***

***My Manna and unleavened Bread,
Without a place to lay His head,
Was perfect in His purity.
Do this in remembrance of Me.***

***Is it my passion and my pride
That so eclipses down inside
The winepress of His agony?
Do this in remembrance of Me.***

***So I will take the bread and wine
And thank My King for all that's mine
Because He died to set me free;
Do this in remembrance of Me.***

A full moon silvered khaki colored houses clustered on the hills of Jerusalem. It was Passover. And in an upper room somewhere in the city, Jesus and His disciples gathered to eat the Seder supper.

This was the last Passover of significance. Since God's people first slopped lamb's blood on the door posts of their Egyptian slave shacks, the annual meal of mutton, bitter herbs and unleavened bread was a promise. Someday, a divine Deliverer would come.

Moses described Him as a Prophet who would be a lot like the lawgiver himself. Now that righteous Redeemer reclined at the table. And the hour of deliverance was just hours away.

But before our Lord walked the shadowed streets to Gethsemane, He instructed believers of every age and era to keep a new feast. Early Christians called it the Eucharist.

Some saints call it the Lord's Supper, others Communion. But whatever we call it, it is more than a ceremony, rite or ritual.

Our Savior had a simple purpose in mind for the bread and the wine. The disciples didn't realize it yet. But their Lord would soon leave them. And they would be left to warm their hearts with memories of Him. That is the purpose of the Lord's Supper.

...do this in remembrance of Me. 1 Corinthians 11:24

First century saints called the Lord's Supper the Eucharist for good reason. They took that name from the Greek word for *giving thanks*. To them, it was a time to remember the Redeemer with overflowing gratitude and thanksgiving for all He did for them. That was the purpose of Communion

then.

And it still is today.

Remember His Purity

Our Lord didn't bring a special loaf of bread for that first Communion. He simply took the Passover bread and broke it.

While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is My body." Verse 22

Each Passover, Jewish children would play a game. They would scour every cabinet and corner of the house, searching for any shred of leaven. Then every trace of leaven was thrown out.

Both by necessity and design, our Lord took the flat, unleavened bread from the table to represent His body and His life here on earth.

In God's Word, leaven is symbol for sin. So the bread that represents our Lord's body is without any leaven at all.

That is to remind us of our Savior's pure and perfect life here on earth. With the bread, we recall how Christ willingly obeyed His heavenly Father, never swerving from perfect obedience to God.

So when God's Spirit drove Him out into the blistering Judean Desert, our Savior willingly went. And for forty long days, His stomach was empty and His tongue was parched for want of water.

During those days, God's Son was tempted in every way we are. He experienced every addiction, lust and longing that plagues mankind. So He knew the powerful pull of hopelessness and despair.

He was also tempted to seek His own benefit: to forget about God and serve Himself. In fact, our Savior was tempted in every way we are. And not for the merest moment did He sin.

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16

We never need to worry that our heavenly High Priest won't understand our struggles and sorrows, our tears and torment. He has experienced them all. So we can come to Christ confidently.

We can be sure He knows precisely how we feel. And as the Lord whose very nature is love, we know He cares and will surely help.

As we partake of the bread, we also remember our Redeemer's faithfulness. He walked with His disciples for almost three years.

And never once did He let them down. Even when they failed and forsook Him, He was faithful and true to them.

In Caiaphas' courtyard, Peter warmed his hands at a fire and called up forgotten fisherman's oaths to deny he knew Jesus. And after the Redeemer returned from the grave, Peter was stung by the memory of how he had forsaken the Lord who loved him.

That is why Simon Peter went back home to Gennesaret. He felt he had forever failed the Lord he loved. And his glorious life as a follower of Christ was lost in the mists of sweet memories.

So Simon returned to his nets. And for a long, bitter night, they came up empty. But when morning came, he looked across the water.

Standing there on the shore was Jesus. He had come to recall and restore the man who failed Him.

When we faint or fail or fall, we need to remember our Redeemer. He never gives up on those who trust Him. He will always come to fetch us back to full faith and love.

With the bread, we also remember Christ's great love. Outcasts came to Him and found a Friend.

Prostitutes and publicans, drunks and derelicts looked into His eyes and knew our Lord loved them.

On a dusty road in the hill country southwest of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and His disciples met a funeral procession near the little village of Nain. Swaddled and sealed with spices, the body of a young man was being carried to a hillside grave for burial.

Following the men who bore the body, a woman walked, wracked with loss and loneliness. Sometime earlier, she had buried her husband. Now her only son was dead, too.

And she was all alone in the world. Our Redeemer didn't respond to a plea for His help that day. His great heart was broken over the terrible sorrow that lost and lonely mother endured.

That is why Jesus stopped the funeral procession and brought a cold corpse back to life. He was moved by pity and compassion.

Remembering that day, we are reminded that our Master also knows the way we walk, the tears we cry and the hopelessness we sometimes feel. At the same time, we are reminded that no problem we might have is too far gone, too difficult or too complicated.

Absolutely nothing is impossible for the Savior we serve. His power is unlimited. And His love knows no end.

As we partake of the bread, we remember our Savior's pure body and perfect life. And we remember that it was all for us. He gave His body and lived a life of perfection for each of us.

No matter how hard we strive and struggle, we cannot keep God's commandments. So we are under a curse. And though we long to experience the blessings promised to the obedient, we cannot.

Our sinful hearts have shut us off from God's great blessings. But the Lord Jesus kept the law perfectly. So every blessing God's Word promises to those whose obedience is absolute and unbounded is His.

And when we trust in Christ, His perfect record of purity is credited to our eternal account. His body was given for us.

Remember His Payment

During His days on earth, God's Son experienced the full range of human experience. But as He sat with His disciples in the upper room, He had never tasted what every other man knows all too well.

Jesus had never known the pain and poison of sin. He had never felt the crushing load of guilt and remorse, of darkness and despair that is the inevitable, unavoidable result of disobeying God.

But an hour or two later, the full force of the fruit of sin flooded into our Lord's pure and perfect heart. And He felt all the accumulated guilt that has driven men to madness and suicide. Worst of all, He felt the terrible loneliness of being cut off from God.

At Gethsemane that load was so crushing, our Savior sweated blood. And He begged His Father to remove the cup of darkness and death from Him. But He knew that was an impossible prayer. The reason He came to this world was to carry our sins to the cross.

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. 1 Peter 2:24

With a fury that bordered on madness, soldiers lashed our Lord's back. And it was all for us, that the dreadful disease of sin that dogs our steps and darkens our days might be forever healed.

On the way to execution hill, our Savior staggered, stumbled and fell. But it wasn't the weight of the cross that crushed Him. It was the terrible weight of our sins that was so heavy.

That is why, as we drink from the communion cup, we are commanded to remember our Redeemer's blood.

And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Verses 23-24

This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance

of Me. 1 Corinthians 11:25

On Calvary, iron spikes were pounded through Christ's hands and feet. And blood flowed from His arms and feet onto the cross.

The head that now wears a King's crown in Heaven wore a crown thorns on that hill called the Skull. Blood flowed down into His eyes. His beard was ripped out. And blood flowed from His face.

Indeed, the cross was soaked with our Savior's blood. But it had to be so. There was simply no other way to pay the price for our sin.

...without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9:22

Our sins can't be simply forgiven and forgotten. The pain we slice into human hearts is real. And our willful violations of God's holiness cannot be overlooked. No, sin must be cleansed away.

And only blood has the power to forever obliterate our sins. But that blood can't be poisoned and polluted by guilt of its own.

It must be pure and perfect blood: the blood of God's sinless Son.

...the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7

So as we drink from the communion cup, we remember the blood and brutality of our Savior's sacrifice was for our sinful hearts, our sinful ways and our sinful actions.

And we are reminded that no sin we have ever committed is so foul or so terrible that Jesus' blood cannot forever cleanse it away.

At the same time, the wine reminds us that Christ's blood buys us back from the slave market of sin. We sell ourselves to Satan when we sin. And the only price that can set us free from the chains of darkness and death is our Savior's blood.

...you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 1 Peter 1:18-19

That is why we don't mourn our Master's mangled body as we drink from the cup. We rejoice!

We who were once far off from God's light and life and love are now sheltered under His wings. And we who were dead are now alive. All because of the blood our Savior shed on Calvary.

Also, as God's children, we need never fear our eternal enemy. By the power of Christ's blood we can and will overcome him.

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb... Revelation 12:11 (NIV)

Our Savior said the cup is to remind us that His blood has purchased a new covenant between God and man. Because God's Son shed His blood, we can come to God with simple, childlike faith.

So there is little wonder early Christians called Communion the Eucharist: the thanksgiving. We who are soiled by sin and deserve to die have been brought to God by the precious blood of His Son.

The Lord's Supper reminds us of that. As we drink, we remember we can never repay our blessed Savior for His sacrifice for us.

No works of kindness, obedience or sacrifice is worthy of His blood. Indeed, any effort to please God on our own is an insult to the Lord who loves us and shed His blood that we might live.

Instead, we are to renew our resolve to live no other aim than to express our love and gratitude to God. We owe all we have and all we are to the Christ of the Cross.

Both now and forever more, that is to be our single song and our great rejoicing in life.

Remember His Promise

Somewhere in the dark streets of Jerusalem, Judas slipped from shadow to shadow on his way to betray the Lord who loved him. At the same moment in the upper room, our Savior celebrated the first Eucharist.

And He did so that we might remember Him. But Paul proclaimed there is yet another glorious purpose for eating the bread and drinking the wine of Communion.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He

comes. 1 Corinthians 11:26

There is a promise in the bread and wine. Jesus told His disciples if He went away, He would surely come again.

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:2-3

Celebrating the Lord's Supper isn't only a time to look back. It is also a time to look forward. Yes, by eating this bread and drinking from this cup, we celebrate all our Savior did for us.

But at the same time, we also rejoice that one day very soon, in a moment we least expect it, our Savior will split the skies.

"Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Verse 25

Until that glorious day, we are to keep Christ's command to remember Him with bread and wine. It is a very personal way of proclaiming that we trust in Jesus.

As we eat the bread, we are not merely to proclaim that Jesus lived a perfect life. Or even that He lived a perfect life for the sake of mankind.

By sharing in the Lord's Supper, each and every one of us proclaims that our Lord was perfect in obedience, perfect in faithfulness, and perfect in love for me personally.

He kept the Law for me! Eating bread that represents His body is a proud proclamation that He lived for me.

And when we drink from the cup, we proclaim the blood of Christ was shed, not merely for all mankind, but for me personally.

And I not only both believe that is true. I have received His gift of salvation for myself. His blood cleanses me from my sins.

The death He died is the death I deserve. And by His blood my sins have been eternally cleansed from the memory of God.

Communion is to be a personal proclamation to ourselves, to God and to everyone around us that Jesus is not merely *the* Savior and Lord. He is my own personal Savior and Lord.

It is both a sacred responsibility and a glorious privilege to celebrate our Savior with bread and wine. But it is reserved for those who have chosen to trust in the Christ of Calvary.

The bread and the wine are the exclusive property of those who have laid their life in His holy hands. That is why Jesus sent Judas away before beginning this first Lord's Supper.

Communion is the supper table for God's chosen children.

And for them only.