

"IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME"

or

THE HUMILITY OF CHRIST

Intro: Usually on the first Sunday morning of the month when we observe the Lord's Supper, I am in a series of messages, and it is not always easy to break away from the series to speak on some aspect of truth having to do with the Lord's Supper. But since I haven't gotten back to my series on the Sermon on the Mount, I decided, and I trust that this is the will of God, to spend this morning on the Lord's Supper.

The main purpose of the Lord's Supper is *to remember the Lord*. That sounds very simple, but it calls for a lot of discipline on our part to do just that whenever we observe the Lord's Supper. We can easily get distracted by watching those who are serving, or by our own participation in taking the bread, and then the cup, that often very little time is given to focusing our attention upon the Lord. We need to be praying before we come that the Lord will help us to think only of Him while we are taking these elements.

However, our understanding of the Lord's Supper would be very deficient if we were to understand from what the Lord said, "This do in remembrance of Me," that our remembrance of Him is only to apply to the time that we are observing the Lord's Supper. Our time at the Lord's Table is to set the direction of our lives until we come back to His Table again. We are always to remember the Lord. Our thoughts should turn to Him when we get up in the morning. And throughout each day we need to keep remembering the Lord. King David in the OT is an example to all of us in this. Perhaps you remember his words in Psalm 16:8 where he said,

I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved (Psa. 16:8).

"I have set the Lord always before me." What a difference it would make in all of our lives if we could honestly say this! David was constantly thinking about the Lord, and that gave a strength and stability to his life that he could not have had any other way. And so he went on to say, "Because He [the LORD] is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." This was not a blessing that was reserved just for David, or for only a few of the Lord's people. *This is both a privilege and a responsibility that is available to all of us who know the Lord.* And we are to learn this at the Lord's Table.

The trials of life make this a necessity. When we are in trouble, non one

needs to tell us to turn to the Lord. But it is here at the Lord's Table that we are to learn this lesson, and to keep practicing it continually.

Keeping all of this in mind, we know that there is a special way in which we need to be remembering the Lord. When the Lord took the bread, as Paul has told us in his letter to the Corinthian church, He first of all gave thanks, then broke the bread, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you." And then He added, "This do in remembrance of Me."

And then He did the same with the cup. He took it, and said, "This cup is the new testament in My blood: This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." *Now where was His body broken, and where was His blood shed?* Our children could tell us today that it was at the Cross where He suffered and died *for our sins!* Now this means that as we remember the Lord today, and every day, we are never to forget His death on the Cross. Read through the Gospels and you will see that the Lord's purpose in coming to the earth was never out of His mind. It was in His prayers. It was in His messages. And, consequently, it was in His thoughts all of the time. He never forgot why He had come into the world. He never forgot why the Father had sent Him. He never forgot the prophecies that had been given throughout history before He came. And we can see many, many lessons that we are to learn from the references our Lord made to His death, and from the references that the writers of Scripture made in speaking of the sacrifice of the Son of God.

One of those lessons is found in Matthew 20, verses 20-28. I want you to turn to that passage again if you will.

This particular lesson began with:

I. THE REQUEST OF A MOTHER FOR HER TWO SONS (Matt. 20:20-21).

The first time we hear of Zebedee is in Matt. 4:21. The Lord was at the Sea of Galilee, and He had just called two brothers, "Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, to become "fishers of men." They were men who made their lives by fishing for fish. The Lord was calling them to become His disciples. Then the Lord went on to call the two sons of Zebedee who, as we learn from Luke 5:10, were partners with Peter and Andrew. You all know the names of Zebedee's two sons. They also became disciples of our Lord, and their names were James and John.

In our text in Matthew 20 we have Zebedee's wife making this special request for her two sons.

Now I will have to say that I commend her for her request. What mother, *and father*, who know the Lord, would not want their sons to sit on each side of the Lord when He establishes His kingdom on the earth? Mark gives us this same account, but he said that James and John made the request. So this means that at least the mother and her two sons were in agreement that this should be done, and perhaps Zebedee stood with them also in their request.

Now there are many parents who are not the least bit interested in anything like this for their sons. And there are many young men who have ambitions that are far different from these two young men. So we have to commend the family for what they wanted.

But what was the Lord's response?

II. THE LORD'S RESPONSE (Matt. 20:22-23).

The Lord asked the sons a question, and the sons answered. What was the question?

You have it in verse 22. (Read.) What did the Lord mean?

Our Lord's prayer in Gethsemane helps us to understand the meaning of "the cup." In Matt. 26:39 we read,

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed,
saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:
nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

And in John 18:11 we have this question our Lord asked Peter after Peter had cut off the ear of the high priest's servant:

Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the
cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

So by our Lord's references to "the cup," He was obviously referring to the death He would die for the sins of His people.

The same is true of a "baptism." In Luke 12:49-51 we have still another statement from our Lord where He used the word "baptism." In the KJV it reads like this:

49 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be
already kindled?

50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division (Luke 12:49-51).

— This is the way it is translated in the NASB:

49 "I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!

50 "But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!

51 "Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division (Luke 12:49-51).

The Lord's question indicated that the way to the throne was through suffering. It is as the Apostle Paul told Timothy, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2:12a). And in chapter 3 and verse 12 of the same epistle Paul said this: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

— So when the Lord asked the disciples if they could drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism, He did not mean that they would suffer for the same purpose, or to the same extent, but for the same reason. And they correctly said that they could. In verse 23 the Lord confirmed that they had given the right answer. But He deferred to His Father as the One Who alone had the right to say who would sit at His right hand and left hand.

III. THE RESPONSE OF THE OTHER TEN DISCIPLES (Matt. 20:24).

They were "moved with indignation." They were very angry; they were very displeased.

But this was probably because of their own envy and jealousy. It looked to them like James and John were seeking to get favored treatment from the Lord. It shows that they were affected by the same kind of pride which, consciously or unconsciously, moved James and John to make the request that they made. This could easily have been a situation which would have hopelessly divided the twelve apostles at the very moment when it was so necessary for them to be united behind the Lord.

— How did the Lord deal with such a potentially harmful situation? He did it by teaching.

IV. THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD (Matt. 20:25-28).

What a lot of trouble we would avoid if we were only better taught in the Word of God! So many times our objectives and well as our reactions are more like the people of the world than they are like people who know the Lord. You probably will remember how strongly the Apostle Paul addressed Himself to the Corinthian church when he wrote the words we find in 1 Cor. 3:3,

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

Our tendency, like the disciples, and like the Corinthians, is to "walk as men." We forget, if we ever knew, how different the life of a Christian is to be.

There is a rather lengthy section in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians which deals with this very problem, and I want to take the time to read it to you. If you would like to follow in your Bibles, please turn to the fourth chapter of Ephesians, and I will begin reading with verse 17. (Read down to 5:2.)

But what did the Lord say in our text for today?

The text is not absolutely clear, but it seems to me that when Matthew said in 20:25 that "Jesus called them unto Him," that the "them" referred to all of the twelve. You can imagine what a spirit of competition there could have been among them. So it was not just James and John who needed some teaching; *all of them needed it!*

First of all, let us notice

A. The mistake they were making (v. 25).

In the world, the man at the top is the top man. We are all instructed in this from the time we are capable of knowing anything. Princes are the ones with the greatest authority and power. And people do what they say. This is true in business. This is true in government. There is a lot of rebellion today against authority, but that is the way the world operates, and no one is going to change it. Governments can be overthrown, but the governments which replace them are just like them. Neither our Lord, nor the apostles, ever engaged in any movement against authority. Paul could honestly say that he never sought to do away with the religious leaders of his day even though there was much corruption among them. It is the Lord Who sets rulers up, and it is the Lord Who puts them down. This is

the way of the world.

But then the Lord went on to point out

B. The difference with the people of God (Matt. 20:26-28).

How striking are those words, "But it shall not be so among you"! God's ways and man's ways are not the same. In fact, they are totally different! This is what we learn from Isa. 55:8 and 9:

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

So what is different about us as the Lord's people? How do we achieve greatness before the Lord? Verses 26, 27, and 28 are certainly among the most important verses ever to come from the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me read them to you again. (Read vv. 26-28.)

You see, the way up with the Lord, is not what the world calls up, but it is down!

If we seek spiritual greatness, greatness before the Lord, then we ought to aim at being both a "minister," and a "servant." And as the Lord used these words He meant that we are to be ministers to each other, and servants to each other. Let me explain these words to you.

What is a "minister"? That word has been taken over by pastors, so that when we think of a minister we think of the pastor of the church. Now a pastor needs to be a minister, but he has no right to claim that title just for himself. In fact, we have taken that word, and made it an indication of a high position – just like the world would do.

The truth is that every child of God is to be a minister. The Greek word is *διάκονος*. And it speaks of a person who is active in serving people. He does not do it because he is forced to do it, but because he wants to do it. It is his or her joy to be of service to others. He is a helper. When the apostles needed help in the early church, they chose men to be *διάκονοι*. This is the word which gives us our English word *deacon*. And our deacons fit the definition. But our church is full of ministers. Lucille and I have been very conscious of that. We have had more offers to help than we have been able to receive. And I hope that you feel that we are minis-

ters to you.

When this kind of ministry is going on *in* the church, and, as we have opportunities *outside* of the church, this is what is pleasing to the Lord. And such loving service is often used by the Lord to open the hearts of people to the Gospel.

What is a "servant"?

This is the Greek word δοῦλος. This is a bondservant. Ministers were usually free men, but servants were bondslaves. They were not free men, or women.

The Apostle Paul helps us to understand the meaning of this word as it applies to us when he called himself in his epistle to the Romans, "a servant of Jesus Christ." He used this word δοῦλος. He was the Lord's bondslave. He belonged to the Lord, and he lived to serve the Lord. He knew that He had been bought with a price.

So these two words, "minister" and "servant" give us a perfect picture of what is truly great, and what brings the blessing of the Lord. In the word "minister" we see one devoted to serving people for the Lord's sake, and in "servant" we see one who is devoted to serving the Lord.

And don't we have the two great commandments in the Law in these two words. We are to love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind. That is a "servant." And we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. That is a "minister."

But now I come to the best part of what the Lord had to say, and that is ***the Example of this kind of living and service: our Lord Jesus Christ!*** (Read verse 28.)

Concl: We come to the Lord's Table today *in remembrance of Him*. We come to remember Him in His death, to proclaim His death until He comes back again. And as we remember Him in His death, what do we see? We see One Who as the Servant of the Lord was doing the will of His Father in laying down His life. And yet at the same time we see One Who was meeting the needs of His people as He laid down His life to save them from their sins.

Is it becoming of me to serve the Lord like I am trying to climb a corpo-

rate ladder, and to make everybody recognize how great I am and how much I am doing, when my Lord did not come to be served, but to serve, and "to give His life a ransom for many." Notice: not for all, but "for many."

What is "a ransom"? It is the price that He had to pay to redeem us from the penalty of our sins. And He paid it all. He left nothing for you and for me to pay – nothing! This is one thing that we need to remember as we remember our Lord Jesus Christ today. He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

Therefore, it becomes us to approach the Lord's Table in the utmost of humility, confessing our sins, acknowledging how unworthy we are to take the bread, and to take the cup. And then to go from this place, not to go through life walking as other men and women walk, but to live as sinners saved by grace who are intent on showing by our lives how much we love the Lord, and how we long to help people in any way we can, trusting that the Lord will use our inadequate service to tough the hearts of those who do not know our Lord, causing them to turn in faith alone to Him.