

"IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME"

Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:24, 25

Intro: I have been in many churches where these words were cut out on the side of the table where the Lord's Supper was served. And I like that. We can't see those words, nor can we hear them, too much. They are always to indicate to us why we are here. The main purpose of the Lord's Supper is always to remember the Lord. Surprisingly Luke is the only Gospel writer who used this phrase, "in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). And he only used it in connection with the bread. But the Apostle Paul used it in connection with both the bread and the cup, and it is very likely that our Lord did the same. The whole Supper is a memorial of our Lord.

The idea conveyed in this expression, as I have pointed out to you before, is that we will forget the Lord--not as we come to the Lord's Table (although that is possible too). But that we will forget the Lord in our day to day living. Even if we are careful to remember the Lord when we come to a service like this, it is easy for us to leave this service only to forget about Him until we come back to the Lord's Table. However, that is the very thing that the Lord's Supper is designed to correct.

Forgetting the Lord is a major sin in God's sight. There is probably no sin that is worse, no sin that is more to blame for producing other sins, than the sin of forgetting the Lord. Only the other hand, remembering the Lord not only will bring great delight and blessing to the Lord, but it will be used by the Holy Spirit to keep us from sin. If we forget the Lord, we will do things that we would not do otherwise, bad things. But if we remember Him, we will be more careful about where we go, what we do and say, and even what we think!

Let me illustrate this from some OT passages.

This year, as I was concluding the reading of the OT, I was impressed with a certain verse in Zechariah's prophecy, Zech. 10:9.

Zechariah was speaking of the return of the Lord's people from captivity, and this is what he said that the Lord said:

And I will sow them among the people:

and they shall remember me in far countries;

and they shall live with their children,

and turn again.

The thought is that the basic reason for the captivity was that they had forgotten the Lord. I know that they had been

idolatrous, and that they had been involved in many other sins (adultery, covetousness, lying, etc.), but that which led to those terrible sins was the fact that they had forgotten the Lord! And the purpose of the captivity was to make the people remember Him Whom they had forgotten.

Let me give you another illustration. Please turn to Jonah 2:7. Here, from the belly of the great fish, this was a part of Jonah's prayer:

When my soul fainted within me **I remembered the Lord:**
and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.
Before this do you remember that, in the storm, the shipmaster had awakened Jonah who was sound asleep, telling him to call upon his God? How could Jonah sleep at such a time, and why was it that he wasn't praying? By his own testimony he had forgotten the Lord. And it took more than the storm to make him remember again. He had to be swallowed by that great fish.

Let me give you still another illustration. Turn to Psa. 78:34, 35. Here you read these words about the children of Israel on their journey from Egypt to Canaan:

When he slew them, then they sought him:
and they returned and enquired early after God.
**And they remembered that God was their rock,
and the high God their redeemer.**

Let me give you one more illustration.

When Moses was giving up the leadership of Israel just before they entered the promised land, he reminded them of this awful danger. Please turn to Deut. 8. This thought is very obvious in this chapter. In verse 11 we learn that he said, "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God." And then in verse 18 we read, "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God."

I repeat what I said a moment ago: Every sin in which the children of Israel were involved was traceable to the fact that they forgot the Lord. And I will also say that the judgments which the Lord brought upon them were designed to make them remember the Lord, and to bring them back to Him.

There are other passages I could refer to tonight, but these are sufficient for us to get the point.

How gracious our Lord has been to give us a Supper which is designed to keep us from forgetting the Lord! And when I say that, I am saying that this Supper is designed to keep us from sin, to keep us from judgments that the Lord would have to use to bring us back to Himself. You see, this is one reason we are to examine ourselves when we come to the Lord's

Table, and why we need to repent quietly in our hearts right here if we suddenly realize that we have been forgetting the Lord.

But you might say, "How can we really forget the Lord?"

Let me give you three answers to that question from Deut. 8.

I. WE FORGET THE LORD WHEN WE IGNORE HIS LEADING, AND WHY HE DEALS WITH US THE WAY HE DOES.

This is how Jonah got into trouble.

Look at Deut. 8:2. They failed to recognize that it was not Moses who was leading them, but the Lord. It was His presence which was with them, but they forgot the Lord anyway. What a tragedy it is when we fail to remember that the Lord is with us, always leading us, always taking care of us.

Related to this is the point that Moses made in Deut. 8:11.

II. WE FORGET THE LORD WHEN WE DO NOT OBEY HIM.

How do we show our love for the Lord? By our obedience to His Word. How often do we do things, or say things, when we know in our hearts that it is not right before God. That is forgetting the Lord. Oh, we know He exists. And we know that He is mighty, but practically we forget Him.

Let me give you a third evidence of forgetting the Lord. Look at Deut. 8:18. But the passage really begins with verse 11, and then we see the point in verse 17 and following.

III. WE FORGET THE LORD WHEN WE CLAIM THE CREDIT FOR BLESSINGS WE HAVE, RATHER THAN GIVING GOD THE GLORY.

In addition to pride, you can see that there is a failure here to give thanks to God for the blessings He had poured out upon His people.

Concl: But how do we apply this truth to our lives today?

We certainly are forgetting the Lord when anything has greater priority in our lives than the spiritual blessings we have in our Lord Jesus Christ -- the blessing of the forgiveness of our sins, of being declared righteous in God's sight, the blessing of deliverance from the power of sin, the work of the Holy Spirit in conforming us to the likeness of Christ, and certain prospect of being in heaven, and many, many more blessings.

We forget the Lord when we fail to recognize His presence with us. We forget the Lord when we ignore His providential dealings with us. We forget the Lord when we fail to trust Him, whatever the circumstances might be. We forget the Lord when we do what we want to do instead of being obedient to His Word.

We remember the Lord tonight as we observe this Supper. We are reminded of what it cost Him to save us, and hopefully we are very, very thankful. But let us pray that we will continue to remember the Lord tomorrow, and the day after that, and so on through the rest of our lives. How thankful we should be, too, that the Holy Spirit has been given to us to bring to our remembrance what the Lord has said to us. Cf. John 14:26.

As we take the bread and drink from the cup tonight, let us pray that this will be an evening, and 1994 will be a year, when we will remember the Lord more faithfully than we ever have before.