

WHO AND WHAT ARE WE TO REMEMBER AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Intro: In the Gospels the record of the Lord's Supper which the Lord instituted on the evening before His crucifixion, is recorded for us in Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, and Luke 22:19-20. The account given to us in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 is longer than any of the three Gospel records, and it was written by the Apostle Paul who was not even a Christian at the time of the Lord's death. Any event in the life of our Lord on earth was important but any event which is repeated in either the Gospels or the epistles deserves our special attention. In the Apostle Paul's own words we are told that he learned about the Lord's Supper, not from one of the apostles who was actually there, but by special revelation from the Lord Himself. That also serves to emphasize how every important that event was.

The word that I want to emphasize with you tonight is the word remembrance. Actually the words remember and remembrance are among the most important words in the Bible, occurring over two hundred times. You don't need me to tell you, but I will anyway, remember is a verb; remembrance is a noun. A remembrance is the act of remembering. This is what the Lord's Supper is. It is a time when we recollect something that is very important. In the case of the Lord's Supper, it speaks of an event that the Lord did not want them to forget. And yet it was not just an event that they were to remember, but they were to remember Him in connection with an event in His life. That event had to do with His death on a cross at Calvary (see Luke 23:33).

Actually the Lord is remembered for many things. As we read through the Gospels we realize how unique the Lord was in every way. The disciples would never be able to forget the miracles which He performed. Whether it was healing from disease, or restoring sight to the blind, or even raising people from the dead. There were many, many that He performed which are not recorded for us in the Gospels. There have been other miracle workers in the Old and New Testaments, but no one ever performed nearly as many as He did. The Apostle John is the one who tells us that He did many more things than are recorded, and that if they were recorded, the world would not be able to contain the books that would be written. See John 21:25. This was a truly important part of our Lord's ministry, and gave ample proof of His deity. See John 20:30-31.

But then there was the wonderful teaching of our Lord. The Gospels are full of His teaching. And just as the disciples would not be able to forget seeing the Lord perform miracles, they would not be able to forget his teaching. Men called “officers” were sent by the Pharisees to arrest the Lord Jesus, and they came back with the Lord but saying to the Pharisees, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). They were so impressed by our Lord’s teaching that they came back without arresting Him.

And then none of the disciples, nor any others of the multitudes who saw the Lord could ever forget the Lord Jesus as a Person. He was not a sinner like the rest of us are. Nothing corrupting or evil ever came from His lips. He deceived no one. He showed love for His enemies. He never reviled those who reviled Him. The only witnesses that the Jews could get to testify against Him were false witnesses. He never did anything deserving of death. His life was characterized by mercy, compassion, and kindness, going far beyond anything that was ever seen in any human being. And, of course, it was all because although he was a real human being, yet He was Son of God incarnate, in human flesh.

But when it came to being remembered, our Lord used His last supper with His disciples to be observed after His death “in remembrance” of Himself. And it was not a lavish, expensive feast of several courses. It was not designed to satisfy the hunger of their bodies. It was designed to convey a message which the Lord Jesus never wanted them to forget. It was a supper of bread and a cup of wine which was to minister to their souls. They all partook of the same bread and drank from the same cup. He did not specify how often they were to observe it, but He made it clear that it was always to be observed “in remembrance of” Himself.

Now the Supper was designed to remind them of two things about our Lord, and the Lord explained what those two things were. The most complete record is given to us by the Apostle Paul. The bread spoke of our Lord’s body; the cup, *i.e.*, what was in the cup spoke of His blood.

To state it another way, the bread spoke of His true humanity; the fruit of the vine in the cup spoke of His death. He had to become a man because He came to be the Savior of men. His birth of a virgin mother, plus the miraculous works which He did on earth, and the nature of His teaching, plus His sinless life, gave evidence that, as the Apostle John wrote many years later, “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world” (1 John 4:14).

The Lord's Supper carries to us again the Gospel of our salvation. The Lord Jesus was, and is, God Who became Man. He died, not because He was a sinner like we are. But He died because His was charged with our sins. Isaiah had predicted that all of this would happen years before when he wrote,

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6).

How often are we to observe the Lord's Supper. The Apostle Paul simply said, "As often as ye eat this bread . . ." The early Church observed it for a time every day. Some churches do it every week. Others do it once a month. We do it twice a month, once on the first Sunday morning, and then on the third Sunday night especially thinking about those who cannot attend on Sunday morning.

The Lord's Supper stands between the two main events in the life and ministry of our Lord: His death for the salvation of sinners, and His return to take us to be with Himself. In showing forth His death, we are preaching the Gospel, remembering the Son of God Who became a Man that He might suffer and die to save them from the penalty of their sins.

The writer of the book of Hebrews stated in the second chapter of that epistle three reasons for the incarnation of the Son of God. Let me read them to you:

- 1) Heb. 2:9-10.
- 2) Heb. 2:14-15.
- 3) Heb. 2:17-18.

Who should partake of the Lord's Supper? Only those who are trusting in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. The Lord's Supper shows us Who only was qualified to be our Savior, and what it cost Him to save us from our sins.

One final word: For what did the Lord give thanks as He gave the disciples the bread. Matthew and Mark said that He blessed the Supper; Luke said, as Paul did in our text, that He gave thanks. Charles Hodge, in His commentary on 1 Corinthians says that the two expressions mean that our Lord was thanking God for His mercy in providing salvation, and that He was asking the Father to bless this time of remembrance. Let us thank God for our salvation, and pray that each time we observe the Lord's Supper it will be a time of special blessing for us.

1 Cor. 11:23-26 (4)

Who do we remember as we observe the Lord's Supper? We remember our Lord Jesus Christ. And what do we remember? We remember that to save us our Lord came to earth as a Man, that He might die in your place and mine, thus atoning for our sins, and securing for us total forgiveness for all of our sins, and the gift of eternal salvation.