

Our Memorial Day (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

I am about as forgetful as a person can be. With the aid of my iPhone, I'm much better than I used to be. After all, I can tell Siri to remind me of things. The calendar can help me remember what I need to remember.

But, at heart, I am a very forgetful person. When we were in Charleston, West Virginia, one of the hospitals had a very confusing parking garage. One day, I had been to the hospital, made my visit, and then went to find my vehicle. I got so confused and turned around in that parking garage that it took me more than an hour to find my car. Directions just aren't my thing. After that experience I always parked in the same place—on the roof of that parking garage.

I'm sure that many of you have a hard time remembering things. Maybe it's your car keys or your wallet or purse. Maybe you have a hard time remembering to take your prescriptions. Sometimes my kids get in trouble and their defense is: "I forgot."

People have always been forgetful, and God has, throughout history, established memorials to help his people remember. About the Passover: "So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations" (Ex 12:14). When the children of Israel crossed the Jordan to enter the Promised Land, the Jordan stood still. A man from each tribe then took a large rock and placed them together in the Jordan. We then read: "These stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever" (Josh 4:7).

Tomorrow is Memorial Day. Throughout this country, people will remember not only the war dead, but all of their loved ones. You may have plans to visit a cemetery this weekend. This morning, we want to remember "Our Memorial Day," the first day of the week as we assemble to remember the death of Jesus.

We owe our very existence as the people of God to the sacrifice of Jesus. "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). We need to be extremely grateful for the sacrifice of Jesus. He never had to leave heaven to come to this sin-sick world. Yet, He willingly chose to come here and die for you and for me.

If we remember the sacrifice of our veterans, we absolutely must remember the sacrifice of Jesus! He suffered far more than they; He died for more people than they; He died for a far greater good.

God has set aside the first day of every week as "Our Memorial Day." The church comes together for the purpose of partaking of the Lord's Supper: "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread. . . ." (Acts 20:7). This morning, we have taken the Lord's Supper as part of "Our Memorial Day," to remember the sacrifice of Jesus.

The Corinthians were taking the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day. However, they weren't taking the Lord's Supper in any manner worthy of Jesus: "When you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor 11:20). Because the Corinthians had messed the feast up so badly it couldn't even be called the Lord's Supper, Paul instructs them in the right way to participate in the Supper.

Paul's message is simply this: "*The Lord's Supper remembers Jesus.*"

Scripture (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

verse 23:

Paul received from the Lord which he also delivered: This wasn't something Paul made up, but he received his information directly from the Lord.

These events happened on the same night the Lord was betrayed: The Lord had a heavy heart that night. The Supper is a solemn reminder of the Lord's heavy heart and what He endured.

verse 24:

He broke the bread, gave it to His disciples and said the bread was His body.

The fact that the bread is Jesus' body is significant:

This goes back to the Incarnation.

As we have a body, Jesus had to have a body. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). Hebrews 2:14. Without a body, Jesus could never have died for us.

This also declares that Jesus' death was real.

God is spirit, but spirit cannot suffer and die. Jesus had to house His spirit in flesh and blood in order to suffer and die. Jesus' death was no illusion; the bread reminds us that Jesus really suffered and died.

This idea also seems to go back to animal sacrifices.

An animal's dead body lay upon an altar to remind God's people of sin. Likewise, Jesus' dead corpse hung upon a cross to show us God's hatred of sin and the price that had to be paid.

Because Jesus died in bodily form, He owns my body.

"You are not your own[.] For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor 6:19-20). I cannot do whatever I please; Jesus owns my body.

verse 25:

The cup is the new covenant in Jesus' blood.

The cup is a reminder of the faithfulness of God. God had promised to make a new covenant: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Jer 31:31). In the Supper, we remember that God, through the death of Jesus, was faithful to that promise and brought about the New Covenant.

Jesus' blood is also very, very important. We have forgiveness through Jesus' blood: "In [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph 1:7). 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Have you ever thought about why blood is so important?

The blood of a lamb prevented the Lord from slaying the firstborn sons among the Israelites.

Exodus 12:12-13. If you were a parent, you would have had that blood over your doorpost.

God's first covenant was consecrated with the blood of animals; ***the second covenant was consecrated with the blood of God's Son (Ex 24:8).***

Life is found in blood.

"The life of every creature is its blood: its blood is its life" (Lev 17:14). Our physical life is in our blood; our spiritual life is in Jesus' blood.

verse 26:

As often as we participate in the Supper, we remember (proclaim) Jesus' death.

Application

"The Lord's Supper remembers Jesus."

How do we make that a reality?

When we come to the Lord's Supper, make a conscious effort to concentrate on Jesus' death.

There are several ways to make that a reality. Maybe you need to close your eyes. Reading the biblical accounts of the crucifixion will help. There are hymns which will graphically and poetically bring the cross to mind. Make a real effort not to let your mind wander.

We need to make sure that we do not distract others.

I've known many people who just weren't that interested in what happened in the minds of others—they might get up to use the restroom, they might whisper, they might be digging in their purse for a check to write for contribution. We need to be very, very careful that we don't disrupt the worship and thought process of others.

What specifically could we think about during the Lord's Supper?

We can think about God's great love demonstrated at the cross—John 3:16.

We can think of our sins that put Jesus there.

"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Cor 11:28). In context, Paul is saying that the Corinthians needed to examine themselves to make sure they aren't causing problems in the church at Corinth, but it's healthy to undergo rigorous self-examination.

We can think about the unity of the church.

1 Corinthians 11:33 The Lord's Supper is not something we just do individually, but it is something we do as a congregation.

Will you come to the Supper and remember Jesus? Is it the case that you need to remember Jesus with your life—to remember Him by living a life that honors Him? If you need to come this morning, come right now as we stand and sing.

This sermon was originally preached by [Dr. Justin Imel, Sr.](#), at the [Dale Ridge church of Christ](#) in Roanoke, Virginia.