

The Lord's Supper: Remember Everything – 1 Cor 11:23-34 (Part 1)

22 students prayed to receive Christ that week; And many more grew in their convictions
Great things are going on in our Student Ministries, Jr. High and High School alike
And I can't wait to see how God uses it in the year to come

There are also great things going on at HBC-Phoenix where I preached last weekend
Becky and I came away really encouraged, and excited for their days ahead
But it's good to be home; And with the summer vacations behind us, I'm eager to get back to 1 Corinthians
So turn there with me, to 1 Cor 11:23-34, and if you need a Bible, just get the attention of one of the ushers (p.958)

The issue is **The Lord's Supper**, which if you remember, Paul introduced with a scolding in the previous paragraph – rebuking them for their lack of unity
But now comes the correction; He got on their case for what they were doing wrong, but now gives the instruction for how to change it; A great example in and of itself

And this is such a key passage, and this issue so important for our life and worship together as a church, that we're going to spend 3 weeks here (v23-26) (**Intro**)
For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

- I think I've shared this with you before, but when Becky and I first started dating in college, we spent our summers apart – she in California, and me here in the Mid-west
And we were miserable; We hated it; We were love-struck and smitten, but I was still a bit concerned going into that first summer, that I would be “out of sight out of mind”

So on the way to the airport, I gave her a Hallmark card that said “Remember” on the outside, and “Everything” on the inside; That's it – just “Remember Everything”
B/c in my absence, I didn't want her to forget about me
I didn't want her to forget about our memories, our laughter, our love, our chemistry, our fun
I wanted her to remember everything in the past, so that her heart wouldn't wander in the present, and we could look forward to our future

The very things the Corinthian believers were *failing* to do
In their relationship with Christ, they were failing to remember some of the most important things and practices Paul had taught them
Consequently they were wandering in their walk; Just like some of you are I imagine
And Paul chides them for it in v22, saying – *Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not*
For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you (23)

IOW I won't commend you in this, b/c you know better
I told you exactly what you should do and how you should do it, and it came from Jesus himself – straight from the source
Which means you should not only know it, but remember it

And the same is true for us
God's Word, his special revelation, his explicit message for us – has been recorded and preserved for our instruction
And it's incumbent upon us to know it, and remember it; To remember everything
That's one of the reasons the Holy Spirit dwells within us – to remind us of what we already know; Especially something as important as The Lord's Supper

So when participating in it, first of all . . .

Remember the setting (v23b)

The circumstances; Which are briefly mentioned in v23b – *The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread*
The night when he was betrayed establishes the setting – the time and place in which Jesus instituted what we now know as The Lord's Supper
And that setting is important to remember, b/c first of all, it connects The Lord's Supper to his death, the very next day

Remember the setting . . .

• **Because it connects The Lord's Supper with the Lord's death**

Otherwise, you're left with an empty ritual; Or at the very least, a ritual whose meaning isn't clear; Think about it
Apart from his death, what does, “*This is my body which is for you*” mean? That he lived a good life on your behalf?
Or, apart from his death, what does, “*This cup is the new covenant in my blood*” mean?
That he cut himself and did a little bloodletting, but wrapped it up and walked away?

Something like that must have been going through the mind of the Disciples that night
B/c it would have been another 18 hours or so before they could connect his comments, with his death; And thereby consider the setting as a whole
But once done, it would have left no doubt in their minds, that Jesus was referring to the death of his *own* body and the sacrifice of his own life
Especially so when you consider that a reference to blood like that, with all the OT sacrifices, most often indicated the giving of life

So when it comes to The Lord's Supper, it's important to remember the setting in order to give meaning to his words
The setting, that Jesus ate with his disciples on Thursday night just before going to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray . . .
And while there, probably sometime after midnight, Judas came to betray him into the hands of the chief priests and soldiers, to be killed the next day
Less than 24 hours after their meal
Sealing the connection for all time, between the meal and his death
Remember that; Remember the setting to make sure you get the meaning

Second, remember the setting . . .

• **Because it reminds you of the Lord's suffering**

One of the risks associated with observing The Lord's Supper 2000 years after the events it symbolizes – is that we make it into a nice, clean, convenient ritual
While the suffering it represents, is anything but nice, and clean, and convenient

Christ suffered *immensely* on our behalf – physically, emotionally, and most of all spiritually; Forget that, and you make The Lord’s Supper into something it’s not

He was tortured with a crown of thorns, flogged with a multi-lashed whip, beaten with fists while blind-folded, deprived of sleep, repeatedly struck on the head with a reed . . . And then hung on a cross with nails through his hands and feet, to suffocate and die of shock and exhaustion
In fact, he suffered so much physically, the Bible says he was unrecognizable

On top of that, he suffered emotionally
From being falsely accused in bogus trials throughout the night . . .
To being mocked with a purple robe and hailed as a King . . .
Railroaded by a frenzied crowd; And derided and reviled by everyone from passersby, to the chief priests, to those who were crucified with him
He suffered emotionally

And worst of all, he suffered spiritually; He became sin who knew no sin
Holy God bore our sin in his body on the tree, when he didn’t deserve it, and we did
And consequently was forsaken by his Father, and infinitely separated for a time – b/c God’s holiness can have no part of our sinfulness
He suffered physically, emotionally, and especially spiritually

And we honor him for enduring it, to the extent that we remember it (**Summary**)
Just like fallen war heroes – we honor them most when we remember them most
So remember the setting, b/c it reminds you of the suffering, and connects The Lord’s Supper with his death; And then . . .

Remember the background (Ex 12:21-27; Lk 22:1-20)

Which is an important piece of just about every aspect of life
From history and novels, to stocks and bonds, to employers and friendships – knowing and remembering the background is very important

Why do you think good authors spend so much time developing their characters?
B/c they know that your knowledge of the background, increases your link with them
And why do you think employers do a background check?
B/c they know it’s important for their decision
Or why do you think economists go to such great lengths to assess the past?
B/c it increases their understanding of the present, and their insight into the future

Knowing and remembering background is vitally important in life
Otherwise your understanding of the situation or practice is limited, and your appreciation for its significance is shallow
That’s one of the reasons I continue to tell the story of how we started as a church in Party with the Pastors
B/c it increases people’s understanding and appreciation for of our church

And the same is true of The Lord’s Supper; So first of all, it’s important to remember the background . . .

• **Because The Lord’s Supper is based on the most significant celebration in the Old Testament – the Passover meal**

Referring to the meal or feast that was intended to celebrate and *remember* God’s liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt
Remember the story? The Israelites lived among the Egyptians for 400 years, the last part in brutal slavery around 1500BC
Until God raised up Moses to lead his people out with 10 different plagues – the last of which was the Passover
Where every firstborn in the land of Egypt, man or animal, was killed

Unless, a spotless lamb was sacrificed, and it’s blood was placed on the doorposts of their house
In which case, when the Lord came by, he would pass *over* their home and spare them the death of their firstborn
They were saved by the blood of the lamb, and their faith in it, as demonstrated by their obedience to God’s commands

Commands which included ridding their homes of all leaven, fermented dough, *preceding* the Passover, and then eating only *un*-leavened bread the week following
Which was symbolic of consecrating themselves or separating themselves from the sinful culture around them

And on the evening of the Passover, they were to combine the unleavened bread with bitter herbs – symbolic of their bitter time in slavery . . .
And eat it with the lamb’s meat that they had sacrificed

• Subsequent to which, God instructed them to observe that meal every year, to *remember* their salvation; Listen to how Moses says it in **Ex 12:24-27**
24 “You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. 25 And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. 26 And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ // 27 you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’”

God wanted to make sure that his people never forgot their miraculous release from bondage, and their salvation from death
He wanted to make sure they remembered everything
And that meal became the most significant means to do so, right up until the time of Christ; Not only that, but it’s the basis for what we do now . . .
B/c it’s the very meal that Jesus and the 12 were eating in the upper room . . .
When he reinterpreted it, infused it with new meaning, and instituted what we now call The Lord’s Supper *****

Remember the background, b/c The Lord’s Supper is based on the most significant celebration in the OT – the Passover meal; And second . . .

• **Because the Passover meal for the Jews, was the last supper for Christ, and became the Lord’s Supper for us**

Not only is it based on a significant part of our salvation history, but it was celebrated by Jesus himself, and transformed into The Lord’s Supper that we celebrate
And I’d like for you to turn to Luke 22:1-20 in order to see those connections for yourself (p.881)

1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. 2 And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people . . . 7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

The day of Unleavened Bread refers to the first day of the festival, when a lamb was sacrificed on the altar in the temple; Again, as a means of remembering

8 So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us [the Passover meal], that we may eat it.”

It was not only celebrated publicly in the temple through the sacrifice of a lamb, but privately in homes through a meal

14 And when the hour came, he [Jesus] reclined at table, and the apostles with him.

15 And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

IOW I will not share this meal with you, eating and drinking it Jesus said, until it’s fulfilled in the kingdom of God (16b); Or until the kingdom of God comes (18b)

- So here’s the deal – by this time, the time of Christ, the Passover meal was not only a meal of remembrance, but a meal of *anticipation*
Made all the more so, by the words of Jesus here
It not only looked back, but looked forward – forward to the day when God would send a Messiah, a deliverer, who would once again save God’s people . . .
And establish his kingdom forever and ever
Which he’s has been doing through Christ for 2000 years now, in the hearts and souls of people just like us all over the world

But it’s not complete is it? The Kingdom of God has not yet been fulfilled
It’s already here in the person and presence of Christ *within* us, within those who believe, but it’s not yet complete around us
And won’t be until Christ returns to establish his rule and reign, not only in the hearts and souls of those who believe in him, but physically over the entire world

At which point, the meaning and anticipation of the meal will be fulfilled
All those predestined for salvation, those who desire to be saved, will be saved . . .
And we will eat again *with* Jesus, just like he says, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, referred to in Rev 19:9
A meal where the people of God, the church – will celebrate his kingdom, rejoice in our salvation, and revel in our *communion* with him face to face

That’s why we need to remember the background – b/c the Passover meal for the Jews, was the last supper for Christ, and we’re going to eat it w/ him again, in the future

- Not only that, but the last supper, became the Lord’s Supper for us; That’s verses 19-20
19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”
20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for

you is the new covenant in my blood.

With Paul once again adding in 1 Cor 11:25 – *Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.*

With these verses Jesus is basically saying, “Hey, you’ve been eating and drinking to remember the Passover; Now I want you to eat and drink to remember *me*”
No more lamb, no more bitter herbs; Just the bread and the wine to remember *me*
Transforming the Passover, the last supper, into The Lord’s Supper . . .

• **Because Christ is our Passover Lamb**

Remember the background, especially the Passover, b/c Christ is our Passover Lamb

No longer do we focus on the lamb small “l”, but the Lamb, capital “L”

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29)

The Lamb who’s worthy *to receive honor and glory and blessing* (Rev 5:12-13)

Our *Passover Lamb* as Paul says it in **1 Cor 5:7**; Remember that?

That’s where Paul says – *Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened.*

As in, purge the household of God of sin, so you can *be* the people you are – unleavened and untainted for God’s own possession

Why? B/c *Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

Our substitute, our perfect, spotless, blameless Savior – has shed his blood, applying it to the doorposts of our heart through faith and repentance . . .

So that we might be *saved* from death and the bondage of sin, and made alive in him
Just like the people of old, with *their* Passover lamb

- And it just so happens, that on that first Good Friday, *our* Passover Lamb was sacrificed on the cross, as the memorial lamb was sacrificed on the altar *****
Random coincidence? I don’t think so; But the parallels don’t stop there . . .

Just as the blood of the lamb applied to the doorposts protected *them* from *physical* death due to the *plague* . . .

So too, the blood of Christ applied to our *lives*, protects us fr *spiritual* death, due to *sin*

And just as the blood of the lamb was *their* means to freedom from the bondage of *slavery* . . . The blood of Christ is *our* means to freedom from the bondage of *sin*

So listen, Hallmark card or not, remember everything (**Summary**)

Including the setting and background of the past, so that your heart doesn’t wander in the present, and you can look forward to the meal in the future

Pray – Lord, we want to understand the things you did, and the ways you ordained to remember them, more and more

Help us to make the connections, to appreciate their significance, to recall the background, and see you as you are

Make our times together, with or without The Lord’s Supper, more and more meaningful