

I want to start with a story from the life of Mark Moring, past editor of Men of Integrity magazine.

"It was late, and my young sons, Peter and Paul, had been in bed for at least an hour. My wife and I had just returned from our Bible study group, and I snuck into the boys' room to say good night.

Peter asked, "Dad, can I have some ice cream?"

"No, Peter, it's late, way past bedtime."

"But Dad, you promised."

He was right. Peter had asked for ice cream earlier in the day, but we didn't have any. And I had said, "I'll get some for you later, I promise."

Dinner came and went. We cleaned up the kitchen; the boys picked up their toys. The sitter arrived. And my wife and I left for our Bible study.

I'd forgotten all about the ice cream. But Peter had not.

So, even though it was after 10 o'clock, I hopped in the car, drove to the convenience store, got a half gallon, and hurried home.

Peter and I enjoyed that chocolate-vanilla swirl together. After all, I had a promise to keep."

Did you ever get into trouble because of a promise you forgot to keep? Have you ever caused yourself some problems by forgetting a birthday, an anniversary, or an appointment? Likely most of us have. So we learn to remind ourselves of important events.

What do you do to remind yourself about important things? Maybe you write family birthdays and anniversaries on the calendar in red so they stand out. I write little notes and leave them on my desk, on my dresser, in my Bible, or on the seat of my truck. I have run out of gas only once in my life. I keep a piece of paper in my truck with the word "GAS" written on one end and the word "MILK" written on the other. I have used these for years to remind me to buy whichever one is needed.

What do you do to remind yourself of important things? (throw out)

When Jesus was about to make the ultimate sacrifice for us of dying on the cross for our sins, He gave His followers something to do to remember this special sacrifice of His. He gave us a memorial.

Our lives are full of memorials. Some years ago my wife and I went to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on vacation. We went to see the liberty bell and Independence Hall. These have been preserved as memorials to the struggles of our nation for freedom and justice. We look at them and are reminded of the sacrifices of those early Americans. We have memorials to our nation's history all over our country. There are memorials to the men and women who died for their country.

We also have memorials to philanthropists. These are people who have donated money in their name to build hospitals, schools, and libraries. Some of our county park facilities

have been named after community citizens who gave much of themselves to the kids. Our local G.O.R.C. park has a memorial sign.

Many churches have memorials too. They may name a room or a building after a deceased member of that church. Families often donate a pew or a window or something in the name of a loved one and put a little memorial plaque on it.

All of these memorials have something in common. They all include some tangible object for people to look at or make use of. A statue you might look at. A park, building, or pew you would use. **These are all memorial objects.**

But there is another kind of memorial. **There are memorial actions.** These are things you do. A good example is an annual Memorial Day parade or a Independence Day parade that many communities hold each year. Some communities hold rallies with patriotic concerts and speeches.

Well, when Jesus created His church, He established that a memorial be created. This would be a memorial action, something for us to do. This memorial is in honor of the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf.

Three books of the Bible reveal Jesus introducing this memorial to His followers. We see it in the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In none of these does Jesus give this memorial a name. Only once in the Bible do we see it referred to by a name. In 1 Corinthians 11, the missionary Paul calls it the Lord's Supper.

**1 Corinthians 11:20 (NIV)** "When you come together, it is not the [Lord's Supper](#) you eat..."

**"Lord's Supper"**

He says it is not the Lord's Supper they eat because they were taking it lightly, even making a mockery of it. He is rebuking them for their lack of sensitivity concerning the church and the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

Other names have been used for this memorial by various Christian groups. Some use the term communion which comes from 1 Corinthians 10.

**1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (NIV)** Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a [participation](#) in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a [participation](#) in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

**"Communion", Greek "*koinonia*" = "to share in"**

He is referring in this passage to them sharing in the Lord's Supper. Some of the older English translations of this verse used the word communion instead of participation. So the Lord's Supper picked up the name communion. The Greek word here is koinonia. I spoke about the word koinonia in last week's sermon. If you missed it, you can read it on our church's website.

Other Christian groups use the word Eucharist. This comes from 1 Corinthians 11:24.

**1 Corinthians 11:23-24 (NIV)** The Lord Jesus..., took bread, 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."

**"Eucharist", Greek "*eucharistos*" meaning "to give thanks"**

And still other Christian groups use other terms, such as Mass, Sacrament, Blessed Sacrament, Divine Liturgy, or Divine Service.

Jesus commanded His followers to keep this memorial action together. I believe we see this in our key verse. Our key verse in this series of sermons is Acts 2:42.

**Acts 2:42 (NIV)** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, [to the breaking of bread](#) and to prayer.

The term "breaking of bread" originally meant the sharing of a meal. It is used that way elsewhere in the Bible. But it was adapted by the early church to refer to the Lord's Supper. But it also became one of the terms used for the Lord's Supper.

When we first built the new wing of the church and started using it, we realized we needed a name for it. It became known as the west wing. At times we need to differentiate between the two wings and need a name for this one. Is this the east wing, old wing, or main wing? I've used all of those as we haven't established a name for it. But having two wings we need a name for both.

In the same way, the early Christians needed a name to refer to this thing they were now doing. Over time different names have been used. One of the first was the breaking of bread. This term carried over to the Lord's Supper for four primary reasons.

1. Jesus didn't give it a name.
2. Jesus introduced it during a meal, the Passover Supper.
3. Jesus broke the bread before giving it to His disciples to eat.
4. The early Christians often observed it during a meal, as we see in 1 Corinthians 11.

Some believe that this reference in Acts 2:42 refers to the early Christians eating together, as is mentioned a few verses later in Acts 2:46.

**Acts 2:46 (NIV)** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

But I believe the reference in v. 42 is to the Lord's Supper. Their whole existence as partners in Jesus were based on His death on the cross. Jesus commanded them to keep the Lord's Supper memorial. I choose to believe that this is what the term means in verse 42. It may be that they did not first do so as a large group daily in the temple courts, but rather in smaller groups in their homes. But I can't help but believe that the Holy Spirit reminded them to do this memorial action that Jesus gave them to do.

No matter what you call it, it is a reminder. There are three main things it serves to remind us.

**The Lord's Supper reminds us to look backward.**

**1 Corinthians 11:23-24 (NLT)** ... the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this [to remember](#) me."

Jesus said to eat this bread and drink this cup to remember Him. Jesus performed for us the greatest sacrifice one can give for another, to give up his or her life. Others have done that. Some of our soldiers have done that. But Jesus' death accomplished so much more for us than the life of any soldier. So as you partake of the Lord's Supper, remember to look backward to what Jesus did and why.

**The Lord's Supper reminds us to look forward.**

After His death, God raised Jesus from the dead into His eternal life body. Then, for a short time, Jesus prepared His followers for His return to heaven. But part of the good news is that Jesus is coming back to earth. One day Jesus will return and set things right upon the earth.

**1 Corinthians 11:26 (NIV)** For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death [until he comes](#).

We live in anticipation of His return. We are looking forward to that day. Observance of the Lord's Supper helps us keep this in mind.

We need something to hope in. Life can be very hard. We easily get depressed by the weight of it all. But God's promise of Jesus' return is meant to lift us up and encourage us in our obedience to Him. So as you eat this memorial, look forward to the return of the Savior.

**The Lord's Supper reminds us to look within.**

Whenever we are reminded of what Jesus did for us, we should also be reminded of the life He has called us to live. He has called us to a life of service, of holiness, of self-giving.

In the letter of Paul the missionary to the Christians in Corinth, he warns them not to take the Lord's Supper lightly. Instead, they should use the occasion of this memorial action to remind them to look at their own life.

**1 Corinthians 11:28 (NLT)** That is why you should [examine yourself](#) before eating the bread and drinking the cup.

We honor Jesus more by our obedience to Him in everyday life than we do through eating a bit of cracker and drinking some juice. The Lord's Supper is a reminder of how far we are from living the kind of sacrifice for Jesus that He lived for us. Let the Lord's Supper serve as a reminder to critically examine yourself for sin, confess and repent of your sin, and renew your commitment to Jesus.

Are you growing as a Christian? Are you living in obedience to Jesus? Are you seeking more and more to give every part of you to Him, every part of your life? This is what holiness is all about, complete dedication to Him. Are you working hard at this? Use the Lord's Supper to remind you of the need to do so.

Use the Lord's Supper to remind you to look backward, look forward, and look within. Now let me give you two cautions.

**Don't let it become routine.** Some churches try to guard against this by making the Lord's Supper a special occasion. So they do it only a few times a year. Other churches, like ours, do it monthly. Some churches who have done this are going to doing it every Sunday. Some do it even more often than that, in both their large worship settings and their smaller Bible groups.

**Don't let it become legalistic.** Jesus did not give it a name, nor tell us how often to observe it. He doesn't give details about what to use. I heard a story just this week at VBS about a child who told his grandfather that you have to use oyster crackers or it doesn't count. He said that because that is all he has ever seen used. I told his grandmother to tell him that Jesus didn't use oyster crackers.

The focus of the Lord's Supper is not on what kind of bread to use or what liquid to use. The focus is on the meaning, on looking backward, forward, and within. Remember, praise Jesus, give thanks to Him, and recommit yourself to Him.

Now we aren't going to do the Lord's Supper today. It may seem odd to preach on it and not do it. But the whole point has been to remember what it should mean for us. So you need to decide what you will do to remember, between now and the next time we observe it, and every time we observe it, how you will remember what to do with the Lord's Supper.

#### Invitation

You may have heard the expression "an offer too good to be true." We hear promises every week that are too good to be true. "Use this toothpaste and everyone will want to be your friend." "Invest in our company and your money worries will be over." "Now, for a limited time you can get these genuine diamonds at less than cost because of our overstock conditions." All of these are too good to be true. And after you fall for some of them you learn that things that are too good to be true, usually are.

God's offer of forgiveness to sinners such as we are certainly sounds too good to be true. But this one IS true. Only God can offer forgiveness, and He does. Only God could bring about a solution to our sin problem and He did. Only faith in Him will enable you to receive that forgiveness and it will.

Today, won't you put your faith in Jesus? Won't you receive Him as your Savior and turn your life over to Him as your Lord? I know it sounds too good to be true. But Jesus died to make it real. And God raised Him from the dead to show us it is real. Today, believe the offer that is both good and true.