

Remembering Jesus in Communion

Luke 22:19-20; Hebrews 2:14

November 18, 2018

Greg L. Price

We all have various ways of remembering those who are dear to us when we are separated by many miles. Perhaps you have photos on your fridge, on your dresser, or in your wallet. It is surely a sign that someone is not very dear when we forget them or act as though they do not exist.

It is, therefore, very significant that the Lord Jesus has given to us a sacrament by which we are to remember Him for as long as we have breath. For in the Lord's Supper, Jesus has given a picture of His sacrificial love for His beloved Church whom He purchased unto Himself at the price of His own blood: "This do in remembrance of me." The Church's heavenly husband hereby calls His bride to stir up her love and affection, her zeal and enthusiasm, her holiness and godliness, and her faith and confidence in her Savior. He calls her to turn from her lusts, her covetousness, her forgetfulness, her pride, her self-righteousness, her resentment, and all her ways wherein she has loved her pleasures, her work, her riches, even her family more than she has loved her Redeemer.

Dear ones, let us today prepare our hearts to remember our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, as we look forward next week (in Grand Rapids) to that holy meal we know as the Lord's Supper. There are two questions we desire to answer this Lord's Day: (1) What Are You to Remember? (2) How Are You to Remember?

I. What Are You to Remember?

A. Just hours before Jesus was betrayed into the hands of the Jews and was slowly tortured upon a Roman cross, the Lord spent that time in communion with His disciples. The very meals Christ shared with His disciples that evening revealed much about the new age that was about to be brought in through His death and resurrection.

1. The Lord Jesus first ate the Passover of the Old Testament with His disciples and then concluded by eating the Lord's Supper of the New Testament with them. Thus indicating that the age of promise (as represented by the Old Testament Passover) was to be abolished and that the age of fulfillment (as represented by the New Testament Lord's Supper) was to be inaugurated in the one sacrifice to end all sacrifices: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

2. The Passover looked back to Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt through the blood of a lamb smeared on doorposts. The Lord's Supper looks to the Church's deliverance from bondage to sin through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ shed on the cross.

B. We are told in Luke 22:19 that the Lord first took bread, gave thanks for the bread, broke the bread, and gave that bread to His disciples (as they ate and passed it around the table).

1. The Church of Rome teaches that it was not in fact bread that was eaten; it just had the outward appearance of bread. When the Lord declared in Luke 22:19, "This is my body which is given for you", was the bread which Christ took, blessed, broke, gave, and commanded the disciples to eat, miraculously transformed into the literal flesh and blood of Christ by words of consecration (transubstantiation)? Rome declares this is the meaning of Christ's words: "This *IS* my body." The Church of Rome declares that the outward appearance is bread, but that the inward substance truly becomes the body of Christ.

2. As Protestants, we protest against this heresy of Rome. In fact, many Protestants have suffered martyrdom at a fiery stake (Bloody Mary) because they would not confess their faith in this pernicious lie of Rome. How is the bread the body of Christ?

a. The bread is Christ's body figuratively not literally, symbolically not actually. It is

a sign of Christ's body. It is not transformed into Christ's body. The bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper signify and seal the sufferings of Christ (in His broken body and in His shed blood) in paying the penalty of sin for sinners chosen in Christ Jesus.

b. If I were to take a photo of myself and tell you, "This *IS* me", would you understand me to mean that this photo is literally me? Of course not, and yet I said, "This photo *IS* me." What I actually mean is, "This photo is a picture or a representation of me." For how could I be standing there in person before you, and yet be saying that the photo is actually me in person? And yet this is precisely what Rome would have us believe. How could the disciples be eating Christ's actual body when He was sitting with them in His actual body around that table?

c. There are places in the Gospels where the Lord says He is a door (in John 10:9), a vine (in John 15:1), a light (in John 9:5), a way or a road (in John 14:6), or even bread (in John 6:35). Are we to understand that Christ literally transformed Himself into each of these objects? The Lord means that He is symbolically a door, a vine, a light, a way or road, and yes even symbolically bread (as here in Luke 22:19).

d. Perhaps someone may ask, "What difference does it really make whether the disciples ate Christ's actual body and blood or whether they by faith ate and drank that which signifies His body and blood?" The difference is that Rome's view (by way of consequence) undermines the atonement of Christ for elect sinners.

(1) For such a view of Christ's body means that His body was not truly human. It was a hybrid. For an actual human body cannot be in more than one place at the same time. But such must be the case, if Christ was sitting at the table and yet the disciples were eating His body and drinking is blood around that table all at the same time. In fact, if Christ's body and blood are eaten not only around a table at the same time, but around the world at the same time (wherever the Lord's Supper is observed), Christ's body cannot be that of a man. We do not deny that Christ was omnipresent while He ministered upon earth, but He was not omnipresent as to His human nature (or as to His body), but as to His divine nature (which is infinite Spirit).

(2) But here is the significance: if Christ did not have a real human body, He could not be man's mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). And if He could not be man's mediator because He was not actually and fully a man Himself, He could not keep the Law of God perfectly for His Church nor could He suffer as man's representative so as to pay for the sins of His Church (Hebrews 2:14). The false teaching of Rome by consequence leaves us in our sins without the hope of eternal salvation if Jesus is not fully man.

C. Now that we understand what Christ meant by the phrase, "This is my body which is given for you", we are ready to answer the question, What Are You to Remember when Christ says, "This do in remembrance of me"?

1. **You are to remember** the suffering and death of Christ as you eat of the bread and drink of the wine at the Lord's Supper. As the loaf of bread is broken and eaten and as the wine is drunk, you are to remember how the Lord Jesus Christ was voluntarily broken in His suffering and death and how He freely shed His blood for elect sinners.

2. **You are to remember** that it was not only Judas, the Jewish leaders, or Pilate that put Christ upon that cross, but that it was you and me that did so. For it was not the mere wrath of the Jewish leaders that put Christ on that cross, but was the predetermined plan of a righteous and loving God who purchased a chosen bride for Himself that did so (Acts 4:27-28).

3. **You are to remember** that God's holy justice sent Christ to the cross to pay the debt of sin; for sin against God is a debt, which we all incur (Matthew 6:12). Either the debt of sin must be paid by the sinner forever in endless punishment in hell, or the debt of sin must be paid by a mediator (or a substitute) who suffers the equivalent of hell for the sinner ("It is finished"). This Jesus did for His chosen people. It was due to the holy wrath of God that fell upon Jesus that led Him to cry out from that cross, "My God, my God,

why hast thou forsaken me?”

4. **You are to remember** as you eat of the bread and drink of the wine that you not only need Jesus for your righteousness in justifying you, but you also need Christ daily in sanctifying you—to crucify the remnants of corruption in your hearts and to make you more and more like Christ. You need the Lord Jesus Christ every day to grant to you repentance and a godly sorrow for your sin and a renewed faith in Him that you might live for Him in the midst of suffering, pain, heartache, afflictions, and persecution in this life. Jesus reminds you in that holy meal, “Without me, you can do nothing.” Just as you need physical food to sustain your bodies, so you need spiritual food for your souls. Jesus Christ is the food and the drink for your souls which is represented in the bread and the wine which you eat and drink in the Lord’s Supper.

5. Finally, **you are to remember** as you eat of the bread and drink of the wine, that Jesus Christ did not remain upon that cross or lie forever in that tomb. For He was gloriously raised from the dead, proving by His empty tomb that His payment for the guilt and penalty of sin was fully received by God, so that the sinner who receives Christ alone for His eternal salvation will never pay that debt in hell. Christ’s resurrection guarantees eternal life in the glories of heaven for His bride, where all suffering, death, misery, sin, and temptation will be forever removed, and where joy, peace, contentment, and holiness will forever reign as we commune with God, the elect angels, and saints from all ages.

II. How Are You to Remember Jesus Christ?

A. You are to remember the sufferings and death of Christ by due preparation in your own hearts, thoughts, and worship.

1. Dear ones, it is to profane (and to make common or ordinary) the suffering and death of Christ when you approach that holy meal without due preparation. You cannot truly remember the Lord at the communion table by simply showing up to eat of the bread and drink of the wine. If you do not prepare yourself to come to the communion table, Paul declares that you will eat and drink God’s judgment upon yourself rather than God’s blessing (1 Corinthians 11:27-30).

2. Dear ones, have your lives become so consumed by your own pleasures and by your own work that you have left Christ, your first love? Did you begin well the race as a Christian, but have you been overtaken in some sin, or have you been sidetracked by family, friends, work, riches, or your own comforts from following your Savior with a steadfast and sincere faith? Has persecution for your faith cooled your zeal for the Lord so that you have placed Christ into a safe corner of your life where He will not demand too much of you?

3. Jesus Christ is not a part of the Christian’s life. Jesus Christ is the Christian’s life (Philippians 1:21). What or who is your life? If Christ is not your life, what have you put in His place? Your husband, wife, children, grandchildren, health, wealth, education, or job? These are gifts from God, but it is idolatry to love and enjoy the gift more than the Giver. Anything you put in the place of Christ cannot be a gain to you, for you will leave it here when you die. Only Jesus can be a gain for you when you die; for only He has conquered death and has gone to prepare a place for you in heaven. Thus, make all due preparation, repent of all sin that has entangled you, seek His forgiveness, and renew your obedience to Jesus.

B. Finally, you are to remember the sufferings and death of Christ by an inward communion with Him.

1. What you do in eating the bread and drinking the wine at the Lord’s Supper is not a mere memorial of Christ’s suffering and death. For your outward eating and drinking speaks of your inward eating and drinking by faith in laying hold of Christ and His forgiveness, Christ and His love, Christ and His perseverance, and Christ and His suffering and persecution. By your eating and drinking you remember that you are united to Christ by faith and have communion with Him in the blessings, trials, afflictions and persecutions of this life. Though Christ is bodily in heaven, He is truly with you spiritually.

2. Protestants do believe in the real presence of Christ with us as we eat of the bread and drink of the wine—His divine presence, not His human or bodily presence. You remember your Savior by a real spiritual communion which you enjoy with Him. He is nearer to you than the bread that you eat and the wine that you drink.

3. Your eating the bread and drinking the wine of the Lord's Supper, reminds you that you cannot enjoy Christ, His forgiveness, His righteousness, His joy, His peace, His contentment, nor His heaven unless you do more than simply behold Him and acknowledge certain facts about Him. You must receive Him, embrace Him, eat of Him and drink of Him by faith or you will certainly perish in your sin.

4. You could be starving to death or perishing in thirst while looking at a table in front of you that is filled with nourishing food and satisfying drink. It will do you no good as long as you simply acknowledge that food and drink is on the table before you. It will do you no good as long as you simply confess that it will do you good if you were to eat and drink. It will only keep you from perishing if you actually eat and drink. So it is with the Lord Jesus. He will do you no good if you merely look upon Him or merely confess He is able to save you from your sin. He will only rescue you from perishing in hell, if you by faith eat and drink of Him.

5. Have you placed your faith in that which you can see and touch in this world (whether in man or in riches)? Nothing in this world can save your soul from eternal punishment in hell. Only Jesus Christ can do that. He calls you to come to Him. He promises you His righteousness, the forgiveness of all your sin, and everlasting life (Revelation 22:17).

Copyright 2018 Greg L. Price.