

Honoring His Memory

“Memories” or “In Remembrance”

In what manner do we remember the Lord? In what way do we hold His memory and honor all that has touched us in His living and His dying? When someone who we love that has greatly affected us with the Life of Jesus dies or is physically removed from us, how do we remember that person? I know these questions may sound a bit strange, yet I believe they are questions that reach into the very core of our walk in Christ.

How do we deal with the death of our Lord? In what way do we comprehend the resurrection? After a godly man or woman dies one may feel constrained to write a book that commemorates the greatness of their life and records their words and works so that future generations might remember and be inspired. Another may give of their resources and time to tell others about the great things accomplished through this person. Someone else may simply and quietly hold a deep reverence and appreciation within for what the person had meant to them. Although all these things may seem noble ways to honor the person that has died, we must first consider; how did that person want to be remembered? It would be greater love to honor their desires than to only be aware of our own estimation of how their legacy should be held and continued through us.

Jesus Shares His Heart

“With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer” (Lk. 22:15)

We may not have thought about it in this way, but Jesus had a special request concerning the way He wanted to be remembered after His death (Mat. 22:14-20). Before Jesus suffered and gave Himself on the Cross, He gathered near to Himself those that were His closest friends and began to share with them out from His deep desire. Only Jesus knew that He was about to die and that this was the last time He was going to intimately gather with His friends. Beyond teaching and instructing disciples, Jesus began to open up His heart with those who loved Him, and share from His own personal needs. These words held great importance to the heart of Jesus.

The external, physical Jesus that the disciples had walked with was going to leave them. Even those closest to Jesus would never be with Him in the same way again. This Jesus was going away. A radical change in their daily lives was about to come with His death. Jesus wanted to prepare them to respond to this change according to His desire and eternal purpose. Jesus wanted them to be with Him and choose to remember Him according to what was in His heart. In a very practical sense, we will look at some of the last words that came from a man that was about to be crucified. This is what He desired to communicate before He was taken from them. His words hold great significance for they reveal the way in which Jesus desired to relate with us after His death. Every action and instruction had meaning to the Lord and represented the new relationship that was to come after His death.

Not A Walk Down Memory Lane

Before we discuss what Jesus did say, let us consider what He did NOT say. In these final words at the Passover meal, Jesus did not mention the externals of His earthly ministry and walk with them. The last supper was not a walk down memory lane! What if this final gathering consisted of Jesus reminiscing with His friends about the loaves and fishes, or when He healed the sick and raised the dead? Had the disciples known this was their last time together, maybe they would have fondly remembered the tender moments when Jesus showed them His love and care. If their relationship with Him was about to end, then the best they could do was think back on what they had with Him in “the good old days”. But instead, the Lord’s emphasis was concerning that which was to come. To lose someone we love can be devastating, but the Lord didn’t want His disciples to be devastated but to be prepared for what was coming.

We cannot live off of memories, and Jesus in His last words spoke of partaking of life. We are not sustained by the deeds and words of a great man that is now dead. We are sustained by the life that is in us. Jesus knew that the same life that was about to leave them would soon be in them, but first He must die. Jesus understood that He as a corn of wheat had to become bruised and enter into death in order for the fulfillment of this communion to take place in His kingdom. At this time Jesus was trying to communicate the wonder of what was going to happen through His death, burial and resurrection.

Honoring His Request

*“Take and eat for this is my body which is broken for you, do this in remembrance of Me. This cup is the new relationship in my blood, drink this in remembrance of Me”
(I Cor. 11:24-25).*

“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood you have no life in you. Whosoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in Me and I in him” (Jn. 6:53-56).

Jesus’ requested that His friends would remember Him by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. This was His DESIRE. This is what Jesus asked those who sincerely loved Him to do when they remembered Him, for in this way alone could they truly honor His purpose in dying. The thing of utmost importance to Jesus was that a new covenant relationship was going to happen through His death that would bring them into living oneness with Himself and one another. He was about to die in order to bring them into eternal life. This eternal life was not a ticket to heaven after they died, but a living union with the Son both now and forever. For His disciples to partake of this union would require eating and drinking.

Those with Him at that Passover probably did not understand what Jesus was asking them to do or what was in His heart concerning the bread and the wine. But Jesus was seeing

His Bride, He was seeing His Body and this New Man that would be raised up in Him. Jesus knew that He was about to die to bring this forth, and in His heart during this final Passover meal Jesus was communing over what He loved. They would become His Body filled with His Life, but in His heart He was seeing them in Himself and preparing Himself to die. His desire was toward His Bride, the Body of His Resurrection. He knew why He was dying and with great desire longed for the day that He would commune with us in oneness forever. This moment was for the heart of Jesus, and an opportunity for Him to share His desire before He died. *“And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (Lk. 22:15-16).*

In reference to Jesus’ focus on eating at the final Passover meal some may have thought, “Jesus! This is no time to be thinking about eating and drinking! There are much greater issues at hand for the Son of man is about to be handed over to wicked men and crucified. Now is the time to fast.” But the time to fast is not while the bridegroom is still with them (Mt. 9:14-15). We must fast partaking of that which is not Christ and partake of the Lord while the table is spread before us.

The heart of the Lord desires the communion that can only come through oneness. For that relationship to come forth death was necessary, and not just death but the partaking of that death on our part. We receive the benefits of that death at salvation, but we partake of the fulfillment of that death as we begin to relate to Christ in oneness. Jesus said “I live by every word my Father speaks”. He has made Himself consumable and in a form that can now become our life. It is no longer two walking together, but a living union.

Jesus Became Edible

“As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eats of this bread shall live forever” (Jn. 6:57-58).

Jesus came and died to give us LIFE. He didn’t come to give us correct doctrines, bring us a new religion, or leave us with a wonderful story to remember. He came to give us a Life that gets inside of us! This requires eating and drinking. Truly our communion is in one Life that we all share. Truly our fellowship is in the Father and the Son. We must partake of His death in a way that it gets IN us! The preaching of Christ and Him Crucified is powerful but impotent if not received internally.

Jesus as the Bread of Life had to become broken so that we could partake of Him. Jesus said that He was the Bread that came down from heaven that would fill us with eternal life. God sent the Bread of Life down from Heaven so that He could be eaten and internally digested as life in man! When Jesus spoke to His disciples He told them to allow these words to sink deep down into their ears. He was concerned that what He was speaking was getting inside of them. He did not want them just to hear and understand His words, but to partake of them and allow His words to abide in them. Jesus told them

that His words were not doctrines or fleshly, but that they were spiritual and living (Jn. 6:63). Jesus also said that His words would profit us nothing if we did not become quickened by them (Jn. 6:63). Jesus said it was a living Father that had sent Him, and therefore He was able to live by the Father Himself. In the same way we have a LIVING Jesus, not just a doctrine, and we are able to eat Him and live by Him (Jn. 6:57). God told Jeremiah and Ezekiel that they needed to eat the book/scroll. What they were preaching needed to first be in them.

The disciples had already performed miracles, studied Jesus' teachings, gone on missionary trips, prayed and ministered to Jesus in many ways; but none of them had yet ingested His Life. Jesus had once told them and all those who desired to be his disciples, *"Truly I say to you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood you have no life in you."* Many of those who were following Jesus at that time became offended and turned back when He told them this (Jn.6:61,66). This requirement related to the Life of their ministry and not the deeds of their service, or the depth of their teaching. Jesus emphasized the need for partaking of His Life above all else.

Preparation For The Greater Relationship

Jesus was preparing His disciples for the change that was to come. They would think his death to be tragic and a most horrible end to a wonderful experience with the greatest man that ever lived. With deep care, knowing their frame and concerns, Jesus spoke to them that He would be more than a memory to them for He would be life IN them.

"I will not leave you comfortless (orphans): I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but you see me: because I live, you shall live also. At that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you are in me and I am in you" (Jn. 14:18-20). Once again, Jesus speaks about a new and internal relationship wherein we would dwell IN Him and He would dwell IN us. All that they had known in their walk "together" as Master and disciple would not be worthy to be compared to having His Life IN them! I am sure at the time of the final Passover meal they could not have imagined what could be better than Peter hearing the words of eternal life come from Jesus' lips, or John resting on His bosom close to His heart. The Lord was preparing them. What once was among them would now be in them. This Man Who was their example of Life would be Life in them. Student and teacher would become vessel and treasure. What were merely words and teachings about correct attitudes would become His nature in them. Disciples will become vessels of the Master's care to others. These learners will become live-ers. In essence, Jesus began to teach how they would relate to Him in the resurrection relationship that would come after His death.

It can be hard to grasp something better than walking with the Lord, but the Spirit was sent to awaken us to the greater relationship that is now ours in Christ. Hearts became troubled and fearful with the news that "Jesus has died and is gone". The disciples felt afraid, alone and overcome with the grief that He was gone. But that is the time they needed to remember the words that Jesus had spoken to prepare them for what was to

come in John 14:18-20. God's perfect love did not abandon them, but gave Himself unto death so that they could be together in an eternal way that would last forever. They would not be able to understand this until the Holy Spirit would come and reveal to them and in them the beauty of the resurrection.

The Jesus Of The Flesh Must Die

There comes a time in our walk with the Lord when our hearts must allow the Jesus of the flesh to die. We must become open to know Christ in a spiritual way that can exist apart from the external, such as miraculous touches and outward proofs. The manna that fell from heaven to feed us in the wilderness must become hidden manna in our hearts as we come to know Christ as Life. This kind of knowing can only exist through the finished work of His Cross that has united us into His death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:4). This time of transition can be dark and confusing. The Spirit of God was sent from above to comfort us during this time of transition, for the name given to the Holy Spirit in the scriptures that refer to His ministry to us during this process is "The Comforter" (Jn. 14:16). He will help awaken us to the new relationship we have in Christ. It will bring us comfort in the midst of our mourning to see by the Spirit the resurrected Christ and our union into Him. The Comforter's desire is to teach us of the Christ Who now fills the Body of His resurrection – US! A death had to have happened for this new relationship to take place. And even so in our own lives, the old way of relating to Jesus must come to an end so that the new relationship can begin!

Death is scary and confusing. All that was before is gone, and what lies ahead is unknown. Jesus told us not to be afraid, and to not allow our hearts to be troubled because He has prepared a place for us in Himself to now dwell (Jn. 14:1-2). We are no longer those who learn about Jesus and know Him from a position of being separate from Him. Now we will know Him from the position of oneness. We will abide in Him and He will abide in us (Jn. 15:4). This new relationship requires living by Jesus and not just remembering what He said and did a long time ago. This new relationship is much better and more fulfilling than anything that came before.

Mary Magdalene was an example of a believer that needed to go through this transition. She responded to the death of her Lord with great love and yet little understanding. She loved Jesus very much and didn't know how to live without Him. She wanted to be with her Lord always, and when He died she had no where to go. How would she live in a world that Jesus was not in? How could she exist apart from Him? The scripture holds clues that were meant to help Mary in her response to the Lord's death. The first clue was when the women came to anoint the dead Body of Jesus for burial (Lk. 24:1-6). An angel of the Lord, sitting by His empty tomb, greeted them by asking, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here for He is risen." These women were seeking to honor a dead Jesus when it was a living Jesus they should have sought. Another clue was again on Easter morning when Mary encountered the resurrected Christ thinking He was the gardener (Jn. 20:14-17). He told her not to cleave to Him in that form, for He must ascend to His Father and her Father! She was instructed not to hold on to Him in the earth

any longer but to wait until He ascended and she could know Him in that place. To be with the Lord in resurrection means a living union, not anointing a dead corpse or even cleaving to a Person Who is still external to you.

Some may wish they lived during the time that Jesus walked with His disciples so they could have been there to see it all and know Him more intimately. Yet there is a greater and deeper knowing of the Eternal Christ that can only come through oneness. External experiences and good memories cannot nourish the inner man. God did not create us to be sustained by a thought-life about Jesus. God created us to be inhabited by His Son (Is. 45:18). The most intimate way that any human being could know God is for the Father to reveal His Son in them (Gal. 1:15-16).

Sweet Memories or The Savor of Christ

To truly experience God's Lamb nature through a person should deeply affect us. Another person expressing God's love in contrast to our own selfishness can melt us. This contrast may also make us feel like the only way we could relate to that person is from a distance through adoration alone. It would be easy to imagine the disciples constantly seeing the difference between their reactions and how Jesus would respond. He loved His enemies while they could hardly get along with each other. They knew they were not like Him and that there was no one like Him. He was the only light in the whole world. He was the only man who could share pure love selflessly. Possibly in their minds the best anyone could do was love and adore this amazing individual. And yet this is not the plan of God. If this were the case, then once Jesus was crucified Satan would have snuffed out the only light in the world and there would be no hope for light ever again. This dark universe does not need memories of a righteous man; it needs light and life. Christ must continue in the earth. His memory must take us to the communion table where we can become vessels that bear that same light of Nature.

Some people worship pictures and statues of those that once lived. Saints that have gone before us have been elevated to such a far place that many would never consider themselves able to let the same Jesus live through them. Yet it would break the heart of any true man or woman of God if the only continuation that remained after their death were people's admiration. It would likewise bring them great sorrow if their legacy consisted of books filled with thoughts and buildings full of unchanged people. Christ expressed a desire for none of this. His desire was for a Body full of His Life. He wanted to commune in oneness of Life and Nature with those who would choose to eat His flesh and drink His Blood. Thinking back on the Lamb of God dying on the Cross may stir deep emotions and provoke many thoughts, but ultimately it must bring forth a holy inward determination to partake of and be filled with that same Lamb. The Scriptures declare that we can bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. We too can be a sweet savor of Christ to the Father if we choose to partake of this same Lamb and be conformed to His image.

Our Lord's memorial is not stone, wood, or stained glass... it is His living savor flowing

out of His Bride. His memory is the continuation of His life in us! We have been made partakers of this Divine Nature that we love so much! Why be satisfied to remember what you can now be filled with? Jesus said I have come to give you so much life that it will pour out of you (Jn. 7:38)! When we remember the Lamb we must also remember that we are one spirit with Him now (I Cor. 6:17)!

The Death Must Be Eaten

“In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb... And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening... And they shall eat the flesh in that night” (Ex. 12:3,6,8).

That which was sacrificed had to be eaten. It was not enough just for the Lamb to be slain and offered up to God. It was not enough for the Old Testament Passover lambs to be killed, prepared, laid on the fire and have their blood sprinkled. God instructed His people to eat the lamb. For us, this simply means that it is not enough for Jesus just to have died, He must also be eaten. God's desire was that they would consume His Lamb and become filled with His life. For the Sacrifice to have effect in our lives requires the application and consumption of His death. Hearing about His death is not enough and remembering His death is not enough. The application of His death must go deeper than the acknowledgement and belief that a death happened for we must partake of it. This death must be applied. His death was unto consumption. The Word of the Cross, the preaching of Christ and Him Crucified, and every word in the Bible must be embraced in spirit with active faith or they will profit us nothing (Heb.4:2). To partake simply means that what we hear and what is laid before us must get inside of us, and, like good ground, be able to remain inside and become fruitful.

This Lamb is now our portion, our heritage, and what God has set apart from the foundation of the world for those that love Him (I Cor. 2:9)! We can freely come to the table knowing that in His heart He was dying so that we could come and eat. We cannot expect the nature of the Lamb to work in us until we eat the Lamb and get Him on the inside. There is no condemnation in this for we all must pull up to the table before we have become fruitful. The prodigal son experienced this, and so does everyone who has ever brought forth Christ. Come freely for Jesus bids us to come and dine (Jn. 21:12/Is 55:1-2)! And notice in John 21:12 it is the resurrected Christ that is bidding them to come and dine! All things are now ready and there is a feast for all those who will come and know Christ in union. The fruit of Christ the True Vine must fill the branch of His Body. We must boldly press into the communion table until Christ is formed in us.

To look at it from Christ's point of view as the Sacrifice we can see the depth of the offering of Himself. Jesus the Lamb of God gave Himself not just unto death, but unto consumption. First He lost His life as He had known it on the cross in death. Then, in the consumption, His life is then found in others. He therefore loses His identity as the only Begotten of the Father to be found in His new Body by those who have consumed Him. In this form He is the First Born among many brethren. He is completely and utterly

poured out in all conceivable areas. Even so, as we choose to conform to the Lamb we can understand that His death will work in us so that Life can be in others (2 Cor. 4:10-12). The increase of Christ in others will be greater than any recognition that we chose to be vessels of the dying of the Lord Jesus.

Our Response

Each one of us must deal with our own lack and how we relate to the resurrected Lord. This can be difficult because of our sense of shame and regret over past failure. We can carry memories of past failure like a poison that prohibits new life. If we saw the heart of Jesus we would be free from that condemnation and ready to embrace Him in union forever.

Paul said, "Follow me while I follow Jesus". The example of Christ in others is not meant to discourage us, but to draw us to partake of that same Jesus. A picture of two brothers might help to illustrate the Lord's heart for us in this way. The older brother was a man who had lived his life in a manner that constantly demonstrated the Lamb to others. Although these brothers were very close, much of the time during this older brother's life the younger brother struggled with revenge, hatred and unforgiveness. But as the older brother was dying he asked the younger brother to continue on his ministry to others. This man's desire was not just for his brother to keep doing the works of the ministry for him, but to keep the flow of Jesus' love continuing to people that needed life and healing. He wanted his brother to remember his life by continuing to share Jesus in the same way that he did. His concern was that the people who needed love and care would continue to be touched by Jesus after he was gone. He saw his younger brother as a vessel who could continue that care in the earth. It was in this same heart and mind that Jesus spoke to those He had been with for three and a half years. These were men who had denied him, not understood him, and acted and spoke from another spirit. Jesus knew that they yet would all scatter when He was crucified for them, and still He gathers them to Himself and asks them to eat. Looking at them right before His departure He said, "Do THIS in remembrance of me". Don't try to bring back these days of discipleship. Don't remember your sin and failures before this time. Do THIS when you want to truly remember me and these days the way I want you to... eat my flesh and drink my blood. Partake of the Spirit that you experienced through me all those days. You remember the days we were together, but I ask you to remember those days by allowing that same nature to now be in you." In this same way the older brother was not just a lingering memory to the younger brother, but the constant example of the true Jesus that lives. What once was just his example would soon become his essence too when this man responded to the Lamb's invitation to "come, eat, and do THIS in remembrance of me." God's heart NEVER focuses on our failures above His Lamb. The Lamb was broken for us because He loved us and wanted us to become one with Himself. His Cross dealt with past failures and all memories of past failures that would cause us to identify anywhere else except in Him.

At such a time we must forget our failures and remember that His heart wants us to come to Him and receive Life. The focus is no longer self-condemnation or regret over past attitudes that could have been better. It is time to allow all that failure to cause us to turn

to Jesus in this way. He died not just to forgive our failures, but also to give us the bright future of being vessels of His Life. Every little contrast of our flesh with the Lamb, every shining example of the mind of Christ in others, every cruel failure of the will of the flesh was meant to lead all men to one end... the realization that we need another life. God did not purpose our seasons of failure as a snare unto condemnation, but as part of His grand scheme to lead us to the communion of His Lamb (Rom. 7:25). Jesus came not to condemn us but to justify us unto partaking of His Life (Jn. 3:17).

His Memorial

“There came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on Jesus’ head.” “She has done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body for burial,” “Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached through the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken for a memorial of her”

(Mk. 12: 3,8-9). (Jn. 12:20-3).

Mary came to minister to Jesus just days before He died. She came not with words, but with something more precious... a treasure in an earthen vessel. She broke her vessel and allowed what was inside to cover her Lord. The savor of her ministry filled the house of Simon the Leper. The Lord was moved deep within by what Mary did. She had touched the eternal purpose of His heart and was able to be with Him in a way that helped prepare the Sacrifice for His altar.

The savor of her ministry would reach further than Simon the Leper, for her memorial would cover over the whole world. Wherever this gospel is preached there is the living memorial of the Bride and Body of Christ. This memorial is not just preaching but broken vessels that pour out the very precious life of Jesus that is in them. They do more than speak His words, they manifest the very spirit of His Life and bear the Nature of His death. They are the fulfillment of Jesus’ request to eat His flesh and drink His blood. They bear not just His memory but His image. They represent not just His doctrine but the Nature of Him from Whom the doctrine came. This true memorial brings to us and to the world Jesus Christ Himself. His Life will continue through us from generation to generation. “Christ in you” is the hope of glory that Paul preached to the Colossians and every church he ministered to.

Our Lord’s memory is carried through the ongoing spirit of the Lamb in the earth. With desire and intimacy Jesus asked us not just to represent Him, but to “be Him” in the earth after He leaves. We are to continue His nature and carry His heart to others. We are to be light in this dark place and salt in this corrupting world. His Bride will show others Who Jesus really is, not just in word, but in manifestation of His fragrant Life. His tender care for others can continue through her. She will be His vehicle and will give Him the ability to continue to minister and pour out His Life to others after He is gone. He will have a

Body to carry forth His Life. His heart longed for this. From the foundation of the world this was in His desire, for from the foundation of the world the Lamb was slain.

What a sweet memorial, a bride that has the life of her husband! Jesus' heart longs for us to know Him in this way. Our hearts long to honor Him in the way that would really bless Him. May the Holy Spirit, even the Comforter Himself, minister to our hearts concerning these things. ***