

5 Days to Calvary: Holy Week Devotions

Thursday

Nameless But Not Known Less

The event we refer to as The Lord's Supper is a significant part of Christianity. Every month millions of people around the world partake, in different ways, of the body and blood of Jesus. From Middle Eastern Christians secretly gathering in Muslim nations to take communion to the West African nation of Togo where "taking the cup" means drinking out of a hollow gourd under a thatched roof, around the world millions of people engage in this sacred and ancient mark of Christian worship.¹

On Thursday of Holy Week, the tradition finds Jesus and His disciples making plans to eat the Passover meal. And it would be at this meal the Lord would reveal the incredible truth of the New Covenant: His body broken in place of all those who had come short of the glory of God and His blood poured out for the forgiveness of sin and reconciliation between humanity and Divinity. When Jesus wanted to show His followers the significance of the Cross, He didn't take them to a classroom, He met them at a table. There is a beautiful revelation in this location, as God isn't just interested in developing a more informed people, but He is deeply committed to forming people who walk in intimate fellowship with Him.

Every table Jesus sits at becomes His table, but at the beginning of the story this wasn't Jesus' table to begin with. Coming into this passage there is a curious expression in the Greek language worth being aware of. Jesus says, "Go into the city to a *certain man* and say to him, ...I will keep the Passover at your house" (Matt. 26:18). The expression "certain man" is *deina* in Greek. The lexicon says this word refers to a person "whose name is of no importance to mention." This seems odd because it was this person's table the Lord would sit at to explain how God was changing everything! It seems as if the owner of the table would be able to get his name in the book so he could at least tell his kids, "Don't sell that table, Jesus ate there."

In our modern culture our names are everywhere. As adults most of us carry at least four or five cards in our wallet or purse with our name on them. Social media influencers make a living by making a name for themselves through creating

¹ <https://christianchronicle.org/practices-may-vary-but-churches-around-the-world-share-in-sweet-communion/>

content and branding it. Politicians run for office and often win races based on name recognition. Even wise, old Solomon says a good name is worth more than financial wealth (Prov. 22:1)! But this guy seems to have been left out. Not only is he nameless in the passage but the language suggests it's not an oversight, it's intentional.

Maybe some of us feel for this nameless man. There needs to be a club for the nameless, faceless servants who give what they've got but remain biblically anonymous. Have you given your all and no one knows you? You too can be a card-carrying member of "The Faithful Forgotten."

And you're in good company.

There's the little boy whose lunch was able to feed an entire multitude but whose name seems to have been forgotten by all the Gospel writers (John 6:5-14). There's the servant girl who was wise enough to tell Naaman about a prophet who could cure his leprosy, but not memorable enough to get her own name into the story (2 Ki. 5:2-3). And who could forget the man who made Jesus "marvel" by his faith? Well, Matthew could forget him. His military rank of centurion is included but notably absent is the name of the one who didn't even need the Master to show up in person, but whose understanding of authority provided him faith that amazed even Jesus (Matt. 8:5-13).

But there's another side to this passage as well. After all, Jesus didn't say, "go to any house and see if there's room," He said, "tell *him* The Teacher chose *his* house and is asking to use *his* table." Just because we don't know the man's name doesn't mean Jesus didn't. So even though he was nameless in the Scripture we shouldn't believe he was known less by Jesus. In fact, out of all the houses in the city Jesus specifically chose his home and his table for this incredible meal. Not bad for a guy who didn't get his name in the book.

In 2015, a man walked into a shelter in Tampa, Florida with no home and no identification. Through circumstance and struggle John Helinski had been wandering the streets, homeless for three long years. But after walking into that shelter a case worker decided this nameless man was worth the effort and with the help of a police officer they were able to eventually track down Helinski's social security number and birth certificate. This was definitely a big step, but they wouldn't realize just how big a step it was until later when those identifying documents led them to find out he had a bank account where his social security check had been deposited each month for the last three years, plus interest. And

just like that, when his story was reported by the news outlets, Helinski was in the process of buying his own place. He went from homeless to homeowner because even though no one else knew who he was, that didn't stop the government from faithfully filling up his checking account.²

We can feel anonymous at times and hard seasons can leave us feeling forgotten and broken. But as we take communion during Holy Week maybe we will remember this "certain man" and let his story sink into our souls. Just because we don't know who he was doesn't mean Jesus didn't. And if Jesus knows us, and if He is asking to sit at the table with us, we will find out that He has been faithfully depositing His love into our account knowing that we are going to need it when we start walking in the fullness of our identity in Him.

² Ben Brumfield, *"After living on a cardboard box, Tampa homeless man finds fat bank account," CNN (4-17-15)*