

The Lord's Supper in Biblical Perspective
"Remember is More Than Don't Forget"
I Corinthians 11:23–34
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
November 19, 2017 • Morning Sermon

This is God's Word and it's the truth. I Corinthians 11:23–26 says [23] *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.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Every year I go back for some very pointed study in the Pentateuch which are the first five books of the Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. I particularly study Leviticus and I'm reminded of how grateful I am that I was not called to the ministry in the Old Covenant. The culture of worship is so complex. There are wave offerings, burnt offerings, drink offerings, thank offerings, love offerings, free will offerings, and then there is circumcision, the Passover, the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the tabernacles. Then they all take place on certain days and in certain months.

I'm not sure what the IQ of a priest had to be to lead the people in Old Covenant worship but two things stand paramount in this type of worship. One is that it is complex and two it is highly sensible. Here is what I mean by highly sensible – it makes full use of all the senses. There is the incense, lights, choir, the words spoken where all the senses of taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight are all being utilized and fully at work in the Old Testament. Complex in physicality is obvious.

Now we come to the New Covenant. Here you move from complexity to simplicity. Why? It is because all of that is fulfilled in Jesus. He is our Offerings, our Sacrifice, our Circumcision, our Passover and the complexity is telling us, to save men and women where they get right with God and God gets right in them, is not an easy matter. But there is a Savior and He has won the victory. So New Covenant worship is very simple. You preach the Word, sing the Word, read the Word, pray the Word and confess the Word. It is highly simply and you move from physical domination pointing from the spiritual to the spiritual that proclaims the triumph.

So no longer is there this ornate temple, oh wait, yes there is. It is you. You are the ornate temple made without hands and fashioned by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God dwells within you. When God's people come together they are the temple of the Holy Spirit and they rise up praise to God. Instead of all those sacrifices and offerings, we come not with dead sacrifices but we present ourselves as a living sacrifice which is our spiritual service of worship. So we move to the spiritual yet within this simplicity and in the midst of this spiritual focus of the Word preached, read, sung, prayed and confessed, with its predominant emphasis on hearing and speaking, still God does not leave the physical out because we're whole people.

So He gives two rites, two sacraments to be used in the church based upon the Word and the Spirit of God – baptism and the Lord's Supper. As you build upon this worship it now brings

us into taste, touch, sight, sound/hearing and smell. This is very special and it is to be embraced in a very pointed way. When we come to the Lord's Supper, according to I Corinthians 11, we are supposed to come prepared in a manner worthy. It is not that we are worthy but we come in a manner worthy. Secondly, we come examining ourselves. Thirdly, we are to come proclaiming Him and the Gospel until He comes again but there is another thing we do which is what I will cover in this study. I would like for you to think about this as we prepare to come to the Table.

We remember. Two times in I Corinthians 11:23–26 it tells us to remember. The Bible uses this word *remember* a number of times. Examples of when it is used are when it says for us to remember the poor, remember the Sabbath Day, remember those who led you and then He would raise up Ebenezer monuments and say 'remember what I did to deliver you' from the Old Testament. These are just some of the ways remember is used in the Bible.

So when the Bible uses remember how is it using it? First I'd like to give you two illustrations on how it is not using it. One, is I was standing at the back of the church and one of the pastors on staff asked me I remembered that I was supposed to speak to his Sunday school class that morning. This pastor knows me well enough to know that things escape out of my brain very quickly these days for the older I get the closer I to hiding my own Easter eggs every Easter. Did he ask me if I remembered to check to see if it was in my calendar or to make sure I was going to be there? It was to make sure I was going to be there.

Here is another illustration that perhaps strikes closer to home. Have you ever had your wife say to you men, 'did you remember our anniversary?' If you answer 'oh yeah it's in my calendar, right here' you will probably have a bad year. When she asks this question she is expecting action. Men, you are to do something in light of the fact that this is the anniversary of your marriage and if you don't do something you are in trouble, even if it is in your calendar. She is not asking you that question for you to respond with the date of your anniversary.

Here is a brief definition of how the Bible uses the word remember. Remember, in the Bible, means to have accurate knowledge for the appropriate action to that knowledge. So when the Bible says to remember the poor there are multiple ways to do this. You can give money to help them or help them get a job or help meet a need they have. It is not for you to just say 'Oh yeah I remember the poor, yes they exist.' Remember the Sabbath Day. This means to set this day aside as holy, unique and for the purpose of worship, rest and renewal unto the Lord. Remember the Ebenezer, what He has done for you. The Lord says, 'Bring your children back here and tell them what I did for I am the same yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever.' Remember those who led you for you are to honor, respect and encourage them in the Lord because of the cost of leadership that is faithful. It is not just to know their name, position and or title. We remember by responding.

In I Corinthians 11:23–26 remember is used twice. What is Jesus saying when He is telling us to remember? He is telling us you are to accurately know who He is and respond appropriately to who He is. And He is giving you this Supper to help you. He has designed it to help you remember Him. 'Know Me, what I've done and what that means for your life in response to what I've done for you.' Here is a definition for the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a gift of God to remember the gift from God – the Son of God who was given for the people of God.

God has given us the Lord's Supper for our better. He has designed it to help us grow for it is a means of grace and growth. The Lord's Supper has a number of blessings but the principle one is that you would remember the Gift. Paul calls Jesus the Indescribable Gift in II

Corinthians 9:15. We are coming up to our season of Advent where we remember the Gift of God as His Son comes into this world and He came into the world to give Himself for the people of God. Remember. I want to answer three questions for you before we come to the Table. Let's look back at our text for this study.

I Corinthians 11:23–26 says [23] *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."*

First question is who do we remember? We are supposed to remember Jesus. He brings us back to a singular focus in our Christian life and that's where the Bible always brings us back to. John 5:39 says [39] *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me.* Luke 24:27 says [27] *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he (Jesus) interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

The Word of God points to the preeminence of Christ as our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer to the glory of God. When it points us to Christ we are to remember Him. We have to keep our eyes fixed on Him. The most well-meaning Christians can get distracted and detour themselves by fixing on good things in place of The Thing, which is Jesus. He renews us in the Lord's Supper by recalibrating us back to Jesus. He says 'Remember Me.' He is the Son of God who came into this world to save us from our sins.

The second question is, how do we remember? We remember by two distinct, linear actions or acts. Act one is you take the bread and eat it in remembrance of Him. You are not to venerate the bread or idolize the bread or worship it or treat it with superstition nor with superficiality but you just take it and eat it. The second act that follows the first act is you are to take the cup and drink it. You are not to venerate the cup or idolize it or worship it or treat it with superstition nor with superficiality but you just take it and drink it.

There is another whole view of the Lord's Supper that leads to an activity where it becomes one action. This is where you take the bread and dip it into the cup so that you take the bread and wine together but that is one action. That is known as Intinction and it is another aspect of theology of the Lord's Supper but from the Reformation we said we would do the Lord's Supper the way He said to do it. He said to do the bread first and then the cup and they are two distinct actions. He took the bread and then took the cup and He said to do this in remembrance of Him.

The third question is, what do we remember? He says this is My body which is given for you. We are fully aware that Jesus in His glorified body is at the right hand of the Father in heaven and there is no re-sacrifice of Christ so this is obviously, spiritually partaking of Christ and remembering when we eat His body given for us. Put yourself back at that moment in the Upper Room. Here is Jesus, the Son of God having come in the flesh and 33 years before this Jesus was the Son of God in glory and He had no body. For all eternity He was a Spirit. Then Jesus humbled Himself by taking upon Himself a body. Jesus' humility was not subtracting from His deity but His humility was adding humanity. Philippians 2:8 says [8] *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

As He is at that Table in the Upper Room He is telling them that this body (His body) is now being assigned to represent in this meal, through which you spiritually partake of Him, His

body which is given for you. The body Jesus took to go to the cross to give in your place is bearing your sin and that is what you are to remember. Secondly, this cup is the covenant in His blood shed for you. So as you drink the cup you are drinking the benefits and dynamics of Christ's shed blood. His blood was given and shed for you and this is what you are to remember as you drink the cup.

I want to affirm this to you by pointing you to a passage of Scripture. There are many I could point to but I just want to show you this one in Hebrews. Hebrews 2:12–15 says [12] saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." [13] And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me." (God has given Him a people (children) and what does He do?)

[14] Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

So Jesus takes a body and that body is given for us in our place as He goes to a cross to die. He does not die a martyr's death or a model death but an atoning death. He gives Himself in that body on that cross to bear the judgment of the Father upon His body that bore our sins so that, that judgment would not fall upon us. And when He redeems and delivers us from our sin then He defeats death itself and has won the victory but it could not have been done without the body. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead (I Corinthians 15:21).

Let's look at one more passage in Hebrews. Remember that Old Covenant worship? It was physically pointing to a spiritual need but it could not accomplish what needed to be done.

Hebrews 10:4–7 says [4] For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. [5] Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; [6] in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. [7] Then I said, 'Behold, **I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.**'"

He came to do the Father's will by coming in the body that the Father prepared for Him. So when you take and eat, this is My body given for you and from that body He poured forth His blood. And His life blood declares that He has satisfied the judgment of God and the wages of sin. He has paid for our physical, eternal and spiritual death and redeemed us from death unto life. So you take that body, that bread and remember the Lord, His body, and take it into your mouth to eat it, masticate it, taste it, swallow it, ingest it, digest it with your eyes fixed on Jesus. Then open the mouth of your soul to eat of all His benefits, who fills you with the knowledge that in His body He took away your sins and with His blood you are forgiven – all of your sins for all of eternity. Open the mouth of your soul as you taste and digest for He will fill you to overflowing.

Remember Me – My body given for you and My blood shed for you.

Romans 8:31–34 says [31] What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. And now for us [1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, prepare our hearts and souls as we come to this Table. Thank You for knowing we are children that are frail and You have given us something physical so that by Your Word and Your Spirit we may feast spiritually upon the benefits of our Savior – the body He gave for us, the blood He shed for us – and it is in Him that we are right with God. As Your people now take, eat and take, drink may what we do physically bring them to open their soul and feast on Jesus. Taste and see He is good for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

THE LORD'S SUPPER—REMEMBER

The Lord's Supper is a gift of God—to "Remember" the Gift from God—the Son of God, who was given for the People of God."

WHO?

HOW?

WHAT?