

# In Remembrance of Me

## 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

We remember this night as the night Jesus was betrayed; and the words of the song we've been making our way through speak very clearly about what the Lord's command to "Do this in remembrance of me" are all about.

"He is present here as then... he comes to us again... O Lord, help us to see that you are here as then..."

It seems that these words have as much to do with the present as they do the past. And then there's another song which has the words, "This is the feast of victory for our God... a foretaste of the feast to come". Then we find that we're taken into the future... the Easter victory and the eternal feast at God's table which awaits us with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven.

So what is this "Do this in remembrance me"? What does "Do this in remembrance of me" mean? Why does Jesus say this?

Well, my friends, these puzzling words bring to us God's amazing revelation of the past, His presence in the present, and the perfect promise for the future for us. To eat and drink in remembrance of Jesus involves more than remembering the events of the night that he was betrayed. It involves more than us using our mental abilities to simply remember facts, and more than our emotions as we filter our life experiences through selective memory.

These words of Jesus to

"Take and eat... my body. Take and drink my blood... Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me"

bring about an amazing reality for us tonight. The Lord's Supper is, in so many ways, the Easter event happening in our lives. And to help us understand this, we turn to the Old Testament Passover meal. You may remember that the first Passover was instituted by God as his final act of saving Israel, of freeing Israel from the bondage of Egyptian slavery. On the night of the first Passover, God would pass through Egypt, and strike down every first-born Egyptian, and pass judgment on the Egyptian gods. But the Israelites were to eat the Passover with their cloaks tucked into their belts and their sandals on their feet and their staffs in their hands, ready for freedom. And what's more they were to remember this feast in future generations. "This is a day of remembrance to you" (Exodus 12:14), God says. But what does this mean?

This future remembering involved not just mental abilities, but a current and new participation in God's saving grace every time it was celebrated in the future. In the Passover liturgy, a young person would ask the head of the family, "What does this Passover mean?" And the answer would come, "With a mighty hand, the Lord brought us out of Egypt." (Deut 26:8) The Lord brought us. And so future generations would participate in God's passover gift of freedom. The past became the present. And the Passover became the time to both proclaim the saving grace of God and expect the coming Messiah, and so it was common practice to leave the door open because the Messiah might just come in. Past, present and future. God's timeless salvation and freedom. God in Jesus enters the world, enters our lives.

I'm glad we leave the door open tonight. Not because I expect Jesus will necessarily to walk through it tonight; but because you and I have walked through it to come to this amazing meal... the Lord's Supper. For here tonight, we have the events of the last passover meal celebrated according to God's will; the institution of the Lord's Supper; the new covenant in Jesus' blood, and all these come to us in the present. Here, we gather with Christ at his table to be served. Here God comes to give us the forgiveness and salvation won for us on Good Friday. Here God comes to give us the new life, the freedom from death won for us on Easter morning. Here God comes to give us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet which awaits. And here, in our communal life of faith, we proclaim the Lord's death as God's saving gift for all people, for all time.

And none of this is done through our own mental or emotional abilities (which I get more and more anxious about sometimes as I grow older), but it is done through the promise of Christ in the past, which he brings to us right now: "This is my body given for you... this is my blood shed for you." Here is the Easter story, the Gospel in action, and received by us who in faith believe these promises are for us.

It is on this night that we remember the disciples who slept when our Lord prayed. It is on this night that we remember the disciples who fled when Jesus was arrested. It is on this night that we remember the disciple Peter's denial of Christ. It is on this night that we remember that we are guilty too. We strip the altar bare. But it is also on this night that we remember the promise of salvation given to the same disciples before our Lord's suffering and death... that the Easter dawn is ahead, and that, as we gather at the table, resurrection is ours, too. That's the Gospel. *And* it's for you and everyone, for us to take and share with.

Come then to the Gospel in action as you hear Jesus speaking to you. Come to the Gospel in action as you see, touch and taste Christ for you. Come to where time is timeless, where the boundaries of heaven and earth overlap. Where we join with the angels and archangels and with the saints on earth and the saints already in heaven. Come and proclaim the Lord's death until he comes for you. Come! participate in God's salvation for you. Take and eat! Take and drink! Jesus says, "This is my body given for you. This is my blood shed for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Amen.

*Video of the service including the above sermon: <https://youtu.be/2KFwoLiuDeM>*