

A Meal to Remember - Matthew 26:17-30

Introduction: Some of you can remember meals you have had that stick in your mind. It may be a homecoming meal, a holiday meal, or a family reunion where great cooks collaborate to grace a table with the finest of culinary delights. Whatever the occasion, there are just some meals that stick in your mind.

I can remember some particular meals at my Maw Maw's house, and at Elaine's Mom's house. But probably the meal I remember the most was not at anybody's house – it was our first breakfast together as husband and wife. There we were, newlyweds getting up and going to breakfast at the Holiday Inn, and ordering our first breakfast together. When the waitress asked Elaine how she wanted her eggs, she said, “*Well, I dunno...kinda runny I guess!*” I wanted to crawl under the table. The point is, thinking of certain meals brings back memories and emotions.

When we think of the Lord's Supper, we don't think of it as a meal in the sense of having an appetizer, a main course, and a dessert and a drink. This meal is different in that it is truly meant to be a memorable meal. And when we partake of it, it should stir emotions in us and cause us to remember some things. Jesus told His disciples to partake of this supper in remembrance of Him and what He would do for them. They had no idea that this meal would later mean so much to them. It was not until after Jesus was crucified and resurrected that they would know the full impact of this meal they observed with Jesus before His crucifixion.

The meal still has meaning for Christians today. First, it is a meal that only Christians are to partake of. Anyone who has not accepted Christ as their Savior should not partake of this meal. That is not meant to be rude or non-inclusive; it's just that the elements don't mean anything to people who are not Christians because they represent Christ. I think this is something that needs saying from time to time.

It has nothing to do with a person's denomination or church membership; it just matters whether or not you have accepted Jesus as your Savior. The Lord's Supper is universal in that it reminds us that Jesus died for the sins of all people. It reminds us of His broken body as He hung on the cross and His blood flowed from His body as He died for our sins.

In our passage, we find Jesus and His disciples observing the Passover together. However, at this Passover, He instituted what became known as the Lord's Supper. The Passover was and is a Jewish feast that reminds Jews of how God delivered them from Egyptian slavery. It is a feast where many lambs were slain; one for each household, and according to the law, the blood was symbolically applied to atone for the sins of the people. However, the blood of these lambs could never pay for people's sins. It took a greater sacrifice to do that, and it came in Jesus' giving of Himself on the cross. It was this that the meal that Jesus instituted would commemorate.

Tonight, let's look at some of the things the Lord's Supper should remind us of. First:

1. We Are Reminded to Be Pure and Separate

Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 10: 16-17 & 21 (NLT)**, “*When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't*

we sharing in the benefits of the blood of Christ? And when we break the loaf of bread, aren't we sharing in the benefits of the body of Christ? And we all eat from one loaf, showing that we are one body...You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat at the Lord's Table and at the table of demons, too."

Paul is stating a fact that Jesus also stated. We cannot serve two masters. We will either hate the one and love the other or love that one and hate the other. We must be holy and pure as His people, but we must also be separated from that which is evil. We can't dabble in sin and serve Him at the same time. We can't fellowship with Him and dance with the devil at the same time. Now, I'm not saying that we have to totally separate ourselves from the world. We are called to be salt and light in a tasteless and dark world, but at the same time, we are called to separate ourselves from the things that are displeasing to God.

As Paul said in **Rom. 12:1-2 (NIV)**: *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*

To partake of this meal in an unworthy manner is to sin against God. What is the unworthy manner? Those who are not Christians but yet partake of it are doing so in an unworthy manner. Those who are Christians but who have unconfessed sin in their life but take of the meal do so in an unworthy manner. The Bible instructs us to examine ourselves before we take of the meal. Secondly, when we come to the Lord's Supper:

2. We Are to Remember the Lord's Death

As Jesus observed the meal with His disciples, He told them to eat the bread as a reminder of His broken body and to drink the cup as a reminder of His shed blood. In fact, this whole observance reminds us of the death of Jesus Christ. In observing the Passover, the Jews looked back to the time God delivered them from Egyptian slavery. But now, in observing the Lord's Supper, Christians look back to the cross where Jesus paid the price of our sins. Jesus instituted a new meaning.

Before, the animal sacrifice was only good for a year, and it was not entirely pure. It was not complete. The Lord's Supper reminds us that the blood of a perfect sacrifice Jesus Christ had to be shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

As we partake of this meal, we proclaim to others the death of Jesus and the purpose of that perfect sacrifice. This is why one who does not know Jesus as their Savior has no business taking of the Lord's Supper. You can't proclaim what you do not know. Taking of this meal is a testimony to the world of the Christ that we believe in Jesus and that we are obedient to Him.

Finally, during the Lord's Supper:

3. We Are to be Reminded of Our Eternal Hope – (29)

Paul says; *"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."*

This meal is a remembrance of what Jesus did until He returns to the earth. The promise given to them that Jesus would observe this meal again with them in a future kingdom was an assurance of His future return. The meal reminds Christians of our eternal hope that Christ has promised to return and share His kingdom blessings with us. The end of this life is not the end. We have the assurance of an eternity with Him. Isn't that a great blessing? Isn't that worth serving Jesus for?

Conclusion: Before we partake of this most memorable meal together next Sunday, let's take time to examine ourselves. First, we need to make sure we have Christ in our lives. We have no one to remember if we don't know Christ as our Lord and Savior.

And for Christian, this is another opportunity for us to examine our relationship with Christ. Are we where we should be? Do we need to confess and come clean before Him? You wouldn't want to partake of the Lord's Supper unworthily would you? So, as we close in an altar of prayer tonight, let's examine our hearts.