The Benefits of Remembering the Lord

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References: 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; Genesis 3:17-19; Genesis 9:20-25; Genesis 14:18-20; Luke 22:19-20; John 1:12; John 6:33; John 8:36; John 13:2-5; Romans 1:20; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:3; 1 John 4:20; 1 John 5:3

Obedience and Love in Remembrance

I want to just for a few minutes this morning think about how celebrating or remembering the Lord, how it benefits us.

No doubt we're often reminded as we read the various accounts in the Synoptic Gospels in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We read this morning in Mark of the Lord Jesus instituting. He instituted this supper, the night in which He was betrayed. That's what we read. He took bread. He took a cup. And He instituted the Lord's Supper. And He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

So at the very outset, we could say that it's in obedience to the Lord. And so in its most basic sense, it gives me an opportunity to—and gives you an opportunity to—show that you love God and you love the Lord Jesus. Right? I mean, that's what 1 John says:

> [1 John 5:3 NKJV] - For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

That's how we express our love to God. Now, we know that's not conversion. That's not how we're saved. That's not how we're justified, according to Romans, from our sin. That's not our point of conversion. That's not when we were born again. Right? When we were born again, really, as the verse on the wall here says, what we realized the day we were born again, whenever that was for you, is how much God loved you and how much He loved you in giving His Son for you and for me.

And then when I realized that, I believed on the Lord Jesus. I received Him according to John chapter 1. And when I did that, He gave me as a gift—as a **gift**—eternal life. But you know, it was His love that I was thinking about at conversion. How much He loved me—that's what

drew my heart. Trust. That's what drew your heart. And that's what continues to draw hearts to the Lord Jesus: His love. His love for us.

But then as now believers—now for me, was 50 years ago, or nearly 50 years ago—I have an opportunity now, as best I'm able, to keep His commandments and to show my love for Him. That's what we want to do, so it's a privilege. But as John says, His commandments are not burdensome. They're actually life-giving. They create liberty and freedom. Paul could never get over the idea of what he was in the past life and the slave he was to sin, and how he had been set free in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus said in John's Gospel, isn't it:

> [John 8:36 NKJV] - Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

And so there is no relationship in the universe that's more important than the relationship we have with God through His Son. And so even on a Sunday morning, we come together and as we say, in obedience to what the Lord asked us to do, we're obeying, showing our love, but there's benefit in it for us. It's not a tradition.

Our brother Eric read from Mark's Gospel, but as we said, it's in Matthew, it's in Mark, it's in Luke. This is what the Lord Jesus did. And so let's read it in Luke's Gospel. In Luke's Gospel, it's a little bit different. It's still the same; it's the transition of the Passover. You know, the Lord Jesus is celebrating the Passover with His disciples, and then He's going to make a transition to something new, what He calls the Lord's Supper, what Paul calls the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And so you have in Luke's Gospel, you have all the Passover being celebrated. And then in the middle of the Passover, the Lord Jesus institutes what's called the Lord's Supper. And so in verse 19—sorry, chapter 22. Chapter 22, verse 19, says:

> [Luke 22:19 NKJV] - [19] And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

And so there's where, brothers, when they talk about the commandment, that's where they get it. He says, "Do this in remembrance of Me." He's not making it an option. He's saying, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Likewise, He also—verse 20—likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying:

> [Luke 22:20 NKJV] - [20] Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

And so, these are the two verses that lay down again in Luke's Gospel, and we say one of the three Synoptics. And when we say Synoptics, what we mean by that is, what the scholars mean, the theologians mean by that is, that Matthew, Mark, Luke have lots of similarities. Synoptic: written from the same angle of the eye, the same purpose, lots of connections, lots of ways in which they're the same. And in contrast, John is mostly unique to himself. People have gone through and showed that maybe 95% of John's Gospel is unique to himself. And so, the Synoptics, all three of them have the institution of the Lord's Supper.

Common Elements, Divine Purpose

And then some people will say, "Well, you know that the Lord Jesus was celebrating the Passover, and so there was food on the table. There was a lamb, and there was cups of wine, and there was bread. And so He just randomly chose two items that would be used to bring significance to what we're celebrating here today, what we're doing in remembering the Lord."

We say, although we would agree with the idea that, yeah, all these things were on the table, they were common items at the Passover, but they weren't random. So there's a difference between something that's common and something that's random. So the Lord Jesus just didn't randomly choose two items and say, "Well, you know, it doesn't matter what I pick."

I mean, I guess we could say, as Brother Harold reminded us, that all of creation manifests the glory of God. And so if we've got eyes to see, we can see the Creator in His creation, no doubt. And Romans 1 says that there is coming a day that men will be without excuse because they've rejected God as He's revealed Himself in His creation. But the Lord Jesus, on the night in which He was betrayed, did not just take two random items, although they were common.

The First Mention of Bread and Wine

And so we want to go back to the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter 3 and use a principle of interpretation, a principle of interpreting the Bible, a rule, if you will. It's not maybe just a principle; it's a rule of interpretation, and it's the rule of the law of first mention. And so the first mention of the word bread—now, you remember it: the Lord Jesus, on the night in which He was betrayed, He first took bread, the institution of the Lord's

Supper. So the first mention of bread in the Bible is Genesis chapter 3. And so in verse 17, then to Adam—this is God speaking to Adam in the garden:

> [Genesis 3:17 NKJV] - 17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

This is connected now with disobedience, the first sin committed by man. It says:

> [Genesis 3:17-19 NKJV] - "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

There's the first mention of bread in the Bible, and it's linked with a curse, right? That's the first mention.

Now, the first mention of wine, just over a couple of pages to Genesis chapter 9. Genesis 9:20—"And Noah," it says, "began to be a farmer"—this is after the flood, after he gets out of the ark. It says:

> [Genesis 9:20-21 NKJV] - 20 And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. 21 Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent.

We drop down, verse 24 says:

> [Genesis 9:24-25 NKJV] - 24 So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. 25 Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren."

The first mention of wine in the Bible is linked with a curse. So the first mention of bread linked with a curse, first mention of wine linked with a curse. Now, these are these two items that were, again, common, but they were not random. So the Lord Jesus brought them together.

And so we say, "Well, when's the first time bread and wine were brought together in the Bible?" Well, that's just again over a few pages. That's Genesis chapter 14. Genesis chapter 14, verse 18 says:

> [Genesis 14:18-20 NKJV] - [18] Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. [19] And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; [20] And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

So, the first mention of bread and wine together linked with blessing. Well, that's exactly what we're experiencing here this morning. We're thinking—and it was brought forward—we're thinking of bread and wine together. Now, again, not random, chosen with a purpose, representing something independently, both linked with the curse separately. But when they're brought together in the story of Melchizedek, linked with blessing.

And so it's even alluded to as we remember the Lord Jesus. We think of the cup, and it was said that—and we think of the cup that was a cup of suffering that the Lord Jesus drained, as the hymn writer says, to the utter dregs. He drained that cup of wrath that was due us, and now that cup has become a cup of blessing for us. And so in Genesis 14, Melchizedek brings these two together for blessing. And so we're experiencing both this morning as we come together, we remember the Lord Jesus.

And as best we're able, as we remember Him, we think of and meditate on and share back to the Father, the best as we are able, the depths to which the Lord Jesus went to accomplish our salvation. The bread is connected with His incarnation. The bread of God, the Lord Jesus taught in John's Gospel, chapter 6:

> [John 6:33 NKJV] - For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

You know, the Apostle Paul wrote half the New Testament, and he wrote about mysteries, things that were hidden away in the Old Testament. But, you know, he only wrote about two great mysteries. And one of the great mysteries, one of the things he could never really get over, he said, great is the mystery of godliness, that God was manifest in the flesh—that God, the Hebrew writer, as we read in Hebrews 1, God manifest in the flesh, the exact representation of God, what God was like, of who God is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes we want to know what God is like. Well, we look at the Lord Jesus, and that's how we see how God was like. And that's what the Lord Jesus said. The Lord Jesus never claimed any of the things He said or the things He did as His own. He said that the works He did were His Father's works. The words He said were His Father's words. And so somehow, this is tied together in these emblems that are before us.

The Towel and the Basin

Let's turn to John's Gospel. Now, we said that the institution of the Lord's Supper is—John chapter 13—is in the three Synoptics, in Matthew, in Mark, and in Luke. Now, what's interesting is that only one of these men would have been an eyewitness. Right? Matthew would have been in the upper room. He was one of the twelve. But Mark wouldn't have been there, and neither would have Luke. Mark, we are told from Peter's writings that Mark was Peter's son in the faith. So no doubt Mark got his content from Peter, who was an eyewitness, but Mark himself wasn't there. Luke tells us in his first chapter that he talked to eyewitnesses. Everything that he wrote, he talked to people who had witnessed it. So he had talked to one of the twelve, or maybe at this point, one of the eleven, or maybe multiples of the eleven eyewitnesses. But he got his account, his information, from eyewitnesses. But Matthew was there. And so when Matthew recorded the institution of the Lord's Supper, it was because he witnessed it himself.

Now, what's interesting in John chapter 13, John also was an eyewitness. He was in the upper room. Actually, he's the one that—just think of this painting, you know—he's the one who was laying on the breast of the Lord Jesus. He was the one who was closest to the Savior. But he doesn't write about the bread and the cup in his gospel. He actually, in chapter 13—and this is where it would have been; this is when the Lord Jesus would have instituted, is in this area right here. And in chapter 13 of John, verse 2:

> [John 13:2-5 NKJV] - [2] And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, [3] Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and

> was going to God, [4] rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. [5] After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

So John doesn't write about the bread and the cup. He writes about a towel and the basin. It suggests equally as important. What does it represent? We know that the bread represents the body of the Lord Jesus Christ and the cup, His precious blood. What's the towel and the basin have to do with anything?

Self-Examination and Personal Relationships

Well, turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Let's read the Apostle Paul. 1 Corinthians 11. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 23 says:

> [1 Corinthians 11:23-26 NKJV] - [23] For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; [24] and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." [25] In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." [26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

And he says this:

> [1 Corinthians 11:27-29 NKJV] - [27] Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. [28] But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. [29] For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Serious, serious words.

Yes, the Lord's body. There's a connection to judgment, not discerning the Lord's body. Who's the Lord's body? What's the Lord's body? Well, the Lord's body in chapter 12, 13, 14, Paul numerous, numerous times says, it's **us**.

And so we said at the beginning that there's a benefit to celebrating the Lord's Supper. You know, a benefit, an opportunity for me to say and to show that I love the Lord by keeping His commandments. And I could get that from 1 John chapter 4; I could get that from John's Gospel numerous times the Lord says that; John records this. But that's not the only benefit. The benefit here from 1 Corinthians chapter 11 is it gives me an opportunity to assess personal relationships.

My relationship with you, your relationship with me, our relationship together. You know, we come together and we see the price that the Lord Jesus Christ paid for our so great salvation. We see the depths to which He went to show His love to the Father, to show His love for us. And as we think about that and reflect on that, it gives us an opportunity to assess how we're doing the Christian life. Because, you know, in that great passage on me being obedient to His commandments and showing that I love God by keeping His commandments, in that same passage, He says, "Rob, how can you say you love Me, and you hate your brother?"

So, as we think about the Lord's Supper, I can't imagine a more important meeting. That's where we started this morning: the importance of this meeting. Not just to show our love to God, not just to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, but there's benefit for me as I assess how I'm doing.

A Prayer from the Heart

And I could say it goes beyond that. I remember reading a story from a famous commentator, a man who lived on the west coast of California, well-known, books downstairs in the library: Harry Ironside. Harry Ironside told a story years ago—thank you—that the little assembly that he was part of had this meeting every Sunday. And the assembly was exercised in the gospel, and they were sharing with a brother who lived in California, but was originally from Japan. And so they had tried many ways in which to present the gospel to this man. And Harry said it was really hard to make any spiritual progress.

But he said one Sunday, that man showed up, and he came in, and he sat in the Lord's Supper. And Harry said, partway through the meeting, the man stood up and he said, "I would like to pray."

And Harry thought—he said he thought to himself, "This is going to be inappropriate."

And then the man poured out his heart to the Lord. He said, "I never realized till this morning how much the Lord Jesus Christ paid for my sin, for the penalty of my sin. I never realized until this morning the depths to which He went to save my soul. And I would just like to say thank You, Lord, for saving me and for dying on the cross."

And Harry said, "I can't ever remember hearing a more appropriate prayer in the Lord's Supper."

Let's pray.

Father, we're grateful for the presence of the Lord Jesus, for the price that He paid. Father, we're so thankful that the Lord Jesus was the appeasement, the satisfaction to You at the cross, not just for our sin, but for the sin of the whole world. We're thankful for the gospel that's presented in this simple supper. There's redemption for all. Father, thank You for Your Word that tells us of the living Word, that presents to us the Lord Jesus. Pray that You would help us by Your Spirit to understand these things, to take them in. We pray in the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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