

In Remembrance
1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Albert Einstein, one of the most brilliant men who ever lived, was asked for his telephone number. He looked puzzled for a moment, then asked for a phone book (I know. Those of you under 25 are wondering, "What's a phone book?")

It's not that he was forgetful. It's just that Einstein refused to clutter his mind with inconsequential information.¹ Einstein was brilliant and wise. There are some things that must be remembered; there are other things that fall into the category of clutter and can be discarded.

Maundy Thursday is one of those things that must be remembered. Long ago the people of Israel were slaves in Egypt. Moses spoke to the Pharaoh in the name of God, saying, "Let my people go." But the Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he refused to let them go.

So God said to Moses that on a certain night the people of Israel were to take the blood of a lamb and smear it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of their houses. On that night, God said, He would pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn child as well as every firstborn animal in that land, and He would bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. But He would pass over any home marked by the blood of a lamb. It was a night the people of Israel would never forget.

To make certain that they would not forget it, God gave them a command. The people of Israel are to commemorate the Passover annually, and have done so for more than 3,000 years.

Why is this something Christians should remember? Because Jesus and his disciples were devout Jews, and the meal they celebrated on the night of his arrest--which we call the Last Supper--was a Passover meal. This is why this evening we'll take bread and cup and remember Jesus.

And when we do, we should remember his death on our behalf. We take the bread and remember his broken body. We take the cup and remember his blood shed for us. The elements before you remind us of Christ's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary.

When we view the cross we remember that Jesus Christ gave his life in order to become a bridge between us and God. We remember his death when we take bread and d cup. We remember that he died for us. It's something we dare not forget.

And as we remember that Christ died for us, we are reminded of just how much God loves us. In 1 John, 3:1 we read, "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God". We see that love demonstrated quite starkly on Golgotha's cross.

Max Lucado tells a story of an angel that was seeking to understand salvation. He writes, "He looked around the hill and foresaw a scene. Three figures hung on three crosses. Arms spread. Heads fallen forward. They moaned with the wind.

Men clad in religion stood off to one side . . . Arrogant, cocky. Women clad in sorrow huddled at the foot of the hill . . . Faces tear streaked. All heaven stood to fight. All nature rose to rescue. All eternity poised to protect. But the Creator gave no command. 'It must be done . . . ,' he said, and withdrew.

¹ Fred Bauer, *Daily Guideposts* (New York: Guideposts, 1983), p. 343.

The angel spoke again. 'It would be less painful . . .' The Creator interrupted softly. 'But it wouldn't be love.'" ²

And it wouldn't be love, not in its most extreme form. Breaking bread and drinking from the cup reminds us of just what the cross cost God. Christ's death was the only way God could show us the extent of His love for mankind.

And there's one thing more. Tonight we remember Christ's promise to return to us. Paul writes, "The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 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.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Christ will return. God's Kingdom will come. Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup, we remind ourselves that hatred and violence, death and despair will never reign victorious in this world. The Lord of love, the Prince of peace, will one day establish his reign over all the earth. So we remember these things--his death, his love, his promise to one day return and establish His kingdom in this world.

There are some things in this world that are of little consequence. They take up residence and clutter our mind. Search them out. Find them. Lay them aside. Forget them. Focus on those things that must always be remembered. Foremost being the cross of Jesus Christ.

Take the bread and take the cup this night in remembrance of him.

² Max Lucado, *In the Eye of the Storm*, pg 176.