

McCabe United Methodist Church

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**Luke 22:14-23**

“Remember”

by: Gary Walters

Luke 22:14-23: “When the hour came, Jesus and his Apostles reclined at the table and he said to them ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.’ After taking the cup he gave thanks and said ‘Take this and divide it among you, for I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God has come.’ And he took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, gave it to his disciples and said ‘This is my body, given for you, do this in remembrance of me.’ And in the same way after the supper Jesus took the cup saying ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood which was poured out for you.’”

The word of God for the people of God, Thanks be to God!

I had a seminary friend who was an active member of AA ,so coming from him this was particularly appropriate, but he said “The world drinks to forget, but the church drinks to remember.” It’s not only that difference of drinking to remember versus drinking to forget that separates the world from the church, because our heritage, spiritual heritage at least, and really much of what we do in worship comes right from the synagogue that the early church had borrowed back in the days of the apostles. But there is also a mindset that comes along through the scripture and part of that Hebrew thinking they approached the idea of remembering very differently.

Let me start actually with what they mean when they say forget, because it is very telling on this whole idea of remembrance. When we say, “Uh, I forgot”, it slipped out of my mind, sorry about that, the idea never got firmly planted and it just sort of slipped out my ear and I forgot your name or forgot to be there for this or that or the other thing, it’s not very concrete it’s just these ideas didn’t make it into the right spot, so, I forgot, sorry about that. But in Hebrew, to forget something is very concrete, very active, very tactile. In fact, it really carries with it a very forceful idea. It doesn’t just slip out of your mind but it is to annihilate, to obliterate, to destroy the memory or the idea of a person or a place or an event from your mind. It really has with it this idea of a living reality that impacts the present moment. Well, in that same way, remembering carries with it a similar idea. It is a living reality, bringing the past into the present so that it is active and real and continues to happen.

Take the context of this Passover meal and think about that. They are not just recalling interesting historical facts that their ancestors went through, but they’re taking the reality of God’s deliverance from Egypt and bringing it into the present moment so that it is active and real for them. It is not just that their ancestors were saved by the mighty works and the hand of God from the Egyptians, but it is the present reality and it is the foundation upon which they live. It’s something that continues to be active and real for them. Because without the events they are remembering, there wouldn’t be an Israel and there wouldn’t be Hebrews and they wouldn’t exist as a people or a

nation.

With a similar idea, the last supper and the events of Christ's life and especially that last week, are that kind of a turning point for us. Do this in remembrance of me, Jesus said in this last supper. He wasn't simply saying when you come up to the communion table and take bread and the fruit of the vine, think kind thoughts about me. No, he's Hebrew and he's thinking of this lay hold of it and seize it and make it for yourself a present reality. Something that is active and living. To put it another way, remember that my sin-bearing death is your salvation and the foundation of your life and that let my forgiveness of you characterize your life so that it permeates every part of who you are, what you are about and the reality by which you live. Well, that is easy to say but that remembrance takes different shapes.

Let me share with you a very quick story from another one of my seminary friends. He was from India and had been born into a very prominent Hindu family but was converted to Christianity in his late teens. Well, as I said, this family was wealthy and his conversion caused quite a controversy in his family. Where he was at, he was basically disowned by the family for becoming a Christian. Not only that, but it put at stake his considerable inheritance, or share in the family business, and the wealth and so it set off a fire storm within the family because then they started arguing and bickering and fighting and getting into the legalities of who was going to end up with what had been his share of the wealth.

Well, they didn't trust one another and fights ensued and it got very bitter and ugly but he was so transformed by his conversion to Christianity that when they started fighting and dividing up the plunder, so to speak, his share of the family business and wealth, he actually didn't fight it, he wasn't bitter about it, he wasn't resentful and in fact he really tried to help keep the peace with this whole process. So much so that in observing that difference in him, they actually made him the executor of the spoils of dividing up the plunder of that wealth between the various family members. How ironic is that. Was he being victimized? On the contrary, he didn't consider it a loss, he had Christ.

But, that kind of transformation speaks loudly and by his conversion then and his witness, his father was converted and this being a very patriarch-dominated society, a lot of the family members came to Christ as well. Well, if they're all Christians too, then he's back in. Part of the family, the wealth is his, the inheritance is still there but no sooner was it his to give away than he gave it all away.

That's remembering, making real what Christ had done for us. Christ who could sit and share this meal with his disciples, these very ones who would betray him, who would deny him and all of whom would abandon him. Christ, who could hang on a cross looking down at the very ones who put him on that cross and say "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

And Christ says, remember, remember me. Lay hold of this reality and make it active and living in your life, the foundation upon which you live.