

“Celebrating Warm Memories”

Luke 22: 7-19

Preached by Dr. Robert F. Browning, Pastor

First Baptist Church

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Communion Devotion

This morning, our attention is turned to one of the most intimate scenes in scripture. Jesus and his twelve disciples have gathered in a room somewhere in Jerusalem to eat the annual Passover meal.

On this special night, they will recall the story of the ancient Hebrews' release from bondage in Egypt and their march toward freedom. They will remember the role Moses played in their ancestors' liberation and thank God for His provisions and protection.

There was something different about this Passover meal from previous ones Jesus celebrated with his disciples. This will be the last time all thirteen of them will be together. The next day, Jesus will die on a cross like a common criminal. Jesus knew this but the disciples did not.

Can you imagine how Jesus felt as he looked around that table at the men in whom he had invested so much and with whom he had shared his inner most thoughts and feelings? His heart had to be heavy and full. Leaving them made his arrest and crucifixion even more painful.

This helps us to understand what Jesus said to the disciples as they assembled in that room. Luke shares it with us.

“I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,” Jesus told them as they reclined around the table. “For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

These words indicate that the disciples will gather with family and friends in the years to come to observe future Passovers, but he will not be with them as he has been. This was why Jesus said after giving them the bread and cup, “This is my body given for you. Do this in **remembrance of me.**”

The words Jesus used during this portion of the meal are unique to Luke. Matthew and Mark do not include the sentence, “Do this in remembrance of me.” I wonder why these words were important to Luke.

Maybe it had something to do with Luke being a doctor. Perhaps he heard the final conversations dying patients had with their family members when they asked to be remembered after they were gone. “Don’t forget me and my love for you,” he may have heard more than once.

Whatever his reason, Luke considered these words worthy of being preserved and passed down to us. In addition to remembering the story of the ancient Hebrews’ liberation from Egypt each time the disciples gathered to eat the Passover meal, they were to remember Jesus, too.

Why did Jesus want the disciples to remember him after he was gone? Was this merely the wish of someone soon to die who did not want to be forgotten? I don’t think so. This command was much more about the disciples than it was Jesus.

Jesus knew their memories of him could guide them when facing tough decisions. Remembering the lessons Jesus taught them and the faith he modeled would help them to honor God and make life better for everyone.

The disciples’ memories of Jesus could inspire them when they faced stiff challenges. If Jesus could remain faithful to God, so could they.

If Jesus could carry heavy burdens without giving up, so could they.

If he could handle disappointments and detours without abandoning his mission, so could they.

If he could listen to people when he was tired and help them carry their load, so could they.

If he could curb his appetite for the things of this world in order to have more to share with those who were struggling to survive, so could they.

By God’s grace, they could be as strong, resilient, compassionate, generous and faithful as Jesus was. By God’s grace, we can, too.

The disciples’ memories of Jesus could also comfort them. Recalling the tone of his voice, touch of his hands, expressions on his face and gaze in his eyes could warm their hearts and strengthen them for their journey.

His words of appreciation for their friendship could sustain them in their darkest days.

The promise of his abiding presence and unconditional love could strengthen them when fear attacked their faith.

This morning, let me encourage you to do the very thing Jesus instructed his disciples to do. As you hold the bread and the cup, remember Jesus—his life, words, deeds, compassion, courage and promises. Let these memories guide, inspire and comfort you.

In addition to Jesus, who else do you need to remember today? Who was the presence of Christ in your life as a child when you felt afraid and alone?

Who gave you advice when you were at a crossroad and did not know which way to go?

Who held your hand and wiped your brow when you were sick or writhing in pain?

Who believed in you when others had given up and walked away?

Who came looking for you when you had lost your way?

Who loved you enough to tell you the truth even though it was not what you wanted to hear?

Who prayed for you and loaned you their faith when yours had grown weak and ineffective?

Who made it possible for you to go to camp or college or open your own business?

Who helped you to get a job when more doors were shutting than opening?

Who stood by your side when others were attacking you?

Who fed you when your cupboard was bare?

Who showed you how to live with courage and die with dignity?

Who inspires you the way Jesus inspired his disciples? Whose words guide and comfort you?

As you draw near this table of remembrance this morning, recall the people who have been there when you needed them and thank God for their contributions to your life. Celebrate these warm and precious memories.

And then, I want you to do one more thing while the bread and cup are distributed to everyone. **Reflect upon how you will be remembered after you are gone.**

Are there things you have said or done you prefer not to be a part of your legacy? What do you need to replace them with as you move forward?

It is not too late to make changes if you feel you have fallen short of your own expectations. You still have time to make new memories. Talk to the Lord about it as we gather around this sacred table.