

## **“Precious Memories”**

Luke 22: 14-20

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### **All Saints Day Communion Devotion**

This is a service that tugs at our hearts and brings tears to our eyes. Each year when the children bring into the sanctuary the banners bearing the names of church members who have died since this time last year, we smile and cry. We are grateful for their contributions to our lives but are still grieving their loss.

It is appropriate we have this service of remembrance around a table that reminds us of Jesus' life and death. It is also appropriate we let Luke guide our thoughts today because he highlights the importance of remembering Jesus each time we eat the bread and drink the juice. Of the three gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark and Luke, only Luke includes the words of Jesus, “This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19b)

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 when their hearts were broken.** 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 do not want 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.