

Lest we forget - 20/03/2016

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ 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." ²⁵ In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1.Cor.11:23-26)

Beloved in The Lord,

The phrase "Lest we forget" is a familiar one to most Australians. It is part of the remembrance of our fallen soldiers. This phrase comes from a poem called "Recessional" which was written by Rudyard Kipling in 1897, for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee.

The poem was a prayer that neither the nation, nor the individual person, would ever forget the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Over the years the true meaning has been lost, and this phrase has come to take on a different meaning. There are in fact, very few, who do commemorate Christ's sacrifice, there are few who truly know and celebrate the real meaning of Easter.

Memorials and memorial days are very important, because without them we do forget. Today is Palm Sunday. We commemorate the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was greeted like a king. What so many did not understand that day, nor indeed even today, is the fact that He is a King, but His Kingdom is not of this world. His Kingdom is the heavenly Kingdom.

On Palm Sunday, crowds lined the streets and laid out clothes and Palm branches and shouted "Hosanna". The word "Hosanna" means "save us". On that day it was more a political phrase than a spiritual one. The people were hoping that King Jesus would save them from the oppressive occupying force of the Romans.

They did not understand that He came into Jerusalem to die, to lay down His life, to save people not from the Romans, but from the power of sin and death.

Today we lift our voices and we join in the shout "Hosanna", because we know and understand that Jesus is the only one who can save us from sin and death. We honour Him as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In order that we would never forget what Jesus has done for us and to help us to celebrate and remember, Jesus gave us a new memorial feast – The Lord's Supper. It was a new memorial feast, for the believers in God already had a feast – The Passover. Having delivered the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, God commanded that they observe the feast of the Passover every year, so that they would never forget that night that God saved them. They were to always remember the night the death angel passed over the houses that had blood on the door posts. That night when all the first born of the Egyptians died, yet all of the first born of the Hebrews lived.

Celebrating the feast of the Passover with His disciples, Jesus instituted the New Feast. He took bread, thanked God for it, broke it and divided it amongst His disciples saying: ***“This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” (1.Cor.11:24)***. Jesus said that the bread was His body, given for them. His body was broken for us, so that we may be healed. We read in Isaiah: ***“He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.***

***⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.***

***⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.
(Is.53:3b-5)***

He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He took our punishment. He bore our sin, in order that we would not have to suffer the awful eternal consequences of it.

Breaking the bread, Jesus commanded that we do it in remembrance of Him. We must never forget what He did for us. We must remember that He was perfectly innocent, without spot or blemish. He was sinless.

Then Jesus took the wine cup and gave it to His disciples to drink, saying: ***“This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” (1.Cor.11:25)***

In the Old Testament, the blood of sheep and bulls was shed and sprinkled on the altar, to redeem people from sin. In the New Testament, Jesus sprinkled His own blood on God’s Heavenly altar, thus paying the full price, for all sin, for all time. When we drink the cup, we are to remember the blood of Jesus shed for us, this tremendous price that Jesus paid. We read: ***“For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” (1.Cor.6:20)***

We have been bought with a price that is beyond valuation. There is nothing more valuable in Heaven or Earth than Jesus Holy precious blood..

Peter writes:

“knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. “ (1.Pet.1:18-19)

Lest we ever forget, Jesus has given us The Lord’s Supper. In instituting it, He gave the command: ***“Do this in remembrance of Me.”*** It is not possible to overdo our remembrance. We need to keep the Blood of Jesus in the centre of our thinking. Our Church Father, Dr. Martin Luther taught that we should partake of the Lord’s Supper as often as possible,

because there is nothing more important than remembering and honouring the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lest we forget. We must never forget what Christ has done. We must never become complacent about sin. Jesus has saved us from eternal death – from hell. He loves us with an everlasting love. He suffered so that we would not have to. He died that we may live. He shed His blood for you and me because He deemed us as precious to the Father.

Lest we forget.

Paul writes about Jesus command: ***“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.” (1.Cor.11:26).***

It is clear from the original text, and this is a good translation, that eating and drinking at the Lord’s Table, we proclaim the Lord’s death. So you see, one way we fulfil the great commission, is by partaking of the Lord’s Supper. As we partake, we are proclaiming that we understand that Salvation is through the Blood of Jesus. Partaking, not only are we strengthened, but we also bear witness to others that this is the way to God.

Out of His grace and mercy, Jesus has given us Holy Communion, so that we would never forget His sacrifice. If we lose sight of Jesus sacrifice, we begin to drift away from God, our love grows cold.

Last Sunday, one of our members said to me: “ I come to Church and I get refuelled, much like a car at the service station. I receive God’s Word, Holy Communion and partake of wonderful, loving fellowship.” To that I say Amen.

It is important to come, to participate, to commemorate, lest we forget. I will close our meditation today with some words from Psalm 116:

“Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.

⁶ The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.

⁷ Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

¹² What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits toward me?

¹³ I shall lift up the cup of salvation

And call upon the name of the Lord.

¹⁴ I shall pay my vows to the Lord, Oh may it be in the presence of all His people.

¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His godly ones.

***¹⁶ O Lord, surely I am Your servant, I am Your servant, the son of Your handmaid,
You have loosed my bonds.***

¹⁷ To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And call upon the name of the Lord.

¹⁸ I shall pay my vows to the Lord, Oh may it be in the presence of all His people,

¹⁹ In the courts of the Lord’s house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

Praise the Lord! (Ps.116:5-7;12-17)

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.