

## ***Remembering and Proclaiming***

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1 Corinthians 11:23-26

*“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”*

Maundy Thursday

### *Movement 1 – Remembering the Person Christ*

We are called to sit at the table. We are called to sit at the table and remember. When we sit at the table, when we pass the bread and the cup, we are taking part of something that is more than just a simple meal. When we sit at the table we are taking part in an event, we are taking part in a moment that transcends time that cuts through our reality and brings us close to the divine. So let us sit at the table and experience the holy, experience the profound, and experience the divine event of Jesus Christ.

We are called to sit at the table and remember the person and the ministry of Christ. Our experience starts with Jesus and our identity is shaped around our relationship with Jesus. So it is appropriate for us to take the time and remember Jesus. Each time we sit we are to remember who it is that has prepared the table for us. Each time we take the bread and the cup we are to remember who it is that is giving us the sustenance of food and drink. This event begins with Christ sitting next to us, across the table from us, within our sight. Lift up your eyes and look at Christ. Look at Christ and remember what has brought you this far. Remember the first time Jesus called you, how his voice calmed you, gave you hope and spoke to your in-most fears and desires. Remember the amazing things you saw as you followed Jesus. Remember the powerful healings, the miracles of nature, the way Jesus affected other people, and how these events convinced you that this person was more than just any ordinary person. These events convinced you that you were walking with someone divine.

Remember what Jesus taught. Remember how he taught that the meek, the humble, the peaceful, and the righteous were the ones who were walking with God, not those with worldly power and glory. Remember his words about an inclusive love, a love that would not let go of anyone, a love that strived to continue reach out to the lost and the outcast offering hope and peace. Remember his words of rest and assurance, his words of mercy and kindness and how they gave you hope that something new, something profound and something powerful was happening.

Look at Jesus sitting at the table, handing you bread, handing you the cup and remember who he is, what he taught and what he did. Take a moment and realize how, by walking with Jesus, you have indeed brushed with the divine. Experience Jesus, remember Jesus, and sit with Jesus. We are called to sit at the table and remember Jesus.

### *Movement 2 – Remembering the Body*

We are called to sit at the table. We are called to sit at the table and remember. We are called to sit at the table and remember those around us. Look around you. Look at the people next to you, across from you and within your sight. Notice that there are disciples, and apostles, church planters, missionaries, evangelists, and servants of the Lord sitting at the table. Notice that there are white collar and blue collar and no-collar workers all here at this table. People from the highways and the byways of life all gather at this table. Notice that there are people from all the corners of the earth at the table, people who look a little different than you do. Notice that

there are people who speak different languages than you do, and yet you are all gathered around the table. The table is a place where walls are broken down, the table is a place where common ground is established, and the table is a place where the body of Christ, all of God's children can find a sense and a place of unity. We are called to remember that it is Christ who calls us to the table, not anyone else. We need to remember that it is only Christ has the authority to invite someone or exclude someone, and so we invite all in the name of Christ. No priest or pastor or deacon or trustee can bar someone from this table. No church official, no doctrine, no teaching can bar anyone from coming to the table. It is by the grace of God that we can come to the table, each one of us individually, called by Christ. It is by the grace of God that we can sit with each other. It is by the grace of God that we can find this common ground around this table.

We also need to remember our brokenness. Paul was writing to a community that was struggling to live out the radical inclusivity of the table. Paul was writing to a community that was struggling to make real the body that Christ created at the table. Yet even as they tried to live into the vision of Christ's inclusive community they fell into brokenness. Some would eat before others. Some would use political power, economic power, or power of status in the church to bar others from the table, and the body was divided.

Even today, we are divided when we come to the table. Churches are at odds with other churches, splitting theological hairs in order to keep others from sharing in the cup that Jesus pours and the bread that Jesus breaks. Individuals hold bitterness on their heart causing a separation with their brothers and sisters even as they come to the table. There is brokenness, there is emptiness at the table as we sit and try to listen to Christ. Even at that very first Supper, there was one plotting to betray Christ. We sit at the table, a fractured and broken body. Yet Christ persisted and continues to persist and calls his followers to unity. Let us remember that Christ calls us to the table, that Christ unifies us at the table, and that only through the grace of Christ can we be the body that we are called to be. Even with our splintered and broken reality, we are still gathered by Christ. Grieve the brokenness of the body and experience the wholeness of the body, and the unity of the body of Christ. We are called to remember that we are a part of a larger body of Christ.

### *Movement 3 – Remembering the Emptiness*

We are called to sit at the table. We are called to sit at the table and remember. We are called to sit at the table and remember the absence of Christ. Even as we remember the final supper, it is appropriate to let our imagination capture the events which will follow this dinner. It is right to remember that following the supper is the crucifixion and the death of our Lord. It is appropriate to remember that following the supper everything breaks apart and falls out of control. This is the night that Christ is betrayed; tomorrow is the day that Christ is crucified. Let us remember these events always as we sit at the table.

There is an absence of Christ in the world. Look to Christ again and yearn for his presence in the places where hope seems to be absent. Take the broken bread and think of the broken bodies that are yearning for healing. Think of those who are held down with sickness and are calling for Christ. Take the broken bread and think of those whose spirits are broken by the evils of the world. Think of those who are held down by powers and principalities; those who face injustice and oppression daily and yearn for the presence of Christ. Take the cup and think of the wounds of the world crying out for a healing touch. Think of the child that will go hungry tonight. Think of the mother who is left alone with her children. Think of the father who cannot afford enough to support his family. Think of the youth who face only violence, who know only

hatred and who feel that they no longer have any real choices in their life. Think of those who are hurting, who are grieving, and feel that there is an absence of Christ in their life. The wounds of the world seem to flow from the brokenness of the bread to the liquid in the cup, mixing with the juice in salt and sweetness.

Think of those who are overwhelmed, those who are crying, those who are living in darkness, and those who need to know that they are loved. They are crying for Christ. Every time we sit at this table, the very table which Christ has set and which Christ has called us to, we remember that there is a longing for Christ in many parts of the world. We realize that there is an absence in the world, brokenness in the world that yearns for the healing touch of God. There is a need in the world for the presence of the Kingdom of God. There is a desire in the world for the calling of our Lord and Savior. We remember that Christ is not here, that there is an absence, and that we are waiting for the return of our savior. We are called to remember the absence of our Lord.

#### *Movement 4 – Proclaiming our Faith*

We are called to sit at the table. We are called to sit at the table and proclaim. We are called to sit at the table and proclaim the death, the resurrection and the promised return of our Lord. We are proclaiming that the death of Christ is not the end of Christ. We are proclaiming that the crucifixion is not the completion. We are proclaiming that Christ did rise again. We are proclaiming that God lives, that Christ lives, and that hope lives. We are called to proclaim.

This proclamation cries out that even in the darkest night we still have hope. This proclamation declares that even in the most despairing time we still have faith. It is a faith that rests on the resurrection of our Lord. If death cannot keep Christ from us, than what can? Paul reminds us of this when he tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation” can separate us from the person, the mystery, and the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Even our own broken body, even our own divisions, even those of us who betray Christ cannot keep Christ from us. Death has been stayed, death has lost its sting and we have hope and faith. Yes, as we sit at the table, as we remember the final night, we are remembering the whole event, and for a moment, for a slice in time, let yourself move from the table to the cross, and from the cross to the empty tomb and proclaim that as you take this bread and as you drink this cup that Christ died so that we may live, and Christ lives so that we may be saved.

Yet our proclamation does not stop there. Paul reminds us, and calls us to proclaim that Christ will come again. The resurrection is not the end of the story but the beginning. We now live in a time looking and waiting for the presence and the power of Christ. We live with a hope that this is not all we have. We live with a promise that we are not left here alone. We live with a peace that some day God’s kingdom will come and God’s will be done here on earth as it is in heaven. Even as we lift up the absence of Christ in our lives, even as we look to the wounds of the world, we also proclaim that there will be a time when these wounds will be healed. There will be a time when the tears will fall no more. There will be a time when the brokenness of the world will be healed. As we take this bread and as we drink this cup we do proclaim that Christ will come again, we do proclaim that this is not the end, we do proclaim that we are a part of something bigger, more profound than we can ever imagine.

We sit at the table and we proclaim that we are part of a new covenant; it is a covenant we make to follow Jesus, to sit with Jesus, to walk with Jesus and to stay with Jesus tonight

tomorrow, and to wait for him on Saturday. We are a part of a covenant we make to love our brothers and sisters, to love our neighbors, to love our Lord. We are part of a covenant of mercy, kindness and justice. It is a covenant that Christ makes with us, promising to love us, forgive us, offer us hope and promises to take us home to glory and to our Lord. When we sit at this table we remember and reclaim this covenant, our hope and our salvation.

We are called to sit at the table. We are called to sit at the table and remember and proclaim. We are called to sit at the table and remember our Lord, remember our brothers and sisters, and remember the yearning we and the world has for Christ. We are called to sit at the table and proclaim that death is not the end, proclaim that Christ will come again, and proclaim that we are in a new covenant of mercy and love. Come to the table and remember. Come to the table and proclaim. Come and sit with Christ Jesus.

AMEN