

just a moment. The cross was God's finishing salvation's work. Jesus would utter from the cross it is finished. However, the resurrection was yet to come. The resurrection would be the great victory over death and the grave and yet, we still live in the time of waiting for Christ's return. God is still at work bringing all things through Christ to fulfillment.

Richard Stearns of World Vision has a new book called *Unfinished*, and in the book he asks these questions.

Do you long for a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in your life? Do you believe all the right things, go to church, and faithfully read your Bible, still feeling that something is missing? You may be right.

Two thousand years ago Jesus gave an urgent assignment to His followers right before He left. At its essence it was not just an invitation to believe; it was a bold call to action. It was a challenge to go into the world to reclaim, reform, and restore it for Christ.

Simply stated, the message of this book is that God has invited you to join Him in this world-changing mission. And if you are not personally participating in God's great endeavor, you could be missing the very thing He created you to do.

We are a part of God's unfinished business of reconciling the world to Himself to Christ. Paul put it this way. He said we have been given this ministry of reconciliation and it is as though God is making His appeal to the world through us.

At the table we remember that we have been invited to participate in that which is unfinished. This moment between the cross, resurrection and Jesus' coming.

What do you remember about God? Has life's challenges and experiences created a false

memory? That is why we keep coming back to the Lord's Table. We come back to remember and create the true memory of God. God is at work, God loves us, and God has invited us to participate in the work of the Kingdom. As we come to the table this morning... I invite you to remember.



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## THE WAY OF THE CROSS

### Moments Remembered

Mark 14:12-26

# TRINITY PULPIT

There is a meaningful scene in the movie "Saving Private Ryan", when the Captain played by Tom Hanks and the young private Ryan are having a conversation about memories they have of home. The young private has told a story about his last night with his brothers who have now all been killed in the war. When the story is over Ryan ask the Captain to tell him the story of his wife and her garden. The Captain looks and says "no, no I keep that one for myself."

There are some memories that are our memories and we keep them. There are some memories we share with others and there are some memories we share in community of the church and then, there are some we keep to ourselves.

The memory is a power gift from God. It is our memory that enables us to really do about anything we do. Whether it is muscle memory, which we learn in certain actions, or repeatative memories, which affects how we make a new decision and choose a different action... our memories are powerful. It is our memories that keep stories alive and keep our forefathers and mothers alive. We tell the stories to our children as a way of giving them a sense of place and belonging in this world. We tell our corporate stories of faith, family and nation to also create for us a sense of place and being.

It is our memory that brings to our minds thoughts and images of loved ones, now gone from this world and yet although they cause us grief, it is this very memory

that gives us comfort and helps us not to forget them. Our memory with grief is what Chuck Poole calls "life's lingering echo."

We know that our memory is an important gift from God and we also know the pain of the loss of memory. Many of us have witnessed loved one's whose memory has become a painful experiences. Most of the time, at least by the end of the memory loss process, a greater hurt to us than to the one who is losing memory capacity. As we age, we all know the feeling of forgetfulness. Sometimes it is just funny like when we go into a room and we forget why we went into room, and then sometimes it is a little scary when we forget our way to work, or home.

It is interesting that the Bible is always calling us to remember. In the Old Testament God calls upon his people to remember Him. God calls them to remember God's ways, God's laws and God's actions. God gives to the people festivals to keep as a way of remembering. God warns the people of Israel not to forget what God has done on their behalf. God warns them as they go into the land of plenty to remember who they are and what God has done. They are to remember that they were once slaves and God delivered them. They are to remember God's deliverance at the Red Sea and God's provision in the wilderness. They are to remember that it was God that was giving them the land of promise. They are not only to remember, but also to tell it to their children so they could remember.

When we come to the text in Mark, we

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read earlier that we find Jesus and His disciples getting ready for a time of remembrance. They were going to gather in Jerusalem for the Passover and the Passover Meal. The Passover, more than any other festival and meal, was a time of great remembrance. It was the time they remembered God's deliverance of God's people from Egypt, and how God had passed over them as God brought judgment upon Egypt. Now as Jesus and His disciples met to hold this one meal of remembrance, Jesus would offer a new moment of remembrance.

Jesus would take the bread during the meal and bless it, that is give thanks for it, and then say take this as my body. Then he took the cup and blessed it and offered it to them. This would have been a common cup. As they were drinking from this common cup, Jesus would say this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Then he added, "I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it anew in the Kingdom of God."

Did Jesus mean for this moment to become a time of remembering? In both Mark and Matthew's gospel, there is nothing said by Jesus about making this a moment that is repeated to remember Jesus. In the gospel of Luke, there is added to this story "do this in remembrance of me." In 1 Corinthians when Paul is instructing the church how to keep the Lord's Supper, in this moment of remembrance he states that we are to eat this bread and drink this cup as a way of remembering the Lord's death until Jesus comes again.

It is important to know that 1 Corinthians, Paul's instructions predate the writing of the gospels. Paul's letter to the Corinthians also predates Mark's gospel, which is the earliest. This simply means that the church was already practicing this meal as a time of remembrance. Although not found in Matthew and Mark, the thought that this was a repeated moment of remembrance was understood by the church and was being practiced as a time to remember Jesus.

It is in this form that it has been passed to us. We come to this moment in the life of our church and gather at the Lord's Table and as we do, we

are here to remember. We are to remember Jesus.

Just what do we remember when we remember Jesus? I watched an interesting Ted Talk this week on the message of false memories. There is a whole field of study that is based not on the problem of forgetting, but on the problem of remembering. Remembering false memories. In crime scenes or at times of crisis, we have the ability to actually create false memories that can become as real to us as to what actually happened. I share this with you because each time we come to the Lord's Table we are here to read just our memory and our view of God as fully expressed in Jesus.

In our moments of crisis and stress, it is not only possible for us to create false memories about events; it is also a time when we might create a false memory about God. In our times of trouble, doubt, anxiety or stress we might begin to create a new image of God. We in a sense create a false memory.

It seems to me that in moments of crisis the three false memories we create about God are that God is unloving, unwilling, or unable. We remember a difficult time in life and when we remember God in that moment we might conclude God does not really love me or I would never have passed through this hard time. We might conclude God loves me, but God is unwilling to help me. Another memory we might create is that God loves me and is willing, but is ultimately unable to help me. These moments cannot only affect the way we view God in that moment, but how we remember God in future moments. Today we come to the Lord's Table to reorient our memory and our image of God. It is here we remember anew.

We remember God is at work. Jesus chose the Passover Meal to institute a new moment of remembrance. The Passover is about God's salvation and deliverance. Now Jesus would be God's ultimate story of salvation and deliverance. We must remember something important about Jesus and that is Jesus was God's promised Messiah. This is important for two reasons I want to mention to you today.

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The first is that Jesus is the reminder that God is at work in our world. God's salvation work began once sin entered into this world, and continued through Jesus' today. Jesus is the reminder that God had been at work reconciling the world to Himself and in Jesus has done so fully and completely.

Yet, here is the other important point and that is Jesus was the Jewish Messiah whose coming would not only save Israel, but the whole world. God was at work through God's Israel, God's chosen people and this reminds us that God's work is not what we expect. God uses Israel to bring salvation to the world. God uses a small nation, a vulnerable nation, and a nation of people who have been enslaved, wanderers and who has forever been a pawn in the larger global community. It has always been that way. Yet, God chooses through Israel to bring salvation to the world.

That is the way God works. God confounds the powerful of this world by using the weak and the small. God's ways are not our ways.

When we come to the table of Jesus we are reminded that God is at work in our world and in your life and my life and many times we just miss it because God's ways are not our ways nor God's thoughts our thoughts. The cross itself is the great example of this. How does God give us life? It is through the death of God's only son. How does God choose to reveal God's power? Not by saving Jesus, but by giving Jesus. Over and over again the Bible shows us that God is at work but the problem is we just miss it.

Today we come to the table and we remember God is at work in Jesus and we ask God to show us how God is working in our lives, so that we might exclaim like Jacob of old "surely the Lord was in this place and I knew it not."

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We remember at the table that God is loving. Jesus says this is my body that is given and blood that is poured out. Interestingly there is no verb for is in this passage. So, Jesus said literally take my body and this, my covenant blood. Was it meant for us to take literally? No, not literally. It does not make logical sense for Jesus to be there and then to say this is literally my body and blood. It is, of course, symbolic or represents Him and more so represents something deeper. We find that in the term poured out. The concept that there is an offering made.

Jesus became an offering for us, for our sin, for our transgressions. Jesus was poured out as a sacrifice for us. Why? We are told because God loved us and sent Jesus.

I know there are moments in life when we wonder, "does God love me?" If God loves us, how does this happen? The sinfulness of our choices and the choice of others can create a false memory in regards to God's love, but at the Lord's Table we remember God's love. We remember that Jesus poured out His covenant

blood for us.

We also remember today that we are unfinished. Jesus says to His disciples that He will not drink again of the fruit of the vine, until He comes into the Kingdom of God. Scholars are divided on just what this means. Did Jesus mean He would not drink and eat with His disciples again, until after His resurrection? That is of course true. After the resurrection, Jesus would be with His disciples on numerous occasions. Did Jesus mean that He would not drink of the cup, until the fulfillment of all things in His coming again? There are many who believe Jesus is pointing to the fulfillment of all things when there will be the great feast and celebration. Jesus' return and the Kingdom of God is throughout the Bible seen as a great banquet.

In many ways, both interpretations are true. The point is that God was unfinished. Follow me

WHEN WE COME TO THE TABLE OF JESUS WE ARE REMINDED THAT GOD IS AT WORK IN OUR WORLD AND IN YOUR LIFE AND MY LIFE AND MANY TIMES WE JUST MISS IT BECAUSE GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS NOR GOD'S THOUGHTS OUR THOUGHTS.