

Remember the Cross to Live Your Life

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Date: 15 October 2017

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[0:00] Well, the Bible does not give us a definite schedule for how often we should remember the Lord's death and communion. It never says every week or every other week or once a month. There's no definite schedule.

Jesus said, do this in remembrance of me. So as long as we need to remember him, we need to be doing this. And so it needs to be a consistent, ongoing part of the Christian's life, the church's life.

And the question is, why? Why does it need to be a consistent, ongoing part of your life and our life as a body? Well, it has to do with the nature, the biblical nature of remembering.

Because you probably know this, the Bible generally doesn't use the word remember in sort of just a simple cognitive way. So kids, you're getting ready for a test and you need to study in order that you can remember the answers.

It's not that kind of remembering. It's not merely recalling facts. So we ask God to remember us.

[1:19] Psalm 106. Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people. Come to my aid when you save them. So we're not asking God to recall any facts.

We're asking him to act on our behalf. To put us in mind and then act upon us and for us. The thief on the cross.

Remember what he told Jesus. Remember me. When you come into your kingdom. It was not. He wasn't saying reminisce about that old thief on the cross.

When you come into your kingdom. He's saying, do something for me. Save me. When you come into your kingdom. Remember me. Call me to mind and act.

Hebrews 13.3. Remember your brothers in prison and chains. Again. Their plight. Their situation.

[2:21] Needs to have bearing and weight. In your own heart. And in your mind. So that you pray for them. And so you act on what you know. So remember them. And that's why communion needs to be this consistent.

Ongoing part of the church's life. And our life. Because the cross. Our Lord's salvation. Our Lord's exodus. Is what we heard this morning.

His great salvation. His humiliation. His love. His blood. His sacrifice. Needs to act powerfully. Upon us. Not merely.

Recalling the events. But having to act powerfully. In our own hearts. It needs to change how we think. And how we act. And so communion calls us back.

To the very. Center. Of the Christian life. Not to some. Something. On the edges. The very center.

[3:21] So the Christian life is a. Cruciform life. A cross shaped. Life. And so the cross is. The template.

The cross. Is the shape. That gets overlaid. Over our whole. Lives. Over our hearts. Over our souls. Over our minds. Over our lives.

The cross. And. That's why we need to remember. Because we're always. Losing track of that. Losing sight of that. It's forever getting out of focus.

And so we put on other templates. Other lenses. To look at. To look at God. To look at. Myself. To look at me. To look at others. To look at. My life. And so. In the world.

In the flesh. In the devil. They're glad to help in that. To give us other templates. To put on other lenses. Instead. Of the cross. And so. Instead of.

[4:19] Of looking at life. Through the cross. We look at it. Through. Something else. And so. Instead of acting. From the cross. Aren't we always.

Finding some other way. To act. And so. The danger. The temptation. The wandering. The blurring. The losing the focus.

It's always happening. And that's why. We need tonight. Because tonight. Is when we bring it back. Into focus. We put the right shape. On our lives. On our heart.

And the way we look at God. And everything. And so. We need to remember the cross. We need to feel. Its effects upon us. Because it's through the cross.

That we. See what God is like. Without the cross. You take the cross away. And you do really lose God.

[5:17] You lose the biblical. God. The only God that there is. You become blind to him. And so you can't see him. He might have the same name. He might have some of the same features.

But you lose. Him. You can't see God. Without the cross. On Wednesday night.

A few of us were talking about this week. About Josie. And. And. That whole situation. And everything. And. And he said. There's a peace. That you have.

When you see that this is from his hand. That God has done this. And there is. A peace in that. And we might not know all the details. But we know that.

This has come from him. And so it has to be good. I don't know how it is. But. It has to be good. In a. In a way. Because it's in his hands.

[6:12] It's from his hands. And. And we want to say. Yes. That is absolutely true. But you know. That really all depends on the kind of God.

That this is coming from. The kind of God that you believe in. So what. Kind of heart. Is directing those hands. And really. That's where the.

The cross answers that question. What kind of heart. Is directing these hands. Because without the cross. There. There's no comfort there. There's no peace there.

Even in the sovereign God. Because what. What is his heart. But the cross shows us God's heart. God is holy. He is just.

He can do. No wrong. He cannot sin. That's what kind of heart. Is guiding these hands. You can't do wrong.

[7:07] Ever. And it shows us a God. Who is good. Who is indescribably. Ineffably. Unexplainably. Good.

Angels long to look into this. This is far above them. It's far above us. And he loves sinners. And he loves people. With a fierce. Determination.

With this extravagant. With what one person called. Prodigal. This incredible. Generous. Generous love. And. That's the kind of hands.

That this comes from. And so we need. Tonight. Especially in times like this. Because we need to remember. God's heart. And we remember. We need to remember the cross. Because it reminds us of.

Who we are. Because. Along with all that blurring. One thing that we also lose sight of. Is. Who am I? What am I? Well.

[8:03] What does the cross say? Well. It says we're dead to sin. We're loved by God. We're raised to new life. We're forgiven. We're dearly loved. Dearly loved.

And the cross shows us. How we need to see ourselves. Our place in God's world. Our place in God's design. Our place in God's family.

And so we're not alone. We're not rejected. We're not despised. We're not forsaken. We aren't any of those things. Because Jesus was. Those things for us.

We aren't rejected. Because Jesus was rejected. He was punished for us. And so now there's no more wrath. So where do we learn. That identity. We learn it at the cross.

And it's a lesson. That we need to keep on learning. Because we lose it. And so we need this tonight. But it's just not. It's not just how we see God.

[9:04] It's not just how we see ourselves. As fundamental. As those things are. It has. Tonight has a very practical purpose. We need to remember. For very practical reasons.

Because the cross is not only. The template of how we see God. And how we see ourselves. It's our whole life. How we are to act.

How we are to treat other people. What are we to do. And so Christ is. At the very center. The cross is at the very center. Of all of that.

And so Christ is our example. But he's also our motivation. He not only shows us. What we are to do. He puts the wind in our sails. Because he does it first.

He does it for us. And when we feel that. And know that. By the power of the spirit. We go. And we do. Likewise. And so the cross is forever. Rubbing off those rough spots.

[9:59] Those rough bits of selfishness. And self-centeredness. That me-centered way of living. And it's forever encouraging us. To bend outward from ourselves.

And out onto other people. And that's why we need to. And that's what we. That's what we want to meditate on. Tonight. Just with the time that we have left.

We need to remember. And you need to remember. Christ's suffering and death. To live your life. Whatever your life is.

And as I look out. There's a lot of different kinds of lives. Different circumstances. Different relationships. Different situations. And yet. Whatever kind of life that is.

That God has given you. The cross. Needs to be guiding us. Needs to be guiding you. So we need to remember. Again. And again.

[10:55] Remember what that remembering is. It's having it. Powerfully calling to mind. And acting upon it. So. Just five quick points. Number one.

I want to talk to husbands. I begin with husbands. With something very practical. What does the cross. Say to you. What should tonight remind you of.

Ephesians 5.25. Husbands. Love your wives. Just as Christ loved the church. So. In the same way. That Christ loved the church.

And he gave himself up for her. So husbands. Why do you need tonight? Well. Because. You have all the same seeds.

In your heart that I do. Seeds of selfishness. Seeds of greed. And self pity.

- [11:54] And self centeredness. Wanting. My wife. And my marriage. To be about me. My comfort. My ease. My convenience.
- But that. Isn't. Christian. Marriage. Christian marriage is cruciform. It's cross shaped. And so. You need communion.
- Because you need to remember that. That's how Christ loved you. That's how he loved his bride. That's how he loved his wife. The church.
- And how he loved you. How he loved you. He loved you. He loved his bride with just dying love.
- With self sacrificing love. He gave himself up for her. He counted his life nothing to save her. To love her. He didn't ask what she could do for him.
- [12:53] He wasn't forever counting. Well she should do this. And then I'll do that. He didn't count. Well she owes me this. Or she should do that. She owed him everything.
- And he gave her everything. And so the question was not. In that. At the cross. The question was not. Was she going to love me? The question was.
- Am I going to love her? And he did. And so. I get off centered. I lose my focus. And I. I get into feeling sorry for myself. Or being high.
- And demanding. And expecting this. And expecting that. And then it comes to me. Husbands. Love your wives. And how did Jesus love his bride?
- With total. Selflessness. With total dedication. With absolute commitment. He went down into the pain.
- [13:52] He went down into the agony. He embraced death. To give her life. He embraced sorrow. To give her joy. So husbands.
- Jesus did that for you. Remember that. Act on it. Go and do likewise. Number two. We have five. This is number two.
- And here we want to talk about. Taking care of those who are in need. Taking care of those who are in need. And here we're talking about generosity. Generosity of money.
- Generosity of time. Generosity of emotional energy. Generosity of any part of us. And this is. Where the cross needs to. Teach us. Because I'm forever.
- Forever. Drawing in on myself. And asking. And saying. Well this is what I want. What could I do with that money? What could I do with this? How could I use this?
- [14:51] And then that's why we need to remember the cross. That's why we need to remember. That bloody middle cross. Second Corinthians 8 9.
- For you know. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. That though he was rich. Yet for your sakes.
- He became poor. So that you through his poverty. Might become rich. What was Jesus doing. On the cross. He was embracing poverty.
- He's making himself poor. He gave up all of heaven's wealth. He even gave up his own righteousness. He took our debts.
- And our sin. To make us rich. So we need to bring our greed. And our stubbornness. And our cold heartedness.
- [15:54] To that cross. And remember. What kind of heart he was showing. What he was doing. Number three. Why do we need to remember tonight?
- We need to remember because. And really. Maybe this is the center of it all. We're naturally proud. We're naturally. We naturally say.

What's in this for me? We can be the most cold. And calculating of people. Can't we? With anyone. We go to church.

What's in it for me? We come home. And maybe the question isn't even a. Conscious question. What's in it for me? What can I get out of this?

I'm always on the out. I'm always looking out for my own interests. My own interest. But again. That's why we need tonight.

[16:56] Each of you should look. Not only to your own interests. But also to the interest of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Who being in very nature.

God. Did not consider equality with God. Something to be grasped. Equality. A status with God. Not something to be held on to. At all cost.

But he made himself nothing. Taking. Taking. Taking. The very nature of a servant. And being found in human likeness. Talk about a step down.

And being found in appearance as a man. He humbled himself. So not. Only did he humble himself in becoming a man. Now he humbles himself in how he was a man.

And then he humbles himself in how he dies. He became obedient to death. Even death on a cross. And so what. What's the point of all of that? Well.

[17:59] What was Jesus doing for us on the cross? He was looking out for our interests. That beautiful. Home.

That Paul quotes. It's to prove this point. That we need to look out. For other people's interests. It's not all about me. It's not all about what I can get for myself.

Jesus was taking care of us. He was saying. He was not saying what was good. Going to be good for him. He was saying. What's going to be good for them? Because if Jesus.

Was. Was going to say. What's good for me? He would have stayed in heaven. Amen. Doing what was good for you.

Certainly wasn't good for him. Was it? Nails. Whips. Spit. Beating. That's no health tonic.

[19:04] Isn't good for anyone. But his nails. And his. The whips. And the beating. And the. The. Beard. Pulling. And the flogging. It was for my good. His wounds. Heal me.

Why did he. Take those wounds upon himself. For me. He was looking out for my interest. He was serving me. And so then how can I go about strutting.

And saying what's in it for me. When we come to the cross. Don't you say. Make my selfishness. Make it die.

Perish. And so I need tonight. Because I need to remember. And I need to remember this tomorrow. And the next day. And I need that cross to be that blazing center.

[20:07] In the middle of my heart. Because it's the only thing that's going to kill this. Over inflated view of myself. That can go into every situation. And begin measuring.

And manipulating. And asking what's good for me. Number four. Let's talk about forgiving each other. Forgiving each other.

To live. Life is to be sinned against. That's just. It goes with the territory. It's others slinging mud on you. It's unfair.

It's unrighteous. And it happens. And sometimes it's the little slights. And sometimes it's the big ones. Sometimes it's the. The smallest. Things.

And sometimes it's the. The most radical. Unfair. Judgments. These. Devastating sins. Against us. So to live. Is to be sinned against.

[21:04] And that's your life. That's your life. That's my life. That's our life together. As a church. We are a. Fellowship. We are a body.

Of saved sinners. And yet. We are sinners still. And so we're going to be sinning against each other. And that's why we need to remember.

Ephesians 4.32. Be kind and compassionate to one another. Forgiving each other. Just as. God. In Christ. Forgave. You. Again.

Well. Again. What was Jesus doing. On the cross. Well. He was securing. He was gaining. Our forgiveness. He was bearing our sin.

In order that God might not count. Our sins against us. And so he was winning peace with God. God was counting sin against him.

[22:01] And he bore all of our sins. That we could go free. That we could be forgiven. And that's amazing grace. Jesus died.

In order that there might not be any grudge. Any reluctance. Any cloud. Any shadow. Any anger. Any guilt. Between God and me. And so how can I go around.

Holding grudges against my brothers and sisters. God forgave me. In Christ. And God did it.

At. At the cross. That was the place. Where forgiveness was won. It just didn't happen. It happened at the cross.

The. The blood. The body. The wrenching agony. The bleeding soul. The forsakenness. Of all of that. That was my savior.

[22:57] Winning me. Forgiveness. Forgiveness. Forgiveness. We need to remember that. Because it's only that. That's going to keep us from. Fighting. And devouring each other.

From carrying those grudges. From ten years ago. And five years ago. Collecting slights. All along the way. Until we destroy each other.

So we need to remember. Our savior's blood. Poured down. Poured down.

On Golgotha. And it set me free. From my sin. So now how can I. Turn around. And go and choke.

My fellow servant. So they sinned against you. Yeah.

[23:52] And you sinned against God. And God forgave you. And he forgave you at the cross. Forgave you through Christ.

Through his death. So now go and forgive them. Number five. Last. First John. Chapter four. Verse ten. This is love.

Not that we. Loved God. God. That's John's way of saying. Let's get things in the right order. We're not going to be talking about.

How magnificent. Our love for God is. No. This is love. Not that we love God. But that he loved us. And he sent his son. As an atoning sacrifice. For our sins.

Dear friends. Since God. So loved us. We also ought to love. One another. So what. Again.

[24:48] What was happening at the cross? It was God. Loving us. It was God. Pouring out his love for us.

It was Jesus Christ. Pouring out his life. In a sacrifice. But it was a sacrifice of love. And love. That's what the cross is about.

Love for sinners. And so in love. There's blood. And in love. There's pain. Because that's what John is saying.

This is what love is. And look how God loves us. It's blood. It's death. It's agony.

It's division. Even within the Godhead. And if that is what love is. Then how unfitting. How imbalanced.

[25 : 44] How out of order. How out of line. The injustice. If he loved us. Like that. That we wouldn't love our brothers and sisters.

He loved them like that. He loved them like that. So shouldn't we love them. It's one of those things that. You know what stirs up love in my heart.

When I think about. How God loves you. If God loves you like that. Shouldn't I? And since he so loved us.

We also ought to love one another. God's heart was so full of love. For his people. And you can put your name in there.

If you're a Christian. So full of love for you. So full of affection. Overflowing with goodwill. With a desire to do you good.

[26 : 45] Like Abraham. He raises the knife. And unlike Abraham. He plunges it into his son. And he drags his son.

To the place of wrath. And he throws him in. And that's what love is. That's the burning.

Radical. Blazing. Love. Of God. But it doesn't end there. He raises him up again. He raised him up again. For our justification. He put him at God's right.

He put him. He seated him at his right hand. In order that. That son might pray for us. Without ceasing. And plead for us. And then he makes him king.

And head over all. But not just. Head over all. But for our good. So do you see the love of God. He takes him down to the very depths.

[27 : 43] And he raises him to the very heights. And all along the way. God is thinking of us. And saying. I want to do them good. He loved us. He loves us like that.

And that's how he loved your brothers and sisters. In Christ. That's how he loved them. So what should you do?

You should love them too. You should love them too. You should love them too. God. God. we need to remember we need this.

Well, I hope you've seen this evening why we need to keep doing this. Because it brings us back to the very center of the Christian life. And it centers us.

It puts us there. And so as we take this meal, we are more than remembering the Lord's death. We are committing again to live the Christian life. We are committing again to live in its light, to live as Christians.

[28 : 54] And do you see what a high calling that is then? The world lives for lots of other things and a lot of other things are in the center. But what is in the center of the Christian's life?

It's the cross. The cross. So what we're remembering tonight, but we're also committing to live in its light. So think about these things as we take the bread and as we take the cup.

And then we're happy with you.