



## What does the Scripture say?

### *What We Remember* 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

#### Introduction:

When the Jews at the time of Jesus gathered annually to share the Passover meal, it was a time to remember. Clearly, they remembered how God instituted the very first Passover in the book of Exodus (chapter 12). They doubtlessly remembered how they were once slaves in Egypt. They remembered the slaying of the lamb and the spreading of its blood over the door posts of their homes. They remembered how God told them to celebrate the Passover so that future generations could learn how the Lord delivered them.

As Believers today, we too are told to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25). While we may not share some of the literal aspects of Israel's history, we can remember our slavery in sin, Christ's sacrifice, and God's call for us to share with others about the Lord's great salvation throughout every generation. The Lord's Supper is truly a time for us to reflect meaningfully on what we remember.

#### 1. Remembering Our Slavery

Just as the Israelites were in slavery in Egypt when God instituted the first Passover, we remember how God saved us when we were slaves to our sin. While we do not "remember" our slavery to sin in the sense that we live in the past, we do reflect on this dark time in our lives to celebrate God's salvation.

Paul essentially called the Gentile Believers in Ephesus to do this very same thing. After he talks about how God saves us by His grace through faith and makes us His masterpieces in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10), Paul writes in **Ephesians 2:11-13**, *"Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called 'uncircumcised' by those who call themselves 'the circumcision' (that done in the body by the hands of men)--<sup>12</sup> remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ."*

We see here twice how Paul called the Gentile Believers in Ephesus to "remember" all that God accomplished for them when He saved them by His grace. While these Believers were not yet all God wanted them to be, they clearly understood they were not what they used to be! Their reflection on dark days of their slavery in sin was like a shadow cast in their memory which served to accentuate the brightness of God's



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deliverance and continuous work of grace in their lives. They were not living in the past, but they certainly learned a lot about God's grace which reached and rescued them from the shackles of their past.

And so it is with us. Many times we can become discouraged when we think of where we have not yet "arrived" in our Christian walk, but we forget the depths from where God has brought us from. While we do not need to "settle and be content" in some unhealthy way, we should seek to celebrate God's salvation which has set us free! In this way, we can remember our slavery and praise the Lord for His amazing grace that has saved us.

### 2. Remembering Christ's Sacrifice

Of course, remembering how God delivered us from our slavery in sin naturally leads to a reflection on Christ's sacrifice. Just as the Israelites certainly remembered how the blood of a lamb was spilled and spread on the door posts of their homes so that they could escape the judgment of death, we too remember as we partake of the Lord's Supper how Christ's blood was shed in sacrifice for us.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was bloody and gruesome. There is simply no way for our words to capture all of the horror of that moment. Jesus not only suffered through the agony of physical torture and crucifixion, but He also took upon Himself the judgment from God that our sins deserved. Peter says in **1 Peter 3:18a**, "*For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.*" Here we see how Jesus' death on the cross was the perfect sacrifice for us as sinners so that we could be brought to God.

Again, the first two points of this message go hand-in-hand because we already read what Paul said in **Ephesians 2:13b** that "*you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.*" It is the blood of Christ which brings us to God since it is only the spotless blood of Christ which brings us cleansing and the forgiveness of sins. **Hebrews 10:10b** says that "*we have been made holy [cleansed and set apart for God] through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,*" and **Hebrews 9:22b** tells us that "*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*" Yet, Paul tells us in **Ephesians 1:7** that "*in [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*"

So we remember Christ's sacrifice, shedding His blood and rising from the grave, because it is through Him and His finished work for our salvation that we are saved!



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### 3. Remembering the Call to Share

Lastly, we learn in Exodus 12:25-27 that the Israelites were to celebrate the Passover for future generations. They were to observe this ceremony as they entered the Promised Land, and when their children in future generations asked about the Passover, they were to share how God delivered them from the Egyptians.

Paul also tells us how we are called to share with others about Christ's death. In fact, he tells us that whenever we partake of the Lord's Supper in particular, "*you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes*" (1 Corinthians 11:26b). Just as the Israelites used the Passover ceremony to share with their children about God's deliverance, the Lord's Supper time is a good teaching opportunity for parents to share with their children about God's salvation in Christ. Of course, we do not limit our "proclamation" to our children alone. Rather, we can use this time as a regular reminder to tell the whole world about God's salvation in Christ.

#### **Conclusion:**

As we mentioned in the introduction to this message, we can apply Christ's call and Paul's reiteration of Christ's call to partake of communion in "remembrance" of Him in three specific ways. We can remember how God delivered us from the slavery of our sin, how Christ gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sin, and how God calls us to share with others about His great salvation in Christ!