

# Luke 22:14-20 “More Than a Memorial”

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Date: 28 May 2023

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

We are going to take a break this morning from our almost completed study of 1 Peter to talk about communion, the Lord's Supper, the sacrament that we are about to celebrate together in just a few minutes.

And one reason for that is that it is Memorial Day weekend. And what better time than to talk about the most important memorial in our lives, this supper.

In fact, we're going to talk about how it is even more than merely a memorial. Secondly, we're talking about it this morning because I want to share with you some changes in our celebration of the Lord's Supper here at Southwood in the future.

As our leaders have considered this over the past months, even years, and I'm going to do that as we go this morning. But let's begin with God's Word by reading Luke's account of Jesus' institution of this meal for us.

[ 1 : 2 5 ]     Jesus here in Luke 22 is nearing His death, right? He has gathered His disciples with Him to celebrate the Passover feast in the upper room.

He's going to remember the deliverance of God's people out of their bondage in Egypt. How God fulfilled His covenant promises to His beloved people through the blood of the Lamb on the doorposts as they made unleavened bread to eat as they left in a hurry.

except this time Jesus wants to bring new rich meaning into the old feast that they know so well he's going to transform every future celebration listen to what he says to them Luke 22 at verse 14 and when the hour came Jesus reclined at table and the apostles with him and he said to them I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer for I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God and he took a cup and when he had given thanks he said take this and divide it among yourselves for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes and he took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them saying this is my body which is given for you do this in remembrance of me and likewise the cup after they had eaten saying this cup that is poured out for for you is the new covenant in my blood this is God's word let's pray together father as we give you thanks for this your word and this record of this special last supper we pray that you would by your spirit help our hearts that as we come to your table it would be more more than a memorial than a memorial for us that you would minister your grace to us that we would see our savior clearly that we would rejoice in his love and that our lives would be transformed we can't do that but you can and so we ask you to do that in Jesus name amen have you forgotten this week that Jesus died for you because he loves you my guess is if I if I ran into you say at target and I came up behind you and said hey do you remember the name of the guy who died on the cross for you because he loves you so much that most of you could have said yes it was Jesus you did not forget right but let me ask you differently have you had any moment this week where you felt distant from God have you had any opportunities to share the the good news of forgiveness in Jesus that you've neglected have you made any decisions in this past week that were motivated primarily by self-interest in what you wanted now those are very different questions aren't they I bet almost every one of us can answer yes to at least one of those questions if we're being honest because it is one thing to remember something passively intellectually in your mind the facts are there if you're asked and it is quite another thing altogether to remember something actively practically in your life the truth the truth shapes what you do and and this distinction about remembering is so important in our lives in our relationships with God this is as we've said a special weekend

where we remember don't we particularly tomorrow on Memorial Day those who have given their lives to protect us to provide us with freedoms we enjoy in our country to to sacrifice their lives in place of ours but let me ask you about that is the goal of Memorial Day to be able to answer questions about the U.S. military correctly on a history test that you might have sometime is that the point you know how many soldiers died in the Civil War name 30 soldiers from Huntsville that died in World War II which battle in history has had the most American casualties to be able to answer those right on a test someday or is the goal of Memorial Day to to live in light of the sacrifice that those soldiers made to to actually feel something different to feel deep gratitude for them to to to do something different to commit yourself to enjoying and protecting the freedoms they fought for to to speak differently to honor with your words the soldiers and their families who paid such a high price which of those remembers them better let me ask you to think of the difference in remembering intellectually and remembering actively just one more way what does it mean for me to remember my wedding anniversary 19 years coming up on July 3rd see I remember it's in my notes got it right if in when that day comes July 3rd in a little bit over a month

I am alone playing golf or hanging out with another woman and Christy calls me and says hey sweetheart do you remember what day our anniversary is and I respond very quickly yes indeed I do honey it's July 3rd that's today am I remembering our anniversary or does remembering our anniversary mean renewing that covenant commitment that I made 19 years ago before God and these witnesses to one particular woman doing something to honor her regardless of the specific day finding some way to celebrate and to demonstrate committed love to my wife there's a big difference in those two isn't there if you don't think there's a big difference you talk to me or my wife later there's a big difference that same difference is there in the Bible when God talks about remembering or forgetting

[ 9 : 14 ] Derek mentioned some of this earlier sometimes it can be merely recalling a fact to mind but often when we see in the Bible this idea of remembering it is much more about having your entire life shaped by a reality having that so at the center of your heart at the forefront of your mind that it drives actions and words and attitudes let me give you just a couple biblical examples in the book of Judges God's people keep cycling through seasons of worshipping him and then of chasing after other gods and idols of the nations around them and it's described in chapter 8 of Judges as the people did not remember Yahweh their God did they forget his name?

unlikely we're told the way they forgot Yahweh was they intentionally chose to make Baal their God they listened to his prophets and followed his ways and forgot did not remember Yahweh throughout the Bible we're told of God remembering different people Rachel Abraham Jacob many others later in the book of Judges it's Samson Samson if you don't remember him is the guy with the really long hair and big muscles right?

except his long hair gets cut off Samson is well aware that God has not forgotten who he is God has removed his strength from him but Samson prays oh Lord God please remember me and what does that look like?

and strengthen me only this once God remembers and acts for Samson one last example Psalm 25 remember your mercy oh Lord and your steadfast love for they have been from of old remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions according to your steadfast love remember me for the sake of your goodness oh Lord what's he saying?

it's not a prayer for God to have memory loss is it? see we need God to remember some things and not remember others at the same time in this case he's saying to relate to us according to one set of things his mercy and his steadfast love that's what we need and not to relate to us according to another thing what's that?

[ 12 : 14 ] our sin certainly God hasn't intellectually forgotten either of them but remembering means shaping one's actions around that reality so why all this talk about remembering?

remembering friends when Jesus sits and says do this in remembrance of me as my memorial Jesus says he's not merely afraid that his disciples will be forgetful and not realize that he died on a cross now we we can be distracted and be very forgetful so that possibility exists but rather Jesus is giving us a gift an action a meal to keep at the forefront of our minds and the center of our hearts in a way that shapes our lives the reality that is most important in the entire universe his love and sacrifice for us when we gather at this table

I don't know how many of you can see what it says on the front if you're not in the first couple of rows and most of you aren't there are great seats up here that you can't read there's actually words written on the front of the table it says this do in remembrance of me what is it exactly that we are to remember what does Jesus tell us he's very clear here when he sits with his disciples we're to remember his body given for us verse 19 his blood of a new covenant with us that's verse 20 we remember Christ's death for us God's promises of forgiveness of our sins perhaps as you come to the table you even confess specific sins it's a deliverance from our bondage by the blood of the lamb right and as a result of that relationship with God himself that's the promise of the covenant that God makes with us that all who are covered by the blood of Jesus all who are trusting in his death for them will live with God forever wow what a what a promise what a thing to remember and rejoice in remembering is an action we proclaim his death every time we do this we don't just think about something we proclaim his death every time until he comes back even more than that we remember as we share the meal together our union with

Christ that we are connected to him by faith that we participate in his death and in his resurrection we are united to him and therefore we are united with one another no matter what our differences are we remember that he brings us together so we remember that amazing and gracious relationship he brought us into because he verse 15 earnestly desired to eat this Passover meal with his disciples and he earnestly desires to share this fellowship meal with us and we remember Christ's eternal life and therefore our eternal hope because if we died with him we will also live with him twice here in the last supper eternity comes up verse 16 and verse 18 Jesus says he won't eat this meal again until he's in God's kingdom at the fulfillment of this fellowship meal this glorious marriage supper of the lamb we remember that's coming and all we need to know that that's a meal we will share one day but you hadn't forgotten those things right before you came in here this morning if I'd asked any of you in the parking lot you could have told me those things were true so this table must be more than a mere memorial it is a means of

God's grace coming to help us to live shaped by those realities that are brought at this table to the front of our minds and the center of our hearts right that's what's supposed to happen for us we're supposed to be engaged so deeply with our heads and with our hearts that this week our hands are different because of what happens here I want you to think specifically and practically while I give us some ideas what could that look like how would your life be different if the death of Jesus for our place because he loves us so much is the controlling factor of our lives this week if that happens we will be helped to trust him in our suffering and not to feel that we are alone because we're so mindful of what he suffered for us we'll be inspired to love one another sacrificially and tangibly because he first loved us we'll be burdened to share hope with our neighbors because of our great gratitude for our living source of eternal hope that we just can't stop thinking about and we want to talk about it we'll be strengthened to repent deeply and quickly both to

[18:37] God and to others because the forgiveness and the freedom from our sin is so clear to us that it makes us eager to repent if that becomes if that's what you wake up thinking about that that becomes the foremost thing in your mind that's the thing that's controlling your heart is how much Jesus loves you and what he's done for you then you'll be motivated to give of your time and resources generously because Jesus gave of his resources and riches so generously for us we'll be comforted in our many sufferings as strangers in this world because we realize that there's a home that Jesus has for us where he set a table there and we'll feast with him and it's so much better than anything we could have here and there's great comfort in that we'll be empowered to turn from the sin for which he hung on the cross because we see how much it cost our savior we'll be equipped to find our value in a new place because we look for it in our performance don't we and how well we do and who thinks what of it and we realize here that Jesus treasured us before we performed at all or did anything for him if this is what is controlling your heart you'll be encouraged this week to spend time with Jesus because you'll be overwhelmed by the lengths that he went to to be in relationship with you and so you'll be all the more eager to be with him that's what

Jesus wants for you those are the types of things and hopefully others that are coming to mind for you that are actually what he's calling you to when he tells you to take and eat and drink in remembrance of him now I'll be honest I'm not going to forget Jesus's name this week but I need God's grace I need his help remembering in those ways because that's not the way I wake up every morning and so we have the gift of the Lord's Supper and so we want to celebrate the Lord's Supper more often okay that is the that is the primary change I want to share with you this morning we have decided to double the frequency of our celebrating the Lord's

Supper in our services here at Southwood more or less from monthly to every other week stop clapping stop that's enough no I say that sincerely it ought to bring joy to our hearts right the heart behind this is that this is a good gift of God's grace to us and we want to make sure that we are fed with it regularly because we need it I need it if it was merely an intellectual reminder lest you forget then once a year would be more than enough right but since it is to be a life shaping remembrance and other things at least in my life crowd in so much and so quickly distract my focus our hearts and our lives need this more often right now

I know this because I've talked to some of you we've realized all that it takes is getting scheduled on a couple of wrong Sundays to serve in the nursery and then a kid gets sick on another second Sunday and maybe you have a work trip or a family vacation and all of a sudden without even trying real hard you've gone six months without celebrating the Lord's Supper we don't want that for any of you God has promised to minister his grace to us here in a way that we can't get anywhere else so let's engage wholeheartedly with joy and gratitude every opportunity that we have to do this together I do also want you to know that we are continuing to evaluate the impact of this on our lives we want your feedback in this because we want all of our members engaged in regular heartfelt meaningful celebration of this special supper we don't want it to be neglected or to become nonchalant and no big deal but without a direct biblical command for exactly how often we may stay at this new frequency that we're trying now we may go back to once a month and decide that was more helpful we may increase to every week and decide that's what's best but before settling on that we want to evaluate with you the impact that increasing the frequency of our celebration has on our hearts and on our lives so in the weeks and months ahead we'll need you to talk with us about how that's going for you does that make sense one other change to tell you about today is connected to the elements that represent to us the body and blood of Jesus and that is really important for our remembrance right they're gonna help us remember when Jesus himself instituted the supper he did so with unleavened bread and wine our bread while tasty which I love is actually unleavened contrary to what many

I talk to expect to hear so there's no change there we can enjoy our bread and delight in that but we do now have gluten-free options as well at the center you see the pedestal here front and back if you need that just come over to those tables for the gluten-free bread the same grape juice will also be served in the same cups that we have used for years but we are not today but in the future going to add wine in the same trays with purple cups that are clearly labeled to distinguish juice and wine okay so to be clear there's no wine today okay and I mean that that's important we don't want anyone to in this moment be confused or struggling and in any way have a difficult time coming to the table and be surprised we wanted you to have opportunity to ask questions process concerns that you may have to shepherd your children in their preparation for how they should participate so that's not today but in the future we in no way want any of you to feel bad about continuing to take grape juice as some of your leaders will do the same thing you are not missing out in any way on the full experience of the

[ 26 : 24 ] Lord's supper that's not the point and this is why we want the liquids clearly distinguished so that our young people our brothers and sisters who struggle with alcohol abuse and any others who prefer juice for any reason whatsoever don't get confused or caught off guard okay that's that's our heart in this but besides wine being the practice of the church through history all the way back to Corinth where those who drank too much at their church gathering are chastised by Paul for getting drunk that's not okay and all the way up to the 1920s America and the prohibition era the church has celebrated with wine in addition to that background wine represents very well both the bitter and the sweet aspects of our

Savior's death on the cross the bitter cup of God's wrath right that is poured out upon sin and it's the same one that's the sweet cup of forgiveness that brings joy to our hearts as we celebrate that this change in the elements adding wine like the change in frequency is not motivated by a desire to placate personal taste an effort to be cool I gave up on that a long time ago or to be relevant to our culture that's not the motivation rather we are seeking to be faithful to God's word while remaining considerate of all of our brothers and sisters and young people celebrating the supper together with us so having told you about those two basic changes please come talk to me today is great there's no connect hour following the service

I'll be right down here come talk today or figure out another time we can talk talk with any of our elders any of our women's advisory team members if you have questions we'd love to sit and process that more than what I'm able to say right now we want to walk with you in this and we want to hear your feedback today if that's the best time for you and in the future if that would be more helpful before we come to the table together this morning I want us to reflect on one more thing about remembering in the Bible covenant signs as memorial markers are not just for God's people to shape their hearts and lives the covenant signs are for God to remember too two-way remembrance when you look at this table and you read this do in remembrance of me that is that is two-way remembrance let me explain it to you this way have you seen a rainbow recently and remembered

God's promises to Noah and all of creation did you know when you remembered that that God was remembering the very same thing as you look what he says about the rainbow in Genesis chapter nine I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh the water shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh when the bow is in the clouds I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh on the earth we're not talking right about the omniscient creator of the universe forgetting something intellectually and needing a reminder right that's not true but God covenants with us to act on our behalf and when he remembers it means he acts in light of his promises for us

Hebrews 8 says he remembers our sins no more which doesn't mean he just can't recall who lied yesterday that's not what it means no it means he is merciful toward our iniquities right he knows them but he relates to us like we read in Psalm 25 not on the basis of our sins but on the basis of his mercy Luke 1 54 says one of the greatest times he did this was when he sent Jesus when God sends Jesus it is an act of remembrance of his mercy helping his people see when God remembers his people he acts he comes to them that is the pattern throughout scripture we can't cover it all this morning but particularly we see it when he comes to deliver them from slavery in

[ 31 : 55 ] Egypt then he comes to deliver us from slavery to sin in the person of Jesus and now as we do this in remembrance of him as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim the Lord's death yes to our own hearts we need that proclamation yes to a watching world and they need to hear that proclamation but I think quite possibly even if I can't absolutely prove it to you I'm pretty confident we proclaim the Lord's death to our God himself until he does what until he comes until he remembers and comes to deliver us once for all from ourselves and from this broken world into life everlasting with him because he has come for us listen friends before we come to this table

I want you to think about it this way if all that happens at this table is that in our relationship with God we are the only ones who do any remembering this morning there's only going to be minimal benefit from that but if God comes and remembers us and his promises to us that are signed here if he redeems us as he assures us in his word that he will and he seals to us in this sacrament that he will if he indeed lives with us can you imagine this that he lives with us at the forefront of his mind and at the center of his heart being faithful to his promises for us then the benefit of eternal right if he remembers us and what he has done and what he has promised and what he will do for us so we eat with

God this morning we renew our covenant commitment to God through Jesus God we will remember and we will live for you and he renews his covenant commitment to us through Jesus he will remember and rescue and live in relationship with us forever if that's what you trust and commit to when you participate in this sacrament to take and eat and drink in remembrance of Jesus that he's your savior that he's died for you then come and celebrate and have your life shaped anew by him and his love for you if not if that's not your personal remembrance by faith in

Jesus then don't say outwardly that it is by coming and taking these elements I would invite you to come to observe to pray with us but especially to consider the offer of Jesus of forgiveness for all of your sins lest you be left alone with your own merit standing before the holy God he invites you to have his blood cover you to stand in his righteousness before the God of glory let's pray and then we'll celebrate together God we thank you for the gift of this supper and the reminder that it gives us of your love the sacrifice that you've made the life we owe you because you paid it all and so we ask that you would set aside what are otherwise very common elements to do something in our hearts that would shape today and tomorrow and eternity would you change us because you by your spirit meet with us eat with us and bring your grace to bear on our lives that nothing would be more important to us than knowing and trusting our

Savior would you do that work now even as we celebrate this sacrament in Jesus name Amen For more information visit us online at [southwood.org](https://southwood.org)