In Remembrance!

Overview

So I want to speak this morning about remembrance. What are we to remember? What was on Jesus' mind when He said, don't forget.
Remember, it happened on the occasion of the Passover feast. The Passover feast you will recall is a memory, a traditional memory of when the Jewish people were set free from Egypt by the hand of God. It's a ritual that they continue even to this day. And some of you may have experienced a special Jewish gathering where they perform what's called the Seder. The Seder is the Passover feast.

And it's a very complicated ritual. April and I sat in on it down in Florida some years ago. It was most interesting indeed, especially if the Seder is presented by a Christian taking in both sides, both the Old Testament ritual and comparing everything that was in that ritual had spiritual significance for the New Testament process of our redemption. So it was that time of the year when everyone was gathering for the Passover feast. And so when Luke's Gospel 22, it says, then came the day of unleavened bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John saying, go and prepare the Passover for us so that we may eat it. They said to him, where would you like us to prepare it? He responded, when you have entered into the city, a man will be carrying a jug of water and he will meet you. Follow him into his house that he enters and tell the master of that house.

The teacher says to you, where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples and he will show you a large upper room furnished, prepared it there. So they went and they found it just as he had told them and they prepared the Passover. So when the hour came, he reclined at the table. We're not used to reclining at the table. And in fact, it was that famous artist, forgive me, I don't remember his name, but he painted his concept of Jesus sitting at the table. It's a remarkable painting because of how the ceiling is shaped and so on. I can't go on, you've seen this thing. It's a majestic looking thing.

And then it was trashed by the Olympics, this former year when a bunch of people with a lot of extra pronouns attached to their name decided to mock that table situation. Clearly, those people have not done what Jesus said, remember me and remember, that was a very special, special occasion when Jesus sat with them at the Passover and said, remember me. But the tradition at that time was not sitting at a table like the Romans, they would be in a reclined position, almost like semi-horizontal, I suppose, leaning on your elbow.

I think I'd be pretty uncomfortable doing that. I'm used to sitting up at the table, leaning on my elbows and wolfing down a meal. If you're ever with El Grub at a meal, he'll outdo you at that table. He's amazing the way he could. I'm still putting food on my plate and he, you can hear the clatter of his fort. He's already finished. And so it's a, so, and then in those days, they didn't use the fork and the spoon. They used their hands.

So here they were reclining. And he said to them, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover. That's an important word, not just, well, you know, this Passover, but this specific Passover. I just messed up my program here. I think you're watching it. It's like watching the news at six o'clock. So Jesus tells them that he's been longing for this Passover and why? Because this is the night he's about to be betrayed. Says in the book of Hebrews that he looked forward.

He looked forward to suffering because of what that was gonna produce for us. He came into the world for this very hour. He said, I've been anticipating this particular Passover. They were celebrating the release of the Jewish people from Egypt and it was all done through the death of a lamb, a lamb for a household. Jesus is now that lamb for the entire world. And he's saying, I've been looking forward to my time of suffering for you. For I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

I will not eat it again until it's been fulfilled. Then he took a cup and when he had given thanks, he said, take this and divide it among yourselves. Now they weren't to take the cup and I pour some in for you and some for you. When he said, divide it among yourselves. He passed the cup and they were drinking out of the same cup. That again is something so contrary to our culture. I was so amazed and amused, if you would, as I sat with my Ethiopian brethren out in the desert areas of Ethiopia, having done several days of ministry

and we would sit around the table, a common table, a big round table and all the food was piled in the middle and everyone received some kind of a little plate or a little bowl. So you would plunge your hand into the food that was in the center to make sure your hand is clean. And you plunge your hand into the food and then you work it with your hand and you turn it into a ball, then you press your thumb into it to make a little cup. And then with that little cup, you can get some gravy, some beef juice,

some chicken juice or whatever and you steadily put it up and your mouth, your fingers never touch your mouth. You roll that little ball with that little juice in it. You don't wanna have the ball without the juice. It's a package deal. So you roll it into your mouth. This is so intriguing to me, so intriguing. There were no knives, there were no forks, nothing like that. Everyone, everything was by hand. And suddenly the man beside me, his name is Uneni.

He's the one that I knew the best, knew the most. He rolled up a ball, got some juice in it and without even, without a hesitation, his hand instead of going to his mouth, went over to the mouth of the friend beside him. And that fellow was out skipping a beat when he saw the food coming, he opened his mouth and Uneni rolled that ball into his mouth. And so you'd say, well, that's kind of strange, isn't it? Well, it is if you don't understand the culture. The culture would be that they were, they were warriors against each other.

And in fact, I had a meeting way out in the hills with two tribes that had been murdering each other for hundreds of years doing cattle raids. So the people of my village would go to the next village and we would raid them, kill them and steal their cows. And I oversaw a coming together of two tribes. It was the first time that they met as an assembly. It was a time of reconciliation and a time of forgiveness. It was really something. So you see, when two men are sitting at a table and a man picks up food and goes to put it in his so-called friend's mouth, are you sure he's your friend?

When you have you heard that, you know, that rascal, he's a devil, escaped from Syria, went to Putin land and they were feeding him and taking care of him there, somebody poisoned him, he'd Brittany died. And you get, you know, some food comes toward your mouth and here has a little taste of arsenic. Yeah. You know, so when food's coming toward my mouth, this fellow is saying, please trust me. But we need to be friends, we need to get to the bottom of this, we need to forgive, we need to be together on this. And so when I open my mouth and the food comes in, it's me saying, I trust your word, I trust you. So this is all ritual, this is something that goes on on a daily basis in many of these cultures. I'm not saying that Jesus put his food into these men's mouths, there's no record of that, but they did drink from a common cup.

So we said, divide it among you, divided among yourself, for I tell you that from now on, I will not drink the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. And then he took the bread when he had given thanks and he broke it and he gave it to them and he said, this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Do this in remembrance of me. Every time that you assemble yourselves at the Lord's table, it's a time to remember, it's a time to remember. Now, there's a bone of contention between church theologians over the centuries and some of you would be aware of this, but in the Roman church, that's the one with the papal leadership, they take these words, this is my body, which is broken for you, take and eat it, they take that literally seriously.

They were not eating Jesus' flesh. This church group, by the way, when they have a mass, they believe they're eating the body, literally the flesh of Jesus. And they call that theology the trans, not the transformation, transubstantiation, changing the substance. And so the concept is that if you by faith, take this wafer, and by the way, I've seen it where the priest puts the wafer in your mouth, there you go, trust me, and that when that wafer goes in your mouth, immediately it turns to meat, Jesus flesh. Jesus never intended that we would be cannibals and eat his flesh, but he was saying that the relationship between Jesus, our Lord and us, is so, is so, it's not fragmented, and it's not just spiritual or mystical, it is real that we are now known through the apostles as the body of Christ. And where does our introduction to the body of Christ begin? It begins right here, where Jesus says, take of me. He says, drink of me, he says, I'm the water of life.

I am the bread of life. So he uses these concepts to help us to understand and wrap our minds around this incredible theology that does make sense when you focus on it. So he says, this is my body, broken for you, do this in remembrance of me. And he took the cup after they had eaten, saying this cup is poured out for you, is the new covenant in my blood. Now, if you slow down and you read the passages about this situation, you'll notice that he takes the cup and he's sharing with them the wine,

and he says, I've looked forward to this event. And later on, it says, then after they had suffered, he took the cup. So I did some digging because I think I noticed this before, my brain doesn't keep stuff as well as it used to. It's a little on the porous side. I didn't say porous, said porous. And so I looked this up and when you dig down and you talk about the sadr, the Jewish tradition, and when you discuss and you realize what was happening at that table, that Jesus took the wine two times in the meal.

So I looked it up and it's only mentioned about two times, but in the seder meal, which is the Passover meal, which they celebrated that night, there were four cups. Excuse me, there were four cups. And

each cup for the seder meal has a unique understanding and a unique meaning to it. And I won't bore you with it. But I did look up what the old sages, the Jewish leadership, their theologians, and here's what they see. The four cups of wine is a necessity. And by the way, at every Passover feast, everybody who sits at the Passover feast must drink all four cups. You can't say, oh, just a little bit for me. No, no, you must, maybe you're not gonna drink a lot, but you must participate in all four because the drinking of that wine at the sadr, it's a remembrance, right, of the deliverance from Egypt. So they, each of those cups represents what the Lord said He was going to do. He said to Moses, I'm gonna bring them out. I'm gonna bring them out. I'm gonna release them.

I'm gonna set them free from being slaves. I'm gonna release them from their bondage. I'm gonna take them and I'm gonna make them my own. There's actually four portions, four concepts, and they drink one cup for each of those events. And so I just wanna reiterate again that we do not believe in trans-substantiation. We do not believe in that. There's not one biblical record that can verify and justify that concept. So Jesus says, I want you to remember. So let's just start with this.

Everybody is capable of forgetting. And you can think of lots of things that in the church, we have tended to forget. We have a whole church life now, worldwide that has no concept any longer of what the Sabbath is. I don't know what it was like for you when you were a child, but I wasn't allowed to leave the front steps of my house. I was allowed to go out on the front porch and there were about four steps down to the sidewalk. My feet were not allowed to touch the sidewalk. I had to stay on the porch.

It was a day of rest. No work was to be done. Who even remembers those days? No, we tend to just, we tend to forget that there's a beautiful song that we used to sing at communion services. We won't be singing this one. We have another one selected that we'll sing shortly. But the song says, lest I forget, gethsemane, lest I forget your agony. You know, when we have the little cross dangling around our necks, and I see this with Hollywood celebrities who have no interest in the gospel, do not believe in Jesus and would more likely curse him than in, but they're wearing a cross. Somebody needs to remind them that a cross is not a piece of jewelry. And I know lots of people wear the cross and I'm not getting onto you about that. That's not a problem. But the problem is this, that people dolt on the cross with no thought of the value and what it really, really speaks to us about.

Jesus said, don't forget, but there's a lot of things that he's saying, don't forget. When he says, don't forget me, that's a huge statement. Don't forget all of the thing. Don't forget when you think about Jesus, what do you think about? And a little child would start to sing, Jesus loves me this I know. And another one would repeat their little prayer before they go to bed. But, and everyone has their own little way,

their ways of remembering certain things. When you hear, when you hear a certain statement, it causes a response in you. And this is a truth about psychologists. I'm not a psychologist, but I've done a little bit of reading, a little bit of studying. I've sat in on seminars. And there are people, and I know some of them, that they'll be perfectly normal and happy, and be enjoying their day. And something will happen in that day, during the day, a sentence will be spoken, or something will come up on the television, or something will happen on the street, something will occur, and that person will immediately respond, get angry, and that person could, that they could just go absolutely ballistic, and there'd be no reason that anybody could ever determine, well, what's that guy up? Well, we're all built like an iceberg. There's

that little bit that everybody sees at the top. There's so much more down below the surface. And so, let's say, I happen to know that this happened in the church of ours some years ago.

There was a Sunday morning service, not unlike this. And at the end, I invited people to come to the altar, and Betty Voth, you were there. You were there in that service. People came and gathered at that altar, and they teared for quite a while. There was one lady that was really weeping strongly. And as people began to start to leave, and they were greeting one another, et cetera, there was a lady, I remember seeing her, she was over on this side of the platform, down on the floor, and her shoulders were rounded, and she was weeping profusely. And April went to her. Something in my sermon triggered a memory. And that set her off completely. She was perfectly normal, she was perfectly happy. She was enjoying the service. But something that I said in my sermon, it was a simple word. It was not an awkward word, but it was a word somehow that triggered a memory. It was so much below the surface in that iceberg lady's person, et cetera.

April was there, and they spoke, and the lady was hyperventilating, and she said, I can't talk now, I can't talk now. And so April met this lady later in the week, and this was the story. And she'd never told a soul. If I remember correctly, she had never told her husband, who's a member of my church board. When she heard that word that morning, somewhere in the sermon, just a single word, maybe it was the way I said it, but it was a trigger. It reminded her of when, as a little girl, she was raped.

She suddenly remembered something that hurt her and broke her heart. Jesus is saying, how come all those years went? And now that trigger happened in that lady's person. She clearly had dampened it, she had put it down. And in fact, I talked to somebody just this past week. I was visiting a home, and there was another person there that was a guest, and they said, Pastor David, this lady comes here a little bit, she's not here today. And she said, can I ask you something? I know I experienced something in my past, and I can't bring it back, I can't bring it up, but it's hurting me, and I've been living with all my life, and I'm a broken person. Pastor, how can I retrieve that memory? Isn't that something? She has a memory, and she can't bring it up, because she has suppressed it for so long. I won't go on to tell you the other question that she had for me. It's too deep, and it's too precious, and it's too private. Memories, memories.

So sometimes we press things down, we don't want to remember them, but in Jesus' case, he's saying, don't become so busy that you forget what I am all about. So I want us to talk just for a couple of moments about what we should remember. What was he wanting us to remember? I believe he wants us to remember what he's already done for us. And secondly, he wants us to remember what he's still doing for us now.

And thirdly, he wants us to remember and never forget his pledge of that which he was promising he would still do. Those are three separate compartments. Remember what I did when you eat this bread and drink this cup, don't let it be monotonous. Oh, it's communion Sunday. Okay, pass the bread and pass the juice. Don't let it be simple. Don't let it be shallow. As you eat the bread and you drink the cup, remember what he did for us. But as you remember that, there's a following through, it's linear what he did for me then. He's still completing it in me, in my now and you will complete it gloriously in the last day. King of kings and Lord of lords, eternal blessing with him. And then let's just talk about then, okay,

what has he already done? Will he function among us? He was saying, don't forget I was your prophet. Don't forget I was your priest. And don't forget I came to you as your humble king.

The Prophet, priest and king, don't forget those three elements. What has he done? As a priest, he offered himself. It's in this unique, you get into the book of Hebrews and it talks about how he, our high priest, entered into a tabernacle, not made with hands. It's referencing the Old Testament tabernacle where the priest would go in and he would offer a sacrifice on the day of Atonement. But in the book of Hebrews says that he went into a tabernacle, into a tent, into a house, into a temple that was not made by men's hands.

But as the priest went into the place and approached the altar, he was not just the priest. He was the offering, he was the lamb. Remember, he says, as a priest, this is what I did for you. And then what did he do as a prophet? He came teaching us about the Father. He came teaching us about heaven. And I've preached this sermon here probably a couple of years ago. Nobody liked Jesus, that when he stood on the shards of Galilee as he's speaking and telling them about heaven, the people's mouths were dropping. They'd never heard anybody talk about heaven like he did. And surely somebody would talk and say, man, do you hear this guy talk about heaven? You think that he'd been there already. When he talked about Daniel, the lions, Daniel could smell the lion's breath. When he talked about Moses, holding up the rod and the waters were rushing back, you could feel the wind coming up against your face. Beloved, there was nobody who taught us to find truth like Jesus.

So I'm gonna lose my voice if I don't shut up here. Where are you, Brian? Brian said, pastor, I'm gonna be doing like this and calm you down. Dear Lord, help me. See, I sat there this morning like a pillar of soul. I can't sing. Dear Lord, do you know what that means? I used to be a soloist. I used to lead the worship in conferences. And now I can't sing, Jesus loves me. Lord, love a duck, help me.

He came as our great king, the king of kings and the Lord of lords. Hosanna, Hosanna, blessed be you, son of David. He came as a prophet, he prayed, came as a priest, he came as a king. Don't forget any of these things. Remember me, remember all of these things. But remember what he's doing for us now. By his grace, he's taking care of us. By his grace, he's carrying us along. I visited someone this week that you all know. It isn't enough that he lost his dear wife,

our friend Ron. And now he's lost his ability to walk. He said, strokes. I've sat within him in his living room and I've wept. This guy's my chum, he's my buddy. I'm crying out saying, God help me through this. It broke all of our hearts to lose Lily. Dear Lord, how we loved her and how he loved her. But he lost her. It seems unreasonable, it seems unfair. But that wasn't enough. Not unlike Job.

Things just keep on coming, like tsunamis against him. Calvary was enough to take care of my sin. But I need the resurrected Jesus to take care of me in my now. On purpose, I don't know how I got this, but a crucifix ended up on my desk. Do you know what that is, a crucifix? It's a cross, but Jesus is hanging on the cross. I've done this on purpose. My wife said to me one day, did you see what's on the wall in what I now call the boardroom?

I said, yeah, a crucifix. I said, yeah, who put it there? I said, I did. And I said, you're the first person to say anything to me. What's the problem with the crucifix? It kind of fits with the idea of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. The concept, the concept that the payment for our sins is ongoing. That not unlike the priests of the Old Testament, they had to go year after year after year after year. They got rid of the sins and then half hour later, they're in debt again for their sin. And so when we say we're eating his flesh and drinking his blood, that's crucifying him again. And when we leave him hanging on the cross, that's indicative of it's not done yet. And I'm gonna tell you that Jesus hanging on the cross, will not help a guy to like my chum. When he's going through the valley of the shadows of death, he needs to see an empty tomb. Where an empty tomb around your neck? Because Jesus is not on the cross and he's not in a tomb. He's risen the angels.

The angel said, he's not here. And Jesus said, remember that. Remember me. Remember me is the one who walked in the water. Remember me who raised the dead. Remember me when I served you bread and fish forever. And then there were 12 baskets left over. Remember me. Remember me when I took you to the garden of Gethsemane and you all slept and the soldiers were on their way to come and get me and to beat the life out of me. Remember me that I did not remain in the grave.

Remember me, Mary, when you came to the tomb and you were broken and you suppose that I was the gardener who else would be there when the sun had not even arisen yet. And you supposing me to be the gardener turned and said, please sir, you're in charge of this place. What have you done with the master? Mary, don't forget what went through your person. Don't forget what went through your mind and your soul. When I said one word, I said, Mary. Nobody could say Mary like Jesus did in that moment. Remember? He's not hanging on a cross.

And the crucifix, it's not terrible. It's just, it leaves a question, where is he now? I don't want to remember him on a cross. I want to remember that he was rising up and these poor disciples, it might have been the first time they'd seen the bottom of his feet. In Ethiopia, nobody ever sees the bottom of your feet. You never cross your legs and expose the bottom of your foot. You walked in doggy poo to get here and now you go like this to me. The disciples, I don't think had ever seen the bottom of his feet, but as he rose up toward heaven and eventually he disappeared. Remember me. Remember me that as you stood there and looked and said, how far does he have to journey? A voice came. You men of Galilee, why are you standing here? Remember this same Jesus shall so come. Remember me that the cross was not all, that when you are your best friend or acquaintance or a relative are going through a difficult time, remember this, he gave you the Holy Spirit as your comforter.

Jesus is not the God of yesterday. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Remember this, though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, he will be there with you. I have no idea what's going through Ron's mind these days. He was such a go-getter, loved to buy cars and race them until he hit a tree or a cement abutment. He lived life. He was such a nutcase. I always used to say to him, Ron, I'll pick you up and we'll go and we'll spend some time on the 13th floor.

He's an elevator man. He knows there is no 13th floor, the 13th floor is for the nutcases and I'd say, let's go to have lunch on the 13th floor. It was my way of having fun with him and playing with him. And I

knelt before him two weeks ago and took a hold of his hand and I said, I miss our lunches. He said, me too. I said, I forgive you now for saying you want to buy a Corvette. If you still want to buy a Corvette,

I'm still never going to ride with you in it. And I never thought I'd see this. He raised his finger and went, no more. Don't forget what he did, but don't let it escape you what he's doing now. And as I prayed with Ron a few days ago, we were holding hands and as I went to withdraw, he tightened his grip. And to me, it was the most precious moment I've ever had with him. I've only known him for five years. He looked me in the eye and he said, David, I liked that, he didn't say pastor. I liked it when he said, David, I love you. And I said, I love you. I felt that my being there would help him. I wasn't there as an insurance adjuster. I wasn't there as an elevator man. I was there, David, who preaches at you. I was there with the guy that you call pastor. And I felt that my being there would remind him, Jesus is still with you. And that very day as I was heading out the door, he's a man of so few words, he called out,

I just said the door about to leave and he called out and he said, pastor, God bless you, God keep you, God heal April in the name of Jesus. Ron has not lost his sense of what Jesus is doing in the now, he's not lost that. And remember, he said, remember me, what I pledged that I'm going to do for you. I'm going to come again. I have about 20 more slides that I would include in my message. I have so much more I want to share with you,

but I'm going to pause here and we're going to change the order of the service. We're going to get back to where we belong in the order of the service. I'm going to invite my friend Larry to come and take a microphone. And I'm going to invite Linda, his lovely sister, to step up to the piano. And I'd like us to sing a song that speaks about remembering. And so I'm going to ask you just to go ahead, oh, you need my help, I know it.

Pardon me for a moment, okay? You can sit or you can stand. Here's the words. Servers, will you come? Sing of my life, I crown thee now. Find shall the glory be. Lest I forget thy thorn crown, lead me to calvary.