

## WELCOME 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025 – Maundy Thursday '25 C

Luke 22:7-27

What's your earliest memory? Memories are strange things. Some excite us & rekindle moments of great joy. Others terrify... & we relive the worst. But when we lose those memories...even *THOSE* memories we grieve. To forget or be forgotten is in some real way to die...to be lost...to whither toward nothingness. We *WANT TO...NEED TO* remember.

From beginning to end, the Bible commands *"Remember"*. To forget God – to forget his place for us in his heart – to forget his purpose for us in his world – to forget his work for us for our good...is in some real way to die...to be lost...to whither toward nothingness. We *WANT TO...NEED TO* remember.

The Passover meal ultimately became the pinnacle of Israelite memory. It was the reminder of God's provision *FOR* & deliverance *OF* his people. Passover...the meal to be celebrated every year in every family by every faithful member of Israel. The meal was the consummate reminder of the covenant: God's enduring love & undying faithfulness for them. Passover was the memory they were to never forget.

It was *THAT* memory Jesus chose...for the new covenant. *"He took some bread & gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces & gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After supper he took another cup of wine & said, "This cup is the new covenant between God & his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you."*

Tonight we remember...God's forgiveness & rescue. God's acceptance/welcome. We remember *THIS* is how Christ builds the community of saints from the chaos of sinners. We remember that in Christ alone we're revived & restored – filled w/ purpose & the promise of God's eternal love, cloaked in the Father's steadfast faithfulness & abundant life that are stronger than any enemy & lead us to triumph even over death & hell itself.

Tonight Christ offers *THIS* memory of his grace upon us & his strength <sup>w/in</sup> us...

Remember...He who lives in you proves himself again & again greater than the one who lives in the world...Remember...Jesus assures us that his life given for us redeems us from the powers of sin/death/evil & unites our hearts to the Father's through him now & forever... *"This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel — that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all...He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name."* –Acts 10:36 & 43 **LET'S SING...**

## MAUNDY THURSDAY '25 C – UNFILTERED MEMORY

Food...just the word puts us in the mood for a meal...Many of our best memories happen around food. Special meals/celebrations. Annual family feasts. Growing up in the Guilfoyle home...food was *NEVER* an afterthought...a quick dash for takeaway...gobbled down in front of the TV on fold-out trays. Food matters.

It's supposed to be that way. The earliest narrative in the Bible includes a deliberate conversation about food...Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth & all the fruit trees for your food. I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, & the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life." It was so as God commanded. – Gen 1:29-30

Food matters. Every time we eat...we're to remember: God is generous; abundantly so; joyously so. No need is denied. Sadly...there's also a "food memory" in that same narrative that *ISN'T* so joyous...

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, & you will be like God, knowing both good & evil." The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful & its fruit looked delicious, & she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit & ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, & he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, & they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

Whatever else we remember...we remember we are undone by *THAT* meal. Human sin is to invade God's turf...to try to conquer God's sole territory...to claim for ourselves what rightly is His alone. More than breaking a divine rule or taboo; we tried to usurp God's place in our relationship w/ Him. you will be like God... We remember we were not supposed to be that of our own doing... We remember: We are *UNDONE* by *THAT* meal. *THAT* meal fractures the bonds b/t God & us... b/t each of us & those around us... The Bible tells us to remember that sin is not some small infraction that God for some reason won't ignore...but a tear in the very fabric of God's creation...a rending of the relational garment of the universe...sin disrupts the cosmic order of life itself...In fact...even the fellowship surrounding Jesus is equally disrupted. Immediately b/4 what we read tonight: The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is also called Passover, was approaching. The leading priests & teachers of religious law were plotting how to kill Jesus, but they were afraid of the people's reaction. Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples, & he went to the leading

priests & captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted, & they promised to give him money. So he agreed & began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him when the crowds weren't around. – Lk 22:1-6

For all the world it looks like even Jesus will be undone by a meal...the Passover meal that remembers God's great salvation freeing his people from slavery/death in Egypt. When the time came, Jesus & the apostles sat down together at the table... What we often forget though is that Jesus already knows...But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me.

Wait...Betrayal is at this table? If betrayal is there...denial is not far away...which means abandonment & rejection, fear & confusion, misunderstanding & doubt & weakness are also there...the gospels tell us those things characterized the 12 as did pride & ambition, fakery & blindness & violence...Jesus sits surrounded by those whose professions of love & devotion would prove fleeting...whose understanding always faltered...who'd run at the first sign of threat...John tells us he'd washed their feet as a prelude to this meal & yet...that meal of division/sin/undoing is still w/in...

Knowing that...& we know Jesus knows because he tells them so...he chose not to drive them out like he'd done the money-changers from the Temple but to feed them... *ALL* of them. This food is for sinners betrayers deniers the prideful & the fearful the confused & the doubters This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."...This cup is the new covenant between God & his people — an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you." The physician comes for the sick not those who pretend health. He offers his abundance to those stumbling into sinfulness as well as those charging headlong.

Here is food & a memory as the final word for the disciples...because *THE FINAL WORD* will come when most of them have fled. Here is food & a memory hailing a new covenant signed sealed & delivered in the poured out blood & crucified body of Jesus. Tonight we remember...God's forgiveness & rescue. God's acceptance & welcome. We remember *THIS* is how Christ builds the community of saints from the chaos of sinners. We remember that in Christ alone we're revived & restored – filled w/ purpose & the promise of God's eternal love, cloaked in the Father's steadfast faithfulness & abundant life that are stronger than any enemy & lead us to triumph even over death & hell itself. Tonight Christ offers *THIS* memory of his grace upon us & his strength w/in us...Remember...He who lives in you proves himself again & again greater than the one who lives in the world...Remember...Jesus assures us that his life given for us redeems us from the powers of sin/death/evil & unites our hearts to the Father's through him now & forever...Remember...*Amen*