"The Church: Our Remembrance"

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Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] At the end of our time in worship today, we're going to be taking the Lord's Supper together.

And usually when we take the Lord's Supper, I try to give some instruction and some biblical! reminders of what we're doing as we take those elements today because our entire message is on that.
This will serve, I pray, of preparing our hearts as we take those elements at the end of our service. And we'll take those at the end with minimal instruction as by God's grace we're able to look at these truths together.
We are looking at the church this semester. We've been studying all about the church. And we've got, Lord willing, three messages left. We've got today, next week on baptism, and then we'll have a final message, Lord willing, on November the 8th.
But what we're looking at today and next week are what we call the ordinances of the church, the Lord's Supper and baptism. We're going to focus just on Lord's Supper this morning.
[1:09] And I hope that this will be instructive. I hope it will be an encouragement to you. But I also hope that we will receive what the Lord has for us in a real spirit of reverence and awe.

That should always be true in our worship according to the book of Hebrews. But today especially as we think about the Lord's Supper, there are so many things the Scripture gives us about the importance of the Lord's Supper, the seriousness of it, a real sense of sobriety that we should have as we take the Lord's Supper together.
So I just want to invite you to please listen carefully and to just be open to what the Holy Spirit would have to prepare our hearts as we think and pray and confess our sin and remember the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Open with me, if you would, to Luke 22. I'm going to ask you to turn to two different passages this morning. First in Luke 22. And I want us to look at four aspects of the Lord's Supper that I hope will not only be in your mind today, but any time our church takes the Lord's Supper together, I hope these truths will stay with you.
Typically at our church, we take the Lord's Supper once a month. It's not always perfectly this way, but generally a rough rhythm for us is we do the Lord's Supper on a Sunday morning and the next month on a Sunday evening and we rotate.
[2:46] We do have some special times where we may do that at a members meeting or on a Good Friday service. But any time we take the Lord's Supper, these things ought to be on the forefront of our mind.

I want to give you four words to write down and I pray prepare our hearts for what we will receive together in just a few moments. Number one, write down the word picture.
There's a picture when we take the Lord's Supper that ought to be in our hearts and our minds. And the picture, of course, is the elements, the bread representing as a picture the body of Christ, the cup as a picture of the blood of Christ.
In Luke 22, start with me in verse 14. And when the hour came, he reclined at the 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 that I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Now what's happening here in the Gospel of Luke, and it's recorded other places in the New Testament also, is Jesus is observing the final Passover and inaugurating what we know as the Lord's Supper.
[4:05] So at a typical Passover meal, there would be some things that would be common that the people would do. There was a prayer of thanksgiving. And they would drink what was called the first

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cup.

It was a cup of blessing. There would be the washing of hands. It was a picture of their need for repentance. There would be the eating of bitter herbs as a reminder of the bitterness of the time of slavery that the people of Israel went through with the hands of the Egyptians.
They would sing together Psalm 113 and Psalm 114. They would drink what was known as the second cup. And then the father, the leader of that meal, of that family, would then explain and recite, recount the meaning of the Passover, telling the story of God's faithfulness to His people to deliver them.
And then in the Passover, they would next eat the main Passover meal. It would be roasted sacrificial lamb and the unleavened bread. They would then drink what was called the third cup.
It's at this third cup in the Passover meal that Jesus inaugurates what we know as the Lord's Supper. They would sing the remainder of this collection of hymns, Psalm 115, 116, 117, and Psalm 118, and would then drink the fourth cup.
[5:41] Look at verse 19 in Luke 22. 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. There are two pictures we see in the Lord's Supper. A picture of the body and a picture of the bread.
Or the picture of the cup. The bread representing the body there of Christ. And so, in just a few minutes, when we distribute the elements, for those who are participating in the Lord's Supper with us, you will hold a small piece of bread in your hand.
And it's a picture. It's a picture to remind us of the body of Christ. The body of Christ that was nailed to a cross.
Sacrificed and slain for us. In verse 20, look with me at the text. Likewise, the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.
[6:54] This is that third cup of the Passover meal. And the cup is a picture here of the blood of Christ as that payment for our sin.

And every time you hold in your hands that cup and we drink that cup together, it's a picture for us of how serious our sin really is.
It's far worse than we realize. Our sin is a far greater offense to the Lord than we even know and recognize. And the fact that it took the blood of Christ as a payment for our sin shows us the picture of just how sinful our sin is.
It also, though, is a picture of the completeness of that sin payment. This is the blood of Christ that was shed for us.
We are redeemed, the Bible says, not by something small like silver or gold, but with something so unimaginable, the very blood of Christ.
[8:09] And so while looking at the cross shows us the extreme sinfulness of our sin, it also shows us the absolute completeness of our sin payment that Christ made for us.

There's a picture every time we take the Lord's Supper together. The bread, a picture of His body. The cup, a picture of His blood.
A reminder that our sin was not simply forgiven. It was paid for. If someone hurts you or offends you or wrongs you, and they ask for forgiveness, you may, and I hope will, graciously grant that.
You would say, and I trust mean, when you say, I forgive you. But when you forgive someone, all you're choosing to do is to say, I no longer hold this against you.
But in and of itself, that sin has not been paid for. Not just between the two of you. It's been forgiven, but not atoned.
[9:28] And in our human relationships, that's the best that we can do because when someone wrongs you, that's a sinner who has wronged you, but you're also a sinner.

The uniqueness and the difference in our relationship with Christ is that we, the sinner, have sinned against a holy, perfect God. And He does forgive us in Christ, but He does more than forgive us. He pays for, atones for our sin. Not merely a statement of, I forgive you, but actually pouring out His wrath on His Son.
And so when you hold the bread and you hold the cup, it's a picture of the sinfulness of our sin, but also the completeness of sin's payment.
The body of Christ, the blood of Christ that was broken and spilled for our redemption. Write down a second word, the word purity.

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[10:44] As we take the Lord's Supper together, every time we take the Supper together, there is a picture for us of His body and His blood. There is also a reminder of the purity that should be true of us.

There's a purifying aspect of the Lord's Supper, both in the life of the individual believer and in the life of the church as a congregation.
Turn with me to the right just a little bit, if you would, to 1 Corinthians 11. Acts, Romans, and then 1 Corinthians 11.
Look with me, beginning at verse 27. Verse 27. Verse 27. Whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and the blood of the Lord.
Let a person examine himself then and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.
[11:52] That is why many of you are weak and ill and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

In other words, when we take the Lord's Supper, it is to always be a time of examination where we ask the Holy Spirit to examine our hearts, to reveal to us any wicked way.
Every time we gather for worship, it is a holy occasion. And every time we sing and pray and study the Word together, it's something we should take with complete seriousness, with reverence, and with fear of the Lord.
But when it comes to the Lord's table, there is this heightened sense of that we are to be pure. And the reality of it is that not one of us in this room have gone the last seven days since we last gathered together without sin, and we need to confess that sin to the Lord.
Now, by God's grace, the Bible is clear that those who are saved that truly belong to Christ, you are saved for all time. It would be impossible to lose eternal life. If it's eternal, it cannot be lost.
[13:11] And yet, there is an ongoing sense of confession of sin and repentance that ought to mark the true believer. And when we gather for the Lord's Supper, it's a reminder to us that with all seriousness and earnestness and devotion that we are to ask the Holy Spirit to search our heart to reveal sin that we have and to confess that sin before the Lord.

We shouldn't take any gathering for worship lightly or flippantly. We shouldn't ever worship in an irreverent way.
And yet, when it comes to the Lord's table, there is even this heightened sense of seriousness of what we do. And my prayer is that every time we take the Lord's Supper together, that we would seek purity as we confess our sin to the Lord.
What do we do that we would be reminded that God's grace is sufficient to pardon us? So even this morning, in just a few moments as our deacons will serve and offer the elements to those who are participating today, I want to say to you as I would say every time we take the Lord's Supper together, let this be a time of purification of your soul.
Not being saved again. No true believer gets saved again. It's once for all. But to confess your sin. Confess things that you have done or said or thought that were not fitting a believer.
[15:01] Confess things you have not done that a believer should be doing. Sins of speech or sins of action. Sins of attitude. We always want to use the Lord's Supper as a time for us to say, Lord, create in me a pure heart and restore to me the joy of your salvation.

The Lord's Supper is a picture for us of the body and the blood and there's a sense of purity that ought to be in the church. Purity individually as we each confess our sin and that as the body of Christ confesses and repents of our sin then the entire congregation is blessed as we leave that gathering having once again been reminded of the amazing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
God forbid we would ever approach congregational worship in a flippant way ever.
All the more when we gather to reflect and to remember the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for us. The one who did not merely say I'll pardon you the one who himself said I will send my son who himself will pay the price for you.
[16:37] Surely that deserves our greatest attention and devotion. And the confession of sin that ought to accompany that helps us as individuals and as a church family to walk in purity before the Lord.

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Write down a third word. It's the word participation. This is a biblical word. It comes from 1 Corinthians 10. If you just turn back a page to 1 Corinthians 10 we'll see it in just a moment.
The early church participated together in worship. They read the word. They had the word explained to them. They would sing hymns together and they would take the Lord's Supper together.
One of the things the Lord's Supper does for us in addition to a picture of the body and blood of Christ in addition to purity for our heart as we confess sin the Lord's Supper also is about participation together.
It reminds us that none of us are alone. This is a very important part of the Lord's Supper. We take the Lord's Supper as the church gathers. It's a reminder that while our faith is personal we are saved into a family a part of a body that we're not spiritual lone rangers.
[18:08] We are a part of a family individual members of one body. We looked at that text a number of weeks ago. And when we take the Lord's Supper together we are clearly reminded of this very important aspect of the Christian life that we participate with each other.

And so some men helped us to prepare the elements this morning. Other members of our church that helped us even before this morning got here to be prepared with the elements and the linens and all that goes into the Lord's Supper.
Our deacons and staff gathering early this morning already to pray for you. In a few moments a number of our deacons will move throughout the sanctuary and serve the elements and you will take that tray and if you're participating remove the elements for yourself and hand that to someone beside you and just reminding ourselves shoulder to shoulder and arm to arm that we are together we are participating in this together.
They will offer you a tray they will receive it back to you they will come to the front we will then prepare to take the elements all at one time. We do that to remind us that in the Lord's Supper there is a mutual participation it reminds us that what we do as Christians yes it's personal but it's never alone.
You walk with Jesus you read your Bible you pray you're accountable for your own walk with the Lord that's true but you don't do that by yourself you're a part of a family and the Lord's Supper is meant to remind us of the beautiful and joyful participation together as a part of the body of Christ.
[20:14] Look with me 1 Corinthians 10 verse 16 you'll see this very word here the cup of blessing that we bless is it not a participation in the blood of Christ the bread that we break is it not a participation in the body of Christ because there is one bread we who are many are one body for we all partake of one bread the word participate here a familiar word to us that's used in the New Testament to speak of fellowship we fellowship together with Christ as we identify with him and we fellowship with each other as together we take the Lord's Supper at one time there is no deeper form of fellowship than worshiping together as a body there are so many reasons we've covered many of them already this semester that why participation in the local church is a blessing why it's essential why there's nothing you can do on your own that biblically would be a substitute for gathering with

God's people one of the reasons we see here in the elements of the Lord's Supper that we participate together in this it's true that when you are at home by yourself you can think about and remember and reflect on the sacrifice of Christ and that's good and at home by yourself you can sing a hymn of the cross and the resurrection and that's good but there is something unique that happens when the body of Christ gathers together to participate with each other in worship through the Lord's Supper and I pray that every time you're here when we take the Lord's Supper together that you're reminded in addition to what we've already stated that you're reminded as well that this is something we do together this is a family time of worship for those who are baptized believers in the
Lord Jesus Christ if you're a member of our church or a member of another church as long as you are a member in good standing of that church we would invite all baptized believers to participate with us this morning but for some in our sanctuary and we are thrilled that every one of you are here but if you've not yet come to the place in your life of knowing Christ as Savior if there's not been a time yet where you've repented of your sin and trusted in Christ as Savior then we ask you just let the elements pass by you because this is a family meal this is a family event and for every member of our church don't ever forget that that yes you were saved individually but you were saved into a family ultimately into the family of God to the universal church but but as the

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New Testament reminds us the universal church meets in local assemblies this matters it's not just you it's we and your blessings become our blessings and your burdens become our burdens and your victories become our victories because we are though many members a part of one body and when we take the Lord's Supper as a church it ought to just instinctively trigger for us this reminder that yes we are a part of a family we participate together with each other this is what the New Testament church is all about that we sing together and serve together and pray together we bear each other's burdens together we call the name of the Lord for help and strength together we seek to make disciples together we strive and endeavor to take the gospel to the neighborhoods and the nations together everything we do we want to remind ourselves that we are many members but a part of one body as we participate together as a family let the
Lord's supper first be a picture for you of the body and the blood let the Lord's supper second be for you a time of purity as you confess your sins and let the Lord's supper be for your reminder of the participation we have together as a family and then fourth write down the word proclamation proclamation go back with me chapter 11 of 1st Corinthians if you would look with me at verse 26 for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes now watch this carefully as we take the Lord's supper together there is a proclamation we're making as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim so when the church takes the [26:11] Lord's supper we are making a proclamation and we're proclaiming two things you proclaim the Lord's death that's the first proclamation as we think about the death of Jesus the sacrifice of Jesus the cross of Jesus we proclaim that and we do what it says until he comes which reminds us of a second proclamation we make at the Lord's supper is that Christ is coming again amen so when we take the Lord's supper together biblically we're proclaiming that Christ died for us and Christ is coming again for us and every time the church takes the Lord's supper biblically it's making that proclamation Christ came and he paid for our sin and Christ is coming again and he will take us to be where he is and this is why church when we take the

Lord's supper as a congregation it's such an important time in our church it reminds us that Christ came and died for us it also reminds us he's coming again and so the problem the biggest problem you and I have is the problem of our sin and we take the Lord's supper and we proclaim the death of Christ in the past to remind us our greatest problem has been paid for by Christ but we've got to be honest and say that sometimes this life is really hard and some of you this week have been through really hard times just in the last five days we had two funerals here for two precious precious ladies faithful ladies we grieve for the loss not for them of course but for us and for their family for their loved ones for others of you this week has been a real challenge for you some of you in the sanctuary today are going through some very real trials but at the
Lord's supper we proclaim not only that our sin has been paid for but we also proclaim Christ is coming again which reminds us as real as our trials and sorrow may be they're not forever because Christ is coming again and Christ rules and he reigns and when we take the supper together we remind ourselves that not only has our sin been paid for but our future is with Christ and one day we will be with him in a place with no sorrow and no death and no tears for the formal things we passed away and behold all things will become new and it's at the Lord's supper that we remind ourselves Christ is coming again and because he is we know that our sorrow real though it may be!
really is temporary all of this is proclaimed as we take the supper together it's a picture you hold the bread and remind of the body of Christ you hold the cup and remind it of the blood of Christ it purifies us because we confess our sin individually and as we do that the church collectively is purified and we participate together reminding ourselves that we're not by ourselves we're not alone we are a part of a family a part of a local assembly that seeks and strives to love and to serve each other and to care for each other and we proclaim together that Christ died for us and he is coming again for us this is the gospel that those who in faith would turn to the
Lord Jesus and call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved and it's the gospel that reminds us that we will be his forever as the Lord Jesus said where he is we will be with him also the Lord's supper not only confronts us in our sin the Lord's supper reminds us of our glorious future this glorious future that will be true for us together as on that day as the choir reminded us every nation and every tribe and every tongue all the redeemed of all time join together to declare of the Lord Jesus Christ he alone is worthy this is what we proclaim every time we gather for the Lord's supper so can I just remind you in this church or any other church that you may be a part of one day down the road any time the local church gathers for the

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[32:07] Lord's supper those who physically are able you need to be here and I don't say that in some legalistic way I don't say that to look I understand people are sick and people travel and people work I don't say in a legalistic way I just want to say for those who are physically able to be here when the church gathers for the Lord's supper it is doing so much more than we may initially realize it's teaching so much it's encouraging us and it gives us a chance to proclaim the two greatest truths of human history our Savior died for us and our Savior is coming again for us what greater news could we declarethan that.

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