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The Memorial

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

Introduction

1. As perhaps all of you already know, this is Memorial Day weekend.
2. Memorial Day is an annual holiday set aside each year on the last Monday in May.
3. It is a day dedicated to honoring all U.S. military personnel who have died while serving in the United States armed forces.
4. All told, over 1.3 million Americans have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their nation.

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5. Memorials honoring our service members are all around us:
 - a. Here in our community we have one outside the Court House.
 - b. There is another one located on Main Street next door to our Fire Hall.
 - c. Of course in Washington, D.C. there memorials to those who fought in World Wars I & II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.
6. The purpose of these memorials is to remind us of those who gave their lives for the freedoms upon which our country is founded.
7. Memorials help us not to forget, but to remember.
8. God's Word also has it's share of memorials:

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- a. God established a memorial to remind Him of the covenant which He established with mankind and every living creature, for all generations, never again to destroy all flesh with a flood (Genesis 9:8-17).

“I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the

earth.” God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.” (Genesis 9:11–13, NASB95)

“It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. “When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”” (Genesis 9:14–16, NASB95)

- b. He also set aside the 14th of Nisan the first month in the Jewish calendar as the day to celebrate the Feast of Passover, the time when God put to death the firstborn among all the Egyptians, but spared the firstborn among the Israelites (Exodus 12:13-14).

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“The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ‘Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.” (Exodus 12:13–14, NASB95)

- c. The memorial in which we participate every Lord’s Day (Sunday), known to us as “the Lord’s Supper” or “communion.”

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“While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it; this is My body.” And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. “Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”” (Mark 14:22–25,

NASB95)

9. This is “the memorial” around which our lesson is focused this morning.
10. For us as Christians, there is no other memorial of greater importance, but there are two questions I would like for us to consider:
 - a. What is it that we are doing when we participate in the Lord’s Supper?
 - b. What attitude are we to bring to this special memorial?

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I. What Is It We Do When We Partake Of The Lord’s Supper?

A. WE THANK GOD FOR THE SALVATION WHICH HE HAS PROVIDED

1. When one of the men stands before us and offers prayer to God, first for the bread and then for the cup, it is a moment of thanksgiving for the salvation which God has provided us through His Son.
 “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15, NASB95)
2. Many of you have perhaps heard the term “eucharist.”
3. It was the most common term used in the early church for the breaking of bread in the assembly.
4. The verb, *eucharisteo*, “give thanks,” is used in all four of the accounts of its institution (cf. Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17, 19; 1 Corinthians 11:24)
4. The basis of this thanksgiving is the salvation which brought the church into existence.
5. It is in our act of thanksgiving that we call attention to what we give to God.

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B. WE SHARE TOGETHER IN THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

1. You and I also utilize another term when we speak of the Lord’s Supper — it is the word “communion.”
2. This word, “communion,” is the translation of a Greek word *koinonia* which

means fellowship or sharing.

3. When we eat the bread and drink the cup we are sharing in Christ's sacrifice and the benefits that sacrifice provides to us.

“Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 10:16, NASB95).

4. Our Lord promised to be with His disciples always (Matthew 28:20).
5. The Lord's supper of which we just partook is His pledge to us of that continuing presence.
6. The bread and fruit of the vine represent his body and blood.
7. They are His pledge to us of our continuing fellowship with Him.

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C. WE REMEMBER AND PROCLAIM HIS DEATH

1. The communion in which you and I as fellow believers have just participated is based upon a past event.
2. In our reading today, Paul reminds us of Jesus' own words as He instituted this memorial (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25).
 - a. After giving thanks and breaking the bread, Jesus said to His disciples, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:24, NASB95).
 - b. Then, after giving thanks for the cup, He said, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:25, NASB95).
 - 1) Not only are we recalling this past event.
 - 2) We are bringing that event into the present so that we might realize its benefits for us today.
3. In verse 26, Paul adds, “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26, NASB95).
 - a. Through this memorial, we continue to proclaim that Jesus Christ was

crucified for the forgiveness of our sins.

- b. It is what we will continue to do “until He comes” which means we declare our certainty of His return.

“I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am there you may be also” (John 14:2b-3, NASB95).

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D. WE ANTICIPATE A GREATER BANQUET TO COME

1. Our sharing together in the bread and fruit of the vine proclaims a future event.
2. We fellowship around this table now in anticipation of a fuller fellowship which we are yet to enjoy.
3. In Revelation 19:9, the apostle John was told to write these words — “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9, NASB95).
4. As you and I participate in this symbolic act we share a foretaste of the blessings to come at the end of time.

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II. What Attitude Are We To Bring To This Special Memorial?

A. WE COME WITH AN ATTITUDE OF SELF-EXAMINATION

"But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28)

1. In the verse prior to this one, Paul spoke of our eating and drinking “in an unworthy manner” (1 Corinthians 11:27).
2. This is far different from our being worthy to partake of the supper.
 - a. None of us is worthy of God’s grace; that is why it is called grace.
 - b. Nor are any of us worthy of what God has done for us in Christ.

- c. For this reason, not one of us is worthy of the Lord's supper.
- 3. We come to the table of our Lord because we are spiritually needy.
- 4. Our realization of this fact assures that . . .
 - a. We will partake in a worthy manner.
 - b. We will receive the continuing fellowship and blessing of the Lord.

Slide 11**B. WE COME WITH AN ATTITUDE OF CONFESSION**

1. Paul said that we must each "examine himself."
2. As we think upon the events which led up to and included the crucifixion of our Lord, we think about why He had to go to the cross.
3. Our realization that our salvation was only possible through His death and resurrection prompts us to confess our guilt.
4. We are like the "tax collector" in Jesus' parable who cried out "God, be merciful to me, the sinner" (Luke 18:13).
5. Such heart-felt confession results in God's forgiveness (cf. Psalm 32:5).

"I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I did not hide;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord";
And You forgave the guilt of my sin."

(Psalm 32:5, NASB95)

Slide 12**C. WE COME WITH AN ATTITUDE OF REDEDICATION**

"I will give heed to the blameless way. . . I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart. I will set no worthless thing before my eyes." (Psalm 101:2-3, NASB95)

1. Each time we come together to participate in this memorial, we renew our dedication to the Lord.
2. We ask Him to increase our faith.

3. We promise to live our lives for yet another week in obedience to His will.
4. We ask for strength that we might put away from us anything which would hinder us in following Him.

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D. WE COME WITH AN ATTITUDE OF JOY

1. When we think of God's "great love with which He loved us" (Ephesians 2:4).
2. When we consider that because of this great love "we would be called children of God" (1 John 3:1), we cannot help but rejoice that we are allowed to participate in such a memorial.
3. Even though we do not see Him now, we still believe in Him and what He has done for us.
4. For this reason, we "rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8).

Conclusion

1. Today, as brothers and sisters in Christ, we have been privileged to share together in the supper of our Lord.
2. If the Lord tarries His coming, we will do so again next week — the majority of you here and a group of us with our brothers and sisters in El Salvador.
3. Imagine the day when all of God's redeemed will be together at the marriage supper of the Lamb.
4. The rejoicing then will be unlike anything we have ever known.
5. I must tell you today that only those who are among the redeemed will be able to sit at that banquet.
6. Does God consider you one of His redeemed?
7. Have your sins been washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ?
8. If not, won't you do that today?