

## Good Friday Sermon: “Remember Me” Luke 22:7-26, 23:32-43.

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A few weeks ago I went online and completed a survey on Facebook called “When will you die?” I answered some questions: about my health, family, exercise, diet, smoking, drinking. As I answered these questions, I thought I would do pretty well. Here is the answer I got:

**29<sup>th</sup> February, 2016.**

I did it two more times, with slightly different answers. Got the same result. That’s right. 7 years to go! Of course, that may be true! Or it may be shorter or longer. But then I wondered, as I thought about death, and about Easter, and about Jesus having his last meal with his disciples, what will be my last **meal**? What will be the last thing I eat before I die?

**III – Last meal:** This is DANNY ROLLING (photo). He died on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at the age of 52. His last meal was lobster tail, butterfly shrimp, a baked potato, strawberry cheesecake and sweet tea. What does that tell you about Danny? Does it tell you that he was a serial killer known as *The Gainesville Ripper*. That he was executed with the death penalty in Florida. That he violently murdered 4 university students, as well as other crimes, including rape, mutilation and even decapitation. His last meal doesn’t tell us anything about HIM. Except that he liked seafood. It doesn’t tell you who he was or what he did. It doesn’t tell you anything about his life.

My last meal so far today was cornflakes. If I die before lunch, it will have been my last meal ever! Not very significant. And it doesn’t tell you much about me! Except that I’m often a fairly boring person. Although I did have yoghurt as well this morning!

In this part of the Easter story, Jesus is eating his last meal. We know it as the “last supper”. But this meal, Jesus’ last meal, is actually a Jewish meal called **Passover**. And that actually means a lot. In fact, Jesus’ last meal tells us a lot about Jesus. It tells us the whole reason for his life, his death and resurrection – and the whole reason for Easter. This meal tells us **everything** about Jesus. Let’s have a look at the Passover in more detail: It was the time when the Israelites remembered the day when God saved them from being slaves in Egypt, about 1300 years ago.

Pharaoh was keeping God’s people as slaves and wouldn’t let them go. So God sent 10 plagues on Egypt. He sent plagues of blood, frogs, gnats, flies, a plague on livestock, a plague of boils, hail, locusts, darkness and finally, the 10<sup>th</sup> plague: the plague on the first born. **This was the big one.** God said that unless Pharaoh let his people go, he would kill the first born of every household in Egypt.

Can you imagine that happening today for you? What if a plague killed every first born person in your family? For me, that would mean my oldest brother John, my Father, my son Flynn, my nephew Zac, my niece, Rachel, my uncle Russell, my cousins Greg, Jenny and Russell, my brother in law Craig and his son Cooper – the list goes on. This plague would wipe out the first born in every family in Egypt.

- **PPT** – HOWEVER, Israel, God’s people, would be saved from this plague if they followed God’s directions: (from Exodus 12)
  1. Kill a lamb as a sacrifice.
  2. Wipe the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their houses. **(Wipe blood on doorpost prop)**
  3. Eat the lamb.
  4. Get ready to leave Egypt quickly.

And God made a covenant with his people and said: When I see the blood of the lamb over your doorposts, I will **Pass Over** your houses and no-one from your household will die.

And that's exactly what happened. God's angel of death went through Egypt that night and the first born of all the Egyptians died. But he **passed over** the houses of Israel and saved them. He **passed over** the houses that were marked with the blood of the sacrificial lamb. And then Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go.

As Jesus shares this Passover meal with his disciples, they're remembering how God **passed over** the Israelites and saved them. And then in the middle of this meal of remembrance, this is what happens:

*"<sup>19</sup>And he (Jesus) took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is **my** body given for you; do this in remembrance of **me**." <sup>20</sup>In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new** covenant in **my** blood, which is poured out for you."*

Jesus actually stops the meal and gives it a new meaning. He is saying, at this Passover meal: "I AM the Passover lamb now. I AM the lamb that will be sacrificed to save you. What I want you to do now with this meal is to eat this bread in remembrance that MY FLESH is going to be sacrificed for you. Drink this wine in remembrance that MY BLOOD is about to be shed for you. "I AM THE LAMB" Jesus is saying. This is a NEW COVENANT that takes the place of the old one. Jesus is now the sacrificial lamb. And instead of being saved from the Egyptians, Jesus will save us from the enemy of sin and death. This is the meaning of Easter. A new Passover. A new sacrificial lamb.

His last meal was not just a meal. It was a **promise**. Trust in me and you will be saved. **(Take communion bread and wine in hand)** Take this bread and wine in your hand and remember that I am dying **instead of you** to set you free from sin and death. That my body will be broken and my blood will be shed. Take this in your hand and say: "Jesus, instead of me". Every time you eat it, remember "Jesus, instead of me." Jesus as the sacrifice for my sins".

The blood of the sacrificial Passover lamb was spread on the door posts of their houses in Egypt.

NOW, the blood of Jesus, the lamb of **God**, will be shed on the cross. **(Spread blood on cross prop)**

Sharing in the Lord's Supper is our way of wiping the blood of Jesus on our heart and saying "Jesus is my lamb. Jesus died in my place. Jesus took my punishment for my sin."

So how should we respond this Easter? Let's listen to just one person's response to Jesus on the first Good Friday.

After Jesus was been arrested and tried and sentenced to crucifixion, he's hung up on a cross between two criminals. And surprisingly, Luke records some of their final words.

**III** – It's always interesting hearing people's final words don't you think? Here are some interesting ones:

- Bing Crosby's last known words were: "That was a great game of golf, fellers." I bet he didn't think they would be his last remembered words!
- Oscar Wilde, November 30 1900, said "Either that wallpaper goes, or I do."
- E. E. Cummings was an American poet who died in 1963. His last recorded words were to his wife after chopping some fire wood. He said: "I'm going to sharpen the axe before I put it up, dear." We can only imagine what happened next!

Next to Jesus, one thief's last recorded words were: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us."

Then, verse 40, some more final words: <sup>40</sup>*But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?"* <sup>41</sup>*We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."* <sup>42</sup>*Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

This criminal, all his life, had rejected God. Ignored God. Gone his own way. Done his own thing. And now, on death row, he turns to Jesus, recognises him as King, and says *"Remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

And Jesus said to the criminal: *"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."*

You'll notice that's the 2<sup>nd</sup> "remember me" from the Bible today:

1. Jesus shares the new Passover with his disciples and says to them "remember me" as you eat this.
2. Then the thief on Cross turns to Jesus as he dies and says "remember me".

And they're the two responses we need this Easter. First, we need to **remember Jesus** and his body and blood given for us. To remember what he's done for us and to be painted, covered, with his blood of forgiveness. To say "I remember you. I know what you did for me. You are my Lord and King. My heart is painted with your blood.

And second, we need to turn to Jesus and say "Jesus, remember me. Remember me as one of yours."

I think we often try so hard to be remembered by the world. We want the world to "remember" us. We want to live a life that won't be forgotten. Some people give lots of money to build a hospital, others write books. Think of these famous people – we remember them for what they've done – Hitler was remembered for crimes against humanity. Da Vinci was remembered for works of art like the Mona Lisa. Beethoven was remembered for his music. Einstein was remembered for things like  $E=MC^2$ , Darwin – his theory of evolution, the Wright Brothers – the first human plane flight. The world remembers people for what they've done.

But we don't need the **world** to remember us. We need **Jesus** to remember us. And Jesus will NOT remember us for what we've done, but for **who we've trusted** to take away our sins.

Trust the cross. We all have sin – we need to bring it to the cross and leave it there. Trust the Passover lamb. Trust Jesus to take away your sin. Don't worry about the world remembering you. This is about you, just you, doing business with God. Eat and drink this bread and wine today remembering that you can trust him to deal with your sin, and he promises to remember you in his kingdom.

Let's pray, then we'll share in the Lord's Supper together.