

October 1, 2017 It's About Memories Luke 22:14-23

Remember. The Lord's Supper occurred in the upper room, in Jerusalem. It was a Thursday evening. Betrayal, arrest, denial are only hours away. The cross itself is less than twenty-four hours away. Jesus has been eating the Passover meal with the 12 disciples. In Luke's telling of the story, the closest thing there is to a modern historical account with things laid out in reference to time and place, Judas has made the deal to turn Jesus in to the authorities for money...and Jesus knows. Jesus understands. Do you remember? Do you remember why Jesus is going to die? Body broken. Blood of the new covenant. We come to this table...to eat, to drink, but most of all to remember.

So I will share with you some of the things I remember....memories. I was a teen-ager. My best friend's mother became the person in whom I confided. I would ask her all those questions you would normally not easily ask your parents. I asked her about girls. I asked her about the future. I confessed my deepest most personal fears. She did not see herself as an evangelist. But she told me about Jesus. Forgiveness of sins through faith in HIS name. It resonated with my sense of need. I sought forgiveness because in the presence of God, and yes, I was aware I was in God's presence, I felt so unclean. I felt a soul searing sense of guilt. So I took the chance. The leap. I asked for forgiveness. And I felt so clean, I wept. One of the memories I bring to this table, to the

celebration of the Lord's Table, is the moment I became aware I could feel new life, the grace of God, the love of Jesus.

At this table therefore I am always remembering Jesus crucifixion. Not as a tragedy. Rather as a moment when the flower of hope burst alive inside me. I could not contain the joy. And I could not deny the possibility. I am glad that Jesus died and rose again for Peter. I rejoice that Jesus died and rose again for Matthew the tax collector. I get absolutely giddy that Jesus loved Mary Magdalene enough to bear the suffering of Good Friday and see it through to Sunday morning. But I must tell you what makes me happiest, so happy, I cannot help believing HE is the very son of God, is that HE died and rose from the dead, for me. That memory gets refreshed like it was yesterday every time I am disappointed in myself...every time I am conscious of a moment of sinfulness...every time I stumble. Every time I fall.

At this table, I lead in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. I lead you. This thing called ministry is very clearly defined in our denomination of the Church, (The Presbyterian Church In Canada). We call it the ministry of word and sacrament. Later this afternoon I will preach in Pickering as The Presbytery of Pickering meets to ordain a young woman, wife and mother, to the ministry of word and sacrament. She won the gold medal as a graduate of Knox College, which simply means she had the highest marks of any in her graduating year. She won the preaching Award which I believe is even more

significant. I knew her as a child. And then a teenager. I led the funeral service for her younger sister, killed as a child. I conducted her wedding service. She is one of the greatest achievements of my years in ministry. Why? Because long after I am dead and gone, she will be preaching the word, comforting the gravely ill, and the deeply troubled, and bringing the love of our Saviour and Lord to bare in a host of real life difficult situations. Her name is Meghan Paterson. She wrote verses 2-4 of "In Moments Like These" page 24 in our little St. Andrew's praise collection. She will feed the church from the pulpit. And she will feed the church at a Table like this one. I remember at this Table that we really do have the privilege as disciples of Jesus to affect the lives of others, and to see Jesus working in their lives and shaping them as eternity continues to unfold.

At this Table I remember that long ago, I lost count of the times and the places and the people with whom I had the privilege of sharing the "God moment." That's my daughter's phrase. The God moment is any piece of time in which you become conscious that you are not alone in the universe and this world. They are moments in which you find yourself without thinking saying something like "thank you Jesus." Because whatever happened...it may have been someone else's good deed, or a moment in which you saw that a prayer you dared to pray almost convinced that nothing would happen, and then things resolved. Circumstances took a radical turn toward heaven...tears turned to smiles, illness receded or disappeared or at least became symptomless. I long

ago learned that having an illness that appeared to have no symptoms is a heaven sent blessing. To God be the glory, is a phrase inspired by the God moment. I bring a bag full of those memories to this Table.

If you are wondering what the minister is babbling about let me try once more to put it in clear terms. Jesus said, "Eat this bread...Drink this wine...Do this in remembrance of me." The words are so key, so significant, so important, the wood carver carved them into the front of the table. When I stand before you and we celebrate the Lord's Supper, I am remembering Jesus. Not the figure in the distant past. Not the figure depicted in the pictures and stories of the New Testament, foretold in the stories and teachings of the Old Testament. No! I am remembering the Jesus whom I know.

He walks with me and talks with me. He has touched my life and changed my life. When I was very young I had two ambitions. Both had to do with making money. Lots of it. I wanted to be a singer. And if that did not work out I wanted to be the great writer, novelist and poet Canada has never had. Do you hear the pride in those ambitions? Jesus got a hold of my life and HE won't let me go...and I do not want HIM to do so. Praise the Lord! This Table, this sacrament that we celebrate at it....is all about Jesus. And because HE is real, and genuinely saves....this Table is all about memories. "Do this," says Jesus, "In remembrance of me."

Let us pray;

Lord we thank you for the sacrament in which shortly we will take part. It is not an academic exercise. It is not an exercise in which we engage because we are religious. It has to do with our having heard your voice and our responding to YOU. Feed our faith. Lead us where you would have us go. Grant us the courage to follow you both now and forever. Amen