

In Remembrance of Me

A Sermon by Rev. Joel Christian Glenn

15 February 2026

Children's Talk: Memory and the Lord

- How do you remember someone?
 - Could just think about them
 - Picture them in your mind
- But easier to remember someone if you have an object to remember them by
- Some people have memory box that they put things in to hold their memories
 - Pictures of old friends
 - Gifts from past students
 - Childhood toys
- But if they remained in the box, they wouldn't help anyone! We have to pull them out, look at them, even handle them or use them, for the memory to come alive.
- The Lord gave us something to remember Him by:
 - Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."
 - And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
- He said to *do* something: this something is to eat bread and drink wine. That is something your parents will do later today: eat bread and drink wine to remember all the good things the Lord gives us
- Not just a memory, but a way of really bringing the memory alive.
- When we think of the Lord, sharing food and drink with His disciples, it also reminds us of all the other things He has given us:
 - Love
 - Kindness
 - Joy
 - Laughter
 - Wisdom
 - Ideas
 - Skills
 - Talents
 - Friends
 - Families
 - Homes

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When we know that someone will be leaving us our memory of them starts to become important. When parents says that last goodbye to their daughter going off to university, they may try to hold that last sight of her in their mind. Or perhaps, in a time before instant communication, two people in love would exchange pictures by which to remember each other when they were to be separated for a time. Or when a good friend is moving away and so you begin to store up all those cherished moments, taking extra care to put them away in the memory so that you can bring them out again when interactions themselves can no longer be repeated. We hold on to memories as a way of keeping someone close who is far away in body. If our memory is strong enough and true enough, their presence will remain with us even though physically they may be a thousand miles away, or even further away, on into the spiritual world. We become present with each other through those tender and loving memories.

We see this truth at work in the Lord's life. As the end drew near, He brought His disciples together to have one last meal with them, in the celebration of the Passover. He would have known that soon He would be arrested, put on trial, and finally killed on the Cross. In short, His time on this earth was drawing to a close, and so too His time with the Disciples. And so during the meal, He gave them something by which they could remember Him, a final farewell as it were. He took bread, and broke it, and distributed it to them, calling it His body. Then He took wine in a cup and passed it among them telling them that it was His blood. And in the midst of all this, He said to the disciples, "do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). The Lord was not simply speaking to the disciples at that time who would in fact see Him

again. He was speaking to us, through all the ages, to those who would need a way to remember Him. And with this command, “Do this in remembrance of Me” He gave us the means of remembering Him and the recognition that He never truly leaves us at all.

There are two parts to this command: first is simply the remembrance. But what exactly are we to remember about the Lord? We are told on one level that we are to remember what the Lord has done for us, to remember that He was willing to lay down His life in order to forge a path for us to follow, the path of regeneration, a path that at last led to His death. Ultimately we are supposed to remember His death. But remembering the Lord’s death on its own accomplishes little. The very passage that encourages us to remember the Lord’s death likewise urges us to remember His love for the salvation of mankind, the *reason* He was willing to die (TCR 709). It is the reason for His death that gives significance to our memory of it.

And we do recognize this principle. Consider, for example, what we do as we remember those who have died fighting for their country. Yes, we may think back to images of soldiers in combat, and picture them as they fall. But we do not remember and love them because they died. We remember and love them because they were willing to die. They are men and women who saw a cause greater than themselves and made the decision that their lives were worth less than the cause they were fighting for. That is what we love in those we honour.

True Christian Religion draws this parallel between our remembrance and love for the Lord and our remembrance and love for those who make sacrifices for others:

Who does not remember and love the man who, from the zeal of love for his country, fights with her enemies even unto death, that he may thereby deliver her from the yoke of servitude? And who does not remember and love the man who, when he sees his fellow-citizens in extreme want, with death from

grievous famine staring them in the face, out of pity brings forth all his gold and silver from his house and distributes it freely? And who does not remember and love the man who, out of love and friendship, takes the only lamb he possesses, kills it, and sets it before his guests? (*True Christian Religion* §710)

Just as a soldier can pay the highest price to defend the freedom of his country, just as a wealthy man can part with all his wealth for the sake of those in want, just as an individual can give his one and only prize possession for his friends, the Lord was willing to fight through every temptation, to push on in every struggle, to endure every pain, in order to rescue humanity from hell. In each of these cases it is not the sacrifice itself that is meaningful that we hold in our memory, it is the intense love that we remember.

The other side of remembrance, perhaps even the more important side, is the command to “do” or to act. The Lord could simply have said, “remember Me when I am gone,” but He did not. He specifically chose to say “do this in remembrance of Me.” This command goes beyond thoughts and feelings in our minds. In one sense the act that the Lord is calling us to is a simple one: on a regular basis, or as often as seems appropriate, to take part in the Holy Supper. When we go through this ritual, thinking about the Lord, we literally follow the His command to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him.

But there is much more to that command than the sacrament. The significance of the Last Supper is not confined to those times when we are taking the Holy Supper: it applies to our whole life. When the Lord said “do this” He did not mean for us to simply go through a ritual. He meant for that command to apply to the full scope of what we do and what we say, what we choose to love and to think on a daily basis. So what is that we are to *do*, which is so important to our very life? What

is it to eat bread and to drink wine in remembrance of the Lord? To take His very body and blood into ourselves?

In a general sense bread and wine are the Divine good of love and the Divine truth of wisdom (TCR 711). The wine, or blood, means Divine truth. So to drink the Lord's blood is to live according to the truth that the Lord gives us. When we look to the Word and understand and live the commandments we drink in the Lord's lifeblood. Every single time that we act according to what the Lord tells us to do, from shunning adultery to simple acts of kindness, we are drinking in that wine and fulfilling the Lord's command to "do this in remembrance of Me."

And the bread is the Divine good (AC 2165:4). On the one hand bread is the Love that the Lord shares with us. But the good that we do towards others is also bread that feeds us. This too is a gift from the Lord. Every time we serve the Lord and our neighbour out of love, we are feeding on the bread that the Lord is giving to us. When we go out of our way to be kind, when we go to great lengths to do our part, when we put aside our own wants and desires to do as the Lord asks, we are eating the bread of the Lord's supper, and again fulfilling His command to "do this in remembrance of Me."

So we have seen what it is to do as the Lord commanded at the Last Supper: it is to do good to those around us (to eat the bread), to have truth shape our thoughts and intentions and actions (to drink the wine), and to welcome the Lord into our lives (to receive these from the Lord).

But how is this a remembrance of the Lord? The Teachings of the New Church make it abundantly clear how we can remember the Lord when we do something, and even be remembering Him while not even mindful of it:

Anyone who receives and possesses faith is constantly mindful of the Lord; this is so even when he is thinking or talking about something other than Him,

or else when he is carrying out his public, private, or family duties, though he is not directly conscious of his mindfulness of the Lord while he is carrying them out. (*Secrets of Heaven* 5130)

In other words, if we have true faith in the Lord, that faith will be governing our minds whether we are conscious of it or not. And so here we have the key as to why the Lord commands us to do all things in remembrance of Him. It is not that they remind us of Him necessarily, but that they themselves are the remembrance of the Lord.

So finally we come to what it really means to remember. To remember the Lord involves remembering His love for us and the things that He has done for us; but we only truly remember the Lord when we are doing something: when we act out the meaning of the bread and wine in Holy Supper; when we love our neighbour and live as the Lord taught. When we follow the Lord we are actively remembering Him through how we live. And if we do this we will be doing as the Lord said when, on the verge of giving His own life up for our sake, He took bread and wine, shared it, and said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." *Amen*.