

Do this in remembrance of me

Bible reference for sermon: Exodus 12:1-14

¹⁴ “This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

Welcome to everyone today and especially family and friends of the young people who will be receiving Holy Communion for the first time today, and to your families and friends who share this special time with you. My prayer for each young person and everyone here today is that this will be a memorable day for you.

I wonder if I can ask people who already receive holy communion if they can remember the first time they received holy communion



I can just remember. For me it was part of my Confirmation time and I remember being able to buy a dark blue body shirt to wear and for a 13 year old I thought I was the coolest cat getting around. The older I get the harder it seems to be to remember.

Today we're going to briefly explore what Jesus means when he gave us the precious gift of this meal to share as his family, when he said "This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.... This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me.

And pastor Sue will say these words soon when she leads the holy communion liturgy. We'll briefly explore what this means for us today also in light of the Old Testament reading where God says to Israel ¹⁴ "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you.

Lets pray the prayer from First Communion Book:

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for inviting us to your table.

Thank you for giving yourself to us.

Help us to remember your love whenever we share Holy Communion. Amen.

That prayer is the last prayer in the First Communion booklet and one which we prayed together in our lesson time and one which first communion people may have prayed at home this past week.



Help us to remember your love when we share Holy Communion.

God says “remember!” too. When he rescued the people from slavery in Egypt. He said “This shall be a day of remembrance for you.” and this reminds me and maybe you also of the words of Jesus at the Lord’s table which we hear in 1 Cor 11 . “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

So what is this “do this in remembrance me”? What does “Do this in remembrance of me” mean? Why does Jesus say this?

Well, my friends these puzzling words bring to us God’s amazing revelation of the past, His grace filled presence in the present and the perfect promise for the future for us. To be invited by Jesus to eat and drink at his table involves far more than remembering with our minds. It involves more than us using our mental/cognitive abilities which may fade or be lost over time, our memories to simply remember facts and more than our emotions as we filter our life experiences thru selective memory.

These words of Jesus “To take and eat...my body. To take and drink my blood; To do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me”; these words of Jesus with bread and wine bring about an amazing reality for us today. The Lord’s Supper is in so many ways IS Easter happening in our lives. And to help us understand this, it helps to turn to the Old Testament Passover meal. You may OR MAY NOT remember that the first Passover was instituted by God as his final act of saving oppressed Israel, of rescuing, freeing Israel from the bondage of Egyptian slavery. On the night of the first Passover the Israelites were to eat the Passover with their cloaks tucked into their belts and their sandals on their feet and their staffs in their hands and to be ready... ready for freedom. And what’s more they were to remember this feast in future generations.

This future remembering involved not just mental/cognitive abilities but a current and new participation in God’s saving grace, a new again story for the heart every time it was eaten in the future. In the Passover liturgy a young person would ask the head of the family “What does this Passover mean?” And the answer would come “With a mighty hand, the Lord brought US out of Egypt.” The Lord brought US, here now. And so future generations would participate in God’s Passover gift of freedom. The past became the present reality in the promise and work of God. And the Passover became the time to expect the coming Messiah and so it was common practice to leave the door open because the Messiah might just come in. Past, present and future. God’s timeless salvation and freedom.



I'm glad we leave the door open today. Not because I expect Jesus to walk thru it. It would be pretty good if he did. But because you and I have walked thru it to come to his amazing meal and his amazing presence for us here...the Lord's Supper. For here today the events of the very Last Passover meal celebrated according to

God's will; the institution of the Lord's Supper; the new covenant in Jesus' blood come to us in the present. This is Jesus' gift for us today. Here, we gather with Christ at his table to be served. Jesus says in Luke 22:20, "I am among you as one who serves" Here God comes to give us the forgiveness and salvation won for us on Good Friday. here God comes to give us the new life, the freedom from death won for us on easter morning. here God comes to give us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet which awaits.

And none of this thru our own mental or emotional abilities to remember but thru the promise of Christ in the past which he brings to us right now "This is my body given for you....this is my blood shed for you" here is the Easter story, the Gospel in action and received by us who in faith believe these promises are for us.

Jesus' invitation to the first communion class and to each of you today is to come to the banquet. His meal prepared for you and for us as family, as community. I pray for all the families today celebrating first communion that this is a day to remember. And maybe it's a good thing to remember that prayer we prayed at the start of the sermon. But even more, that every time Jesus invites us "come, for all things are ready" that we will be assured that he meets us in love and he gives us life to live and make a difference.

Come to the Gospel in action as you hear Jesus speaking to you. Come to the Gospel in action as you see, touch and taste Christ for you. Come to where time is timeless, where the boundaries of heaven and earth overlap. Where we join with the angels and arch angels and with the saints on earth and the saints already in heaven. Come and proclaim the Lord's death until he comes for you. Come! participate in God's salvation meal for you. Take and eat! Take and drink! Jesus says "This is my body given for you. This is my blood shed for you. "Do this in remembrance of me...Amen.

Video of the service including the above address can be found on the St Paul's Lutheran Church Youtube page <https://www.youtube.com/@stpaulslutheranchurchboxhi1133>