

In Remembrance of Me

Scriptures: Exodus 13:1-8; Psalm 136:1-4; Luke 22:14-20

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Grace Greater Than Our Sin is the hymn written by Julia H. Johnston in 1911.

Listen to some of the words:

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see His face
Will you this moment His grace receive?
Grace, grace, God's grace
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!

Every first Sunday of the month, and at other special times in the Christian year, we gather at the Lord's Table, the Communion Table. At some point in the service around the Table, the Pastor will quote Jesus saying, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Jesus was giving the disciples and all of us through the ages a visible reminder of the grace that his death and resurrection was about to bestow upon humanity.

There was something about the moment when Jesus broke the bread and gave it to them; there was something about the way Jesus poured out that wine into the cup and gave it to them that would call us later to remember Him.

When we come to the Table of our Lord we call what happens there Communion. Communion is conversation between us and our Lord; communion is our listening once again to the message of Jesus who describes for us the significance of what He has already done for us. Communion is a holy moment in our worship of our Lord. Communion was instituted by our Lord at the end of the last Passover meal that He had with his disciples and his family.

Passover is also a meal of remembrance, a meal that calls to remembrance the grace of God and the deliverance of God's people, the Hebrews, from the land of Egypt. As the Passover Meal progresses there are symbolic foods that accompany the story of their slavery and their deliverance.

At the end of that last meal Jesus broke the bread and poured wine into a cup and shared them with those at the Table in an effort to demonstrate the new liberation, the freedom from sin, the gift of grace that He was about to give to all.

They were visual examples of what would happen during his sacrifice for us. His body would be broken. His very life blood would be poured out.

On a day recorded in eternity, God must have looked down upon humankind and observed that

- Some were trying their best to keep all of the Law

- Some had never heard of the Law and were just doing the best that they could to please gods of their choosing.

God must have decided that there was one last way that redemption could be provided for God's creation. It is at the Table that we are called to remember.

There must have been something about being present at that last meal with Jesus that would help the disciples believe that Jesus was truly the resurrected Lord.

When Jesus appeared in the locked room with the disciples on the morning after his resurrection, He was not immediately accepted as being real, not just an apparition in their presence. It was when Jesus ate with them that they believed.

It was after a meeting with some of his other followers on the road to Emmaus that Jesus was invited to remain for the night at their home. During their journey they had been so grieved about the crucifixion that they had not recognized Jesus. It was at the meal, when Jesus broke bread, that they recognized Him as their Lord. It was in the remembrance of the meal that they remembered the Lord.

What a gift! What grace!

It is a gift a grace that erases all of the lines

- Between social standings,
- Between genders,
- Between straight and LGBTQ,
- Between ethnic groups,
- Between cultures.

It is grace that is beyond our comprehension.

Even those who were closest to Jesus found it difficult to believe that grace and salvation were being offered to folks who weren't like them.

- Could a Roman soldier named Cornelius be invited to God's Table?
- YES!
- Could a Greek over in Macedonia be equal to a Christian of Jewish heritage?
- YES!
- Could a jailer who had guarded the disciples in prison actually believe in Jesus the Messiah?
- YES!

In Christ the barriers, the walls, have been broken down. Everyone is invited into the family.

As we come to the Table today, what will you be remembering? Perhaps there will be a flood of memories. Maybe you will go all the way back and remember

- That sweet baby in the manger,
- Those Magi who found their true King.
- That little boy and his parents who became refugees in Egypt,
- Jesus confounding the scholars in the Temple with his questions about the Torah,
- The baptism when Jesus heard God say, "This is my Son, in Whom I am well pleased,"
- Those times of healing and teaching and challenging tradition when Jesus was demonstrating that the law of love was more important than the religious laws of people,
- Those last moments with his disciples around the Table in the upper room when He knew what lay before Him,

- That time when you realized that the body broken and the blood shed and the grace provided was for YOU.

A missionary to Brazil tells the story of walking down the street. Behind him he felt the insistent tapping on his hand. It was a little street boy who had come up behind him and was asking for a piece of bread. He invited the boy to go with him into the nearest sandwich shop and while he only had coffee he told the waiter to allow the boy to choose whatever he wanted. Afterwards, the little one said to the missionary, "*Obrigado.*" "*Thank you!*" "*Muito Obrigado.*" "*Thank you very much.*" The moment was overwhelming for him.

The thought occurred to him, "If he was so moved by a street orphan who says "thank you" for a piece of bread, how much more is God moved when I pause to thank God – really thank God – the Bread of Life for his grace that redeems my soul.

Amen.