

BUCYRUS UNITED METHODIS CHURCH JUNE 3, 2018

“REMEMBER”

Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26 **GOD’S WORD:** JOSHUA 4:1-8

I – MEMORIAL DAY:

This past Monday was Memorial Day and I had the honor of being asked to give the invocation and benediction at the Memorial Ceremony held for those lost in wars at Oakwood cemetery. I’ve had numerous family members who served their country such as my Grandfather who was in WWI and my father who was in Korea. So this holiday has some meaning to me.

The holiday today sees people decorating the graves of their loved ones, but in the purest sense of the holiday it is about remembering those who have fought and died for our freedom. It is about remembering their sacrifice so we can live as we want. The various veteran’s organizations place flags on all their graves and hold parades and services such as the one held Monday.

It was during the parade that I noticed we no longer remember our veterans and what they’ve done. In the days past I remember wearing a dress uniform and marching with the rest of the Bucyrus Police staff from the city square to the cemetery. As we marched the streets were packed with people. Some in lawn chairs, some standing, some sitting on the curb. As the honor guard passed by with the flag displayed people would stand up, take off their hats, place their hands over their hearts and show their respect.

But not now. Those watching were sparse. I surmise most were already preparing for their eating and drinking later in the day. They no longer remember the day’s significance, or those who died so they could have a day off from work.

II – REMEMBERING GOD:

I wonder how much we treat God this way. God has blessed us richly going on the way back to the story of Creation. He created a beautiful world full of all we would ever need to survive and we broke it. But he didn’t give up on us. He continued to love us and

guide us. Continued to make all kinds of promises to us. But we have a tendency to forget all of that. We don't remember.

In the Old Testament I see story after story that concerns this act of remembering. When God delivered his people from slavery in Egypt he continually called the people to remember the mighty acts of Salvation he performed in front of them with the plagues and the meat and bread from heaven. He called on them to continue to remember all of what he had done and to follow his teachings and commandments. He wanted his children to always remember who he was and what he had done for them. We see that in this morning's story of Joshua. As he took them into the Promised Land he had promised to them he instructed them to pick up stones from the river bed he dried up so they could pass through and to build a memorial with them on the other side of the Jordan. The reason behind this was so that their children and others asked what it was for they could tell them the story of how God had got them to the Promised Land. They could remember and share.

I see this act of remembering in the New Testament as well. Peter and Paul both would start their sermons to the people by leading them through a retelling of their relationship to God back to the days of Abraham and help them remember the mighty acts God had done for them. Then they would lead them to the Gospel and the mighty act of Salvation through Jesus he had recently done for them. God wanted his people to remember!

III – TEXT:

I see this act of remembering and memorialization in the Sacrament of Communion we take today. The part of the letter to the church in Corinth I read this morning (**note – Pat I am probably going to use this Scripture during the celebration of communion prior to the sermon time**) is in a passage where Paul is taking the people there to task because they are making a mockery of the Sacrament. They are treating it like a bag of food from McDonalds. They are not taking it seriously.

They have forgotten what it is and why they do it. In the middle of the passage he helps them to remember what it's all about.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (NLT)

²³ For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread ²⁴ and gave thanks to God for it. Then he

broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”²⁵ In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.”²⁶ For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.

Paul points out that he had received the instructions about how to do the meal, what it meant, from Jesus himself. The bread was broken to help them remember how his body was broken and bruised for them. The cup of wine was to help them remember that his blood was spilled for them. That it was all done to seal the new covenant of Salvation between God and his people through the blood of his Son. The new covenant which was the fulfillment of the promises made by the prophets of old and the sacrificial system that was in place at the time with the blood of animals. Now replaced by the blood of Jesus.

And the meal was supposed to make sure we remember all of this. To make sure we never forget what Jesus did. And to remember every time we do it that we are remembering his promise that he will return to set Creation right and we are supposed to proclaim this so all know it.

This is all contained in Jesus’ command to “Do this in remembrance of me.” Most communion tables have this engraved in them.

IV – DO YOU REMEMBER:

The church is full of memorials like those stones piled up by Joshua. Full of symbols to help us remember. We have stained glass windows to tell us the story...we have crosses...we have an altar...we have candles...hymnals and Bibles. We proclaim the word, pray for help, and sing of God. But do we really remember?

Each and every time we come to this meal we should remember...

- That Jesus, the Son of God, gave up his rights as the prince of heaven, to be born in the flesh in a lowly stable.
- That he lived without privileges of the rich and famous.
- That he spent three years preaching the Kingdom of God, always in the face of opposition.

- That he allowed himself to be arrested...mocked...beaten...and tried all as an innocent man.
- That he was nailed to a Roman cross in the blistering Middle East sun where he bled and died for us.

And more importantly do we remember that he did it all for us. That his actions and death was to establish our covenant of Salvation with a loving God who put it all in motion.

Do we remember or will we allow our faith to go the way of Memorial Day. We'll forget because we have better things to do?

V – REMEMBER:

I know that remembering all of this can make us sad. When we realize the full story and that we caused his death it can make us sad. When we face our sins it can be uncomfortable as we release them and nail them to the cross with Jesus. It is then we realize that the sin and the sacrifice come together to bring us Salvation. There is no other way.

But then we should remember it all with gladness. The fact that his actions did set us free. That we have been washed clean of our sins and God remembers them no more. That past that cross is an empty tomb. That Jesus was resurrected and promises us our own resurrection. That by his actions our sin AND death no longer rule over us...they have been defeated!

This is the Good News...this is what we are called to proclaim. This is what we are called to teach our children and others. The story we proclaim at every Communion meal:

“CHRIST HAS DIED; CHRIST IS RISEN; CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN.”

Amen