

You might remember me having said months ago in a sermon that my Grandpa Born died when I was only in second grade. I was barely beginning to know him and suddenly he wasn't there anymore. I spoke then about remembering very clearly the day I found out. Since I was seven years old it was probably a little easier in the days, weeks, and months after to move on. What I didn't share then was that my grandma gave me something of my grandpa's to keep. I hadn't ever seen it before, but when she gave it to me it became one of my most precious possessions.

Forgetting my grandpa was not possible. There's still hardly a day that goes by I don't think of him, and now her too. I didn't need then something tangible to remember him, and I don't now. But sometimes it's nice. Every once and a while I pull that old treasured possession out and hold it in my hands and remember.

God certainly didn't need to give us something so we could remember Jesus. His incredible works are hard to forget. But God gave us something anyways. And sometimes it's nice to partake of it and remember in a special way the things Jesus did for us. That's what we can do tonight as we look at the second lesson...

**Do this in remembrance of me**  
**Holy Communion is a real presence remembrance**  
**Communion is a gospel remembrance**

My grandpa started work for Kohler Company in 1950. That's the company that makes sinks, tubs, and toilets. After 25 years with the company they gave him a gold medallion. The Kohler logo is on the front with my grandpa's name and quarter century club imprinted with 1975 on the back. It's on a gold chain but I don't know that my grandpa ever wore it. I'm not even sure what he did with it once he got it. But he kept it, and after he died my grandma gave it to me. I treasured it. I kept it in a special place underneath my bed or in one of my dresser drawers. I took it out when the door was shut and I cried. I cried because I loved my grandpa and I missed him. The medallion allowed me to remember.

On the night before Jesus would be betrayed and crucified he was eating his last meal with his disciples. He took elements from the table in front of him and set them up as something his disciples could use to remember him. That last meal was the Passover, something the Israelites had been celebrating for more than a thousand years. It included bread without yeast to make it rise. Yeast was a picture of sin in the Bible, just like yeast works through a whole batch of dough so sin works through the life of every human being. Bread without yeast showed God wanted his people to be without sin. Wine was included because the primary drink at most meals was wine. Without refrigeration any other drink would have been impossible to keep fresh. Jesus chose the bread and wine. Ultimately we don't know why. But God does tell us what they are.

While holding the bread in his hands Jesus said, **"This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."** The bread was there. Jesus' body was there too. Both would be received in a miraculous way when this meal was taken. Jesus then picked up the cup holding the wine and said, **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."** The wine was there and so was Jesus' blood. Both would be received in a miraculous way when the meal was taken. Christ's real body and real blood present in with and under the real bread and real wine. A real presence remembrance in Holy Communion.

And what do we remember? We proclaim the Lord's death. **"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."** We proclaim that God became man, joining his divine nature to a human body and soul. His purpose was death. We proclaim Jesus Christ lived a perfect human life. Perfect service to God, perfect obedience to the Heavenly Father, perfect in every way. Our proclamation is that he achieved the death he sought. Death on the cross. Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper we proclaim Jesus' death on the cross to pay for all sins. We'll keep proclaiming this until the Lord comes again. Keep proclaiming it because it's the forgiveness of sins and life we receive. We partake of the real body and real blood Jesus gave and shed on the cross. God connects us to the very price paid for our salvation. Holy Communion is a real presence remembrance that we treasure until Christ returns.

As many times as I held that gold medallion of my grandpa's I never once saw my grandpa. And I didn't expect to. The medallion was only a token to remember him; it would never replace him. The Lord's Supper we celebrate tonight looks like a token. Something done only to remember. But it's more than a token. More than just ceremony. This is real gospel. Visible preaching of the same gospel we hear and read in the Word of God. Jesus lived for us. Jesus died for our sins. We are forgiven. I can say those things and announce them to you and they are true. But here, along the rail, when you receive Christ's body and blood along with the bread and wine, then you taste and smell that the Lord is good. You receive the forgiveness Christ won. It's the gospel made visible. That makes it incredibly special.

So anyone celebrating it needs to know how special it is. That's why abuse is taken seriously. The Corinthians were abusing the Lord's Supper. Paul had to address it seriously. They needed a reminder of how special the supper was. So Paul wrote, **"Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord."** Unworthy? Sin? Doing something in church could be sinful? That's something that should make us sit up and take notice.

What could make someone possibly unworthy to take something so special in church? Jesus died for all sin, so it can't be sin that makes us unworthy. Denial that Jesus paid the price for sin, unbelief, that would make someone unworthy. Someone who doesn't believe can't and shouldn't take the Lord's Supper. No trust in Jesus means no participation in the sacrament. And if someone is a Christian but they aren't repentant, refusing to believe they're sinful, don't want to admit they're guilty, or don't want to leave their life of sin, then they too are unworthy. And Paul described, **"Anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."** So someone not recognizing Christ's real body and real blood present in the sacrament shouldn't take the Lord's Supper. Anyone who does won't receive blessings, only judgment.

Those of you planning to take the Lord's Supper now want to be sure you're prepared I'm thinking. A renewed interest in preparation is good, not only tonight but every time. How? **"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup."** Examination basically amounts to three questions. Do you recognize you're a sinner? Do you trust that Jesus paid for your sins and forgives you? Do you trust that his body and blood are really present in this Lord's Supper for your personal forgiveness? Yes. Yes. Yes. You are worthy. You are prepared. God's Word has convinced you of your sins and assured you of Christ's forgiveness. You step forward to receive that forgiveness in a personal way. It's Christ's body and blood to comfort you. Jesus says this is my body and my blood for you. Sins taken away. Even the worst ones, the haunting ones. Trust in Christ and this gospel remembrance.

It has been almost 30 years since my grandma gave me that medallion. And I still have it. It may be nothing to others, but its super special to me. The Lord's Supper may not look like much. Eating in church? But if we ever forgot what Jesus said about it or forgot what promises were there we'd be the ones losing. The power of the Lord's Supper is not in simple bread and wine but in the spiritual elements miraculously joined. Christ's body and blood to take your sins away. That's peace. Gospel peace no matter what. Do this, take this sacrament, enjoy this gospel, be assured of your peace with God, in remembrance of Jesus.