

REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST! LUKE 22:7-23

Photo albums are the most embarrassing things we keep! To see ourselves when we looked different; to see the clothes we once wore; to see the hairstyles that we once thought looked great (and that's not just the women!); for teenagers to be reminded of their baby photos, what they looked like as children; to see again the clothes in which their mothers dressed them and what they looked like on beach at age of 3 – especially if they are introducing a boyfriend or girlfriend! To see ourselves as we were then! I remember the day when our children were first introduced to our wedding album – 'is that really you?' They could not believe how young we looked! It can be embarrassing to be reminded of some of these things, how we once were.

On other hand, photo albums are great! They are great because they allow you to look back at old photos and remember places you once visited as a family; it is great to look back on special events and photos trigger memories of that day, hence wedding albums! We remember people who have died and they are not forgotten because we have photos of them to remind us of the people we love and who are still in our hearts. Do I remember childhood events when I was young or do I remember them through photos we have of these times? Psychologists might know the answer to that! I have a book that I was given just after Christmas *100 Days in Photographs – pivotal events that changed world* and there are photos that remind us of these events and some are here on the screen! We remember all kinds of things through photos.

"Remember..." (2 Timothy 2:8) This was Paul's advice to his young friend, Timothy. 'Don't forget Jesus!' That may sound a strange thing to say; of course, Christians are not going to forget Jesus; He is their life, their salvation. But it is not so strange, because Paul went on to say *"remember..."* (2 Tim 2:8) This kind of remembering was for good of Timothy's faith; remember what Jesus has done; remember what Jesus was like; remember what Jesus said - and all of that, so that we can believe in Him and that our faith can be made stronger. We remember Jesus to learn all over again what He did and that what He did was for us; that kind of remembering is to make our faith stronger and our love for Jesus deeper.

We have no actual photo album, but two things to take its place. 1) the gospels, in this case Luke's gospel, that paint a picture of Jesus and His life and what He did and what He said, what kind of person He was and how His life and ministry touch us; 2) the bread and wine of the communion service, show us in a different way, a picture of what Jesus was like and what Jesus said and did and how what He said and did touches our life today. We are going to dip into these two 'photo albums' today, so that our faith can be stronger.

Photo Album 1 – Luke's gospel

We have been looking at Luke now since September and all the sermons I've preached so far are on the Church website and some are printed in the vestibule; we reached chapter 11 two weeks ago. For the next three weeks

we're going to jump to the end, to the story of Easter week, so that in the weeks before Easter we can have an overview of the whole story. We will never be able to touch on all of it, but this week we consider chapter 22, next week chapter 23, then the Palm Sunday story and on Easter Sunday chapter 24. Whatever we miss out, there will be the chance to discuss at the Discovery Group at end of March! Luke has been painting a picture of Jesus and we have seen Him heal, we have listened to a little of His teaching last time, but like all of the gospel writers Luke spends far more time on the last week of Jesus' life, 5½ chapters on the events of 8 days, from Palm Sunday to Easter. But then, Jesus has been heading for Jerusalem for a long time; at the end of chapter 9 we read that: "*As the...*" (9:51) The Easter events of the cross and resurrection were not a nasty accident, but were the real reason for Jesus' coming; this was something He set out to do, to achieve.

It is Thursday, the day before Jesus would die. He sends His friends to prepare a meal they would share; it was a Passover meal because it was that time of year and they were all Jews. They sat together round the table to enjoy their last night, their last meal together (though only Jesus knew that!) They shared the Passover and as they did, Jesus changed it. "*He took...*" (22:19f) Here was Jesus sitting round a table telling His friends to remember Him by repeating what He had just done. We will come back to that in a minute, but we need to see that this is clearly connected with Jesus' death the very next day. Luke tells us the story of Jesus and His friends round the table so that we remember what He did, remember His words and remember that the next day He would go out to die on a cross and that what He did, He did for us.

Luke also tells us that this meal took place against all kinds of things going on in the background. It took place against a background of betrayal – Judas had just agreed to give Jesus up to His enemies for 30 pieces of silver and later Peter will deny three times that he knows Jesus despite his protests that he will never leave Him; it took place against a background of squabbles – the disciples would argue who was greatest; it took place against a background of deep personal anguish in Jesus Himself, in the garden later that evening, having to choose to go the way of the cross or to escape; it took place against a background of the threats and hatred of Jesus' enemies, who were delighted to have opportunity to be rid of Him. All of that is there in Luke 22; this is the real picture of Jesus; this is a picture of His real life that would lead the very next day to His death.

Photo Album 2 – bread and wine of communion

"The Lord's Supper is... a visible and tangible proclamation of the good news that Jesus died for our sins." (Howard Marshall) We see bread and wine on the table in front of us; later we will touch them and taste them, eat and drink them. There are all sorts of ways in which this service and these elements help us remember Jesus. We remember that He once did this with His friends round another table in Jerusalem, so we repeat what Jesus did; we repeat the very words that Jesus used; we do what He did with bread and wine. We remember that the next day He went out to die on a cross and on the third day be raised and that in His death and resurrection, He became the Saviour of

the world, our Saviour, so that now we are forgiven people, and friends with God. We remember that Jesus did all of this for us, for our sake because He loved us.

“He took...” (22:19f) Bread is the symbol of Jesus’ body; it represents His body. Wine is the symbol of Jesus’ blood, it represents His blood. These are linked, tied into, His death the very next day. The bread and wine are a photo album of the Saviour who on Thursday sat round a table with His friends and who by Friday lunchtime was crucified. That’s what the bread and wine remind us of. We can’t capture love on a photo very easily, but we know that Jesus did this because of His love for His friends. We have all kinds of faults and mistakes, we are not perfect people, these faults, mistakes, and shortcomings get in the way of our relationship with God; Jesus died to take all of these away so that now we are forgiven people. That’s what this photo album reminds us of.

Remember Jesus to trust Him. These two photo albums are given to us so that we may trust Jesus more. Both Luke’s gospel and the bread and wine tell us the same thing; they tell us that Jesus came to be the Saviour and that He completed that work on the cross. Both Luke’s gospel and the bread and wine tell us that, so that we may trust Jesus to be for us and to do for us what He said He would be and do.

When we’ve come to Church today, what’s in the background? We said that Jesus did this against a background of betrayal, anguish, squabbling, hatred – hardly designed to produce good spiritual experience; yet in that place God was at work. What’s in the background for you today? It’s Mother’s Day – so perhaps you had breakfast in bed and were pampered before you came out; but perhaps it’s the same kind of things as we see in Jesus’ story – anguish, fear, worries, squabbling, tensions, failures, shortcomings, mistakes and you are here thinking that all of these things drive us away from God. But it was for people like us, in situations like that, that Jesus came; for people like us He is the Saviour; for people like us, the bread and wine is given that we may not only remember Jesus, but trust Him and find in Him our life, our strength, our hope and peace, our forgiveness, our salvation.

Remember Jesus to trust Him. We eat the bread and drink the wine and that in itself is a little parable. The twelve around the table were not spectators; they took part in the drama. They didn’t admire what Jesus did from distance; they took the bread He offered. Faith and trust are about receiving what Jesus offers, far more than bread and wine, but grace, peace, hope, forgiveness and faith and trust are about saying ‘yes’ to Jesus; ‘yes, I want what You have to give!’ As we eat the bread and drink the wine, as we gaze at the photo album, as we participate in eating the bread and drinking the wine, say ‘yes’ to Jesus all over again today; let His grace, love, peace, forgiveness fill your heart.