

Lord's Supper Meditation (Sermon)

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Written in spoken form

When a people believe something is important, they remember it.

They put it on the calendar. They close schools. They close businesses. They gather families. They decorate streets. They raise flags. They tell stories. They visit graves. They pause before monuments. They teach their children names, dates, battles, sacrifices, and causes.

We do this because memory shapes a people.

A nation that forgets what has been given to it will eventually take those gifts for granted. A family that forgets the sacrifices of those before them will begin to live as if the present came cheaply. A person who forgets the cost of freedom will eventually misuse that freedom.

That is why days like Memorial Day and Independence Day matter. They are not just long weekends. They are not merely cookouts, fireworks, and time away from work. At their best, they are acts of remembrance. They force a people to pause and ask, "What was given so that we could live this way?"

Memorial Day reminds us that some freedoms were preserved by men and women who did not return home. Independence Day reminds us that liberty was declared, defended, and passed down at great cost. These days carry weight because freedom carries weight.

But here is the question I want us to begin with: what makes a freedom worthy of remembrance?

Is it the cost paid to secure it?

Is it the number of people affected by it?

Is it the way it changes a person's life?

Is it how long that freedom lasts?

Is it whether that freedom can be taken away?

If a temporary, earthly freedom is worth setting aside time to remember, then we should carefully consider how we treat a freedom that reaches deeper than law, deeper than government, deeper than a nation, and deeper than the grave.

Before I rush to my first point, we need to sit with the principle: freedom is never a light thing. True freedom is costly. It changes how we live. And, true freedom must be remembered.

Freedom is costly.

We know this when we think about national freedom. No serious person looks at the freedoms we enjoy and believes they appeared without sacrifice. They were declared with risk, defended through hardship, and preserved by people who gave up comfort, security, and in many cases, their lives.

After 17 years of military service, I can attest to how much our nation has spent (time, money, lives) to acquire and maintain the freedoms we enjoy today.

And the more we understand the cost, the more seriously we treat the gift.

That same principle helps us understand the freedom we have in Christ.

Scripture does not present our freedom as cheap. It is freely given to us, yes, but it was not cheaply purchased. Nor is it “cheaply” maintained.

In 1 Peter 1:18-19, we are told, “¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Isaiah 53:4-6 shows the magnitude of Christ as a sacrifice;

⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He bore griefs, carried sorrows, was pierced for transgressions, and the Lord laid our iniquity on Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 shows the innocent One standing in place of the guilty; ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin^[a] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus did not secure our freedom through earthly power, political influence, or military strength. He secured it through His own suffering and death. He was betrayed, arrested, falsely accused, mocked, beaten, crucified, and buried. The innocent One stood in the place of the guilty. The

righteous One bore the judgment of the unrighteous. The Son of God gave His life so that sinners could be set free.

This means Christian freedom is *blood-bought* freedom.

That is the cost of our liberty.

When Paul says, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free,” he is not speaking of a vague feeling of religious comfort. He is speaking of a freedom purchased at the cross. Freedom from the guilt of sin. Freedom from the power of sin. Freedom from the fear of death. Freedom from condemnation before God.

National freedom is precious, and we should never treat it lightly. But even the greatest national freedom is only temporal, not eternal. A person can live in a free country and still be enslaved to sin. A person can possess civil rights and still stand guilty before God. A person can enjoy earthly liberty and still fear death, judgment, and eternity.

But, Christ gives a greater freedom. And the cross shows us the highest cost ever paid for the greatest freedom ever given.

Freedom is costly.

Freedom changes the way we live.

One of the great misunderstandings of freedom is the idea that freedom means no limits, no authority, no responsibility, and no obedience. But that is not true in a nation, and it is certainly not true in the Christian life.

National freedom does not mean every person does whatever is right in his own eyes. A free people still need laws, order, justice, responsibility, and self-control. Liberty without restraint does not remain liberty for long. It becomes disorder.

So even in earthly freedom, we understand this principle: freedom must be rightly ordered.

A citizen who values freedom does not use that freedom as an excuse to destroy the very things that make freedom possible. He does not say, “Because I am free, I owe nothing to anyone.” Instead, he understands that freedom comes with duty. It calls for responsibility. It calls for discipline. It calls for a way of life that honors the gift received.

This is truer for the freedom we have in Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul speaks to this “¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; You were bought at a price...”

Christ didn’t set us free so that we could be alone and autonomous; He set us free so that we could belong to Him. We have been purchased by the blood of Christ and because of that our lives are no longer to be ruled by the flesh.

That is why the fruit of the Spirit includes self-control. Galatians 5 does not describe a life where a person is free to follow every desire. It describes a life where the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. In other words, the Spirit teaches freed people how to live free.

When Christ sets us free, He does not set us free so that we can return to sin. He does not break our chains so that we can willingly put them back on. He does not deliver us from one master so that we can live as though we have no Master at all.

Paul says in Galatians 5:13, “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.”

That verse corrects two errors at once; First, it tells us that we truly are free. The Christian life is not slavery to fear, guilt, condemnation, or the impossible burden of trying to earn salvation. Christ has set us free from that. But second, it tells us that Christian freedom is not self-indulgence. We are not freed so that we can serve the flesh. We are freed so that we can love, obey, and serve.

This is where we must be honest: sin often presents itself as freedom.

Sin says, "Do what you want."

Sin says, "Follow your desires."

Sin says, "Answer to no one."

Sin says, "This will make you happy."

But we know that's a lie. What begins as freedom (in sin) becomes bondage. What looks like control becomes slavery. What feels like independence becomes captivity.

Christ gives a different kind of freedom. He gives us freedom from sin, but also freedom for obedience. Freedom to walk by the Spirit. Freedom to love our neighbor. Freedom to forgive. Freedom to serve. Freedom to deny ourselves. Freedom to say no to the flesh and yes to God.

The freedom of Christ calls us into a new way of life.

We obey not because we are trying to purchase our freedom, but because our freedom has already been purchased. We obey not as slaves trying to earn the love of a master, but as sons and daughters who have already received the love of the Father. We obey because grace has changed us.

Romans 12:2 says, "And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Christ does not merely set us free from something. He sets us free for something.

Free from condemnation, and free to walk in holiness.

Free from fear, and free to trust God.

Free from sin's dominion, and free to serve righteousness.

That is the second truth: freedom changes the way we live.

Freedom is worthy of remembrance (not spoken).

But if freedom is costly, and if freedom changes the way we live, then I will add that **freedom is worthy of remembrance**.

We understand this as a nation. When a freedom has been purchased at great cost, we do not treat it casually. We remember it. We mark it. We set aside time for it. We teach it to our children. We gather around shared symbols, shared stories, and shared meals. We do this because remembrance is one of the ways we honor what was given.

And if that is true of earthly freedom, how much more should it be true of the freedom we have in Christ?

In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Paul reminds the church of what the Lord Jesus gave to His people. He writes,

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The Lord's Supper is not man's invention. It is Christ's command. Jesus Himself gave His people a way to remember Him. He knew we would be prone to forget. He knew we would need to be brought back again and again to the cross. He knew we would need a visible reminder of the body given and the blood poured out.

So, when Christ says, "Do this in remembrance of me," He is inviting His people to the table of grace.

He is inviting us to remember the cost of our freedom.
He is inviting us to remember the love that held Him to the cross.
He is inviting us to remember that our sins have been paid for.
He is inviting us to remember that our chains have been broken.
He is inviting us to remember that we belong to Him.

But, some of you may have noticed that I didn't read the verse 26; ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

And now, you may see what pushed me to connect these two memorials. "You proclaim, you make a declaration, of the Lord's death until he comes."

For nearly two years, that one statement has caused me to think more deeply about the Lord's Supper. Because Paul does not say that we only remember the Lord's death. He says we proclaim it.

That means the Lord's Supper is not only something we look back on quietly in our own hearts. It is also a public proclamation. Every time we come to the table, we are saying something. Each one of us, as we take the bread and drink the cup, is declaring before God, before the church, and before the world: Christ died for me. Christ's blood was poured out for my sins. Christ has set me free. I believe in His death. I believe in His resurrection. And I believe He is coming again.

That makes the Lord's Supper deeply personal, but not private. It is personal because each believer must examine himself and come in faith. But it is not private because the act itself is a visible confession. Week after week, when we gather at the table, we are not merely observing a religious tradition. We are proclaiming the gospel.

We proclaim that our freedom was purchased by the body and blood of Christ.
We proclaim that our sins have been paid for.
We proclaim that the grave did not hold Him.
We proclaim that the risen Lord will return.

The Lord's Supper looks backward to the cross, where our freedom was purchased. It looks forward to the return of Christ, when our freedom will be fully completed. And it speaks in the present, as each of us publicly proclaims that we belong to the crucified, risen, and returning Lord.

And if we can spend money, time, energy, ceremony, honor, and attention remembering earthly freedoms, then surely the freedom purchased by the blood of Christ is worthy of even greater remembrance.

This does not mean we despise national holidays. It means we understand them in their proper place. We can give thanks for Independence Day. We can honor Memorial Day. We can be grateful for the freedoms we enjoy in this country.

But there is a greater freedom.

A freedom no nation can grant.
A freedom no prison can remove.
A freedom no grave can hold.

That is the freedom we have in Christ.

So, when we come to the Lord's Supper and to Worship, we do not come casually. We do not come carelessly. We come as freed people remembering our Redeemer.

We come with gratitude.
We come with humility.
We come with joy.
We come with honor.

So, when we come to the table, we come as people who have been freed at great cost. We come as people being changed by that freedom. And we come as people who gladly proclaim that our Redeemer died, rose again, and is coming back. This is not empty tradition. This is not cold obligation. This is grateful remembrance, public proclamation, and joyful worship before the One who set us free.

Will the men please come forward as we prepare for the Lord's Supper.

Freedom is costly.

Our freedom was not purchased with something disposable. It was not purchased with something temporary. It was not purchased with something small. Our freedom was purchased by the suffering, blood, and death of the Son of God.

And when I really consider that, I must ask myself: how often have I treated as common what God calls precious? How often have I treated my freedom in Christ casually, when it came at the highest possible cost?

Freedom changes the way we live.

You know, I waited until now to share a thought that many of us may have had at some point in our lives. When I was younger and less mature, I remember thinking negatively about Adam and Eve. I remember wondering, "How could they make such a simple mistake?"

In the Garden of Eden, God's instruction seemed so clear. In essence, He said, "This, not that." You may eat from these trees, but not from that one. It seems simple when we read it from a distance.

But then I come to Galatians 5, and I realize that we are given a very similar kind of instruction. Paul says, "Walk by the Spirit." Here is the fruit that should mark your life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This is the fruit of the Spirit. These are the things you are called to walk in.

And Paul also shows us what belongs to the flesh. These are the things we are to turn away from. In other words, the instruction is still, in many ways, "This, not that."

And my perspective has changed. Because I realize that I have often looked back at Adam and Eve with judgment while continuing to make very similar mistakes myself. God has shown us what leads to life, and He has shown us what leads back into bondage. Yet how often do we still reach for the wrong tree?

And freedom is worthy of remembrance.

I will say it one more time; OUR Freedom, is worthy of remembrance. Because it is possible to hear about freedom in Christ, sing about that freedom, speak about that freedom, and still live as though we are chained to the very things Christ died to break. It is possible to remember the cross with our lips while forgetting it in the way we live. But the Lord's Supper brings us back again and again to the truth: Christ did not give Himself so that we could remain the same. He gave His body. He poured out His blood. He broke our chains. He called us out of bondage and into life.

Invitation

So, as we close, the invitation is simple: if Christ has set us free, does the way we live show gratitude for that freedom?

Are we living as people who have been bought with a price? Are we walking by the Spirit, or are we still reaching for wrong tree? Are we treating the cross as precious, or have we allowed the freedom Christ purchased to become common in our hearts?

If you are in Christ, then come back again to the joy of your freedom. Remember what He has done. Proclaim His death with gratitude. And live as one who has truly been set free.

If you are not in Christ, then hear the promise of the gospel: true freedom is found only in Him. Freedom from sin, freedom from guilt, freedom from condemnation, and freedom from death. Christ gave His body and poured out His blood so that sinners could be redeemed.

So today, if you need to come to Christ, come. If you need prayers, come. If you need to repent and return to the freedom you have been given, come. Do not remain in bondage when Christ offers freedom.

“And if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”