

Remembering Jesus Our Guide to Christian Life

Jesus said: "Do this in remembrance of me."

Memory.

Memory is a compilation of life experiences retained in our conscious and unconscious mind. Our ability to retain information and then conjure it back at a later time is one of the great gifts to humans by our creator.

We have feelings that are tied to memories. We might feel joyful, or sad, or angry, or fearful. We want to remember things that make us feel good and forget things that make us feel bad. But, as we know, that is just not how it works. Something we also know is that, over time, memories fade. The details that made a memory particularly joyful are forgotten. And details of unpleasant memories are also dulled. That is, unless the memory is reinforced often by the telling and retelling—as stories are handed down through generations..

Memories are not just created by and for an individual. The telling and retelling in community becomes the community's memory. Such is the case with the Christian community.

And this is why Jesus said: "*Do this in remembrance of me*". He said this to those who were with him in that upper room as they reclined at the dinner table. He wanted to be sure his story would be told and retold so that it was committed to the memory of not just those with him that night, but for generations to come.

Now, in the "memory" we just read together, Jesus says those words as he is breaking bread and sharing it. Was Jesus telling them to remember that, whenever they broke bread together in the future, that he gave his body for them? Well, yes. But was he saying something more? Let's think about that.

We just read the memory of the Last Supper. We also read, through the retelling of Luke, the memory of Jesus riding down the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, his excruciating last night in the Garden of Gethsemane, his arrest, and trial and flogging, his brave walk to the cross, his crucifixion.

I ask you, when Jesus said, "*do this in remembrance of me*", could not Jesus have been saying, "Remember my life. Remember. Remember what I did. Remember my words to you to follow me. Remember to love as I have loved."

I suggest to you that this is why we read the memory of Jesus's Passion not just once, but twice during Holy Week, (we will read John's memory on Good Friday). This is why we "break bread" together every Sunday and sometimes during the week. It is not only to remember that Jesus died on the Cross for the sins of a world that continually forgets to love; it's not only that he was resurrected from dead so that all may have eternal life, not only so that we can "show" that we are awaiting his coming again.

I suggest that we consider that Jesus asked his disciples to retell his story over and over so that future generations may know that his death wasn't only about everyone's sins being forgiven and getting eternal life. I suggest it was about future generations knowing what is expected of his followers. We, Christians—the followers of Jesus—the way of the Cross—the way of Love, are to commit to memory, to retell, to feel—to be moved—stirred to act on the life and Passion of Jesus by: respecting and caring for all of God's creation, by loving and respecting the dignity of every human being no matter their race, their creed, their religion, ethnicity, their social status, their political beliefs, what country they're from, no matter what, no matter; and by striving for justice and peace everywhere.

Along with the retelling comes the memory of Jesus's command—not suggestion—command to his followers. We remember, again, that we are to use our hands, our feet, and our voice—be the stones that shout out for Jesus!

We have many historical examples—stories retold—of Christians who have exemplified how to live into the memory of Jesus. Last Monday we remembered Martin Luther King Jr. and yesterday we remembered Dietrich Bonhoeffer both of whom lived the Christian faith to their deaths—giving their lives for the cause of the justice of God's love.

Here, at St. Barnabas, we have lots of options to help us live into the memory of Christ; some of which are listed your bulletin today.

In response to recent global tragedy, Sigrid Long is hoping to host a fundraiser soon that will support Ukraine relief through the sale of a food called Khachapuri, made by Alison Sidorenko, who is a local woman from Ukraine.

Memory. Why are we remembering—retelling the Passion of Jesus and what are we supposed to do with it? We are remembering because Jesus asked us to. He asked us to remember so that generations upon generations of his followers would know how to be his followers: to love as he loved, to serve as he served.