

In Remembrance
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Good morning, Lighthouse!

The last Monday of May has for many years now been designated as a National holiday. What we know as “Memorial Day” was first established right after the Civil War to honor the fallen of both the Confederate and Union armies. For the nation, last Monday was a day of remembrance for our war dead.

The thought occurs to me that never since the Civil War has this Nation been so morally and politically divided as she stands today.

This holiday, as some of you older ones have heard it called, was originally known as “Decoration Day.”

In years gone by, families would gather at cemeteries; they would prune and mow and trim and clean up the grave sites of their loved ones; they would plant flowers and otherwise decorate the graves and then have a dinner on the grounds and pass on the old stories about the ones gone on before them. Often this would include a religious service; particularly if there was a minister in the family.

The concept of honoring our deceased relatives has all but died out of our society

today. For the most part; young people no longer care to hear the stories of those gone on before them. They are no longer willing to give a day out of their lives to honor those who are dead and gone.

I suppose we could blame the younger generations for not caring; but the truth is that with each passing generation there seems to be less and less and fewer and fewer whose lives merit such honor.

In any case, let me encourage you to share with your young ones some of the history of those gone on before them; especially if that history includes a heritage of knowing, loving and serving the Lord.

I might point out that with the rise of cremations vs. burials in the US - some states, Nevada for example, now over 72% - there are often no graves to visit. California is 56% and Texas is 32%. It is interesting that in States and areas where the Bible is held in high regard, many more people bury their dead.

Without getting into a whole discourse on the merit of a Christian burial and the dishonor associated with the Pagan origin of cremation; let me just point out that to this day, there are no cremations in Israel, the land of the Bible.

If you are born again, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; let me suggest you honor it

by arranging for a Christian burial after you are gone.

Not long ago, while in Israel, we toured the site of the world's most famous and most visited grave of all; we found it empty!

It was not empty because some grave robber stole the body. It was not empty because it was never used. It was not empty because of any natural cause. **It was empty because of a supernatural cause; it was empty because the One buried there rose from the dead just as He said He would before He was crucified!**

In **1Corinthians 15:1-19** The Apostle Paul writes:

- 1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
- 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.
- 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;
- 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures:
- 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:
- 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the

- greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.
- 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.
 - 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.
 - 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
 - 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.
 - 11 Therefore whether *it were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.
 - 12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?
 - 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:
 - 14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.
 - 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.
 - 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:
 - 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.
 - 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.
 - 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

This message of the **death**, the **burial** and the **resurrection** of the Lord Jesus **for our sins** is without question the most important and the most powerful message anyone could ever comprehend. This is the only message with power that can save a soul from hell!

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the **gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God** unto salvation to every one that believeth...

When we share this message with those whom the Lord has prepared to receive it, we often get to see the Lord transform their lives when they place their trust in the Lord to save them from their sins.

Very often, those whom the Lord saves know little or nothing about Church or Worship. I was once one of those; I remember not knowing that my baptism made me a member of the Church. I just knew that Jesus wants people who get saved to be baptized: that was all I needed to know, so I got baptized.

When we come together as a Church, the things we do; the order of it all, are not just arbitrary choices we make.

We have great liberty to worship the Lord and some of what we do is **by our choice** but always under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

There are some things, however, that are mandated by the Lord to always be a part of what we do; things that are to never change.

Aside from the language of our worship which includes many Biblical gestures like raising our hands, clapping, applause, verbal affirmation like the “amen”, bowing our knees which is the very root meaning of the term ‘worship’ itself; we actually have five formal acts of worship we are directly instructed in the Scriptures to follow. They are:

Preaching.

Praying.

Singing.

Tithing/giving.

The Lord’s Supper.

One of those stands among three ordinances we are charged with to continually be practiced; each one standing as a remembrance; a memorial, if you will, of the glorious gospel of Christ. These ordinances are to ever be a part of our worship.

The good news that can save your soul contains three incredible events; the death, burial and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was your trust in this One the grave could not hold that gave you eternal life; it is likewise your observance of these ordinances that

honors the One who bought you with His own blood!

The first ordinance we will discuss is to be practiced in remembrance of His death:

I. We know it as “The Lord’s Supper.”

Observance of The Lord’s Supper is widely misunderstood; let me clear up some of the misconceptions for you:

A. Observance of the Lord’s Supper is commanded! It is not some optional side-note to our worship that we can take or leave.

1. 1Corinthians 11:23-26

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he broke *it*, and said, **Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.**

25 After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, **This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.**

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

2. If you are saved, the Bible commands you to be baptized.

Acts 10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord...

3. If you are saved and baptized, you became a member of your Church where you were upon your baptism.

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized:

Acts 2:47 ... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

4. If you are a member of this Church by virtue of being saved and then baptized here; or a member by being received into this membership based on your scriptural baptism in another Church;

5. You, who are the Church and members in particular, are commanded to observe The Lord's Supper.

6. In I Corinthians 11 you are told twice "this do!"

7. In Matthew 26 we are told twice to do this.

8. In Mark 14 we are told twice to do this.

9. In Luke 22; same thing!

10. Why then do most of you rarely, if ever, participate in The Lord's Supper?

11. Have I so poorly taught you that you perceive this as optional or unimportant or are there other, more personal reasons, why you so often skip the remembrance of the Lord's death?

B. The Lord's Supper is commanded to be observed "often."

1. The early Church whose example we are commanded to follow observed The Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.

Acts 20:7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,...

2. Twice in I Corinthians 11 the key word used to describe the frequency of observing The Lord's Supper is "oft" or "often"; not 'seldom!'

3. **1Corinthians 11:26** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

4. If, as the scripture says, we show forth the Lord's death each time we observe The Lord's Supper; why on earth would anyone use this verse as an excuse to do it seldom instead of often?

5. How often do you think you *ought* to stop and remember what Jesus suffered for you when He died in your place?

C. The Lord's Supper is to be observed "worthily." There are two aspects in which this applies:

1. The first is **self examination**.

1Corinthians 11:27-28

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

2. No man is worthy of what Jesus did for him on the cross; that is not what this means.

3. However, when Christians confess their sins before the Lord, Jesus cleanses us; body and soul, of all unrighteousness.

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

4. This is the condition in which we are commanded, upon risk of serious consequences, to observe the Lord's Supper.

5. Let's ask ourselves, "Should we confess our sins often or seldom?" hmmm; kind of a no-brainer, isn't it?

6. The second aspect of a “worthily” observance of the Lord’s Supper is **the proper elements and atmosphere** used in its observance.

7. We use the elements of the Passover which are unleavened bread and pure real wine; not grape juice or soda crackers which are full of leaven.

8. I cannot take the time to teach you about the proper scriptural elements of The Lord’s Supper today; but I will point out that it was unheard of for any Baptist Church to use grape juice in the Lord’s Supper until the era of prohibition in America.

Secondly:

II. The second ordinance we practice by command of our Lord is Believer’s Baptism.

A. Every time someone new places their faith in Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection for the forgiveness of their sins; we are commanded to baptize them.

1. Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

2. **Acts 2:41** Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

3. **Acts 8:36-39**

36 And as they went on *their way*, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is water*; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe [trust] that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

B. This too should be happening every Sunday; hopefully one day this will be the case.

1. We baptize a good number of new believers but we are not up to “every week” yet.

2. We are working on that.

3. Winning the lost; more of you teaching Bible Classes; more of you serious about reaching souls will make this a reality.

III. The third ordinance we observe is Sunday Worship.

A. We do not have recorded in the Scriptures a specific command from Jesus that we should worship on Sunday.

1. What we do have is the early Church practice which is our commanded example to follow.

2. All of the members of the first Church, including Jesus, her Pastor, were Jews.

3. The Jews, even to this day, worship on Shabbat or “Sabbath” as we say it; which is Saturday.

4. Members of the early Church, being all Jews, still went to synagogue on Shabbat; but then met the following day to worship in celebration of the resurrection of our Lord.

5. Which is why we worship on Sunday, not Shabbat.

B. Sunday worship is in celebration of our Lord’s resurrection.

1. No, the Sabbath has not been changed to Sunday.
2. Yes, Saturday or Shabbat is still the Sabbath and should be primarily used as a day of rest.
3. Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday.
4. Jesus imparted the Holy Spirit to His disciples; his Church on that very same Sunday.
5. The early Church worshipped Jesus on Sunday; and thus do we!
6. I find it interesting that the ordinances directly and plainly commanded given by example instead of direct command is the one most practiced by Christians without controversy.

In Conclusion:

Can you see the dynamic that is created when these three ordinances are taking place?

The Lord's Supper shows forth the Lord's death.

Baptism pictures, in particular, the Lord's burial.

Sunday worship is practiced in honor of our Lord's resurrection.

Together these three preach the gospel.

Is it your desire to worship and honor the Lord?

Is it your desire to worship and honor the Lord the way He commanded it to be done?

Then let us not leave any of it out.

It doesn't matter what you've 'always done' or how your parents did it or how your 'old Church' did it. For most of you, your 'old Church' didn't even teach you how to be saved!

What matters is that we worship the Lord based on the knowledge of the truth we have been given.

John 4:23-24

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

What part needs to be adjusted in your life?

Do you need to trust in the death, burial and resurrection and be saved?

Do you need to get baptized and become a member of the Church?

Do you need to begin worshipping and honoring the Lord like He told us to do it instead of what is merely convenient?