

Sunday January 14th sermon: "Forgetting and Remembering -- The Lord's Table's Meaning"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
by John Pittman Hey

Hebrews 10:3; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

How wonderful it is to be gathered together around the Lord's Table to remember how He died to save us, especially after missing out last Lord's Day!

Some false religions claim that this table forgives sins and is a propitiatory sacrifice. That is the blasphemy of the Catholic mass, that somehow Christ left some of our sins unforgiven when He died on Calvary's tree.

Consider the Lord's Table and the Old Testament sacrifices. Hebrews tells us of the stark failure of animal sacrifices to take away sin, or to perfect the Lord's people.

In the repetition of the animal sacrifices, there is a remembrance of sins. Not a remembrance of sins forgiven and cleansed, but rather a remembrance of sins left unatoned for.

The animal sacrifices were a continuing offering for sin not yet forgiven, still binding the conscience, and requiring judgment and wrath to come.

Not only did the worshippers remember they had more sins left, but God remembered their sins against them!

This denied peace with God, since the sacrifices proclaim condemnation.

The Romanist mass is a perfect example of the Old Testament sacrifices! Constant remembrance of sin, and judgment pending, and no lasting peace with God, and no end of wrath for sin.

But the writer of Hebrews is contrasting Christ's one-time sacrifice with animal sacrifices, NOT building an analogy by suggesting any similarity between the two!

Thus, the mass pictures the wrong sacrifice – not Christ's but Aaron's sacrifice under the law, the sacrifice that didn't work!

Because the mass is a remembrance of unforgiven sin, it must be repeated over and over again. Were it the sacrifice of Christ, it would never be repeated again!

The mass is the devil's counterfeit of the Lord's Table, because the mass is a remembrance of unforgiven sin.

It contradicts what Hebrews says is the DIFFERENCE between a remembrance of sin, and what Jesus did for us!

Christ's one-time offering of Himself on the cross can never be repeated, because by His one offering He has perfected His people forever!

But Hebrews goes further: it compares the remembrance of sin with the consequence of Christ's sacrifice, which is NO remembrance of sin! God does not remember our sins against us anymore.

That is the New Covenant promise, executed by Christ's blood, which leaves the Lord's people with no sin remembered against them by God.

Neither must we remember our own sins against us. We are declared to be without fault before our God on account of the sacrifice of Jesus!

That is why there can never be any more offerings for our sin. There can never be any more condemnation for those who have trusted in Jesus! There is peace forever with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Thus, the Lord's Table is not a sacrifice that forgives sin, for the simple reason that Christ has already completed that great work on our behalf.

Rather, the Lord's Table is our remembrance of NO remembrance of our sin! We remember NO remembrance, by remembering the One Who took away our sins already by dying for us on the cross.

Paul wrote specifically of what we are to remember at the Lord's Table. We come to remember our Savior, the Lord Jesus, and the death He died to redeem us from all our sin.

In the original Greek, the exact same word is used to denote the REMEMBRANCE of sin under the Old Covenant animal offerings, and the REMEMBRANCE of Jesus at the Lord's Table.

It is the thing remembered that distinguishes the two religious rites. Under the Old Covenant, the thing remembered was unforgiven sin.

Under the New Covenant, at the Lord's Table, the One remembered is Christ, and the sacrificial work He accomplished to take away our sins.

Our sins still unforgiven, versus the One Who forgave them all already!

Another sacrifice demanded, versus the one sacrifice already done!

Another sacrifice remembering our sins, versus the one sacrifice that left no remembrance of our sins.

The Old Covenant animal offerings were a remembrance of sins. The Lord's Table is a remembrance of our sin-bearer, the Lord Jesus Christ!

"God made Him to be sin for us, He Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!"

The Lord Jesus Himself put it this way: we are to remember Him in this cup, which pictures His blood shed for the forgiveness of our sin.

We remember Christ, and celebrate God's forgiving and forgetting our sins forever, already judged as our sacrifice, our Redeemer's body and blood!

Samuel Trevor Francis wrote these beautiful words:

"Saviour, we remember Thee!
Thy deep woe and agony,
All Thy suff'ring on the tree:
Saviour, we adore Thee.

"Darkness hung around Thy head,
When for sin Thy blood was shed,
Victim in the sinner's stead:
Saviour, we adore Thee.

"Jesus, Lord, Thou now art risen!
Thou hast all our sins forgiv'n;
Haste we to our home in heav'n:
Saviour, we adore Thee.

"Soon with joyful, glad surprise
We shall hear Thy word:
Arise! Mounting upward to the skies:
Glory, glory, glory!

"Saviour, we Thy love adore;
We will praise Thee more and more;
Spread Thy Name from shore to shore,
Saviour, we adore Thee!

"Calvary! O Calvary!
Mercy's vast unfathomed sea,
Love, eternal love to me:
Saviour, we adore Thee."

Imagine the insult to God, and to our Lord Jesus, every time the mass is performed, blaspheming Christ's sacrifice, by treating it like Old Testament animal sacrifices, which could never take away sin!

But here, we remember Jesus, and what He accomplished on our behalf, our precious Savior, who died and took away our sins forever, and forgave us forever, and blotted out God's remembrance of our sins forever!