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Ron and Val Berrus

Rwemember Me JCI #87 June 1, 2010

Just Checking In #87 Remember Me June 1, 2010

Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord...for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."

"As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" 1 Cor 11:26

Story... symbol...ceremony

As my friend Tom Steffen has often reminded me, a person's worldview (who we are and how we fit into life) is comprised of an overarching **story** including several significant, major stories that are constantly brought to our collective memories by means of **symbols** and **ceremonies**. *Stories...symbols...ceremonies*.

We are approaching Memorial Day Weekend, a special, collective celebration of national importance. We recognize ourselves as citizens of "the land of the free." Freedom is a huge part of our national identity from our earliest days. This freedom is precious in large part because of the price that has been paid to obtain and retain it. The symbols of our flag flying free and the eagle serve to remind us of this, as do military parades and special ceremonies at cemeteries with twenty one gun salutes. The symbols, ceremonies and stories combine to remind and reconnect us to our roots and our values as a nation. As believers, we have far more than a temporal, national identity to remember and give thanks for.

The nation of Israel came to its collective identity as a people through the events of the Exodus. ***This one key event and its annual rehearsal in story, ceremony and symbol would become central to her identity in this world.*** The **story** of her redemption, the celebration of the **ceremonial sacrifice** and feast and the **symbol** of the lamb and its blood would remind the people again and again of their past, their present and their purpose in this world. God so tied Israel's identity to this event that He changed their calendar to correspond to it. It would be their new beginning forever more. Read Exodus 12 and consider this carefully.

The church of Jesus Christ owes its collective identity to the event of His crucifixion and resurrection for us. Jesus took Israel's defining story, symbol and ceremony that was designed by God to prepare His people for His coming, and reweave them into the fabric of fulfillment. We now have the completed story, with completed ceremonies and completed symbols (Baptism and Communion.) Today we are only considering communion. It was not by accident that Jesus set out this new ceremony with its new symbol "after supper," that is, to show that this is now replacing the old symbol and ceremonial feast of Passover.

This story identifies who we are, where we came from, why we're here, where we're going and how we're going to get there. We are sinners forgiven, brought from death to life, living for the pleasure and glory of our Savior, heading to heaven, and all by His death and resurrection for us. Consider the following parallels.

Feast Passover Sacrifice/Reminder Judgment Faith Freedom New Laws New People Promised
Land

Feast Communion Sacrifice/Reminder Judgment Faith Freedom New Laws New People Promised
Home

The Exodus event took place once; the feast would then serve as a reminder ever after. The Cross event took place once; the feast now serves as a continual reminder. **The story** is His death in our place. **The symbols** are bread and cup. **The ceremony** is the giving, receiving, eating, and drinking. **The bread** is symbolic of His body... without leaven because He is without sin... broken because He died... eaten because we believe and receive His life giving work for us. **The cup** is the symbol of the new covenant. The **old covenant** was the law that left us condemned and without excuse. The **new covenant** is the work of Christ completed that leaves us justified and without fault. Jesus took the bitter cup of judgment for us, so that we might drink the sweet cup of forgiveness purchased for us through His blood. The Lamb of God has indeed taken away the sin of the world and we drink this cup as a witness to our faith in Him as Lord and Savior.

We look back at the cross... we look within to examine ourselves... and we look ahead to His coming. Through this ceremony and its symbols we proclaim the story of His death until He comes back. We should rejoice with holy awe and reverence as we come to the table of our Lord with His people. We declare His worth, His work, and His coming as His rescued and restored people. This holy feast of the New Covenant should not be merely tacked on to the end of a service, but prepared, proclaimed, explained and experienced as a wonderful reminder of who HE is and who we now are because of Him.

Remember Him... worship Him... proclaim Him... expect Him.

He is Lord, He is worthy, He is coming!

Self Check: Look back, look within, look ahead.

1. Examine yourself for saving faith. What evidences are there of a new life that has made you different from what you once were.
2. Examine yourself for full surrender. Are there any areas of bitterness, anger, unresolved unforgiveness, unconfessed sins, or unfulfilled vows that must be confessed and made right before you come to His table.
3. Examine yourself for eager expectation. How does the reality of Christ's soon return evidence itself in the decisions and priorities you are making in your life this week.

For further study:

Read 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and also 11:17-33. Consider how the story of redemption actually begins in Paul's mind with the Exodus, and how he sets the stage for his instruction on reverent self examination and congregational unity around the Lord's supper with exhortations based on Exodus. What other story-symbol-ceremony reminders do we have in the Old and New Testament that help us remember who we are, why we're here, and where we're going? We all face the danger of forgetting these foundational realities and taking up the deceptive stories of our age. Our Savior gave us these constant reminders to help us resist the lie and retain the truth

"Lord, thank you for giving us this constant reminder of Who you are, and who we are in You. The next time I sit down at Your table, help me worship You in reverential awe, remembering the price You paid, the life You gave, the forgiveness and cleansing I have, the new identity that is mine as one of Your people, the blessed privilege of belonging to Your church, and the responsibilities this brings to me as part of Your blood bought people. You know how easily I forget. Thank this reminder again and again, I pray in Your name, O Lamb of God, Amen."

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.

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