

Maundy Thursday - April 2, 2015
Text: Exodus 12:1-14
Theme: "Remembering and Healing"

The most severe and most frequent injury we receive in life is loss. Whenever we suffer a loss we suffer injury. But unlike a broken leg or a plugged up artery, loss is more intangible and so while there are pills and substances and activities that can help us avoid thinking about the loss, there is no medication or medical treatment that heal us from loss. I think that the vast majority of people believe that we find healing from loss through forgetting.

Have you ever noticed how uncomfortable people become when speaking to someone who has recently suffered the death of a close loved one? On the one hand you want to know how they are coping, but on the other hand you don't want to bring up a painful topic. It is as though we believe that by simply refusing to talk about loss, we can heal from loss.

And then, whether we're talking about death or divorce or job loss or whatever loss can be suffered, there is the normally unsaid expectation that there is a time limit on our grief and at some fixed point in time, we ought to be "over it by now." We will hear words like, "don't you think you need to move on now?" Or "when are you going to get over that?" It is as though the griever is not supposed

to talk about the loss anymore because it causes others to remember and they think they heal by forgetting!

I don't think we heal by forgetting. I don't think we ever "get over" a loss. I do think that there are a number of ways we can ignore the loss or dull the pain of the loss, but that is different from "getting over" the loss and it certainly is different from healing. I do believe that we can heal from loss but I know that we do not heal by forgetting. In fact, according to Jesus, we heal by remembering.

On this night, long ago, he gave us his holy supper and said do this in remembrance of me. Now when Jesus said do this in remembrance of me, he said it in the context of the liturgical celebration for which they were gathered that evening, that is the Passover. So when he talks about remembering, it is not like Memorial Day, when we remember the soldiers who have fallen for the freedom of this nation. And neither is it like when we take a refresher course to brush up on our French before our vacation to Paris. And it is not a pageant, in which we reenact some great moment in history to teach others and celebrate some great accomplishment.

Remembering for Jesus is more like the activity of the heirs who have gathered to hear the last will and testament of their loved

one. Each time we gather around this altar to receive his body and blood we remember who we are and whose we are and we receive our inheritance over and over again. As God's people gathered to celebrate the Passover, they were not just remembering some powerful event that their forefathers experienced. They were experiencing the event anew. On that night in Egypt, the angel of death spared God's children not because they were great people worthy of special honor and not because they did the right combination of ritual acts, but because they were God's children and heirs to his kingdom.

Every time they celebrated Passover they beat back the angel of death again. They remembered that regardless of the sadness or trial they endured on earth, Death, the final master of all life had no mastery over them. They were heirs to God and life was their inheritance. Jesus took that Passover meal and added something to it – or should we say added some "one" to it.

Now Jesus himself comes to us through this supper – his very body and blood – not in some mystic or spiritual sense but in a very real sense. In a way that we cannot understand or explain, the true body of Christ and the true blood of Christ enter us through the bread and the wine. Jesus Christ is the son of God and therefore heir to everything God has. Through this supper, Jesus Christ bodily

enters us and therefore, we too are heirs of everything God has to offer. And there is where we find healing.

Healing can be found nowhere else. You and I have experienced profound losses in this life. We have lost children, parents, husbands and wives, jobs, marriages, brothers and sisters, our health, our dreams and sometimes we even have lost ourselves and these losses cannot be healed by medical science. They cannot be healed with a fifth or Vodka. They cannot be healed by another person, or Paxil, or Meditation. We must face these losses, and overcome them through remembering and that is how they heal. This, however, is an ugly process because most of our losses and feelings of loss involve sin one way or another – either our own sin or sins against us or both, and sin is ugly and brutal. But avoiding it will only put off healing.

When you have a gaping wound, you can ignore it and hope it heals up alright and it might eventually if you don't bleed to death first and you overcome the infections. Of course the scar would be grisly but eventually I guess it would heal on its own. Or, you might choose to go to a doctor and get some stitches. Now stitches hurt a little, but then the wound will heal.

Healing from loss is similar. We don't go to a doctor and get stitches but we might go to a therapist who will help us to close the wound. But real healing comes from remembering that although our loss is profound, Christ has already overcome that loss for us.

That is first and foremost what we are remembering when we remember Jesus in the Lord's Supper. Because Jesus now dwells within us, we are heirs not only to eternal life, but also to everything his Father has.

What loss could we possibly have that will not be restored? Nothing! Every loss will be restored. Maybe not today. Maybe not tomorrow. But by the time we enter paradise, every loss will be restored and that is where we find our healing. We do not heal by forgetting. We heal by remembering that although we have hurts now, whatever is missing from our lives will be put back into place. Because all things is all things! And our Father, made our Father by Jesus Christ, his son, our Lord, bodily entering us, Our Father has promised us ALL THINGS. REMEMBER! And know that no matter the loss, you will be made whole again.