

Layers of Memory

At the front of my childhood church's sanctuary, the altar was inscribed with the following words: "Do This in Remembrance of Me." I wondered for a long time who had donated money for the communion table, wanting us to remember them every Sunday.

It took a while, but Sunday school finally taught me that we were actually remembering Jesus himself. Those were Jesus' words, asking us to remember the saving grace of his own body and blood. It turns out, when Jesus spoke those words commanding us to remember, he had in mind an even older saving grace.

That final supper with the disciples was at Passover, an ancient remembrance of God delivering the Israelites out of Egypt. When God instructed the people to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood on their doorposts so that their families would be safe during the defeat of their enemies, God told them to make this day into a festival, a tradition, a "perpetual ordinance" (v. 14). It would forever become a day of remembering.

Memory exists in layers. When we remember Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we also remember God's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. When I remember that altar now, I remember saints from that precious congregation—faithful people who lived in remembrance of Jesus and became lifelong witnesses to saving grace. So, what all are you remembering, today?

—Dana Cassell
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Text for today: "This is how you shall eat [the lamb]: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the LORD. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be *a day of remembrance* for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance" (Exodus 12:11-14, NRSV). **Bible readings for today:** Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14 (14); Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35.