

Conley Memorial Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church, Marion,  
Maundy Thursday Joint Service, April 2, 2015

**A Time of Sadness: A Time of Joy**

Dr. Kenneth Humphreys

April 2, 2015

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Our scripture reading this evening relates what are probably the most familiar words of scripture for all Christians, familiar because we hear them many times each year.

“This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Essentially same words appear in Luke 22:19-20 and we hear them every time we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, as we will do tonight.

Depending upon the customs of any particular congregation these words are said at least four times per year, more commonly about twelve times per year and in some churches every Sunday.

These words reflect a time of sadness, but they also reflect a time of joy.

Jesus is eating dinner with his disciples and takes bread and wine, says these words and tells the disciples that one of their number will betray him. He tells them to remember him whenever they break bread and drink wine together.

Only a short time later Jesus is betrayed, arrested, tried and condemned to death. He dies on Good Friday, the day we remember tomorrow, a day of extreme sadness. But the time of joy is not far away for on the third day, Easter morning, he will rise.

“Do this in remembrance of me.”

Those words remind us of the sadness of Christ’s betrayal and suffering and the joy of his resurrection. They remind us of his presence with us.

Whenever Christians gather to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, we gather to remember Christ’s suffering and his resurrection. William Willimon<sup>1</sup> said that, “... remember does not mean mere historical recollection. It

more nearly means to wake up, to open your eyes, to call to mind, to renew or reawaken...

“This ... sense of remember is how we are best to remember Christ in the Lord’s Supper. When some people come to the Lord’s Supper they come with long faces and sad hearts, as if they were at a funeral, as if their best friend had just died, or at least as if their best friend died 2,000 years ago. But our best friend has not died! Christ is present, alive, at work in the world, in the midst of us.”

Tonight we remember with sadness what happened on this day, 2,000 years ago, the day Jesus was betrayed and arrested, the day when he was taken off to be tried and crucified. It was a time of sadness which will be reflected at the close of this service by darkening of the sanctuary and removal of the liturgical colors.

But we look forward to the time of joy which awaits us in three days on Easter morning.

**Amen.**

1. William Willimon, Sunday Dinner, The Upper Room, Nashville, 1981

Note: All scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.