

# WHAT IS THE TRUE MEMORIAL?

Rev. Ellsworth Hartsfield  
Text: Matthew 26:6-13.

The world erects memorials to those who first erect their own memorials. Express yourself through pure and holy motives, and you will dwell in the lives of men after you have left them. If your greatness of life is not remembered in stone or memorial exercises, you will certainly have men to build greatness in their lives because your life was great before they built their lives. You are blessed with unbounded privilege to do this. How much of a memorial you make of yourself depends on how much you seek to build your life after the way and truth of Jesus Christ.

**Dignity of the True Memorial**  
The custom of celebrating memorials is of God when it is done in the right spirit. In the Old Testament memorials are commanded by God. Our heavenly Father gives his name to Moses, and says, "Thus shalt say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." The Lord speaking to Moses about the passover to be instituted, said, "And the day shall be unto you for a memorial." Hosea states that the Lord Himself is His own memorial.

In these instances, and in many others, we have symbols of different remembrances that the children of Israel were to observe in their spiritual lives. When Jesus came he did not do away with the symbols. He commanded us in the Last Supper: "Do this in remembrance of me."

In the Holy Sacrament our

Lord glorifies the meaning of the symbol, and not the act itself. He did not make a mode of ceremony or any ritual his idol. The Pharisees glorified the monument itself, and not the principle for which the monument stood. Jesus showed us the proper attitude to take toward the monument when he glorified the smallest of noble deed. Behind the deed some of the bigness of the man is seen, regardless of the size of the deed. The soul who loves is really great. The woman who anointed his feet was to be remembered because of the love she showed in the best way she knew how. Even a cup of cold water given in his name becomes a memorial.

From these facts we see that a memorial, in the truest sense, is something with which we remember the goodness in the lives of others. When a person has reached the height in character where his life is outstanding in greatness and goodness, the person himself becomes the monument, for such a person truly lives in the lives of others. On this high plain Christ lives within him.

**How Shall We Commemorate?**  
Commemoration is vain unless it contributes toward making the life of Christ real in human hearts. To depend on stones and celebrations alone is truly vain. A family reunion dinner may become no more than a picnic if this principle is not on the program. Our Lord came to minister to life, and we do not honor him or men until we seek to enthrone him in the hearts of men. To reach this ideal we must get next to the hearts of living men and women.

The way to do this is to do what is called in the familiar expression: "Scatter roses before them while they are yet alive." Jesus sets the lesson before us when he commends the poor woman for anointing him. There were human beings there in the room who failed to see the great in the small. Her deed was insignificant to the others present, and foolish waste of money, but to Jesus it was great because she did what she could while he was yet alive. She went to great expense in doing this service, but to the critic it was a small and silly act of great extravagance. Woman-like, she was fond of cosmetics, and especially of this very expensive perfume, which had probably been imported from the far-away section of India bordering China.

We are prone to go to great expense in paying tribute to our dead, and too often when it comes to helping the living we do not trouble ourselves so much. We pay tribute to the dead body, and not in time to the living spirit which has taken its flight. We even so often allow the soul in the body to be lost. I love to know that loving hands will honor me after I am gone and will show it with flowers. But can such take the place of what they actually do for me while I am present with them in the flesh? No. Can friends and loved ones do as great service in preparing the body for burial, and in building a tomb, as they can in preparing a soul for more abundant life here and for eternal life? Of course not. It is living men we are commanded to show more concern for, and not the dead. Jesus showed this when he said, "Let the dead bury their dead," and when he said on another occasion, "I am come that men might have life,

and that they might have it more abundantly." The whole Gospel is a message of doing good unto living men. It pays its tribute to those who have died by urging the living to love each of the living more and more.

Of course we should carry on the good name of the dead, and all the good we can find in lives of wicked men we should do honor to. Our lives are made richer when we seek only for the good, but not so when we fail to distinguish between the good and the evil in men. Yes, praise what good can be found in the wicked man, as Christ would do. But, above all, seek to make men so that they will be praised as saints. This is done by first making your own lives sublime.

How can I make my life sublime? No, none of us may ever become famous, but each of us can achieve character and esteem by taking the great and good as our models, and the only spotless person essential to follow as our guide is Jesus Christ. God expects every person to make a good name for himself, and such can be done only by devotion to the principles laid down by our Lord. An Atlanta boy of fifteen was planning to run away from home. As he was walking down a crowded street, he saw a pocket book on the side walk. The boy picked up the bill fold, hastened to his room and locked the door, and nervously counted the bills, and found that he had a large sum of money; and he determined to take his leave early next morning. That night he tossed nervously in bed, his conscience struggling with him; and his mother was concerned enough to question him. He told here that he must have eaten too much supper. Early next morning he slipped out of the house, caught a street car, and was soon in the country, and on the way to distant city.

As he was walking along the dusty road under the steep side of Stone Mountain, he looked up and saw the unfinished figures of Lee and Jackson carved in the side of the mountain. Immediately the boy found himself back in Atlanta, and soon he was in the office of the business man who had lost the money. He said, "I saw the faces of Lee and Jackson, and I could not steal this money." The man replied, "You are worthy to be called the son of Lee or Jackson." Jesus was lifted up, and, being so, he has made himself a model for men; and, by his divine favor, each of us who look to him can attain greatness.

Hawthorne's story of the Great Stone Face is familiar to many of us. On the side of a high and steep mountain was the noble-looking face of a man, carved out of the granite by nature. It was the main attraction of the community. The people of the little village nearby were looking for a great man to come some day. Late in the afternoons, a little boy, Earnest by name, would sit looking at the great face as the sun seemed to give it a more glorious look. Time passed, and men passed, and there was much speculation as to who

the great man was to be the citizens had watched for so many years. Finally the great man was found. He was none other than the little boy Earnest grown great, who had so often cast his eyes and thoughts on the grand old face on the mountain. He had kept his life centered on making a great character like that seen in the countenance of the Great Stone Face.

This should remind us that we are unconsciously influenced by the company we keep with books or people. Be submissive to Christ, and his influence will make your life sublime.

He gave his life for all ages. You and I should give our lives to our own present age, and other ages will be blessed by us. We should never forget that all the good we have today has been given us by others of past ages, and that we should likewise serve the present age. Famous people of the past do not deserve all the credit. Obscure people working behind the scenes illuminated men into fame. Forgotten and perhaps prehistoric men discovered the use of iron, and today an Edison or a Henry Ford reaps the honor. You and I may never be known beyond the bounds of our county, but Jesus holds the servant and self-effacing soul in greatest honor.

But our's is not to be a mere material contribution to the race, "For man shall no live by bread alone." He lives by that which makes men and women and children grander personalities. When he does not contribute a good life to his generation he has failed to serve his generation. Jesus emphasized the importance of Christian service in several discourses before his death. "He, that is least, shall become the greatest." "Behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." "But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever shall be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." "There are in fact, many passages in the word of God's Authority showing that service is indispensable as an element in character.

The facts of modern progress should lead us to know that we are not to live on the sentiments of the past, but that God calls us to serve the present age, as Saint Paul served his. People say, "Times are not what they once were." Of course not. Every age is different in many respects from every other age. Our's is an age filled with the greatest opportunities of history. The good people of former days seized opportunities and blessed their age. Do not waste your time in bemoaning your generation. Lay aside all sins and all hindrance, and run with patience the race for every true citizen and Christian. (He-complaining, do your very best brews. Chap. 12.) Instead of t onake these times the very best in the history of the world. Let us arise and stretch

# Sunday School Lesson

Lesson for May 5

## WHAT HILKIAH FOUND IN THE TEMPLE

LESSON TEXT—II Chron. 34:14-23.  
GOLDEN TEXT—Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.  
PRIMARY TOPIC—Finding a Lost Book.  
JUNIOR TOPIC—Finding a Lost Book.  
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Discovering a Guidebook.  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—The Bible in National Life.

### I. The Book of the Law Found (vv. 14-17).

1. The occasion (v. 14).  
It was while restoring the temple during Josiah's reformation that the Book of the Law was discovered. No doubt, in clearing out the dark corners to make repairs and to find a place to store the subscriptions made by the people, many things which had been lost were found, among which was the law. This was "the law of the Lord given by Moses."

2. The book delivered to the king (vv. 15-17).  
In a report of the work, the king was informed of the finding of the Book of the Law by Hilkiah, and the book was delivered to him.

### II. The Effect of the Reading of the Law (vv. 18-28).

1. The king read the law (v. 19).  
As the law was read before him, the king was led to realize the awful extent of the nation's departure from God. He knew that sin merited punishment. The function of the law is to reveal sin. The reading of the royal robes indicated that the king was penitent and sorrowful.

2. The king sent a deputation to make inquiry of the Lord (vv. 20, 21).  
The king included himself in guilt before God. "Go inquire for me and for them that are left—for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us." His sense of sin was so keen that he sent to inquire of the Lord as to whether there was any means of averting the divine judgments. Instinctively, the human heart turns from God's threatening judgments to a means of escape. The soul that sorrows for sin inquires for a way of escape. The law prepared for the gospel. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

### 3. The message of Huldah, the prophetess (vv. 22-28).

(1) Confirmation of what the law said (vv. 22-25).  
She said that all the curses written in the law must fall, for the sins had been so flagrant that God's wrath could not be restrained. Destruction was hanging over Jerusalem and it was too late to avert it. It was not too late, however, to repent and to obtain mercy from God, but the outward consequences of sin must be realized. Fulfillment of this is found on every hand today. The murderer must hang.

(2) Acceptance of Josiah's repentance (vv. 26-28).  
Because of his tenderness of heart and deep penitence, the Lord said he should be gathered to his grave in peace and should not see all the evil to be brought on Jerusalem and its people. What Huldah said was true, even though Josiah died in battle (25:23-25). When God accepts a man and forgives him, his death is a peaceful one, even though it may be on the battlefield. God's presence is with him, therefore he will go straight from the battlefield to the heavenly home.

### III. The Law Obeyed (vv. 29-33).

1. The king read the law (vv. 29, 30).  
He gathered together the inhabitants of Jerusalem, including the priests, Levites and elders, and read unto them the law.

2. The king made a covenant before the Lord to keep His commandments and testimonies (vv. 31, 32). In this covenant he pledged himself to do three things:

- (1) To walk before the Lord (v. 31). This meant that he would get personally right with God.
  - (2) To keep God's commandments, testimonies and statutes with all his heart and soul (v. 31). To read the law is not enough. Its holy requirements must be obeyed.
  - (3) To perform the words of the covenant, which were written in the book (v. 31). This was done sincerely and he caused all that were present "to stand to it."
3. The king took away the abominations out of all the countries which pertained to Israel (v. 33). All the days of the king they departed not from following after the Lord, the God of their fathers.

**The Camel and the Rich Man**  
And Jesus looked round about, and said unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.—Mark 10: 23-25.

**Our Deeds**  
Our deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds.—George Eliot.

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