



## **WOW: Word Of the Week**

### **CELEBRATION**

**May 20, 2018**

My sister's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday is only two days away. I plan to visit her so we can celebrate together. I am 18 months older than my sister – lacking one day. The day after her birthday, I will turn 71 ½. Whether it's her birthday or my birthday, we like to celebrate together. Think with me, grasp abundant life, celebration begins with memory.

The origin of the word celebrate relates to giving honor. Honor is earned, deserved, merited. Giving honor for no reason is nonsensical (except at youth sports events where everyone gets a trophy?). We celebrate because God gave us the ability to remember. What other part of God's creation celebrates as do we humans?

As we celebrate a birthday on Memorial Day weekend, sis and I plan to visit our mother's gravesite. Memory, honor, celebration. Paul's instructions to the Corinthian church about the Lord's Supper give perspective on memory and celebration. Paul says that partaking of the Lord's Supper helps us look to the past, bring the past into the present, and use the past to inform the future.

Celebration is a time of remembering, looking back.

Celebration not only begins with memory; celebration depends on memory. My sister and I will remember special times, silly times, serious times, shared triumphs and shared tragedies. Our minds will go back to past times. Many memories will flood our shared hearts. Some things she remembers I will not. Some things I remember she will not. Sharing our stories will jog and sharpen our memories. The church often fails to celebrate because we do not share our stories, we spend little time remembering the past.

Celebration is present tense; in celebration we bring the past to the present.

Celebration helps us "remember forward." Memories give us identity for the present. Memories help define us, make us who we are. We cast away and forget those things that mar identity. Our ability to remember is evidence that we are like God, created in his image. Our ability to forget also makes us like God. Thankfully, God's great love and past action in Christ makes our present clean and worthy of celebration!

Celebrating the past informs the future.

We are stronger, better people when we learn how to celebrate. Jan and I celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary nine months ago. We began celebrating a year in advance (our 50<sup>th</sup> year) and we have continued to celebrate, because celebration helps us remember how God is empowering and enabling our united lives for his glory. Without celebration, we are less likely to see and to reach God's purpose for us.

One of my favorite songs, English or Spanish, "Celebrate Jesus, Celebrate!" "¡Celebrad a Cristo, Celebrad!"