

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## *The Infinite Value of Remembering* **Selected Passages**

**Keywords:** Gospel, Remembering, Faithfulness, Perseverance, Judgment, Salvation

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:**

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. The end of a year a good time to reflect on what has transpired.
  - 1. Times of hope or victory.
  - 2. Times of hurt or failure.
  - 3. Remembering opportunities of grace and mercy.
  - 4. Reflecting of the fleeting reality of this thing called “life.”
    - a. The older you get the more pronounced it becomes for the most part.
    - b. But every mother who has posted a picture of their little baby at 1 year old usually says something like, “I can’t believe how little he was!” A simple statement of the inexorable passing of time.
- B. 2 Timothy 2:8-9 reads, “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.”
  - 1. Paul exhorts Timothy to remember Jesus Christ. What follows is a intimate glimpse into what it can look like when you remember and love that remembrance of Jesus Christ. Suffering, humiliation, hope, service, and expectation.
  - 2. Funny thing about the call to follow Jesus. We start out following Jesus but somehow we find ourselves following a political agenda, a certain preacher, a certain lifestyle and Jesus begins to fade from view.

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3. This cannot be and it is one of the foremost responsibilities of fellow Christians to encourage one another to stay focused on the right Person as they are in that race described in Hebrews 12.
  4. All of this led me to ask what it is that God calls His people to remember and that started out as a basic introduction to 2 Timothy 2:8-10. But then it expanded and became the sermon before you.
- C. We all remember. Good, bad and ugly, our memories are part of our life.
- D. But when we talk of remembering in the bible we are not talk about going to memory lane, picking out this or that.
1. Rather, biblical remembering is an intentional act.
  2. It is a rational act, you don't just let your mind go.
  3. It is a deliberate, focused act. You shepherd your memories; something that would be a very good goal to grow in this coming year.
  4. When things come to your mind that you should not remember you have a plan to turn your mind to other things that are worthy of remembering. That takes discipline and practice.

## **II. Examples of not remembering:**

- A. Mark 8:18. Only a very short time before they saw the miracle of the bread.
- B. Acts 20:31, 35 — They were to remember all that Paul taught them, but sadly they didn't. The bane of any teacher is to pour knowledge or wisdom into vessels that leak.

## **III. The Art of Remembering:**

- A. Foolish hearts remember the wrong things—Numbers 11:5.
  1. They remember cucumbers and forget the Red Sea.
  2. 'You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:15)
  3. And before we shake our heads remember that we do the same. We remember our good job or health and forget the Cross.

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4. Perhaps this sermon will be used by God to remind you of many things that you have forgotten.
  5. But do not let this pass from your minds too quickly. Israel saw the great miracles of YHWH and yet when they came to the River Jordan and the Promised Land was before them, they forgot who saved them out of Egypt and walked in unbelief.
  6. Do not forget this, for the writer of Hebrews uses this example to warn those who claim Jesus as their Lord and Savior to not fall short of entering eternity. We are to encouraged and strengthen each other daily in the race for the deceitfulness of sin lurks around us in ways we cannot even see at times.
- B. It is wise to remember that God is not like the gods of man—Isaiah 46:1-10
1. Bel and Nebo are key deities of Babylon.
  2. Vs 3, even in their captivity Israel has been borne along faithfully by YHWH. Note how He asserts His covenant faithfulness in vss 3-4.
  3. This is in contrast to the idols all around them (5-7).
  4. The call to remember who God truly is.
    - a. There are no other gods, therefore to trust in one is folly and certain destruction.
    - b. It is God who establishes the times, the borders and the life spans. We live under His scrutiny and His rule.
  5. This means we must worship and live in light of the true God, rather than an idolatrous false god of our making. We are not the ones to define God, rather, we are defined by God.
  6. We also, therefore, must remember that God is unique and therefore His ways are not like ours, His thoughts are not our thoughts. We must find comfort in the vastness of God rather than seek to tame Him into something safe and cuddly.
  7. Finally, we must be always mindful that He stands outside His creation. He alone was before there was a beginning. And only when we are rightly related to Him through Jesus Christ can we begin to understand our place in His economy.

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- C. It is always wise to remember the gospel and the effects it has in your life—Ephesians 2:11-12.
1. Paul reminds of their perilous condition in 1-3 and then their glorious, gracious salvation in 4-9, with a call to live that truth out in vs 10.
  2. This is what he means in the “therefore, remember . . . .”
  3. All who come to Christ are brought into full fellowship with God. This brings them into the fulness of all the blessings and promises attached to the gospel, which is what Paul does in the rest of the chapter.
  4. One of the great challenges is to learn to see the gospel and its effects touching on every aspect of our lives.
  5. Sin and unbelief does something quite devious if we are not alert to their methods. What happens is that they will attempt to worm themselves between you and Jesus so that you lose sight of your Lord and Savior.
    - a. This will result in either despair, or the folly that somehow Jesus doesn’t see you.
    - b. Either of these are deadly.
  6. But when you battle unbelief and sin with the gospel, you put Jesus between you and the sin. And there you have hope and forgiveness. Yes you have sinned, and yes it is grievous.
    - a. But it is also nailed to the cross and Jesus bids you to come to the Father for your grace and your help in your time of need.
    - b. He reminds you that he is that sympathetic High Priest who was tempted in all ways, yet without sin.
    - c. He reminds you of the gift of the Holy Spirit who strengthens and guides us into truth and holiness.
  7. Beloved, we cannot forget the gospel and we must remind one another of it constantly.
- D. Remember those who faithfully taught you sound doctrine and a godly example—1 Corinthians 11:1-2.
1. This church is messed up, yet they continued to look to Paul as an example of what it looks like to follow Jesus. Every teacher, preacher and leader of the church must conform to this task.

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2. This is what was commanded of Jesus in Matthew 28.
  3. There are teachers and teachings that people need to forget. This can be hard and it can be frustrating—time lost, decisions rendered, and judgments made that later you regret.
  4. But there are teachings and teachers who point you to Christ and the faithful walk under His Lordship. Those you must remember. Those you are wise to consider their ways and follow their example.
  5. There is no way to follow the teaching of a faithful teacher but not follow their example and still claim to follow the teaching. Think back to those who were faithful to teach you well and follow their example because if they are truly faithful in their teaching they are also likely faithful in their walk.
  6. BTW, this is one of those passages that makes a strong case for transparency with both leadership and congregation. The assumption Paul makes is that they can remember his example and his teaching. He did not hold himself away and aloof, and neither did they.
  7. Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)
- E. We must remember those who suffer for the gospel—Colossians 4:18.
1. This is part of the ministry in the CG.
  2. If there is one obvious thing that stands out to me in 2 Timothy it is the utter loneliness of Paul and his great desire to see Timothy before he dies.
  3. We can remember them with letters and prayers.
  4. But there are those who have suffered in our midst and as you learn of them you have the grand opportunity to gently encourage them to press on and pray for them.
  5. But let me be honest here. If your goal is safety and comfort then you will not understand why you must remember those who suffer for the gospel.
  6. But for you who are willing to step into the gospel call to be vulnerable for the sake of the lost, which means mockery and loss. And for those of you willing to get dirty in the lives of one another as you battle the sin that constantly stalking each of us (far more than most shall admit), you will

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suffer as well, it will create a heart that seeks to remember those others who suffer.

7. Hebrews 10:32ff.
  - a. Having hopefully established a great fear in their hearts, he now calls them to remember. What?
  - b. Endured sufferings.
    - (1) By being the ones who actually were publically persecuted.
    - (2) And by being sharers with those who suffered. What is meant by this?
      - (a) vs 34.
      - (b) Notice though what the motivation was—they had a heart set on eternity.
      - (c) Here again is a great stumbling block for people today, we love this world and its pleasures too much.
      - (d) Question to ask if you don't agree, will the offering statement we are going to hand out in a week or so reflect a treasure in heaven?
  - c. So don't throw all of this away 35ff.
  - d. And right here you have a pattern for praying for those who suffer.
- F. Remember that there are many who are false teachers—Jude 1:17.
  1. Simple explanations here.
  2. Note how he then instructs them in vss 20-21.

## **IV. The glory of God's remembering.**

- A. Interesting passage in Exodus 20:22-26.
  1. In the wilderness, so the altars would be in various places. Ultimately would rest primarily in the Temple.
  2. The simplicity of true worship.
  3. The need to approach God rightly (as defined by Him).

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4. The need to guard even against inadvertent sin (high steps).
  5. But the great point is that God grants that there shall be places where He is remembered. And when we remember we ought worship. What we are remembering is God and His works.
- B. But there is another passage worth our time—Nehemiah 9:16ff.
1. Nation has returned to the land of the covenant. A call to national repentance.
  2. Read from the book of the Law (the Pentateuch) and for many of them this is the first time they have heard it!
  3. The some of the Levites (the priestly tribe) begin to lead in worship. How? By recited the high points of what they just read. This leads up to vss 16-17.
  4. Note how God is distinguished from Man here. They wanted to return to enslavement and God acted in mercy. Why? The reason is stated over and over in the Old Testament, God remembers His covenant with the Fathers and He is ever faithful to that covenant.
- C. It is used when He exercises His mercy:
1. The first time we see God remembering it is after He had just destroyed almost all of humanity with the Flood.
    - a. But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. (Gen 8:1 NAU)
    - b. and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 "When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting (Gen 9:15-16 NAU)
  2. The next key time we find Him remembering is the nation of Israel in Egypt.
    - a. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them. (Exo 2:24-1 NAU)

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- b. Explain the history and the covenant.
  - c. "Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. 6 "Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. (Exo 6:5-6 NAU)
3. But the grandest example of His remembrance in relation to mercy is found in the gospel—Hebrews 8:10-12.
- a. Explain.
  - b. Hebrews 10:16-25.
- D. It is used when He exercises His wrath—Revelation 18:5.
- 1. here it is not a good remembering.
    - (1) The word is again a very unique one, the root coming from the word “glue.”
    - (2) It is in the passive voice which then gives it the sense of joining together, massing together.
    - (3) The image, and if you remember your book of Genesis you will capture the word play, is that the sins of Babylon are clinging to one another until finally they reach heaven itself.
  - 2. God’s vengeance (**The Law of Retribution**).
    - a. God is not mocked, what you sow, you shall reap.
    - b. Here it is given back in double. Consider then the future grace built into commands to not take our vengeance ourselves in Romans 12.
    - c. This verse alone is enough for a thinking person to flee to the gospel.
  - 3. God’s retaliation (**The Law of Retaliation**). (vss 7-8)
    - a. Babylon has exalted herself and said that she cannot see mourning.
    - b. No one exalts themselves against God and gets by with it.



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- c. A strong allusion here to Edom (city of Petra) and the prophet Obadiah.
  - (1) Obadiah 1:1-4 The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom– We have heard a report from the LORD, And an envoy has been sent among the nations saying, "Arise and let us go against her for battle "-- 2 "Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You are greatly despised. 3 "The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, You who live in the clefts of the rock, In the loftiness of your dwelling place, Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?' 4 "Though you build high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down," declares the LORD.
  - (2) The fall is not slow here, but sudden.
- E. Beloved, we all choose to remember. What matters is what it is that we call to our minds.
- F. In light of the fact that God shall remember the sins of His enemies let us always strive to remember and to rest in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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## Small Group Questions

- Why do you think we forget? Give examples.
- What do need to remember more better? Why?
- What are the ways you can change how and what you remember?