

Don't Forget! Build a Memorial

(preached 5/26/24)

Please turn to *Exodus 12*.

Tomorrow is Memorial Day where we honor any soldiers who fell whilst serving our country.

All over our country we've built memorials and here are a few:

- Vietnam War Memorial in Washington DC
- 9/11 Memorial in NYC
- Holocaust Memorial in Berlin Germany
- Hiroshima Memorial in Japan

All these are built for one purpose: **SO THAT WE WON'T FORGET. SO THAT WE'LL REMEMBER.**

I can only imagine that after the Holocaust ended the atrocities committed by the Nazi's and the suffering of the Jewish people were fresh on everyone's mind no matter where you lived in the world. History records many had a "never again!" attitude.

Yet as time passed some elements in the world downplay the event and even deny it ever happened. The Holocaust Memorial was built in 2005 in the city and country that began it: Berlin, Germany. Its purpose is to remind people 1) that it happened and 2) we can never allow something like it to be repeated.

Why would some want the world to forget? So that it CAN be repeated.

When we forget, we repeat.

The year was 1300's BC and the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, having toiled there around 400 years. They cried out to the Lord their God to free them from oppression and the Lord responded by raising up Moses and sending 10 supernatural plagues upon Egypt. The 10th plague was going to be the worst: the Angel of Death himself would fly through the nation and kill all the firstborn sons, both man and beast. It would be after the 10th plague that Pharaoh would finally let God's people go free.

Yet the Lord told Israel this:

[Exo 12:1-6 ESV] 1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 2 "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. 3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, 6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

WE SEE THE FAMOUS “PASSEVER LAMB” sacrifice, knowing that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was the last and best sacrificial Lamb who bled and died for our sins!

[Exo 12:7-14 ESV] 7 "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8 They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. 10 And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. 11 In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. 13 The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. 14 **"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD;** throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

The purpose of Passover is so that Israel would never forget.

FORGET WHAT? WHAT THE LORD HAD ALREADY DONE AND WAS GOING TO DO FOR THEM.

Let's pause and reflect, especially as Americans who've enjoyed being on top for most of our recent history. We've never faced oppression or occupation by a foreign power. We're sovereign, free, and prosperous here.

Imagine a “Red Dawn” scenario where a foreign nation invades and takes over, and we had to live under their regime. Imagine they hate us, make us into slaves, and persecute us...for 4 centuries. They’re the most powerful country in the world and we feel completely helpless to rebel or try to escape. We cannot get into any sort of political office to change laws either, because they only promote their own. We’re completely at their mercy or lack thereof.

So we cry out to God and He begins to send miraculous plagues that go after THEM...not us. Wow! Finally some justice! Finally a Power bigger than our invaders has arrived and He’s on OUR side!

He warns us that the last plague will finally break the invading foreign nation and free us from their oppression. Wouldn’t we be happy? Full of joy and, for the first time in years, HOPE?

If we look at the testimony of Exodus, God said the **Passover meal was to be eaten in a HURRY** and the people needed to be ready to travel. They were leaving Egypt! They were about to be free to go back to their own land! They would finally have a home!

YET THIS LAST PLAGUE NEEDED TO HAPPEN AND IT WAS GOING TO BE TERRIBLE. Upon killing the lamb, they needed to paint its blood on their doors so the Angel of Death would pass over their homes and not go after their firstborn sons. The blood would be a sign to the angel to leave this house alone.

The Lord commands that they etch this evening in their memories forever. To commemorate it as a yearly feast where they kill the Lamb and retell the story of when God sent the 10th plague but spared them. That the 10th plague would be the moment they were finally freed from 400 years of slavery.

After they left, crossed the Red Sea, then watched as the Sea decimated Pharaoh’s army, **DO YOU BELIEVE THEIR GRATITUDE TOWARD GOD WAS FRESH AND PASSIONATE?** That as the waters washed over their former masters and swept them away, they shouted praises, yelled “Hallelujah!”, and glorified God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength?

They sure did! **Exodus 15 says they had an amazing worship session** that was so loud and fiery that no doubt God heard it all the way from heaven! They even went Pentecostal and started banging on tambourines!

How long do you think they “remembered” those events?

How much time passed before they began to “forget” what God did for them? 1 year? 5?

Please understand that when I say “forget” **I don’t mean amnesia**...I’m talking about what Kim calls “dissipation.” Our minds remember what God or someone else did for us, but our PASSION and therefore thankfulness in our hearts has fizzled out.

In my experience that can lead to an **expectation** that whomever did something good for us “back then”—be it God or human—*needs to do something new to reignite our gratitude.*

AS TIME PASSES, WE’LL “FORGET” WHAT THEY DID AND FEEL ENTITLED TO SOMETHING FRESH.

In other words: *“what have you done for me LATELY?”*

Back to our question: after the waters of the Red Sea crashed down on Pharaoh’s pursuing army, **how long did it take the Israelites to “forget”** that God just freed them from 4 centuries of slavery?

Exodus 15:1-21 is the impassioned worship from the people from God where they sang, shouted, banged on tambourines, and glorified God in great thanks and gratefulness.

This is verse 22...the next verse:

[Exo 15:22-24 ESV] 22 Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went **three days** in the wilderness and found no water. 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter [poison]; therefore it was named Marah. 24 And the people **grumbled** against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"

THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATION FOR “GRUMBLE” is fascinating. It means more than “complain” but goes on to mean **“stop/remain.”** In other words, *a lack of thankfulness toward God or people halts our progress/journey.*

Let's be more specific: **people often contemplate their relationship with God** or another person and might admit it "isn't going anywhere" or "isn't moving forward" which means it's STOPPED.

Let's ask: **what caused our relationship with God, spouse, family member, or friend to stop moving forward?**

Maybe we stopped being grateful. Perhaps we had a "what have you done for me lately?" attitude and found them lacking.

After seeing 10 miraculous plagues, being spared by God, walking out of Egypt with most of Egypt's treasures, watching the Red Sea part, walking safely across, then seeing it decimate Pharaoh's army, **it only took the Hebrew people 3 days to stop being thankful.**

Despite this, the **LORD MIRACULOUSLY PURIFIES THE WATER** and everyone is able to drink, then He leads them to an oasis where they camp are provided with more water and food. Only 15 days later this happens:

[Exo 16:2-3 ESV] 2 And the whole congregation of the people of Israel **grumbled** against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, 3 and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Within a short period of time they forgot. All throughout the OT and NT the Lord is constantly setting His people to REMEMBER what He did for them. They build altars, memorials, celebrate feasts, have high holy days (holidays) all of which have the purpose of **CAUSING ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH TO NOT FORGET WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE.**

In the Book of Numbers the country of **Midian attacks the Hebrew people** and they cried out to God for victory. The Lord not only makes Israel victorious, but they take enough spoils to make them rich! The soldiers who fought were given the most and prospered greatly for their service, faith, and sacrifice! Here's what they got:

[Num 31:32 ESV] 32 Now the plunder remaining of the spoil that the army took was **675,000 sheep**, 33 **72,000 cattle**, 34 & **61,000 donkeys**.

They also liberated 35,000 women being held as slaves. **There was also a bunch of gold and expensive jewelry.** What's more is not one Hebrew soldier fell in battle because the Lord was with them. The officers in the Hebrew army brought forth a **generous offering** from all the above to give to the Lord, then this:

[Num 31:54 ESV] 54 And Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tent of meeting, as a memorial for the people of Israel before the LORD.

Moses and Eleazar realized all the people **needed to REMEMBER what God did for them.**

How long do you think it took them to “forget”?

A very short time later, two of tribe leaders approach Moses and **ASKED FOR LAND ON THIS SIDE OF THE JORDAN RIVER** because they decided they didn't want to go into the PL after all. The reason they decided not to is because they would have fight in the war to retake the land from the giants and other enemies entrenched there. The Lord cursed them the same day and not only did they not cross, but they were the ones who went back into the desert for another 40 years.

Should we forget what happened here on 9/11?

Should we remember all the soldiers who lost their lives fighting the **REVOLUTION?** If they hadn't, we'd all be speaking with a British accent right now and flying the Union Jack vs. Old Glory.

Should we forget WW1 and WW2? If the Allies hadn't prevailed, it's possible Europe would be a Nazi Empire to this day and a world power.

Tomorrow is Memorial Day and if the internet is accurate 646,596 American soldiers have lost their lives in combat since the Revolutionary War and an additional 539,000 died while on active duty since the same time. Totaling 1,185,596.

Should we forget the blood they shed? The sacrifices they made? These men and women stood between us and the tyrannical British empire, Nazi's, Communism, and those who'd bring Jihad to our shores. *They died to prevent different manifestations of Satan from devouring our country.* Can we really afford to “forget” this? To stop being thankful?

Have we lost our passion for Jesus?

HAS OUR GRATITUDE DISSIPATED AND OUR FIRE DIED DOWN TO A FLICKER?

Let's remember today. Before He came here *Jesus was GOD sitting on the throne in Heaven*. He created the entire universe, the earth, and every being on it. He ruled and reigned supreme over everything and everyone.

Yet He decided to take on one of these frail weak human bodies and come down here—to this Hell hole—to walk among us as one of us?

- He restrains and conceals His true glory and power just so we wouldn't be afraid?
- Then to be rejected, betrayed, falsely accused, ridiculed, crucified, bleed, and die in the hands of His own creations?
- The people He came to Save and not destroy?

Why should this not fan the flames of love every time we “remember”?

For our hearts to experience fresh thankfulness and gratitude toward our Lord and Savior?

[Luk 22:14-20 ESV] 14 And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. **Do this in remembrance [MEMORIAL] of me.**" 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

We have Communion to remember what Jesus did. It's the Christian Passover and Jesus and the Apostles were celebrating Passover when He said these things.

If Jesus had never come here and gone to the Cross, we would still be in our sins. Yet since He did, we've been cleansed by His blood and are now sons and daughters of God our Father!

COMMUNION

[1Co 11:23-26 ESV] 23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.