



Parkway Fellowship

Don't Forget • Don't Forget Past Miracles • Deuteronomy 4:9-13 • 04/14/2019

Main Point

We must take steps to make sure that the things God has done in our lives don't ever fade from our hearts.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Name three significant memories you have that shaped your life in some way, whether good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant?

How do these memories impact your life now?

When are memories a good thing? When are memories a bad thing?

After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, Israel stood poised and ready to enter the promised land. Moses knew he would not go into the promised land with them, so he wanted to prepare the Israelites to keep their focus and their faith on God whatever circumstances they might face in the future. One important way they would do that is by never forgetting the past miracles He had performed on their behalf.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

In Deuteronomy 1–4, Moses led the Israelites in a historical review of the people's experiences from Horeb (Mount Sinai) to the plains of Moab, where they were camped on the edge of the promised land. Following the review, Moses challenged the people to display wholehearted obedience to the Lord.

| Ask a volunteer to read Deuteronomy 4:9-10.

What was Moses trying to teach the people in these verses? What specific memories was he calling them to hold in reverence and to pass on to their children?

Which truths, values, or commands from God’s Word would you say are most important for us to pass on to the next generation of believers?

What are some ways you can ensure that happens?

In their youth, this new generation of Israelites had heard and seen for themselves the power and glory of the Lord (vv. 11-12) at the base of Mount Sinai (Horeb). Moses reminded them of their obligation to pass the instruction on to their children and grandchildren, who had not yet been born when God gave the Ten Commandments. We should do all we can to center our families on God and teach young generations His Word. All believers bear the responsibility of teaching God’s truths to the next generation and making sure they know what God has done in the lives of their elders.

| Ask a volunteer read Deuteronomy 4:11-13.

Describe the scene Israel had witnessed at Horeb.

How could the people ever possibly forget such an incredible scene?

Have you ever had an experience with the Lord that was incredibly meaningful at the time but you pushed aside over time? (Ex. Many teenagers have important encounters with God and make big decisions at youth camp, only to later forget about it and go back to life as usual.) Why does that happen? How could it that kind of forgetfulness be prevented?

"Out of sight, out of mind" is a real thing, and Moses knew it. God had performed numerous miracles and allowed them to hear from Him in His magnificent presence. Still, if those experiences were forgotten, a glance down the road of doubt could quickly become a journey and the things God had done could fade from their hearts and minds forever. The tablets of stone were meant to be a visible reminder. In this week's message, we learned that in addition to treasuring God's Word, we can also retell His stories over and over, keep believing God for miracles and victories today, and celebrate victories in the Bible so that past miracles continue to equip and empower us to take new steps of faith today.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Which of the three steps stands out to you the most, personally: retelling God's stories over and over, believing God for miracles and victories today, or celebrating victories in the Bible? Explain.

How will you practice one of those steps in the days ahead?

How can we as a community of believers help one another never forget past miracles?

Pray

Thank God for the ways He has shown Himself to you and to humankind throughout history. Ask Him to help you never forget His acts on your behalf. Invite Him to help you faithfully pass on His miracles to future generations.

Commentary

| Deuteronomy 4:9-13

4:9. The great danger that Israel would have to overcome was forgetfulness. They would have to be careful, and watch closely, and see to it that they not forget the events that brought them into their homeland.

The forgetfulness of which Moses spoke is not primarily a problem of mental alertness but spiritual laxity. When Israel later began a large-scale defection to the idolatry of Canaan, it was not because they had forgotten Yahweh's name, still less because they no longer felt he deserved their devotion. He had simply receded from the consciousness at the moment that their defection began. Once it was under way, they were so distracted with the passing pleasures of sin that they did not give him a moment's thought. Godly living is a process that must be renewed each day.

4:10. Merely abhorring the tendency to forgetfulness, however, is not enough. If spiritual reality is to be passed from one generation to the next, it must be positively remembered. To underscore this point, Moses called on the nation to remember the day they stood before the Lord at Mount Sinai.

They were there at God's behest, to hear his words and as a result to revere him as long as they live in the land. Without personal copies of God's Word, Israel had to recall the solemn event when God drew especially near and to allow it to impress upon them the uniqueness of the God they served. Reverence for God and faith in him begin with a regular exposure to his words: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17 NKJV).

4:11-12. That special day at Horeb had begun when the people drew near to the foot of the mountain. They observed the sharp and frightening contrasts between the light of God's fire and the black clouds and deep darkness that surrounded it. In this sobering context, they saw no form, but only a voice—the voice of God himself. Clearly, God intended that this dramatic scene should make an impression on them, and it did. For many years afterward, the leaders of Israel reminded them of these events: "The earth shook, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel" (Ps. 68:8; see also Deut. 33:2; Judg. 5:5; Hab. 3:3).

The absence of a visible representation of God was designed to teach his people that he could not be legitimately represented in the shape of an idol. No visual symbol could possibly do justice to his character and his majesty, and they were to rid themselves of this practice at the outset.

4:13-14. God used the spectacular scene at Horeb to declare to Israel his covenant, summarized in the Ten Commandments. Moses was about to restate this covenant beginning in chapter 5. Here he reminded them that God commanded them to follow the covenantal stipulations and then wrote them on two stone tablets.

The best and most useful location for God's commandments, however, is in the hearts of his people. As a result, the Lord directed Moses to teach the people the decrees and laws they needed.