

Remember
Exodus 13:1-16

November 7, 2021

HDBC

Last week when Jan and I were back in Corinth, MS where I spent much of my childhood I was able to reconnect with a few of my classmates. One of the words we used often in our conversation was **remember**. We were repeatedly asking each other *do you remember . . .?* Some of the things I did remember and others, well, I had to confess that I did not. But it sure was fun.

Some memories come without thought or effort. Events & people are etched into our memories simply because they are part of our experience. We don't choose to remember. They are just there. However, over time, they begin to fade. What once were crisp details fade into vague generalities. That's ok for most things.

But when it comes to important things, we must put into place reminders or makers. Maybe it's a **photograph** hanging in your home that tells a story. Maybe it's a **gathering** with family at a certain time every year. In the case of our nation, there are **holidays** to cause us to remember, as well as to prompt us to inform new generations. **Thanksgiving. Christmas. Veteran's Day.**

The Bible has a lot to say about **remembering**. The word is used over 240 times. Found in 47 books of the Bible. 30 in O.T. and 17 in N.T. Remembering is important to God for it allows us to pass along key things to new generations.

That was true for the Hebrews as they walked out of Egypt. Before they were actually set free, God instructed them to remember it. It would be built into their DNA. Chapter 13 offers instructions for how to remember. **There are** three things involved in the process of remembering found in this text. Let's read the text together, then I'll mention those three things. **Read 13:1-16.**

1. Personal Commitment (13:1-2; 11-12)

They were to make a personal commitment to God that was reflected in their giving to God their firstborn. This would remind them of the final plague where God took the lives of the firstborn in Egypt, while saving the lives of their own. They were saved by God to be given back to God. Why the firstborn? What was this really all about? Firstborn were representative of some key things that were to be surrendered to God.

a. Their first

God claims **first place** in our lives. He wants the first of our time, the first of our possessions, the first of our hearts. It is so sad that so many Christ-followers are unwilling to put God first even in the smallest things. He is not impressed with our leftovers.

Evangelist, Billy Sunday told the story of riding across the country with William Wrigley, the chewing gum man. Wrigley was a Christian, and he told Billy Sunday that he had made it a practice in his life to give the Lord 1/10 of everything he made, and he added that it was not the last tenth but the first tenth. God certainly blessed that commitment. This is not just about money, it's about time, energy, talents, relationships, etc.

b. Their best

The firstborn represented the best. This was certainly not always true, in terms of character, strength, etc. But in a representative way, the firstborn signified giving God the best you have, not what you don't want or need. Giving God your unwanted time, money, talents and stuff will not do.

c. Their future

The firstborn represented all the children and in a sense the entire family. By giving the firstborn you were yielding your future to God. Greatest example of this was found in their own history, when they remembered the story of Abraham being willing to sacrifice Isaac to God.

We quickly learn that God had no intention of seeing those firstborn sons actually brought to an altar and sacrificed. Rather it involved mom and dad releasing to God the first they had, the best they had, and in fact all that they had. This was about acknowledging that **everything belongs to God**.

Remembering, starts with a personal commitment to God. Starts in heart!

2. National Celebration (13:3-7: 12:43-49)

To be an annual celebration. Instructions were incredibly detailed. They are all strategic and meant to teach important truths. Actually two, Passover, followed by Feast of Unleavened Bread, Celebrated as one.

More than 1500 years later Jesus would meet with his disciples in an upper room and would make it clear that Passover was not just about remembering

a past event but was intended to point to a future reality. It is a picture of salvation. The various instructions and elements also apply to that. Consider some of the specific instructions and their meaning.

Death of lamb

Reminder that their salvation was due to the sacrificial death of a substitute. The blood of that lamb, spread over their door protected them from the judgment of death that spread through Egypt. The mark of blood was a sign that separated those who were saved from those who were not. It is a reminder that our own salvation is based upon the shedding of blood by a substitute. Jesus is that substitute. John called Him ***the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.***

Unleavened bread

They were to eat unleavened bread for seven days. Leaven was a symbol for sin. This part of their diet during that week was a reminder that they had made a break from a past life and were now consecrated to God. Once again, it points to the expectation for those of us who have been saved, that we are making a break from our past life of sin to a life of holy living.

Shared experience

The Passover meal was to be shared with all God's people. There were clear instructions for who was to participate and who wasn't to participate. This distinction had nothing to do with social status or position. It was all about where a person stood with God. Those who were in a covenant relationship with God were invited to participate. Those outside of that covenant were not.

The sharing of the meal throughout the nation was a reminder that they were saved together. Their salvation was something they shared. We often think of salvation on personal terms, and we are saved one by one. But there is also a sense of a shared experience for all who have been born again. That's what binds us together in unity and causes us to come together in churches.

3. Family Devotions (13:8; 14)

These were to be done in the context of Passover, but also during the normal course of everyday life, as we will learn later. There was an expectation that each generation would teach these things to the next generation. What things are to be taught to sons and daughters? Three things can be discerned.

1) **What God did** (3, 8, 9, 16)

Four times the text refers to what God did. Three times it adds that He did what He did with a powerful hand. ***By a powerful hand*** (3). ***For with a powerful hand*** (9). ***With a powerful hand*** (16).

Passover was a reminder for parents to teach their children that God had been faithful in the past and therefore could be trusted in the future. They would share about the birth of Moses and about how God saved him from death and caused him to be adopted by the princess. They would share about his time in Midian and his call by God to come back to Egypt.

They would share about the plagues, leading up to the purpose, power and meaning of the last plague. They would explain how they were saved by the blood of the lamb and brought out of bondage into freedom.

May I remind you that there is great benefit in remembering what God has done in your life. **When is the last time you simply reflected on the great things He has done for you.** It's important not simply to remember in vague broad terms, but revisit in your minds the details, the particulars, the specifics. It will strengthen your faith. It's also important to pass those along to younger generations. There is power in the part of your story that highlights the power and providence of God in your life.

2) **What God does** (13b)

He redeems those who trust in Him. The story of Passover is truly the story of redemption. It would remind them of God's past redemption, but also of his present redemption. Teach your kids the principle and power of redemption. How? Look at the text.

Firstborn sons were to be given to the Lord. But they were certainly not to be sacrificed. They would be redeemed by a substitute. And what would that substitute be? The same as it was at the original exodus; a lamb. During the Passover, when you are sacrificing that lamb, you will remind your firstborn son, and all your children, that their **redemption is not free, but costly**. Dad had to sacrifice a lamb for their redemption. God loved them enough to purchase their salvation and their very lives. It would give their lives meaning and purpose. It would point to just how much they were loved by God. He paid a great price.

By the way, for all the firstborn sons who might be tempted to think more highly of yourself than you should, notice that the firstborn among the donkeys was also redeemed by a lamb (13). That should bring all firstborn sons, and indeed all of us back a notch.

The point is this. Every year, during Passover, the fathers would remind the family that God was a God of redemption, not just in the past but in the present. Because the process had to be repeated year after year it would also remind them that a lamb was not sufficient as the permanent redemption price for a human life. That lamb would point to a greater one. That one would be Jesus. Each Passover lamb was merely a shadow.

So, they were to teach their children . . .

What God did and **What God does.** But also, they were to teach . . .

3) **What God will do**

Note the phrase, ***it shall serve as a sign to you . . .*** (9; 16)

Signs are not designed to show you where you have been but where you are going. They are future oriented. They would use Passover and the things involved as **signs**. The ***it*** of verse 9 refers to the entire Passover event. ***It*** would be a sign, meaning it would point them forward.

Many Jews have taken the words of verses 10 and 16 literally, not realizing that Moses was using a figure of speech. Even to this day many will write portions of Scripture on scraps of paper, put them in little boxes, and tie them to their arms and to their heads with leather straps. This was not the intent. Passover was to be so obvious as a sign, that it is **as if** it were signs in on their arms and in front of their eyes.

What are we to take away from this text?

1. **Passover points to an exodus**

Exodus from slavery to freedom. Exodus from an old life to a new life

Exodus from a hopeless past to a confident future.

In other words it points to a radical life change. Life would no longer be as it had always been. The exodus then, like salvation now, marks a radical change. ***Phil Ryken put it this way. God wanted to do something more than get the people out of Egypt. He wanted to get Egypt out of His people.***

2. **Passover pictures salvation in Jesus**

At the heart of Passover is redemption. At the heart of redemption is substitution. God redeems one through the substitutionary death of another. That is a perfect picture of salvation. God redeems us through the substitutionary death of His son, Jesus. Death of one for the life of another.

3. **Passover prioritizes evangelism**

Here's what I mean. Passover is about remembering . . .
What God has done. What God is doing. What God will do.

But it's not about remembering just for one generation. They were to remember so that they might pass these things along to the next generation.

If Passover points to an exodus, a radical change in life, the next generation needs to hear about it.

If Passover pictures salvation in Jesus, the next generation needs to hear about it.

Then Passover prioritizes evangelism. We must tell the next generation. A family is only one generation removed from spiritual death. A culture or a nation is only one generation removed from spiritual death. Each generation must tell the one that follows it. Must not only tell them, but must model it.

Charles Spurgeon reminded his church of this very thing with these words.

Children need to learn the doctrine of the cross that they may find immediate salvation. I thank God that . . . we believe in the salvation of children as children. Go on and believe God will save your children. Be not content to sow principles in their minds which may possibly develop in later years; but be working for immediate conversion.

Some talk to children about being good boys and girls, and so on; that is to say, they preach the law to children, though they would preach the gospel to grown-up people! Is this honest? Is this wise? Children need the gospel, the whole gospel, the unadulterated gospel; they ought to have it, and if they are taught of the Spirit of God they are as capable of receiving it as persons of ripe years. Teach the little ones that Jesus died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.