

A Call To Remember

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[0 : 00] Amen. It's wonderful to be here this morning. I greet you all in the name of Jesus. the one we were singing about. I believe God has been impressing this on my heart for several weeks already.

Simply remembering. To remember. And I realize the Bible says to not look back and all that into our past.

You know, when we plow ahead, we are supposed to look ahead, right? But the Bible also speaks about remembering. And I didn't know for sure what all was...

God was just placing this on my heart. And I still don't know what all it means, but it just seems like God's people need to be reminded to remember.

We sang that song, The Miry Clay, and I want to look at that maybe a little bit then too. But turn your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 2. I just want to read that chapter this morning and maybe make a few comments on that.

[1 : 40] But that's kind of, at least in part, the basis here of the message. A call to remember. Ephesians chapter 2.

Ephesians chapter 2. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein time passed, ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

That spirit is still working in the children of disobedience. We witness that a lot in day-to-day life as we mingle with others, those that are not saved, those that don't know the Lord.

Verse 3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

We were, yes, even as others. We were just like the rest of the world. Verse 4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ, by grace are you saved, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

[3 : 18] I had to think this morning, you know, we could be in a lot of different places today versus being here. We could be doing a lot of different things. But I hope that we're here because we want to be here.

We want to be in the body of Christ. We want to be in a place of worship today. And if Jesus is here, then we are sitting in heavenly places.

Where Jesus is. Let's see, where are we? Verse 8. For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them. Here we see we're not saved by works, but we have works because we're saved.

And here's perhaps the key verse. Wherefore, in verse 11, Wherefore remember, wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision of the flesh made by hands, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

[5 : 05] Do we remember this morning what it was without Christ? That's what Paul is calling us to. He was saying this to the church at Ephesus, the Ephesian church.

He's saying, remember that you didn't have Christ before. You had no hope. And you were without God. Oh, we might have had religion.

We might have had a lot of good teachings. But before Christ came in, we were empty. We had nothing. And the call today, I believe, is to remember that.

To remember what we have been redeemed from. God wants us to remember that. Verse 12, That at the time, no, wait, 13.

But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh, made near, by the blood of Christ. Are you now made near, by the blood of Christ?

[6:12] Do we remember that feeling, of having no hope? That lost feeling. Do you remember being in this world without God?

Oh, we had the fun. We had a lot of things, trying to fulfill that void. But do you remember this morning, the emptiness and the misery?

And then when Jesus came in, and made all things new, He gave us a new life, by giving us a new heart. Do we remember?

I just now had a thought, and it's probably because of this, what I'm saying about remembering, but Jesus also told the rich man to remember, didn't He?

He said, remember thou in thy lifetime. He called him to remember too, but it was too late.

[7:16] Verse 14, For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace, and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, and came and preached peace to you, which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

For through Him we both have access, by one Spirit unto the Father, for through Him we have access to the Father.

Are we thankful this morning that we have access to God? We are now no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

We are of the family of God. We have been adopted into His family, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are built together for inhabitation of God through the Spirit.

We are now made close. By the blood of Jesus. Do we remember? Do we know? Do we think about? You know, Jesus did not only pay for our sins so that we don't have to pay for them.

[9:10] He did even more. He gave us life. He gave us new life. He made us His sons and His daughters and put us into His kingdom.

redeeming us completely from the old life. And remember, let's remember the cost. I was, early on when I was thinking about this thing of remembering, I was thinking about the Israelites, and we'll talk about that some today.

how they so quickly forgot. They forgot so quickly what Jesus, or what God, yes, had done for them. The deliverance.

And they complained, and on and on. And God was very displeased. And I wonder sometimes, is God displeased with the church today?

because we forget what God has done. We don't focus on it. We don't remember. We should remember, I think, daily. Thank you, Lord, that I'm not where I used to be.

[10:18] I'm not who I used to be. Maybe it would change our life, our journey. In Deuteronomy 8, verse 2, it says, And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee.

It's a very repeated word or command in the Bible in this simple word, remember.

It's often repeated. God tells Israel again and again, remember, do not forget. Teach your children to remember. Build memorials that future generations might remember.

Do we consider how important it is to God that we remember His works and what He has done?

Because forgetfulness is a spiritual disease. Israel didn't fall into idolatry overnight, but they forgot what God had done.

[11:33] They forgot the miracles. They forgot His mercy. They forgot His word. And when they forgot, they wondered.

Do we have a wandering heart? Or are we settled on the God we serve? A wandering heart. That's a whole other message, perhaps.

It's a heart that strays and is not grounded on the solid truth of God's word. We don't just necessarily backslide in one moment, but we slowly forget the goodness of God.

We forget, perhaps, the prayers that He answered. We forget the doors that He opened for us. We forget the sins He forgave.

We forget the mountains He moved. Sometimes we're just focused on the mountain in front of us so much that we forget we've already come through a long journey of God's faithfulness.

[12:46] And when we forget, faith dries up. But the Bible teaches that remembering restores spiritual health.

Are we spiritually healthy this morning? Remembering builds faith. It fuels hope. It strengthens worship. And it anchors us again in God's character.

You know, the worship thing. It's hard to worship, truly worship, without remembering. Is it not? When we think about all that God has done.

I'm not just talking about saving us from our sins. Yes, that's number one. But also just all the goodness of God. You know, we don't know what our future holds, but we can look back and say, God, you've been so faithful.

Yeah, you've brought me out of the mirey clay. You've brought me through hardship. You've brought me through trials. We all have them. And He deserves our worship and our praise for who He is and for what He has done.

[14:05] Amen. To remember is a command. A couple more verses in Deuteronomy there.

Chapter 8. Just a few. Verse 1 and 3. 1, 2, 3. All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers.

And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, to prove or to test thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no.

And He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

Jesus referred to this verse when He was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. Man does not live by bread alone, the Word of God says.

[15:34] We can use that too. But here in verse 1, or verse 2 rather, God calls them, the Israelites, to remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years.

In one place He tells the children of Israel to teach the things of God to their children and when they're laying down and when they rise up and when they sit down and all of that.

I don't know where that's found, but He says to teach these things, to remember these things, to proclaim them to our children. And so today I believe we need to teach our children.

We need to teach them at a very young age the goodness of God, the mercy of God, and the things God has done not only for everybody, but specifically maybe for us as a family or as a person, as a father, as a mother.

God is honored when we share those things. And it builds faith in children for their future.

[16:48] This wasn't just a suggestion to the Israelites, it was a command. And I believe it's because God knows that our hearts, as humans, are prone to forget.

It's kind of natural to forget, isn't it? But may God raise up a standard that's better than natural, that's deeper than just our human nature.

You know, there's things that happen at the beginning of this year that unless somebody would remind me, I don't remember it. But God wants us to remember the things He does and who He is.

You know, even after seeing, this is so amazing if you think about the Israelites, after seeing the Red Sea part, they saw manna fall from heaven, water come out of a rock, a pillar of cloud and fire by night, their enemies defeated miraculously, they still forgot.

They still build an idol. You know, I remember thinking, how could they? How could they be so blind and so ignorant?

[18:09] All these things. Well, because I was reading the stories and we were looking at all of it as at one time, but to them there was years of that and then they forgot.

How is it with us? Even with all that, they still forgot. They murmured. They complained. They said, wouldn't it have been better just to stay in Egypt?

We could, at least we had a grave back there. You know, they were so negative. negative. And negative has an impact.

What's the word? Influence. It has, yeah, it influences others. But so is positive.

Positive. We must remember, God says, forgetting is dangerous. In Deuteronomy 6, verse 12, it says, then beware lest thou forget the Lord.

[19 : 24] Forgetfulness leads to pride. Verse 17 says, Israel would say, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

You see, when we forget the goodness of God, the mercy of God, the greatness of God, the works of God, we begin to think of ourselves like we somehow accomplished this.

Somehow I'm this good person now that God did a work in and so somehow, you know, the devil comes and tempts us to think that somehow this is my accomplishment.

Yeah, I agree I'm not like I used to be, but somehow I get the credit. That's the danger of forgetting whose work it is.

In fact, the moment we forget God's hand, you start taking credit for His work. Forgetting leads to pride. It leads to compromise.

[20 : 29] It leads to idolatry, anxiety, ingratitude. Sounds like the Israelites, doesn't it? Let's hope it doesn't sound like us.

I want to look at spiritual drifting. Many Christians do not walk away from God because of a major temptation, but because of gradual forgetfulness.

Gradually forgetting God in our lives. But remembering restores gratitude and worship.

Psalms 103. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not. There's that word. It's just everywhere in the Bible. Forget not all His benefits.

David told his own soul, don't forget. Remember what God has done. O my soul, David said.

[21 : 45] Don't forget those benefits. And gratitude is only possible when we remember. Worship grows when we remember.

Obedience strengthens when you remember. It builds our faith for today.

When we're discouraged, remembering brings strength. I find that so. I find that so for myself. that when there's something discouraging and we begin to remember.

Yeah, but this is rough, but I remember what God brought me through two years ago. Or whenever. It helps. It builds that faith again.

Psalms 77, 11 says, I will remember the works of the Lord. You know, He doesn't say, I feel like remembering. He says, I will.

[22 : 51] It's a choice. It's a clear choice. I will remember the works of the Lord. Sometimes when we don't feel God, we just need to remember God.

When we don't see answers, we must remember His past answers. When the present looks uncertain, we must remember His past faithfulness.

Great is thy faithfulness. Oh, Lord. I had to think of that song. Couldn't find it. But great is thy faithfulness. Remembering brings hope in hopeless seasons.

Sometimes we go through a hopeless season. We go through a hard season. But remembering Lamentations says, This I recall to mind, therefore I have hope.

Because I remember I have hope. What is Jeremiah recalling? Great is thy faithfulness. The city is destroyed.

[24 : 10] People are suffering. Fear is everywhere. But Jeremiah says, I remember God's mercy, so I still have hope. Even in the midst of a hopeless situation.

Hope doesn't come from what we see. Hope comes from what we remember. It's what we know. If all we would have is just a future and no past, it would be pretty hard to have hope.

But a past where we saw God, we met God, we know He's there, we know He's real, we know His redemption. Those of us that have been saved, born again, is something that happened in our past.

Those of us that haven't been saved or born again is something we need, hopefully in the near future. Your testimony is also a weapon against today's battles.

You see, our testimony is from our past. It's remembering. In Revelation, familiar verses there in chapter 12, 11, they overcame Him by the word of their testimony.

[25 : 41] It says, by the blood of the Lamb, I believe, but also by the word of their testimony. testimony. Your testimony is not just a story. This is not a statement I wrote, but your testimony is not just a story, it is a weapon.

That's what that is in Revelation, I believe. Overcoming the enemy by your testimony, by what God has done.

When we face a new trial, remember the last one He brought you through. When you face a new mountain, remember the last one He moved.

When you face a new enemy, remember the last one He defeated. The God who kept you then is the same God who keeps you now.

And yes, we are to teach these things to the younger ones. That reality grips me, grips my heart. My children are older and they kind of teach themselves now, but did I do a good job of teaching them?

[26 : 59] Did I do a good job of telling them what God delivered me from? And, the best I can do with that now is just to say this to you, the rest of us, to do that.

Joshua's memorial stones. In Joshua 4, we read about God told them to take 12 stones from the Jordan and set them up as a memorial. And why did He do that?

Why was that important to God? I believe it was so that the next generation, so it wouldn't soon be forgotten what He did, so that children would ask, what do these stones mean?

In other words, a son might say, Dad, what is that? What happened here? It's a reminder. It's to remember. And then Dad is supposed to say, well, let me tell you, son, this is what happened.

This is the story. It was important to God that it would be remembered. Let me tell you what God did for us.

[28 : 11] God wants His goodness that ultimately it's not about us. It's about Him. But He wants His goodness to be remembered and not buried.

God wants His goodness to be remembered. Wow, this is a powerful statement. Faith dies in a generation that forgets.

Faith dies in a generation that forgets. Psalm 78, verse 4 to 7.

Psalm 78, verse 4 to 7. Actually, I don't think it's all the verses, but in chapter 78, we will not hide them from their children that the generation to come might know and not forget the works of God.

We will not hide them from our children. We will tell them what God has done so that that generation too will know.

[29 : 28] And I know I realize that every generation has to experience God in their own way. We're not taking away from that. But I believe that younger people, children growing up benefit greatly knowing what, you know, my father is gone.

And when I hear something that happened, in fact, I just heard something last night that happened to my mother and my two older brothers when they were little boys.

And I just was like, I just wanted to say, tell me more. What, you know, had to do with what they believe was an angel protecting them. But I never heard that, you know, and not my brothers that we're talking about are in their 60s.

But when they were little boys, an angel protected them in the city. Let's share those things with our children.

Faith dies in a generation that forgets. Let's not forget God. If our children do not hear our testimonies, they may never know God's power.

[30 : 55] You know, yes, we want our children to have their own testimony and they will if they follow Christ. But our opportunity is to say what happened to us. Right?

Right? Will it build faith in their little hearts as they hear those things? Grandparents. I mean, I can do that now with my grandchildren.

Talk about God's goodness. I wish I'd have thought about it more when I was 30. some Christians might say, well, my testimony is so simple or God hasn't really done anything big in my life.

Ever thought about that? Well, I wasn't, I wasn't, I wasn't brought out of the miry clay. I was just kind of raised Christian. If God spared you from the gutters and you got saved, just thank Him for that.

That's a very powerful testimony. We don't have to live in the miry clay and the gutter for long, if any, very little.

[32 : 17] But we're still lost, we still need a Savior. But if God spared you from those scars, thank Him for it. Share that with people. That is still the most beautiful testimony there is.

Don't ever think, oh, it's just not much. No, God saved you from those things. The small things that God has done for you, those are big things to a child that hears them.

And small things are not so small if God was in it. Let's tell our children how God saved us, how He changed us, how He provided, how He healed, how He came through just in time sometimes.

Our experiences. Your faith today becomes their faith tomorrow. Jesus tells the church to remember.

In Revelation 2 it says, verse 5, remember therefore whence thou art fallen and repent. When spiritual passions grow cold or the spiritual passion grows cold, the first step back is remembering. [33 : 45] Remember the joy of your salvation. Remember the hunger for God. If somebody is feeling lukewarm or just not where I used to be spiritually, remember what you had.

The early zeal, the love for the Word of God, the fire in your worship. sometimes we just need to remember, remind ourselves as to where we need to return to.

I know we don't hear this word as much, maybe anymore, but the word drifting. drifting is a quiet, subtle, and it's gradual.

Most people don't lose their first love in a moment. Again, it happens slowly. Less prayer, less scripture, less hunger, less gratitude, less focus, maybe just a little bit at a time.

I remember Brother Manny used to say something like, the devil will never, in this whole aspect of drifting, the devil won't give you a dollar, he won't offer you a dollar, but he has no problem giving you 20 nickels, just one at a time.

[35 : 23] When those things happen, the cure is simple. It's actually really simple. It's just to repent, to return, and to remember. In Isaiah 49, verse 15, Yet will I not forget thee.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hand. Now, this is God remembering us. God says, I won't forget thee. In fact, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.

God is saying to us that he will never forget us. I won't forget you. You can put your name in there. Your name is etched into my hands.

When we forget God, he still remembers us. when we wander, he still calls us. When we fail, he still loves us. I hope this is an encouraging message to you, because I do believe God wants this for us for whatever reason.

God does not easily forget us. You know, when we remember what God has done, our worship becomes real.

[36 : 54] Your faith becomes strong. Your hope becomes alive. Your heart becomes soft. Your children hear truth.

Your walk becomes steady. And your life becomes anchored. What are some practical ways we can remember?

I don't know if any of you have journals or if you write things. I don't have a journal, but I write things. Not as much as I should.

But we can keep a record of what God has done or share with others what God has done, especially our family and children. and to thank God.

I believe that we are somewhat in a, you know, we're so distracted in our day with all the noise and all the media and the social media which is unsociable, but we don't have time maybe to remember God, to praise Him, to personally thank Him naming the blessings that we have and just saying thank like we did this morning.

[38 : 16] That was awesome. In worship, we thank God for specific things. I believe that God is pleased with that.

He wants us to remember. He wants to know that we remember that He has been good to us. let's remember where He found us, where God found you, what He saved you from, the prayers He answered, the grace He gave, and again, the doors He opened, the sin He forgave, His guiding hand throughout our life.

If we think back, it is amazing. I would say, Dan, James, you're the older ones here, but Chuck, if you think back, you can think further back than the rest of us, but I think I can think back pretty far, almost 50 years.

Isn't it amazing where God has brought us all the things, all the places, all the life? even to who we married, who our children are, grandchildren.

It's been an amazing journey. I believe our hearts should be overflowing with thankfulness.

[39 : 47] I know there's negatives too, and hardships, but there's so much good. have we lost our first love?

Have we forgotten our redemption? I've wrote this down, have we forgotten our redemption and therefore become critical of others?

You know, that's part of the problem with forgetting. when I forget my redemption, when I forget who I was and what I was saved from, I tend to become critical.

Isn't that how it works? Maybe if we've become very critical and we don't know why, maybe it's because we forgot who we once were.

It's very possible. Or maybe we've never been redeemed. My heart was distressed neath Jehovah's dread brown and low in the pit where my sins dragged me down.

[41 : 00] Oh, I remember that feeling. Just didn't know how to get out. I cried to the Lord from the deep miry clay who tenderly brought me out to golden day.

Brought me out of the miry clay set my feet on a rock to stay. Let's never let that sense of being on a rock become old and forget.

He put a song in my soul today, a song of praise, hallelujah. He placed me upon the strong rock by his side. My steps were established and here I'll abide.

Do we mean that when we sing it? Here's where I'm staying. No danger of falling while here I remain, but stand by his grace until a crown I gain.

I'll sing of his wonderful mercy to me. I'll praise him till all men his goodness shall see. I'll sing of his salvation at home and abroad till many shall hear the truth and trust in God.

[42 : 25] Seems like there should be a few more verses but what a song. Will we remember? remember. I think we do better when we do.

I think it does all those things we talked about when we remember. Why don't we stand together and pray and if someone is here that has forgotten what God has done or just maybe haven't thought about it in a long time think about it today.

Let's remember let's if we need to make things right let's do that let's not delay but say God I'm sorry I've forgotten all those good things you did.

Let's pray. Father we thank you this morning for who you are. Thank you Lord Jesus for the redemption the plan of salvation the blood that was shed for each one.

Lord thank you that one day that became personal to me and I found a way out a way out of that miry clay that pit where the devil had us trapped Lord we found a way we found Jesus and we so quickly forget how that was and how it used to be and Lord I pray that in our hearts we would commit to never letting that story grow old and stale but that it would be fresh and anointed by God and and that our testimony however it may be and however different our stories are Lord that it would be real to us and we would remember how good you are and praise you and even Paul the apostle Paul he was so drastically changed and became such a man of

[44 : 40] God such a tool and a vessel to you Lord Jesus yet he said he was the chief of sinners he remembered who he once was father I pray that we could do that we just remember who we are and let that bring a humility to our hearts not pride not arrogance but brokenness Lord I pray that you just bless the remainder of this time bless each one that's here and each one that came today we pray in Jesus name amen you may be seated