

**WHY**  
**Why Remember?**  
Deuteronomy 8:10-18  
May 28, 2017 Memorial Day

Welcome...

So, on this Memorial Day weekend we thought it would be good to ask the question: why are we called to remember. To get there, I think it's good to first ask the question, why do we have a memory at all? God created us with a memory for a reason...so, what's the reason. It might sound pretty elementary to start there but I think we need to lay some basic ground work about our memory so that the rest of what we're going to talk about makes more of an impact.

So, why do we have a memory, why do we remember things. The very scientific reason is that our brains have developed as advance storage items. Bits of data or information go into our brains and are cataloged in some form or fashion that makes it available for us to use later. This seems to be a part of almost every animal in all of creation but, where it seems to boggle even the human mind is migratory creatures who just seem to know the way back to the place where it all began. We're fascinated by birds flying north or south and fish swimming upstream. It would appear that the memory development of the human mind is more advanced than that of all the rest of the animal world, although there are days when I am left wondering if we're really all that advanced. But, it does seem that we have more memory capabilities of say, a squirrel what keeps running out onto the road until one fatal day or the bear caught in a trap.

As a person and a church that believes that we are created by a God who designed us on purpose and with a plan, we believe that our memory is there for a reason. Our memory helps us learn by allowing us to retain information. Our memory is also designed to take past information and integrate it with new, incoming information and blend the two to expand our knowledge. Our memories also remind of those things that hurt us and are painful. From placing our hand on the stove as a child to never wanting to be in *that* kind of relationship ever again, our memories serve us and help keep us safe.

So, how does God call us to use our memories to keep us faithful, keep us on track, keep us out of trouble, and remain godly in a world gone wild. The word in Hebrew that gets translated *remember* is found 130 times in the Old Testament. The Greek word in the New Testament is found 36 times. Other forms or words that recommend an act of remembrance occur over 350 times throughout the Bible. As a matter of fact, you could argue that the entire Bible is a book built to help us remember. Why? I think the primary reason is found in a quote that is first made by George Santayana but is repeated by many famous people including Winston Churchill, Edmund Burke, Kurt Vonnegut and many more. The quote is this: ***Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*** I'm just going to let that sit there for a minute. This is so true, isn't it? When we forget what we've been through, where we've been, how much something hurt we will do it over again as if the lesson was never learned when we went through it the first time. I believe God wants us to learn from the past and not to repeat the mistakes we've made back there. So, God calls us to remember.

So, while remembering might seem like a no brainer, the fact is, we don't do a very good job of remembering. We tie strings around our fingers, we use calendars on our refrigerators, ask other people to help us remember, and let's not forget the invention of the "Post It Note" as a vital tool to help us make it through life. We just don't seem to do very well with remembering stuff. There was a time in the past when remembering seemed to be more important. I've talked with some senior citizens who had to learn the preamble to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. You know, those documents that start out...We the people, in order to form a more perfect union...or When in the course of human events...or was that Four score and seven years ago? What is four score anyway...I don't remember.

Now there are so many tool to help us in our forgetfulness that we actually tell people, *you don't need to know all this stuff, you just need to know where to find it.* Remembering has become something we've given up on as a society. I don't think that's anything new. The people who were living during the message of

Deuteronomy 8 were as forgetful as we are. As a matter of fact, it seems to most scholars that the Old Testament is a never-ending account of God doing great things, the people loving God for a while, the people forgetting how wonderful God is, the people falling into trouble because they forgot, and God bringing them back. And on almost every one of those occasions, the accounts end with *and God reminded the people to never forget*. While the word remember is found over 350 times in the Bible, the word *forget* or some form of the word can be found hundreds of times in both the Old and New Testaments. So, it's not something that is new but, what I do believe is that we are making it easier to forget. Our tools and technology is making our remembering muscles more than a bit flabby. So, you know what's we do. We not have tools and technology to help us build up our memory. Yep, it's come to that. We've recognized the problem and so we do games and puzzles to help hone our memory skills. Why do we do all this? Why does God call the people in Deuteronomy 8 called to remember?

### **Because we forget**

*"But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. Deuteronomy 8:11 NLT*

That's why we have things like Memorial Day, to help us remember the things that we, as a society, believe are vital and important. It's why the church has days of recognition like Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Because, in the busyness of life we forget the things that are important, we forget the past and those things that happened that got us here and made us who we are today. Those things are important because they help advance our faith. Every time we take time to remember all the amazing things God has done, our faith and trust in God grows. When we experience difficult times, we can make it through when we remember that God has gotten me through other things in the past and God can see me through what ever I'm going through right now too.

The word that we hear spoken to the Hebrew people is one we also need to hear. That when we have everything we need...we can fall into a false sense of security and forget all that God has done. Look at what it says in this passage: *Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today.* <sup>12</sup> *For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in,* <sup>13</sup> *and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, be careful!* <sup>14</sup> *Do not become proud at that time and forget the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt.* I don't want to be the person who has become so comfortable that I forget God. I don't want to become the forgetful person God has to remind about how good God has been. And I don't want to get so wrapped up in my stuff that I make God upset because I've forgotten all that He has given me. That's why it's important as people of God to:

### **Remember who you are**

*Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Psalm 100:3 (NLT)*

*But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. 1 John 4:4 (NLT)*

A major part of the God calls to remember is done to remind us that we are God's. It is God who made us, it is God who designed us, it is God who sees us through each day. We need to put reminders into our lives that help us remember who we belong to...that we belong to God. A necklace, a bracelet, a cross on the dashboard, what ever it takes to help you remember who's you are. God wants all our attention and tells us that anything that gets between us and God is a distraction at best and at worst, is an idol. Anything that takes our focus away from God can pull us away from the relationship God wants with us.

And let's admit, there are plenty of shiny things that can distract us away from God. There are our favorite foods, and our favorite films, our favorite...I don't have to tell you about all the things that can distract us away from God, do I. On this side of heaven there are plenty of forces that would attempt to keep us focused

on being in this world. But, ultimately, we are not of this world...we belong to God and there is a home waiting for us. It would do us good to wake up in the morning and:

**Remember to whom we belong**

*<sup>19</sup> Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, <sup>20</sup> for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NLT)*

*<sup>18</sup> Remember the Lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath. Dueteronomy 8:18 (NLT)*

God has done so much and there is this side of God that says "Hey, what about me here!" I've done all that for you and you forgot to talk to me, forgot to give me credit, forgot that I saw you through, forgot that what you have came from me. When I forget, my attention is drawn toward other things and away from God. And anything that gets between me and God can become an idol and God is just possessive enough about you that He will get jealous about anything that comes between you and God.

**Rememeber to put God first.**

*Do not become proud at that time and forget the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. Dueteronomy 8:14 (NLT)*

When we put other things ahead of God by forgetting what God has done God there is this jealous side of God that comes out. Now, we might think that's wrong because most of us believe jealousy is unhealthy at best. We don't like it when someone is jealous when we're getting all kinds of attention...right. But, number 10 of the 10 Commandments is that we are not supposed to want what other people have, the word used there is covet...to want something that belongs to someone else, in effect, to be jealous. So, why is it okay for God to be jealous...because anytime we look away from the one who created us, the creator is no long what we are paying attention to and when that happens, when we take our eyes off God, God gets jealous.

On this Memorial Day it's good to remember. It's good to be reminded of all of the things God has done and all of the people that God has sent our way. This is a weekend to remember all of the works of God that we lived out by great men and women who crossed your path and other who we will never meet but, who gave the last full measure so that we could be free. I hope you never forget who's you are and who you belong to. That all you do is done out of a deep knowledge that God loves you and wants to be a part of your life everyday.

Let's take a moment and pray for ourselves, that we might remember. And then, let's pray for our nation, and for those who gave everything so that we can be here today.