

- ***READ Deuteronomy 8:1-10*** On the last Monday of each May (which happens to be tomorrow), this country observes the holiday known Memorial Day. For many of us, this is a day in which we have the tradition of going to the lake, grilling out with friends, or taking a yearly vacation, but we must recognize that this holiday means much more than those things. In fact, this is a day when we ought to take a moment to pause and reflect upon what it took for us to have the ability to do those things in a free country. Memorial isn't just another holiday, but it is a day when we would do well to stop and remember the sacrifice of the many men and women who have given their lives to make freedom possible in this country.
- It can be really easy to take our freedoms for granted, but that is why such a holiday and day of remembrance was established...so that we might not forget and be reminded on a yearly basis. Surely we recognize that we are forgetful creatures. It can be so easy for us to get so wrapped up in life that we fail to pause from time to time and remember the important things. You see...we don't just recognize this about ourselves, but God knows of the forgetfulness of mankind.
- For this reason all throughout the Bible we run into divinely given reminders that have been passed down to use by God so that we would not be forgetful of God or His will for us. This morning, I would like to take a few moments to consider why and how it is that God reminds mankind and His people of who He is, what He has done, and what His will for us is in this life.

I. God knows of man's need for reminders.

A. God's people have seemingly always had a bad habit of forgetting God, His will, and His goodness.

1. This wasn't for a lack of trying on the part of God in trying to get His people to be a people who would always remember God in everything that they did. We read earlier from **Deuteronomy 8:1-10** where God is trying to help the people to make better decisions than they had made before which lead to them wondering aimlessly around the wilderness for 40 years. Now, let's finish out the chapter (**Deuteronomy 8:11-20**) and consider the warnings from God as to why they need to constantly remember God in everything that they did.
2. You would hope that these warnings would stick and that the people would truly be ever mindful of their God in everything that they did...yet time after time we read of the Israelites forgetting the Lord their God and rebelling against Him through disobedience and going after other gods.
3. It started far before they arrived at this point in **Deuteronomy 8** and it continued long after. In **Psalms 106:19-48**, we find a detailed history of Israel's failure to remember God in everything that they did. It began with them making the calf at Horeb. The Psalmist writes, *"They forgot God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt, Wonders in the land of Ham and awesome things by the Red Sea."* (**Psalms 106:21,22**)
4. The author continues by speaking of the days of Phinehas when he stood up to the wickedness of the people as they joined themselves without any shame to the pagan women. (**Psalms 106:28-31**) Their grumbling at the waters of Meribah is also noted as they forgot of the amazing provisions of God and complained because they felt they weren't being taken care of. (**Psalms 106:32,33**) The Psalmist finally concludes the sins of the people by bringing to mind the disobedience of the people in not cleansing the land of the pagan people, and that they even went so far as to join them in their idolatry. (**Psalms 106:34-39**) God had done so much for them, but they continually forgot about Him and His will for them as the chosen people of God.

B. Yet, we find God always having a remembrance of His covenants and faithful followers.

1. Even during the cleansing of the earth through the deadly flood, God remembered the faithful man Noah and His family, and He brought them safely through the deadly waters. (**Genesis 8:1**)
2. After the destruction that fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah, God remembered the faithfulness of Abraham. (**Genesis 19:29**) God's anger with the sinful deeds of the evil man doesn't cause God to forget about those who are faithful to Him.

3. This was especially meaningful for the nation of Israel as a whole when it came to God's promises to Abraham. We remember from **Exodus 2:23-25** that upon the death of the king of Egypt the people died out for they were oppressed and *"God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."* Men forget...but God always remembers.
- C. To help counteract man's forgetfulness, God established numerous reminders to help men to be mindful of God.
1. Numerous reminders came to my mind when I was putting together this material, but these stood out above the rest to me as examples of God doing something to help man remember those things that were worth remembering.
 - a) God established the rainbow as a means of reminding man that He would never again flood the earth in an effort to destroy mankind. (**Genesis 9:15,16**)
 - b) God established animals sacrifices not just as a means of making things right between man and God, but they also served as a reminder of the cost of sin in that life is demanded for sin. (**Leviticus 17:11 & Hebrews 10:4**)
 - c) God established the Sabbath rest under the Law of Moses so that man would remember the rest that God took after creating the world in 6 days. This day was set aside for God's people to not have their minds focused on the business of life, but to consider God and His will for them. (**Leviticus 23:3**)
 - d) The Passover was certainly a strong reminder to the children of Israel concerning God's deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Egyptians. This holy observance was commanded so that the people might contemplate the grace of God, and how He crippled those who oppressed them in the land of Egypt. (**Leviticus 23:5**)
 2. Yet what really came to my mind when I thought about divinely established reminders is the story that is found in **Joshua 4**. In this text, we find that the children of Israel have just crossed over the Jordan river to begin their grand conquest of the promised land. However, this was no ordinary crossing for the priests who carried the ark were able to carry the Ark of the Covenant across the Jordan river on dry ground. Upon them reaching the other side, the Lord spoke to Joshua and commanded that he and the people erect a monument of twelve stones that would serve as reminder to the people of the mighty power of God. Just as He divided the waters of the Red Sea, so did He part the waters of the Jordan River as the people crossed.
 3. The Lord really wants Joshua to get the point of what is going on as He makes the significance crystal clear in **Joshua 4:6,7, 21-24**. God wanted the people to ask concerning the significance of these stones and why they were arranged in such a way and place, and it was purely an opportunity for God to be honored and praised for everything that he had done for them. They were a divinely given reminder that would focus the people's mind on the Lord their God.

Yet what about us? Has God given us anything that would serve as a reminder of Him, His goodness, or His will for us in this life?

II. He has given us a weekly reminder of what Jesus did for us on the cross with the giving of the Lord's Supper.

- A. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He made it clear that this was to be done in remembrance of Him and what He was going to accomplish on the cross.
1. *"Do this in remembrance of Me."* Two times we see this phrase recorded in **I Corinthians 11:24,25**. The greater context is of course some problems that were present within the Corinthian church pertaining to how the Lord's supper was to be observed. These people were not waiting on one another in their observance. They were taking what was to be a sacred reminder of the grace of God and turning it into a common meal that served no spiritual significance.

2. This type of observance was a disgrace in the eyes of God, and Paul strongly reprimands them by reminding them that this observance was for the purpose of remembering Jesus and His broken body and shed blood that were given for our sins. *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."* (**I Corinthians 11:27**)
 3. Our eating and drinking of these emblems is a proclamation that we are a saved people because of the great sacrifice of Jesus. This observance is a reminder of the perfect love of God and just how far He was willing to go for mankind to be saved from their sins. These truths should fill us with all different kinds of emotions and feelings from happiness and gratitude to even sadness for Jesus having to suffer for our sins, and that is exactly what God is wanting in this remembrance.
- B. This weekly reminder should serve us well as we begin each week.**
1. There are some who would scoff at the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper because they would claim that a weekly observance only causes us to become stale and heartless in our actions. Now, I won't argue that this certainly is something that can be true. However, this possible danger doesn't negate the wisdom of God in establishing this observance as a weekly reminder.
 2. It is a weekly reminder that we must live lives that line up with what it is that we are proclaiming. We are proclaiming Jesus's love for us in His death, but are we living in such a way that brings honor to that sacrifice? Much is made about **I Corinthians 11:27-30** concerning what it means to take of the supper in an unworthy manner, but it is my believe that the simplest explanation for how one can take these emblems in an unworthy manner is to allow them to have no effect on us as we move forward throughout the week.
 3. This observance is supposed to remind us of God's goodness towards us in redeeming us with the blood of His sinless Son, yet what are we actually gaining from this observance if we go about our week living like worldly sinners? If we are simply eating some crackers and drinking some juice without contemplating what we need to do with what they represent then we are completely missing the point and partaking in an unworthy manner. This memorial is a divinely given reminder of the love shown towards us in God giving His life on the cross, and we would do well to allow it to truly touch us to our very hearts so that we might remember God as we go through a week living in this world that is so often trying to destroy us in our faiths.

But the Lord's Supper is only observed on Sunday, so what can we do throughout the week to remind us of God's goodness towards us and what He expects in return?

III. He has given us the Bible as a reminder of His will for us in our lives.

A. The entirety of Scripture has been given for our learning.

1. Of course we know this to be true from places such as **II Timothy 3:16,17** where Paul says that the Scriptures have been inspired and given by God for the purposes of teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. Paul even says that the writings of the Old Testament are useful for such a thing. *"for whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."* (**Romans 15:4**)
2. We even have examples of New Testament characters pointing back towards the people of old who can serve as teachers and reminders of what we ought to be doing. Jesus reminds the people to *"remember Lot's wife"* right before He says, *"whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it."* (**Luke 17:32,33**) Did Jesus say this for nothing? Of course not! Jesus is reminding these hearers of Lot's wife's great mistake of loving her life back in Sodom and Gomorrah that led to her turning back towards those sinful cities as they were being destroyed and being turned into a pillar of salt. (**Genesis 19:26**)

3. Paul even uses those forgetful Israelites as an example to help remind the Corinthians that disobedience will only result in punishment being handed down by God. (**I Corinthians 10:1-6**) The Israelites had been God's people and had been delivered from slavery at the hands of the Egyptians, and yet they forgot God and *"they were laid low in the wilderness."* What does this serve to remind us? We are reminded that God is to be taken serious, and that reminder can be found any day of the week and any time of the day in God's Word.
- B. Peter knew this to be the case and He wrote His letters reinforcing the idea that they should serve as reminders for the readers.
1. At the beginning of our assembly we read from **II Peter 1**, and I would like to look again at a few of those verses to highlight the reminder language that is found within them. (**II Peter 1:12-15**) *"I will always be ready to remind you of these things.....I consider it right...to stir you up by way of reminder.....I will be diligent that you will be able to call these things to mind."* Peter's purpose for writing these letters was so that the truth would be firmly planted in the hearts of these disciples so that they might be able to bring to mind what is needed in whatever situation they might find themselves in.
 2. Specifically, in this letter the subject at hand is false teachers and those who mock the Lord and His promises. Peter says, *"This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your Apostles."* (**II Peter 3:1,2**)
 3. This inspired Word of God that we hold in our hands is to serve as a reminder of what God wills for us in our lives as those who have given ourselves to His Son as disciples and Christians. If we find ourselves being forgetful of these things, then that might just be a telling sign that we aren't in this book enough so that the things of God come to mind when the need arises. If we find ourselves forgetting God then it is probably because we have forgotten His Word, and we cannot expect to be mindful of the things of God if we never give any attention to them. This book has been given to us to serve as a strong divine reminder of God's will for us in this life, we would do well to keep it ever close to our minds and hearts so that we will remember God when facing the trials of life.

I absolutely must admit and acknowledge that it can be very easy to get so caught up in the day to day things of life that I find myself forgetting the most important things from time to time. I'm thankful that God knows this, and that He has done things that will help me and others to be more mindful of Him and how He would have for us to live for Him in this life. May we lean upon the Lord and constantly remember Him so that we might not be like the children of Israel and end up punished for having forgetful minds. May God's divine reminders help us to always have Him first and foremost in our minds regardless of the circumstance of life.

PRAYER *Our loving Father in heaven...we approach Your throne of grace and mercy acknowledging that we truly are a people who forget You far too often. Yet, we are thankful that in Your mercy and patience that You have established reminders that can help us to be more mindful of You. Please help us to take full advantage of these divine reminders of Your Son's Supper and Your Word so that we will always remember You in everything that we do. Help us to remember Your love, grace, and mercy, and may that remembrance help us to overcome the evil one and his temptations. We are so thankful for the aids that You give us every day, may we use them to glorify You in all things. Thank You, Father, for all of Your innumerable blessings. It is in the name of Your Son Jesus the Christ we pray these things...amen.*