My Story - Part 1

Remembering Jesus

## (Deuteronomy 5:15)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. I want to talk to you today about memories, because one of the worst things you can lose is your ability to remember those moments and memories of days gone by. You see, we’ve all got stories to tell and its fun to sit around and start telling stories. Like, “You know, I’ve got to tell you about the time when…” and that’s why our memories are so important. Life is a collection of memories that makes up your story and it’s those memories that will define you in the later years when you’re sitting on the couch reminiscing and laughing.

I’ve come to realize as I have gotten older, and I’m in no way suggesting that I’m old, but as I have gotten older, I realize that life is not so much about the days, weeks, months, or years, but it’s a collection of memories, commemorating special events, and appreciating time spent with loved ones. And it’s those memories that add value to our lives, but it’s not so much the events themselves, it’s not the birthdays or anniversaries, because we don’t remember each of them, but what we do remember are the specific memories that make up our stories.

The title of today’s message is “Remembering Jesus” because his story is the greatest story ever told, and we need to remember that his story is also our story. You see, we’ve all got stories that we love to tell, there are so many seemingly insignificant events that have had a significant impact on our lives, but none so much as our encounters with Jesus. Now, of course, we remember those crazy moments, those special moments of intimacy, those stupid things we said or did way back when, because it’s those things that make up our stories. But it’s the intersection of the supernatural with our lives, remembering the things that God has done, that helps define our relationship with him and others today.

And so, for each one of us the strength of our faith is perpetuated by the memories of what God has done in the past, and it’s that which drives our expectations for the future, and I believe that is why the Lord puts so much emphasis on remembering. Time and time again he reminds the children of Israel,

“Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm” (Deuteronomy 5:15).

And so, that one moment of deliverance where they were brought out by the mighty hand of God became a point of reference for thousands of years for the children of Israel. Over and over God reminded them of how he brought them out of Egypt, delivering them from the hand of Pharaoh, and bringing them through the Red Sea, because he wanted that memory to be deeply ingrained in their minds. He wanted to build up their faith, wanting them to remember, so that when he brings them into the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, or whatever else they came into, that they would remember the mighty deliverance of the Lord.

The children of Israel were able to use this moment as a point of reference to strengthen their faith, defining their relationship with God, and that’s why he said,

“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord” (Exodus 12:14).

And so, Moses says, “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out.” And he sits them down, he takes them back and says, “Let me tell you about the time when God said,

“About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh… to the firstborn son of the slave girl… and the firstborn of the cattle as well” (Exodus 11:4-5).

He said, “I’m going to cause the death Angel to Passover by night, and so I’m going to make a distinction between Egypt and Israel. I’m going to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.” And so, he sent Moses to the community of Israel with these instructions; in chapter 12, verse 21, he said,

“Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning” (Exodus 12:21-22).

“When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down” (Exodus 12:23).

And so, the Israelites did just what the Lord commanded them through Moses and Aaron. And the Bible says in verse 29,

“At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead” (Exodus 12:29-30).

“During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the Lord as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go” (Exodus 12:31-32).

And so, the children of Israel hurried out of Egypt with this memory deeply ingrained in their minds, the Exodus now having become part of their identity as the people of God, and they could declare with confidence that if God can do that, nothing is impossible for God.

And so, as they came into the promised land after following God in the wilderness for 40 years, and once again Moses reminded the people not to forget how the Lord led them out of Egypt and how he led them through the desert those 40 years. He said, remember how…

“He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

And so, now their slavery in Egypt was just a distant memory, generations have gone by, and the days of their suffering is a story told by their grandparents. Now, they have settled down, now the children awaken in the morning not to go out and gather manna, but they awaken to the smell of baking bread, and the sound of the tradesmen at work in the community. But Moses brings them back to the memory of their deliverance because he doesn’t want them to forget their deliverer. He doesn’t want them to forget what God saved them from. He doesn’t want them to forget the years of their suffering as slaves in Egypt, and so he said once again,

“Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery” (Deuteronomy 8:11-15).

He says, don’t forget, because it was their deliverance from Egypt that not only defined their faith, but it defined everything about them. And so, he says, remember your story, remember your Savior, because if they were to forget their identity, what gives them distinction, what sets them apart from the nations, there is no guarantee that they’ll ever get it back again. You see, there will never be another story like the Exodus of Israel, and so in spite of the pain of the past, they’ve got to fight back the tears and remember the goodness of the Lord, because they can’t forget the uniqueness of who they are.

Today, I want to encourage you to remember, not forgetting where you’ve come from, not forgetting what you were brought out of, but remembering as the Bible says,

“He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-14).

You see, you may be going through something right now that seems like a nightmare, but remember Jesus, don’t forget who you are and whose you are.

For most of us, because of this invisible disease, we are living in a time like we’ve never seen before, and we don’t know whether we’re walking into it or out of it. In fact, there are some of you that are in a storm right now, you are in a fight right now, and you might have suffered loss, but don’t let the devil convince you that all is lost, because he can’t take your memories and it’s your memories that define your story. I know that sometimes it’s hard to fight back the tears, fighting the frustration of what we’ve lost, wondering if we’ll ever get it back again, but we remember what normal looks like, and so we’ve got to keep clinging to the memory.

Before I go any deeper, I’d like to pause right here, because we can be so forgetful, and I’m just as guilty of this as anyone. So often I find that I don’t truly appreciate what I have until it’s gone and all I’m left with is memories. And maybe that is your story this morning, but you can hold onto your memories. In fact, there is not a person in this room that God didn’t do something in your life as evidence to you that he is God. In fact, his fingerprints are all over every circumstance, every situation in your life, and so don’t forget where God showed up in your life, don’t forget what he has done.

I’m hoping to connect the dots for you, because it was on the night before Jesus was to be offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world that he celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples. He brought them together to remember, but he changed the meaning of the Passover to what we call communion or the Lord’s Supper today. And I believe there are many of you who will be able to understand the Scriptures in a deeper way as we experience the presence of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God in this meal.

The Bible encourages us to examine ourselves, preparing ourselves before partaking of this meal, and so we want to take a moment, just pausing to look within. And if there is a sin, habitual sin in our lives, this is our opportunity to repent of it, and ask Jesus to forgive us and help us walk away from it. And so, if you’ve got a wafer of bread, just hold it up as we read the Scriptures.

“The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:23-24).

Let’s all eat together as one, remembering the body of our Lord Jesus Christ offered for us. Jesus says, “do this in remembrance of me” because he knows that people forget, even the people that you’ve been good to forget and walk away from you. And so, the Bible says,

“In the same way, after supper Jesus took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:25).

Let’s drink together, remembering the shed blood of Jesus, because the Bible says without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. And so, in this meal Jesus is replacing the blood of the Lamb on the door posts of the house with his own blood, and he says this is a new covenant in my blood.

In the same way, he says, I’m going to give you a new memory, a new way of remembering, a new way of identifying yourself, because whenever you do this, you are letting me know that you still remember. And so, the Bible says,

“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

In other words, Jesus doesn’t want you to ever get in a situation where you get so depressed, so broke, so lonely, so discouraged, that you forget that he is coming again. And so, the Bible says, whenever you do this, do it in remembrance of Jesus. Whenever you do this, do it in remembrance of his suffering, in remembrance of his body, in remembrance of his blood, and in remembrance of his coming again, because he is risen and he is alive.

I wonder if there’s anybody who remembers something that God did for you? You know something that God did for you, you remember it, and so when the devil tries to tempt you, deceive you, and take you captive, you can tell him, “This is My Story.” I know that God is real, I know he did that for me, because I remember.

Like the story of Job, if you remember, he lost his oxen and cattle, his sheep, his camels, and his servants, then a mighty wind caused the house to collapse on his sons and daughters killing all of them. He said all that might be true but…

“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes…” (Job 19:25-27).

You see, sometimes the devil will try to make you forget what you know about God. He will come and try to confuse you, snatching away your memory of God, but the Bible says,

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

And so, we’re not going to let the devil come against the knowledge of God, we’re going to fight, it’s not going to bother us, and it won’t upset us. Some of you may be hurting right now, you might be holding back tears, but you’re not going to let anything set itself up against the knowledge of God. There may be somebody trying to distract you, trying to steal your affections from God, but they’re not going to get that part of you because it belongs to God.

And so, you may not know what’s going to happen tomorrow, but you know that your Redeemer lives. You may have lost a lot of things along the way, but your heart is his and so you are,

“Careful and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live…” (Deuteronomy 4:9).

And so, there ought to be something about God, something God did for you, that you don’t need the worship team to remember. There ought to be something about God that all you need to do is think on the goodness of Jesus and all that he’s done for you.

And so, you can look back and see what God saved you from, what he brought you through, and the devil can’t take that from you, because it’s your story and you’ve still got it. You know what he did in your life, and so,

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

I hope that each one of you at the sound of my voice are remembering something between you and God, remembering what he got you through, remembering how he raised you up, remembering how he brought you out, and you’re ready to give thanks to the Lord, because he is good. You’re ready to give God some praise, because the Bible says,

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so…” (Psalm 107:2, NKJV).

And so, some of you may have been through great hardship, you’ve lost a lot in the past, but you know he is still good. And so, every now and then you’ve got to remember the goodness of the Lord and declare,

“I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalm 34:1-2, NKJV).

Because he is still good and so when you think about his goodness, how he died on the cross and rose again. The enemy can’t take that away, he can’t take your joy because, “We live by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

And so, even though the devil may be trying to wear you down, you remember the goodness of the Lord, and you know that his love endures forever.

Even though there may be some people whom you have helped along the way, who have turned their back and walked away from you. They might forget you, but God still remembers you and he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him. Some of you may be going through a tough time right now, but…

“God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them” (Hebrews 6:10).

And so, I want to ask you to remember Jesus, remember what he did for you, remember the times he brought you through something that you thought you’d never make it through.

It’s time to remember, you’ve got to remember, because he hasn’t forgotten you. In fact, he said,

“I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands” (Isaiah 49:16).

God will never forget you, and so, can I encourage you to remember, you’ve got to remember the palm of his hands, like Thomas you’ve got to touch the wounds, you’ve got to remember Jesus. You’ve got to remember, this is between you and God, it’s not about the person sitting next to you, but you’ve got to always remember Jesus, because he remembers you.

Can I encourage you to remember him? He said whenever you do this, whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, do it in remembrance of me. He said, remember I am the one that brought you out of slavery, I brought you out of the darkness, I brought you out of the wilderness, this is your story.

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