

Remember...

Text: Exodus 20.8–11

Theme: God gave us one day to remember Him well so we wouldn't forget Him the other six

Introduction — elderly couple noticed becoming more forgetful

- went to visit their doctor to see if anything they could do
- doctor simply told them to start writing things down so as not to forget
- went home and the elderly wife asked her husband to bring her a bowl of ice cream
- “you might want to write that down, like the doctor said,” she reminded him
- then, as husband was getting up, she added, “Oh, and add some whipped cream, please”
- “write it down so you won't forget” to which husband replied, “I won't forget”
- “you want a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream on top”
- his wife added another: “Oh, and can you add one of those little red cherries too”
- “All right” “write it down” “I won't forget: ice cream, whipped cream, red cherry”
- he headed off to the kitchen, where he spent an inordinate amount of time for just ice cream
- after nearly half an hour, he returned, tray in hand with plate of eggs & bacon
- his wife stared at the plate for moment, then, with a peeved look in her eyes said
- “Where's my toast? You forgot my toast!”

While we may joke about memory issues, it's not just the elderly who struggle with such matters

- in the Old Testament, we see God's chosen people, Israel, constantly having short-term memory loss
- it seems they quickly forgot God's great plagues that caused Pharaoh to set them free
- then they forgot the tremendous miracle at the Red Sea, where He delivered His people once again
- again & again, they forgot God, who He truly was or what He had done
- so they had to be reminded to remember, and not to forget

We're no different today, no matter our protestations to the contrary

- we get overly busy and we forget to remember God
- other things crowd out thoughts of God and we neglect to feed our memory muscles
- and this affects our worship, both individual private worship and our corporate worship
- one would think, after reading Revelation 4 & 5 that we'd never forget something like that
- that the Someone on the throne and the slain Lamb that is Christ could never be forgotten
- one would think that...
- but look at how we treat the Lord's Day
- consider how we think about this very day each week, week-in, week-out
- and you'll quickly have to admit: we forget, we don't remember our great & awesome God

So, as we think of our all-glorious, supremely holy God, we need reminded

- we need to remember that God gave us one day to remember Him well so we won't forget Him the other six days of the week.
- in order to receive this reminder, we need to see the danger of idolatry
- we must be told to remember, lest we forget the Lord our God
- we then must set aside a particular day to remember
- as we do this, we'll start to see a clear pattern to our days given us by God
- all so we can truly live coram Deo: Before the face of God

First, let's see...

I. THE DANGER OF IDOLATRY & RUINING RESTFULNESS

- “You shall have no other gods before me.
“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,

(Exodus 20:3–5 ESV)

1. Idols? Really?

- you may wonder why begin with the commandment which forbids idols
- and especially because we modern Christians think we are immune to this temptation
- but think about this: the people of Israel had been powerfully delivered from bondage
- now at the foot of Mt Sinai, Moses has ascended to have God speak to him
- and they want to “see” this God of Moses, they need to have something tangible
- give gold to Aaron, he melts it in a big pot & viola — out pops a golden calf

2. It’s a heart problem

- John Calvin said our hearts are a perpetual factory of idols
- and they don’t need to be wood, stone or metal
- they can take the shape of sports, celebrities, pop stars, possessions, longings and other things
- I have visited churches where worship, if you turned down sound, looks like idol worship
- an idol is anything we think about more often than we think about God
- it is anything that stirs our affections more than Jesus Christ does

3. So why the warning?

- why does God warn us? Because it’s wrong? Yes
- because it is neither safe nor healthy for us
- idols can never satisfy us, no matter what or who they are
- why not?

4. Searching for something

- Mick Jaeger and the Stone sang, “I can’t get no satisfaction”
- St. Augustine said: You have made us for Yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You
- Solomon, in Ecclesiastes, said, God has put eternity into man’s heart
- we were created with a grand purpose: for faith in & love for the living & loving God
- nothing else satisfies us
- we were made for God and for God alone

5. Our only safety

- idols are dangerous; our only safety lies in God Himself
- so, to worship anything else other than God and His Son, Jesus Christ, is harmful to us
- not just “bad” but harmful, dangerous
- when it comes to worship, private or corporate, we need take great care to remember God

Now, let us consider God’s Word to us, His people:

II. “LEST YOU FORGET THE LORD YOUR GOD”

- memory is important in the Bible
- we’re told to remember quite often, it turns out
- but we’re also reminded in a somewhat negative fashion as well
- *then take care lest you forget the Lord*

(Deuteronomy 6:12 ESV)

- we hear it again a couple of chapters later
- *Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today,*

(Deuteronomy 8:11 ESV)

1. Why should God have to issue such a wake-up call to His own people?

- He’d rescued them from slavery & did so in no ordinary fashion
- and we, so far removed, and often thinking we’re so much more advanced, even spiritually
- we think, “I’d never forget the Lord; not after all that.”
- and yet we do: we neglect and forget
- we forget the vital importance of gathering each Lord’s Day
- we forget to give God the whole day so we’ll be sustained through the week
- we forget to treasure His Word in our hearts, thus forgetting the Word in the first place
- oh, I’m not saying we’re atheists; but when we forget, we live as if God didn’t exist
- then, when hardship, trials, and turmoil come, we are tempted to think He’s forgotten us

2. Forgetting & the blessing of remembering

- Psalm 102 is a good example of this pattern
- in the first 11 verses, the psalmist bemoans all the troubles & hardships that have come along
- and if you were to read it out loud, you’d notice something fascinating
- the pronouns used are “me,” “my,” and “I”
- the psalmist has forgotten and thinks the Lord has forgotten
- until v. 12
- *But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever; you are remembered throughout all generations.*

(Psalm 102:12 ESV)

- remembering the Lord brings rest from the weariness of being consumed with troubles
- it may not always mean those trials disappear
- but you come to Christ, weary, laboring, heavy-laden, to find that He does give rest
- we must, out of great necessity, learn to recovery our memories, saying, “But You, Lord...”

All this leads us to...

III. A DAY TO REMEMBER

- Scripture has over 200 references to remembering and forgetting
- remember is a fundamental duty as a believer in Jesus Christ
- we must remember that He is God’s Son, come in the flesh to die for our sins
- we must remember that we are or were sinners in need of a great deliverance
- we must never forget that it is by grace we are saved and not by our works
- and God has given us a day to gather together as His people to do just this

1. What we must never forget

- this commandment is one of the most helpful things God could have given us
- and it really is a group of the most important verses in the Scriptures
- remember the sabbath: why is this so important?

- because this is a creation mandate, something God willed in His great creative process
- it wasn't something He just came up with for the Israelites
- God created for six days; then He rested...in order that we might have a pattern for life

2. What are we to use to rest & remember?

- as we pointed out last week, God's Word gives us guiding principles for this
- we use the Word of God: we read it, hear it, pray it, sing it
- this day, above all the others is the time we gather together to be under God's Word
- and in doing this, He stores up in our minds what He wants us to remember

3. Not just about the one day

- be careful: this commandment is not just about one day each week
- it's about the other six days on which we labor
- remember Adam, created and placed in the garden of Eden
- he was created last on the sixth day, so even though made on Day 6, not a full day
- when was Adam's first full day?
- it was the seventh day, the day God rested, the day God commands His people to rest
- so, before Adam fulfills the charge from God to work the earth, he rest
- why? Was he tired already? Ha! No, he is to rest in trust and faith in God the Almighty
- Adam's first full day was a day to reflect, to remember God made Him
- it was a day to fellowship with God, store up the truth passed along
- then, he would work...all the while remembering God was with Him

4. Saddest part of this day

- not the time, not the position for us as NT believers as first day of week
- but because we so often see this as the darkest of God's main ten commands
- #6: adultery?—no problem, clearly wrong
- #7: murder?—absolutely not
- #10: coveting?—while harder, still we know it is rightfully against God
- but the Sabbath? Weren't the Pharisees condemned by Jesus for being legalistic about this?
- yes, because this misused it...even as we do, just in the opposite direction
- Jesus, as God's Son, longed for us to have a day to recalibrate our lives
- we get an opportunity once each week to reboot and get ready for our labors
- I am convinced that one of main reasons church in this nation is so weak is because we forget
- so much is forgotten because we don't remember this one this
- keep this day holy, set apart for God and the things of God
- it is vitally necessary for our Christian living
- it is absolutely necessary for our Christian worship

So, we need to see the need for...

IV. A PATTERN FOR OUR DAYS

- God gave a pattern in His creation mandate: one day of resting & remembrance
- then, go about what God has called you to in work & labor for six days
- for the Israelites, He called them to set apart the last day of the week: Saturday
- for the Christian, we start our week on the first day, Sunday, by ceasing to labor
- we rest, cease from our striving
- we remember, lest we forget who God is, who Christ is, and all God has done for us

1. What Jesus restored when He rose from the dead

- Jesus rose on the first day of the week
- as the second Adam, He restored what God gave Adam: a perfect day
- Christians, since the apostles, have gathered to worship now on the first day of the week
- we call it the Lord's day because it's when our Lord rose again
- it's not because the other six days are ours and only a couple hours of Sunday is God's
- all days are His, but especially this day, so we might start our work off on a better foot
- sadly, most of you think of this as the last day of the weekend
- then, come Monday morning, you trudge off to work again, and live for the weekend

2. It's about more than just the one day

- it's really about all days: six days you shall labor, then the one day to rest in the Lord
- God is giving us a time, a means of His grace, to balance our lives
- this is why the whole day should be His
- but how often have you thought: I can't wait until church is over so I can get on with my day
- or, I have to do these things because I don't have time in the rest of the week

3. And there's the problem

- our trouble isn't just abusing the Lord's Day as a day of rest
- our trouble is we abuse the other six
- every day is to be spent living — and working — for the Lord
- by abusing all seven days, we've given up God's pattern, God's clear command from creation
- in doing so, our joy—and rest—are stolen
- we have no rhythm, no pattern, and thus we dishonor the Lord

4. Remember...

- Adam's first day found God saying to him:
- I want your very existence to have time to admire everything I've done for you
- then you will be fueled for the next six days of work
- after that, come back again, rest, trust Me to provide what you need this day
- and remember who I am, what I have done for you, and what I promise to do for you
- in this way, you'll be able to make it through each of the other days

Conclusion – ten year ago, Kevin DeYoung, pastor/professor, wrote a book

- entitled: Crazy Busy—I highly commend it to you
- he laments the American idol of busyness that we Christians have bowed down to
- busyness steals our joy, putting our souls at risk
- busyness robs our hearts of spiritual fruitfulness
- busyness often covers up the rottenness in our souls, making sure no one can see it
- DeYoung offers up a diagnosis of seven points to help us assess our lives
- pride, an over-inflated sense of responsibility, unclear priorities, cruel kindergarchy—parents driven by their children, over-use & dependence upon technology, lack of rest and lastly, godly busyness—being so busy at church and ministry we forget God Himself
- the cure? Resting in Jesus Christ
- cultivating our relationship with Jesus, God's Son, our Savior
- sitting at the feet of Jesus like Mary did, much to that busy Martha's chagrin

If you and I are to be able to withstand the onslaught of evil in this day, we must remember

- we must set aside all of our idols, even ourselves
- we must take this day, above all days, set it aside as a whole day, and worship God

- God gave us this one day in order that we might not forget Him in the other six
- so, let us worship God...all day today, shall we?