

Lake Cities Community Church
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Sermon Series: "Church Works"

"Never Forget!"
Worship – Part II of III

"So watch yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you. (Deut 4:23)

Let's begin with a memory test. Who do you think has a better memory, an elephant or a yak? Yes – the elephant. I read a story about how when Africa went through a severe drought in the 1990's – only the elephants who were alive when the previous drought occurred in the late 1950's immediately traveled to alternative watering holes. They remembered after 40 years! Amazing. Ok – Next. Who has a better memory – a goldfish or a dolphin? Yes the dolphin, most of us know, has a highly developed brain and can understand and respond to not only single word commands, but complex sentences. Goldfish on the other hand only can retain information for about 3 seconds. But at least they are never bored – because every time they swim around the tank, it is a new experience! Next, the pigeon or the turkey? The pigeon. A psychologist at Tufts University spent five years studying the pigeon's brain and found that the birds could memorize and recall up to 1,200 individual pictures. The turkey – well is a turkey. Now let's get personal. Who has a better memory - dogs or cats? A 2005 research study found that a cat's brain contains 300 million neurons compared to only 160 million in a dog's. So cats do have more information processing capacity (Roth & Dicke, 2005). One more: men or women? Who has a better memory? A 2008 study in Stockholm Sweden confirmed what you already knew.

Women are better at remembering than men in nearly every area: The study found women are better at recalling faces, words, objects, pictures and where to find the car keys. Men, the study said, were only better at remembering one thing - “symbolic, nonlinguistic” items - such as how to find their way out of the woods when camping. So... if you are even lost in the woods – give the old man a chance. At least that is something.

(Psychologists Agneta Herlitz and Jenny Rehnman in Stockholm, Sweden, 2008)

What we are going to see today is that memory - the act of remembering, recalling, dwelling upon past events and their implications – is one of the most powerful, important, essential and most utterly overlooked aspects of worship. We are going to see that one who remembers is one who worships! Last week the picture was of bowing down in submission. The picture of worship for us to consider today is someone remembering.

Like our sermon last week, we will first take our study to the Old Testament and then second move to the New Testament, ending, third, with application and reflection on how we, here at Lake Cities, worship through remembrance.

OLD TESTAMENT - Promises

Well – what does God want us to remember? From my study of this topic, it seems that God wanted His people to remember at least two things, and we will observe both items from the Old Testament, starting with God’s repeated and curious broken-record reiteration about three people – “Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” Ever notice how many times they are referred to? Why? A few passages will reveal the reason:

Deut. 6:10 “Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**. Ex. 6:8 ‘And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD.” 2Kings 13:23 But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them and turned to them because of His covenant with **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, and would not destroy them or cast them from His presence...

You see God made promises with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – promises that continued generation after generation. So as God reached out to his people – He asked them to think back on those promises and consider their ongoing importance. Deut. 4:31 “For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor **forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them**.

The first thing God’s wants His people to remember, **are the promises** that He has made to them, and we’d better add into that also the commitment we have to Him. In a covenant relationship – both parties have responsibilities.

As you go up the stairs to our house, you will find copies of our marriage vows hanging on the wall. Tammy had it made for our first anniversary. On one side are the vows or promises that I made the Tammy on our wedding day. On the other side are the vows or promises she made to me. And there they are – every time I walk up the stairs. Anytime you are in a covenant relationship with another person – your day-by-day living is regulated and bound by those commitments. And we must, from time to time, revisit and recall those commitments.

During our worship service today, and every week, we remember the great promises that are ours in Jesus, and the commitments we have to Him. If we have slipped a

little – now is the time to come clean. If we have forgotten some of the fine print – now is the time to recall the details of our relationship with God, which is set in a series of promises and commitments.

Remembering Power. But there is something else we are to remember. Staying in the OT, turn to the book of Joshua 24:6.

With respect to the promises - God referenced Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God now references something else.

God says to His people: [Josh. 24:6](#) 'I brought your fathers **out of Egypt**, and you came to the sea; and **Egypt** pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea [Josh. 24:7](#) 'But when they cried out to the LORD, He put darkness between you and the **Egyptians**, and brought the sea upon them and covered them; [Josh. 24:14](#) "Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in **Egypt**, and serve the LORD.

Another example: [Deut. 6:12](#) then watch yourself, that you do not **forget** the LORD who brought you **from the land of Egypt**, out of the house of slavery.

Another example, through Jeremiah: [Jer 11:4](#): **I brought** them **out of the land of Egypt**, from the iron furnace, saying, 'Listen to My voice, and do according to all which I command you; so you shall be My people, and I will be your God,'

Over 30 times in the Old Testament God says, "You know who I am? I am the Lord Your God who brought you out of Egypt and rescued you through the Red Seas and therefore... Listen to me. Trust me. Obey me. Turn from idols. Turn from fear.

First, we are to remember God's promises, but second we are also, as an act of to **remember God's power**. In our present set of difficulty – we are to bring to mind God's powerful acts of the past, so that we might live in hope and confidence today.

I may have shared before, but in our dining room is one of the most precious possessions in the Schill home. It is a shadow box with nine little plastic boxes that each contain a physical memorial from a time when God worked powerfully in our lives. Not all the stories have a happy ending – but they all contain God's powerful presence and clear hand. How God protected Trevor in a car accident. Wires from when baby Hayden almost died in the hospital. A page from my journal back in 1989 telling how Tammy and I met. Each story reminds us to have courage and faith in the trials we face today. How had God worked in your life, in powerful ways? How has God worked in our church, in powerful ways – that leads us to worship and ever-deeper faith?

ISRAEL'S FEASTS

These two themes of remembering God's promises and remembering God's power come together in the great feasts of Israel. The feasts were special times of worship, and the content of those services was dominated by remembering God's power and His Promises.

Regarding the Passover feast, the Lord said: Ex. 12:14 'Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations.... Verse 26: "And it will come about when your children will say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?' Ex. 12:27 that you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'" And the people bowed low and worshiped. Ex. 13:9

“And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt. Reminder of God’s promises and God’s power – as a powerful act of worship.

A few other brief examples.

Feast of Weeks: [Deut. 16:12](#) “You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes. Remember the power of the exodus – and let that motivates your promise to obey the Lord.

Feast of Booths: [Lev. 23:42](#) ‘You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, [Lev. 23:43](#) so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’” Don’t forget the provision of God in the past and that was to renew their confidence in the Lord’s provision today.

Day of Atonement: reminded Israel: [Lev. 25:55](#) ‘For the sons of Israel are My servants; they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God. God’s power in deliverance – our responsibilities to the covenant as servants.

What we see in the Old Testament feasts – is that when the people gathered together to worship – the central focus of their worship was remembering and proclaiming God’s power and majesty, and reminding themselves of the terms of their covenant – God’s promises to them and their commitments to God.

Bob Kauflin in his book *Worship Matters*, refers to all this as “proclamation.” When we proclaim or confess that which is true about God – his promises and power, we worship. He says, “Declaring what is true about God – is often underrated. Why proclaim spiritual truths we’re previously hear and already know? Because we forget. We lose track of who

God is and what's He's done. Proclamation...reminds us of the convictions and realities that should guide and govern our daily lives." (Kauflin, 129).

NEW TESTAMENT:

Let's turn now to the New Testament, and to continue our study at the Lord's Table. What the Exodus was in the Old Testament the Death of Christ is for us today – Remember, remember, remember. That is our new covenant - where we remember the promises of God and renew our commitment back to Him.

Let's read from Paul's account in 1 Corinthians 11. [1Cor. 11:23](#) For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; [1Cor. 11:24](#) 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." [1Cor. 11:25](#) In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." [1Cor. 11:26](#) For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. [1Cor. 11:27](#) Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. [1Cor. 11:28](#) But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. [1Cor. 11:29](#) For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.

The Bible teaches us that Jesus fulfills the law of the Old Testament – and that all promises are fulfilled in Him. Every week in our bulletin we proclaim that the Lord's Supper is our primary and central act of worship. Everything in the Old Testament – all the feasts and remember this and that – lead to this act of worship.

Our remembrance here at the Table encompasses at least three different areas:

First: Remember **your sin** before coming to the Lord's Table. Examine yourself.

Remember what Jesus said? [Matt. 5:23](#) "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, [Matt. 5:24](#) leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

Second, remember **God's power** displayed in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is by the breaking of His body and shedding of His blood that we are rescued from slavery to sin. In the Old Testament God's power was displayed in military victories and sensational miracles. In the New Testament power is displayed in weakness – in the death and humility of Jesus.

And third – remember **Jesus' promise** to returning one day. Let the power of God in Christ sustain you, as often as you eat and drink, until the Lord returns, as He said He would.

REFLECTION ON HOW WE REMEMBER IN WORSHIP

Reflect with me for a moment on how we can facilitate this kind of remembrance during our corporate worship at Lake Cities. Again we move into "why do we do what we do?" If the church IS to remember – what does the church do to facilitate that?

1) **Of course – as we've discussed we remember at the Lord's Table.** Why do we have communion every week? I hope now you see just how central and important it is – and this was designed by God to help us remember and renew our covenant with Him. I am not saying every church has to do communion every week, but if our philosophy of worship

is rooted in the importance of remembering – well, here we go. This is essential to our worship.

2) **Songs.** Singing facilitates worship. Last week we sang songs that helped us to surrender to God. Today we see how versatile music is. Many songs remind us of God's character and power. Think about our songs today. We have been reminded that God's grace is enough. We have proclaimed that God is a GREAT God, who wants to bless His people. In a few minutes we will sing about the GREAT faithfulness of God. That God's how there is now shadow of turning in Him. And these songs enter us into worship by remembering and proclaiming the power and character of God.

3) **Creeds and Confessions.** When we recite the Nicene Creed – we are reminded of what we believe – which contains both the promises of God and the power of His might.

4) **Testimonies.** When we have people come forward to give testimonies – we are reminded of their “shadow box” moments – how God has helped, guided, saved and delivered them. And together we worship and rejoice in the Lord.

5) **Offering.** I should have mentioned the offering last week also with respect to submission. But also in the offering – we are reminded that it is God's who provides for us and we are reminded of His promise to bless those who give.

Outside of the worship service we have annual anniversary celebrations – these are our feasts to the Lord, and we have scrap books that allow us to look back and remember what God has done over the years. In your own life, you are welcome to borrow the “shadow box” idea – which we got from someone else, also. But the point is we try to intentionally remember here on Sunday morning – and encourage that act of worship to continue throughout the week.

APPLICATION

We have talked about how we can help to facilitate remembrance in our worship service, but now let me suggest how we can, this week, continue remembering God's power and His promises, and make this act of worship personal.

I want you to work on the following prayer.

Dear Father,

You are the God of _____, _____ and _____. You are the God who has _____ and has promised to _____. Therefore, help me to listen to you today, to trust you with my current problems and to rejoice in your goodness. In Jesus name, Amen.

In the first three blanks – I want to you put in the names of your spiritual fathers and mothers – those in whom you have seen God's power at work. In the next blank – I want to you list a powerful act of God – something that was a real marker and turning point in your life. Next list a promise that God has made in Scripture that applies to a situation you need to trust Him with more fully. Therefore help me, LORD to listen, to trust you and to rejoice in your goodness.

For example. Dear God – You are the God of my father and mother and grandmother who all prayed for me daily. You are the God who provided for my family in miraculous ways when I was unemployed, and you have promised always to meet our needs. Therefore now, in this time of financial challenges we are facing today... help me to listen to you, to trust you and rejoice in you. Amen.

Another example: Heavenly Father – You are the God of our mother church Trinity. Our grandmother church Believer’s Chapel, and you are the God of Lake Cities as well. You have grown us here at Lake Cities in the most difficult of circumstances from 13 families to 40 families, and we know that you have promised to build your church. Help us now, that we have lost several families, now that our budget is down, and some are discouraged. Help us to listen to you, to trust you and rejoice in you. In Jesus name Amen.

Whatever situation you are going through this morning – whether a challenge or praise –try this prayer of remembrance to move you into biblical worship of the Lord.

CONCLUSION:

Even though we may have superior memories to pigeons, dolphins, cats, and maybe elephants - we are yet people with poor memories. We retain only 10% of what we read. 20% of what we hear and 30% of what we see. Even the most impactful things, after time goes by fade and are eventually forgotten.

Therefore God in His grace, has instructed and commanded us that there are some things we must **never forget** – Never forget God’s power and how He has worked in your life, in our life as a church. Never forget God’s promises – promises fulfilled in the past, promises enjoyed today and promises yet to be fulfilled in the future.