

If you'll remember before we worshiped the Lord through song, I said I want to talk to you about remembrance or the art of remembering and really how the life of the mind works itself out in our progressive sanctification. The art of remembering either pushes us towards Christ or it inches us away. Which is what Paul is talking about in Philippians 3 when he says, "One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead." We have to do something with that because Paul doesn't necessarily forget what's behind him. In fact, he often brings it up and he often mentions it. So he's not meaning forget everything that's behind you, but rather forget the things that are behind you that Christ has already paid for that would hinder your relationship with Christ. So what I do want to talk to you about tonight is how you go about remembering and what you're supposed to go about remembering.

So let's look at Psalm 77:11. "I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old." Psalm 105:5 says, "Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered." Now, these two psalms are not unique in the Old Testament. From the Prophets to the Psalms to even what Moses is going to say when he comes down from the mountain, there's this idea "Remembering what God has done. . . Remember what God has done. . . Remember what God has done. . ." Now there are two ways in which we are going to remember this. The first way is that we're going to remember how God has interacted with His people, and we're going to remember the God of the Bible and how He has behaved in the Scriptures. So as our life plays out, we can have the confidence that He delivers, that He saves, that He's in and around even the worst of circumstances.

Now I have found that there's a little bit of a problem with this. I've tried to track it down historically and I have literally been unable to figure it out. For some reason, all of the Old Testament narratives in the Evangelical mind somehow became at one point in history children's stories. So we took all of the Old Testament narratives and we put them into children's Bibles, and that became children's stories that no longer bear weight on us. So at least three times this weekend, somebody has gotten into the water and said, "I finally at 28. . . I finally at 25. . . I finally at 36 figured out that Christ and Moses and Noah were real, that they weren't like Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty." But you see, this is what we've done. We've taken the narratives that in the end are not children friendly and we've made them cute and rolled them out as children's fables. And then to make it even worse, we've attached some moral lesson to it. We've just completely hijacked their intent. And honestly, it doesn't work. So I'm tucking in 4 year old little Reid and I'm going, "Okay, here's the deal. God wanting to flex His muscles, sends Moses to say to Pharaoh, 'Let my people go,' and Pharaoh got stubborn about it and so God went off. He sent the locusts to eat the flesh of men, and they still wouldn't relent. So after that, He killed every bit of cattle in the entire nation. After that, Pharaoh still wouldn't relent, so He turned all the water into blood. Then He blotted out the sun. Pharaoh still wouldn't listen, so God killed the firstborn son of every man and woman in Egypt. Goodnight, buddy." That's not a children's story. So a story that should be about the might and the power of God, that he molecules of water obey God in simply by Him demanding that they turn to blood, that the sun will go black if He tells it to, that He can make every cattle on every hill in the entire country fall over dead in an instant and the firstborn son of every person in this room can die tonight at His hands, this is the God of the Bible. That's no children's joint. He is ferocious and mighty and awe inspiring.

And the reason we don't look a back on the fact that when God's people didn't have food, He rained down bread as a legitimate story of the provision of God for the people He loves is because somehow we think that has to do with our six year old and not us. When the prophet Elijah is in the dried up ravine and there is no water or food and the ravens

bring him food, we don't think about that in relation to our lives. We think about that as something the fourth graders are learning. This is a problem. We've got to get back to seeing the Scriptures as God's self-disclosure to us about Himself. This is one of the ways we remember the wondrous deeds of God. God actually parted the Red Sea. That's not some weird allegory. He parted it, He made it rain manna. These are things that God has done, and we are to remember that there is nothing so big and mighty as to stay His hand. And that's the first way we remember.

The second way we remember the wondrous deeds of God is not only by seeing it biblically but we see it in our own lives that He's shown us a thousand mercies. Here's why we struggle with this one. Some of us walk in a level of idolatry that we take credit for everything that is good and right in our lives and God gets blamed for anything that goes wrong. So when you've got money in your pocket, you did that, you handled that, you worked hard, your boss noticed your tough work and you got that by your hard work. When your girl loves you, you did that, you were the one who Googled "romantic ideas," found those ideas and started to implement them like they were yours out of nowhere, you were the one that made that work. You're the one that has made your kids be obedient with your fatherly skills. So when everything goes right, you're the one that pulls everything off. And just let one thing go wrong, and God's the One that did this thing to you. You're a blasphemer and have a wicked heart, and that's why you respond that way. No one in this room got up this morning and went, "Oh my God, everything is working. My brain is working, my hands and feet are working and I am healthy. So I'm stopping, I'm not even moving because God has given me another day of life and He's given me health and I don't have any chronic pain. My wife is there, my children are there and nobody is sick. Praise You, God, for this bit of Your mercy. I don't deserve any bit of this. There's breakfast in the other room, there's coffee that was electronically brewed five minutes before I woke up. Praise be of God." Nobody did that this morning. But you let yourself get up tomorrow and have chronic pain, pain that doesn't go away for a year or two and watch how quickly we'll go, "You tricked me. You betrayed me."

You see, we don't have minds that are in tune with giving God glory for what He's given us. We don't have minds that are naturally in tune with the thousands of beautiful gifts He gives us every day. Like you got here tonight safely. That's the mercy of God. Most of you are sitting next to friends or family. That's the mercy of God. Almost everyone in here is healthy; they physically function like they were designed. That's the mercy of God. Most of you either ate dinner or you will eat dinner. There are people going hungry all over the world tonight, right? Not you, you're not one of them. But I guess that's all you, right? You were the one who decided to be born in the West. Okay, so Who deserves that praise? Who deserves that glory? Who is it that we should be constantly overwhelmed that He has given us these gifts? Okay, but I'm just telling you that our flesh allow most of us to think that way. We need the Holy Spirit to really do a work in our heart because we are not constantly aware of the wondrous deeds that God has given us, the wondrous gifts that God has given us. Instead, we like to point out what's gone wrong and get frustrated with God. Where is our mind to be? We are to remember the wondrous works of God, both biblically and in our lives.

Here is the second one. The second one is interesting. 2 Timothy 2:8 says this, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel." Not only are we to remember the wondrous acts of God, both biblically as well as in day to day life, but the Scriptures are also going to say remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Remember that Christ was raised from the dead. Now let me tell you why this is so important. Because the Scriptures say if Christ has been raised, then we too will be raised (Romans 6:4). If He is the first fruit of a brotherhood that will be raised, then as He is raised, we will be raised (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Let me do it this way. This week, read 1 Corinthians 15. It will blow your mind. I'll intro it this way. Have you ever been at a funeral and heard a pastor quote 1 Corinthians 15 where it says, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" Have you ever been to a funeral where that is quoted? I always think that is such a silly verse to use right there because I'm going, "Right here. Do you see everyone crying? This is the sting of death." You see, that's a hijacked

text. That text wasn't given for that. That whole chapter of Scripture says this that one day the perishable will give way to the imperishable. Our physical, perishable bodies will give way to new physical (not ethereal or merely spiritual), touchable, movable body that the Scriptures say is now imperishable. And if you've ever watched anybody get sick or as they age the vitality and that light begins to fade, they will often say that they are a shell of their former self. Have you heard this phrase? 1 Corinthians 15 is going to say, "You at your healthiest, you at your most robust are a shell of what is to come and that the dead in Christ shall rise, what is perishable giving way to what is imperishable." The Scriptures say, "Don't forget that there is a resurrection coming." And then, that's when we clink our glasses and go, "What's up now, death?" We don't do that now because death still has a sting. But there's coming a day where he doesn't even exist. And that's where we put our hope. The Scriptures say, "Don't forget the resurrection." And listen, if you forget about the resurrection, you're going to live as if this life is it, which is going to doom you to a bunch of shallow, trivial decisions, it's going to make it hard to suffer well and it's going to have you fighting for rights that in the end are not yours.

But remember that this isn't it. In fact, this is a sad version of what's to come? Doesn't Romans 8 clearly say that all of creation has been subjected to futility? Which means the most beautiful pictures of creation are subjected to futility; they're not all God wanted them or meant them to be, but in the new heaven and the new earth, they will be. And you've got to get out of your mind this us holding hands, swaying back and forth and singing Kumbaya for ten thousand years with no less days to sing God's praise than when we first began. Because the Scriptures are also very clear that we will reign with Him, that we will rule beside Him and there will be a new heaven and a new earth and all that has gone wrong in the Fall will be reconciled unto Him, all things made new. You've got to remember that there's a resurrection coming and the dead in Christ shall rise. And those who are here at the return that we just sang about will in the twinkling of an eye be transformed.

I wish I could preach all of 1 Corinthians 15. I might as well since I've got you here. The other thing I love about that is those who have already perished, they're with Jesus right now. And do you know what Revelation, Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15 says they're doing? They're actually pestering Jesus. They're going, "Finish this. . .Finish this. . .Finish this. . ." And He has to tell the martyrs, "Not yet. . .Not yet. . .Not yet. . ." And the Scriptures tell us in Romans 8 that even creation right now is groaning, "Finish this. . .Finish this. . .Make all things new. . .End this. . ." And we likewise inwardly groan, eagerly awaiting our full adoption as sons.

Yeah, we remember the resurrection. It's why we do really stupid things like go into places to tell people of the good news of the gospel knowing that they're probably going to kill us for doing it. Now we probably haven't done that, but a great deal of people have. And everybody goes, "Oh, how irresponsible!" It is irresponsible. . .if there's not a resurrection. So we have the confidence of knowing that, by the preaching of the Word or the shedding of our blood, the gospel goes forward. Because there is a resurrection, and we don't forget it. In fact, Paul goes so far as to say, "If there's not a resurrection, we are to be pitied above all men" (1 Corinthians 15:19). So we remember the goodness and might of God historically and biblically, but we also remember that there is a resurrection coming.

Now listen to this one. This one is very intriguing. Ephesians 2:11-12 says this, "Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." This is a strange thing for him to tell us to remember. Let me translate it for you. "Remember that you're not a Jew." Isn't that what he just said? "You remember that at one time you were outside of the covenant promises, you were outside of the circumcision." He's saying, "You remember that you're not a Jew." Let me explain this. When he's writing to the church at Ephesus, Ephesus was one of those places that was composed mainly of Gentile converts. So when they're Gentile converts, they're hearing the good news of Jesus Christ outside of the context of all God had done in the Old Testament to launch the

Messiah into the world. So he's telling to remember that they're a part of something much, much, much bigger and historic than they can fathom.

So here at the Village, what I'm always trying to do is take you back to the metanarrative. In fact, I'll move my stand and stand over here and go, "A Creator God created all things," and then literally move a step over and I'll say, "And then the fall occurred and that breaks everything so now we're isolated from God. But then God comes to a man named Abram and tells him, 'I'm going to create a people, and through that line I'm going to raise up a Messiah. And through that Messiah, I'm going to reconcile all things to Myself and all nations of earth will be blessed because of it.' And then it just moves down from Abram and from there we just see it start to take place. You've got God giving the Law to Moses. He gives the Law to Moses not so that we would be perfect but to reveal to us that we cannot be perfect. He gives the Law as the first blow to destroy and kill religion. It becomes evident that they cannot obey the Law, so He gives them a sacrificial system to show that God is righteous and that sin will need to be atoned for, innocent blood will have to be shed to cover (propitiation) and then the sin will have to be taken away (expiation). And the whole sacrificial system is built around communicating to Israel that their sin costs. All the Prophets testify to this, all the Psalms testify to this. Christ shows up and says, 'I am He.' He lives the perfect righteous life that was imparted or imputed to you and me, and He dies our death on the cross. All of your sin, every bit of it, past, present and future, is nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ with Christ. God makes Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. We become the righteousness of God, and He becomes our sin, dies and is resurrected. He ascends, makes intercession for us, sends the Holy Spirit and we become not only beneficiaries of the cross but agents of it."

And this is the way we live our lives. And if you miss this, if you forget this, if you get outside of this, then Christianity gets very, very, very goofy and sectarian. Do you understand what I mean by sectarian? We would draw and go, "This is our team, and we've got to stay away from the sinners because they might give us the sins." And this is what happens when you don't understand the metanarrative. You become non-missional, non-engaging and you avoid people that are different than you and walk around with a self-righteous, judgmental spirit. Because you don't understand that you've been given a life to serve and sacrifice for them, not to avoid them. You don't grasp that because you don't grasp the metanarrative, what your life is about.

And then, this is just my opinion. I think it is a goofy thing that so many Christian men can get so emotionally distraught over how their football team does. That's just confusing to me. It's confusing that you can enter into an emotional downward spiral because your boy threw three interceptions. That blows my mind. Now enjoy sports, be disappointed that your quarterback can't throw to the right jersey. There's nothing wrong with those things, but for you to be emotionally affected, something's wrong with you. That's idolatry. That's weird. That's immaturity at best. And if you think you can argue otherwise, I swear I will clear time off my schedule so you can sit down and explain to me how it is a masculine, mature thing for you to emotionally melt down on whether or not a 22 year old boy catches a pass from a 26 year old boy.

So what's happened? I think you were created by God for a ferocious, epic drama, and instead you've replaced it with some ridiculous game, whether that be football, whether that be business, whether that be some sort of external, false, "look at how successful I am" suburban death trap. But all you reveal in those moments is that you don't understand what you're caught up on. You see, work just becomes work and play just becomes play. And women aren't any better. It's just not football for them. It may be some other weird romantic notions. But it's idolatry. Our life has one purpose: the name and renown of Jesus Christ. Your money, your job, your house, your family, your children, your hobbies, your everything is about the gospel of Jesus Christ and God reconciling all things to Himself. The man who understands this lives out the epic. Those who don't get bored, and what they do is pay \$9.00 to go watch epics on movies, and then they daydream about how cool it would be to paint their face blue and wear a kilt. Can I just be straight up with you? You're

the nobleman, you're not Braveheart. The man who gets the metanarrative lives life intentionally. So Paul tells the church at Ephesus, "Don't forget. Don't forget what you're caught up on. Don't forget that God's been doing this thing a long, long time and that you have a part to play in pushing it forward. Play your part well. Don't forget.

Okay, let's do one more. 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, this is where you are. "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when 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." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." So yes, remember the wondrous deeds of God, remember the future resurrection, remember the metanarrative and what we're caught up in, but we'll end tonight like this. But above all and in all and through all, remember the cross. For without it, you no longer have Christianity. Somebody sent me a book called *The Crossless Christianity*. It was a critique on American Evangelicalism. I understand where he was going, but the title doesn't make any sense. Because if there's no cross in it, it's no longer Christianity. Without the blood-splattered, wrath-absorbing cross of Jesus Christ, you no longer have our faith. All you're left with is outside-in religion that we have nothing but 2000 years of evidence that says does not work. So over and over again, Paul is going to say, "Remember the cross. . .Remember the cross. . .Remember the cross. . ." He'll even say, "It's of first importance. Don't forget the cross" (1 Corinthians 15:3). If you forget the cross, all you have to go back to is the sacrificial system that's not going to work. The book of Hebrews says that the problem with outside-in religion is you're continually making sacrifices, like it just never ends. You're never able to be perfect, so you're always in a state of penance. So Christ comes and pays once and for all and thus shuts down the altar. In fact, Hebrews says it clearly, "He is no longer taking any offerings for sin." Paid in full. He did it.

And so we remember the cross, we celebrate the cross, we rejoice in the cross. Do you know what keeps us from being proud people? The cross. So we're an interesting dynamic because we are horrific, wicked sinners so horrific and so wicked that Christ had to die for us, and at the same time we are so loved by God that Christ was glad to do it. So we don't walk with a swagger, but we don't snivel either. The cross is constantly before us, constantly in our heads, constantly in our hearts. When it's not and you stumble about, you will run from Him and not to Him. If you understand that it was His sacrifice that brought you into the kingdom, it was His sacrifice that gives your right standing before God, when you stumble and fall, you can approach the throne of grace with confidence because you know it wasn't your merit that got in to begin with. If you forget the cross, when you stumble, you'll run. You'll run off with the intent of cleaning yourself up so that you can come back. The problem is that just doesn't work very well. And so the life of the mind is this unbelievably important piece of our sanctification. Like what do you think about when you get up in the morning? What do you think about as you walk through the day with the mercies of God lavished out upon you? Do you often think of the imperishable replacing the perishable? Do you get what you're caught up in? Is the cross at the forefront of your understanding of your relationship with God?

So tonight across all 14 services, it's been this exercise of trying to remember. So people have gotten in the water and they've shared their story. Either they've said, "I've had no background in church, and Christ just came after me and snatched me" or, "I grew up in church and Christ snatched me up in the middle of church." They've shared these testimonies in the hopes that it would resonate with you and that you would be reminded of how God saved you. They were baptized in the water. That water is not magical. It came out of the faucet. It's Highland Village water. . . which is better than Grapevine water, which tastes like dirt. This is not magical water; it's just good water. And they were buried with Christ. It's a symbolic act of obedience that says, "I died with Jesus Christ. My sins, my shortcomings, my failures died with Him and I've been raised to walk in the newness of life, I have been raised to walk in the righteousness of Christ that He lived and is imparted to me." And then tonight, I'm trying to recall out of the Scriptures there mercies of God on your life, the hope we have in the resurrection, what you find your life caught up in and then lastly the cross of Christ.

We're trying to help you remember. And then we end tonight by celebrating the Lord's Supper. We end tonight by taking bread and juice and remembering the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. "Father, I thank You for these men and women. Thank You for tonight. I pray for the life of our mind. I pray that we might remember and remember well what You have done, who You are, what our future holds." Let us just take a few seconds to reflect on Him, to think on Him. Maybe we could just take the next second or two to thank God for the mercies shown to you. Maybe it's been a long time since you thought about how good God has been to you. Some of you have struggled as of late and haven't even thought that maybe God is doing you good in your struggle. Maybe you're just a bit exhausted with the fight right now. Maybe we could take some time thinking of a renewed hope in the resurrection in the coming day where all things are made new. Maybe you really just struggle with a great deal of self hate, a hard time forgiving yourself, a hard time letting go. "Holy Spirit, I just pray that You would minister deeply to us in these next few moments, that You would stir up our minds toward you, where we would be without You, where would be without the millions of little mercies You've shown to us. We pray that You would heal and repair, convict and lead to repentance those You love. Help us. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen."

The Scriptures tell us that on the night Jesus was arrested, He took the bread and He broke it. And He said, "This is My body, broken for you." Now He's saying that to a room of men who are horribly imperfect, were they not? There have been several times in my life before my conversion to Christ that I did something that I never thought I would do, and the moment I was done, I felt shame, guilt and the weight of just how wicked I really am. And that's not something I was aware of a lot back then, but there were just these moments where I felt unclean. And in this moment, Christ says, "This is My body, broken for you. I'm paying for that. Where I go next pays for that. There's no longer judgment coming for it. I'm paying it in full." And He says, "This is My body, broken for you. Don't forget it. Do this in remembrance of Me."

After they had eaten dinner, He took the cup, blessed it and said, "This is the blood of the new covenant." Now if God gives me my 30 years with you, what I'm going to do is I would eventually like to do a whole sermon series built around this idea of the new covenant vs. the old covenant. But He takes the cup and says, "This is the blood of the new covenant. As long as you gather and drink, do this in remembrance of Me. Don't forget that My blood pays the bill. Don't forget it. Don't run back to religion. I'm putting to death the altar with its many sacrifices once and for all. Once and for all, sins are paid for. Don't forget. Do this in remembrance of Me."

Now in the Gospels, if you'll read the story, Jesus drinks the wine with them and then He says, "The next time we drink together, we'll be in My kingdom." So He says, "Hey, we are going to drink together again, but it's not going to be until all things have been made new." So in essence, He says that there's going to be a day where you and I, in physical, imperishable bodies, with some sort of glass in our hands, with real wine, in the new heaven and new earth, we will clink our glasses, what we know in part, we will know in full and there will be nothing hidden. There will be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more disease. Death will have finally lost its sting and will have no victory. And we will rule and we will reign with Him forever. And so we end tonight thinking on that and dwelling on that, being reminded of that, celebrating that that day is coming and that we are about an hour and a half closer now than when we came in tonight.

"And so Father, we thank You that there is a day coming. And tonight, maybe even just for this moment, we join with the saints who are already with You, we join with the martyrs who sit under Your throne and we join with creation, groaning to finish this once and for all. We agree with our brother John, come quickly, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Restore all things, make all things new. Come and finish what You started. Come and finish once and for all. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen."