

Sermon- Remember your Journey

Scripture: Deut 8: 10-18, Heb 10:32-36

Sunday, March 12, 2017

As we continue our journey into the Lenten season, we want to take the opportunity to go deeper into our spiritual lives and explore the riches we can find there. There are many spiritual disciplines that can aid us in this exploration, pray, fasting, journaling, Bible Study, meditation and many many areas. Today, I want to focus on the discipline of “remembering”. As you look at the Deut 8 passage and even the Hebrews 10 passage, there is a phrase I want to draw your attention to. It is “remember the Lord your God”. Remember the Lord your God. In the Old Testament, the great Exodus event is summarized in one phrase, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt” and this phrase is repeated in Duet 5:6, Duet 7:8, in the book of Lev 26:13, Ps 81:10, Hos 13:4. Then when you go into the New Testament, God’s rescue from Egypt is rehearsed by Stephen in Acts 7, just before he is stoned, it is talked about many times in the book of Hebrews and even once in the tiny one chapter book of Jude. You see what these spiritual leaders were doing is reminding the people of who God is why reminding of what God had done for them.

So let me very briefly, summarize the whole encounter of Yahweh with his people. It really begins with God first getting the attention of Moses in the burning bush. Moses was a simple Shephard minding his own business and God comes to him in a supernatural way and gives him a supernatural assignment. The next thing that God does is, he uses Moses to liberate his people from Egyptian slavery in the most spectacular way possible. Then after liberating His people, He leads them on a spiritual journey that takes them to spiritual highs when God reveals His presence in a way that is so awesome that it makes the mountains jump and skip like a lamb. And He takes his people through the very dark valleys,

where literally 10's of thousands of people were killed for their disobedience overnight. But in the end in spite of it all the rebellion and disobedience he takes the nation of Israel into the promised land enabling them to experience great victories.

This much is unique to the nation of Israel. Now where you and I come into the picture is when Jesus Christ comes on the scene and takes this story of liberation from slavery for a specific group of people and broadens it so that if we are willing to put our trust in Jesus then He has promised to take us through a liberation from our bondage to sin and take us on an exciting journey into our own promised land, which will be the fully realized Kingdom of God. Here is the deal by friends, my bet is that most of you would have heard almost everything that I have shared with you today. But I am also betting, if you are anything like me that in spite of knowing, then the test you are in becomes intense all that knowing in your mind disappears. And we believers are reduced to jittery, panicky worry worts or sometimes even as a great writer called it, functional atheists. In other words even though we believe, we forget God and we forget our liberation and we forget our new identity.

So today, as we continue on our Lenten journey, I want to help you rekindle some memories. I want to start all the way back to your first burning bush moments. When was the first time you experienced something in your world that was your burning bush moment? What happened to you that made you sit up and say, this definitely is God speaking to me. Well, as you think about your burning bush moment, let me share with you a couple. When I was in middle school, I used to walk every evening to a tutor for one of the Indian languages. And one the way back and forth it used to be pitch dark in some spots on the road. And I used to look at the sky and it was a really intense dark sky and I could see the stars really clearly. And somehow the vastness of it is my burning bush. Say what you want about me but actually every one of those points of light

is literally a burning ball of fire and the closest point of light besides our sun and moon, the closest star to us, light would take more than 4 years to reach us. And if you ask about the furthest point in the universe, if you travelled at the speed of light, you would get there in 46.6 billion years. That is billion with a b. So looking up at the night sky for me is definitely a burning bush experience. But that was only part one. Because to qualify for a burning bush experience, you have to hear the burning bush call out your name. For me many years later, this time I was in my undergrad engineering years, I was maybe 19 or 20. I remember I was at an outdoor party in the evening and the sky was dark once again, but this time my head was full of images of the different gods that I was researching and I just was this image, that God who is outside the universe as we know it, this ball with a 46.6 billion light year radius was penetrated like a lightning strike with the cross of Jesus Christ and that lightning cross came right at me. That was when I heard the burning bush call my name. Do you remember your burning bush experience my friends. You might say, hey only pastors have experiences like that. I don't believe that. I believe, every Christ follower has amazing experiences. You just have to have eyes to see and when you recognize it, you can never forget that. In fact you keep the memory alive by sharing it. Remember your burning bush experience.

But the burning bush experience is only the begin. The next comes the liberation experience. Do you remember when the Lord Jesus Christ took you out of your Egypt? Out of your bondage to sin. For me, overcoming sin has been a graduate experience. I can tell you that there are things that had a hold of me, that do not have any power over me now. Did it happen overnight? Not in my case. But I know others who overcame addictions to all kinds of things overnight. Well, here is the important thing though. Whether gradual or overnight, it is just amazing when you feel that something that had you enslaved has no power over you. And

that frees you up to really follow what God wants you to do. Do you remember your liberation from Egypt?

Our faith journey does not stop with the liberation though. It continues with many mountain top experiences and deep valleys. I remember one of my first students who came to Christ, had this amazing experience where she could feel a very real presence of God and she prayed and stayed with God all night praying. Another friend of mine could feel the whole room flooded with light. A mountaintop experience could be when you really felt God's presence in worship in a special way or when scripture came alive for you or your prayer time was just deeply moving. Do you still remember your mountain top experiences?

You know if you are walking with God you are going to go through some pretty dark valleys as well. You know why? Because if you are walking with God, doing what he wants you to do and making God known to others, you are going to have a pretty big bulleye on your back. Anybody here have valley experiences in your life? You know, you need to remember your valley experiences too. Because God was there with you walking with you through the valley, so that one day, you were at a table celebrating with God's anointing rolling down your face, while your enemy was looking on realizing that he was a loser. Remember your valley experiences my friends because it is in the valley that you really know how real God is. Do you remember your valley experience?

Now why am I asking you to remember all these experiences? Your burning bush moments and your liberation moments and your mountain top experiences and your valleys. Because the world that we are in will try its best to distract you and make you forget the incredible journey that God has taken you on. You know I used to read books about the heroes of the faith, and think, how come they have all these incredible experiences. I prayed hard to God and told God, I don't want

to be an also ran Christian. If I am following the same God that the folks in the Bible were following and even the present day faith heroes, then I too should be able to experience the same level of intensity that they experienced. I told God, if I am following the same God as all those amazing people, then I want to follow you like I am supposed to and I want you to give me experiences that are the real deal. And he started giving me real exciting experiences. I just had to have eyes to see what He is doing and share with others so that I never forget. You just have to spend this time, remembering your journey in Christ.

And when you remember your incredible journey following our Great Shepherd, two things will happen my friends. The first thing that happens is that you go through the next valley, you will not be paralyzed with fear because you will remember how God took you through the last valley and you can tell the enemy, just watch what my God is going to do, God is going to prepare a celebration for me while you get to watch and internalize the fact that you lost again!

Remembering God's past faithfulness helps us to get through today's dark valleys.

But remembering our journey's helps is in one more way. You see our spiritual ancestors Abraham and Sarah had an incredible life of walking with God. But, when they were old and advanced in years, God was still not done with them. There were still more promises to fulfill and new things to happen. Lamentations 2:22-23 puts it this way, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness." Remember the incredible journey that God has taken you through my friends, because God is not done with you yet. He has more loving to be, more mercies to offer. In fact, if you have learnt anything about God all these years, it is that he is always up to a new thing. Yes my friends, it does not matter, where you are in life's journey, look back and jog your memories of all the amazing things God has done in your life, because our Lord is about to do something new. And you will only be equipped for tomorrow's journey, if you hold

the lessons from yesterday's journey close to your heart. If you are able, join me in this chorus, The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. New every morning. Great is thy faithfulness of Lord. Great is Thy faithfulness.

Let us pray.