

Remembering

By Dean Kelly

Memory is such an interesting thing. I can recall events that happened 35 years ago or more, and cannot remember what I said five minutes ago. Don't ask me what I was doing yesterday, but ask me what I was doing on particular days over the last 36 years, and there are some I can recall with extreme clarity. I walk from the bedroom to the kitchen, and in that 10 seconds will forget why I came. I will be in the shower and realize my hair is wet – and can't remember if I have used shampoo yet. I know – it is old age creeping up on me!

What we remember is significant. It can be significant if we forget things that are important to remember. It can also be significant if we remember things we should forget. Sometimes we forget what is really important. We get so caught up in the motions and actions of our lives that the truly important things slip our memories. On the other hand, sometimes we dwell on and remember things that need to be forgotten. One phrase used by Paul concerning the nature of love in 1 Corinthians 13:5 is well translated (believe it or not) in the NIV: “it keeps no record of wrongs.” Love does not keep a ledger book of transgressions against it by the one loved.

Our memories are, indeed, very faulty. I think some looks at “remembering” from a biblical perspective might be fruitful.

We Need God to Remember – and Forget

The great king and prophet, and man after God's own heart, penned these words: “Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD” (Psalm 25:7). We are dependent upon God's perfect memory. Our memories, even those of young folks, are at best faulty and sometimes just plain bad. David's requests to God were that God both forget and remember. He wanted God to remember him, in the sense of asking for God's providential care for Him. We need to recognize our need for and dependence upon God. We must know that we cannot make it without Him. David also asked God to forget the sins of his youth. David committed the “worst” of the catalog of sins in his encounter with and subsequent actions concerning his relationship with Bathsheba. David had absolutely no hope if God kept that sin in his memory; all he could face would be destruction and punishment. David was dependent upon God's perfect memory, which includes the perfect ability to forget. Of course, we are all also dependent upon that.

When We Submit Ourselves to God's New Covenant – He Will Forget

None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Hebrews 8:11-12). When you read the context of Hebrews 8,

you see that the inspired writer was explaining the need for a new covenant, a new agreement and a new law to which we must adhere, taking away the old one and replacing it with a better one. When we allow that to be written in our hearts, we will put away unrighteousness and give ourselves in service to God (i.e., we will submit to the new law). When we do that, then, God says He will be merciful and forget our sins and evil deeds. That promise of forgetting is dependent upon our reception of His new covenant and subsequent submission to it. We cannot do a single thing on our own or of our own volition by which we can bring God to forget our sins. Only when we submit to Him and allow the blood of Jesus to wash away our sins, through our obedience to the Gospel in response to His saving grace He has extended to us (Titus 2:11), will God's perfect ability to forget be applied to us.

We Must Always Remember the Name of the Lord Our God

From the pen of a mighty warrior come these words: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7). Sometimes, we think we can handle life ourselves. Sometimes, we put our trust in frail humans, whose memories and strength are weak like ours. Sometimes, we put our trust in the things that surround us. In the good times, we forget about God because things are going well. In the bad times, we try to tackle things on our own. We tend to forget about God. David had fought many battles. The song that touched of the jealousy in Saul's heart said, basically, "Saul has killed his hundreds, but David has killed his thousands." David had felled the giant Goliath with a stone and with great skill. Yet, David understood that the greatest weapons, swiftest horses, strongest chariots would all fail. The only hope for all of us is when we remember the name of the Lord our God! We all have memory problems. They get worse as we get older. Let us never forget, in our worst moments of memory, to remember the name of the Lord. May He forget your sinfulness and remember you in His great providence.

I was going to say something else, but I forgot what it was! Oh well, just some thoughts for your consideration.