

“Forget About It” – Pr Jim Sprenkle – Thanksgiving Eve November 27, 2024

- I. **Deuteronomy 8:11-18** – previously read
- II. **In 1863 President Lincoln designated April 30th** as a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer.
 - a. Let me read part of his proclamation on that day:
 - i. “It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, who owe their dependence upon the overruling power of God, // to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, // yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, // and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by a history // that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord. // The awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land // may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, // to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people. // Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become // too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, // too proud to pray to the God that made us. // We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power // as no other nation has grown, but we have forgotten God.”¹ ... // But we have forgotten God.
 - b. Our reading in Deuteronomy this evening reminds us to remember the Lord our God as we receive His ongoing blessings.
 - i. However, something is always tied to the idea of remembering – like when we hear the Third Commandment, “Remember the sabbath day by keeping it holy.” (Exodus 20:8)
 1. I’m pretty sure God wasn’t talking about taking a moment to think about the day of rest, then going about our business.
 2. Kind of like setting your alarm for church on Sunday morning, and when it goes off you remember church is starting soon and you go back to sleep.
 3. No, remembering the Third Commandment is to stop or halt from work for a period of time, and take some time to gladly hear and learn God’s Word to strengthen us spiritually too.
 - ii. At the beginning of our reading in Deuteronomy it says something similar – but in reverse: “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.” (v 11)
 1. The same idea applies here, as we are obedient to God’s will, and our lives reflect the love we have for Him by living for Him.
 2. Essentially, the remembering or not forgetting are ways to say that we live for God because He gives us everything.
 - c. The Lord provides for our everything.

- i. Some of things God provides is listed in our reading: food, houses, animals, and money.
- ii. He is also responsible for our redemption and ongoing relationship with Him – back then it included the great deliverance from the Egyptians, but today we have received an even greater deliverance and redemption through Jesus.
- iii. There are also things we don't think much about that are a part of God's blessings to us: air, water, the sun and rain, and all things to sustain our lives.
 - 1. Everything about our earth, including its distance from the sun, is made to support us and help us live because of God's work.

III. **Yet, as sinful people, we have a tendency to forget about it.**

- a. We forget about God's work... about His deliverance... and about His care for our needs.
- b. We forget about thanking Him, praising Him, serving Him, and obeying Him.
- c. It doesn't take long to get so comfortable in our blessings that we forget about the one who is responsible for it all.
- d. Partly this is due to our pride... our lack of humility in recognizing the source of all goodness... but it is also sin's nature to turn inward.
 - i. Augustine and Martin Luther and others used a Latin phrase to describe this phenomenon, *incurvatis en se*, to turn in on oneself.
 - ii. Not only does this mean we aren't looking to the needs of others, we are not looking to God and serving Him either.
 - iii. Again, verse 11 says, "Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His rules and His statutes."
 - 1. When we consider the most basic keeping of God's commandments, it's to love God and love our neighbor.
 - 2. Sin gets in the way of that on a constant basis, and we forget about what it means to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds... and we forget about loving our neighbor as ourselves.
- e. Sure, it's good to have days like Thanksgiving and other holidays that remind us to give thanks for all the blessings we have, but obeying God's will is an every day thing.
 - i. If we forget about God and His provision...
 - 1. We might hold tightly onto our wealth, never sharing it as a sign of trust in Him and a love toward others in need.
 - 2. We may develop a deep pride in our own accomplishments, never giving credit to God or other people who support us.
 - 3. We might even get so comfortable in what we build around us that we don't even think about God at all... we just forget about Him completely.

- f. The call from God to the Israelites, and to us on this day, is to always remember the one who blesses us as we thank, praise, serve, and obey Him.
 - i. Some people would call that a difficult thing to constantly give God the glory, but we know that God Himself makes it possible.

IV. **In His great love, our heavenly Father would never forget about us.**

- a. Just like the Israelites who were in complete bondage to their Egyptian masters... we were in complete bondage to sin.
 - i. Nothing could break the chains, except God's own Son, the Lamb of God.
 - ii. Jesus became the Passover Lamb that was sacrificed to set us free from certain death – "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)
- b. The free gift of God is Jesus, who saved us by grace... and gave us the Helper... the Holy Spirit.
 - i. As God claimed us through Jesus' rescue mission on the cross and in the empty tomb, He then gave us the ongoing help of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. We are able to give God the glory... to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him in our daily lives because the Holy Spirit is always helping us.
- c. So, as we love God and love our neighbor each day, we are remembering God who gave us all good things in our lives.
- d. For many of us, tomorrow is a special reminder of all our blessings, but the greatest blessing of all is the source of those blessings – our God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

¹ Source: Richard Halverson, "The Question Facing Us," Preaching Today, Tape 46