

THE HEART THAT REMEMBERS – the key to Joyful service

My dear Brethren and sisters

Hebrew and English are very different languages, Hebrew has no vowels in its alphabet . With Hebrew you read from right to left

With Hebrew you start a book at the back and read to the front

The Hebrew language has about 8000 words in its dictionary

The English language has about 100,000 words .

Therefore Hebrew words have to be much richer and more versatile than English words ..Often Hebrew words contain much more depth, sometimes they have genders attached , sometimes the same word can sometimes mean differing things in different contexts.

Most **vitaly some Hebrew words have subsequent actions implied in them .**

For example if we use the English word “remember” – we mean that something is stored for future use and we recall it. .For us It usually relates to a mental activity only ..like remembering times tables .

The same applies for the opposite English word “forget “

To forget= is to let slip a fact we once knew , to miss a commitment- like a husband forgetting pick up some milk on the way home as he promised -or we overlook something like our wedding anniversary (usually just a slip of memory

But to the Jewish mind “remembering” and “ forgetting” have much more meaningful applications than just a mental activity.

To the Hebrews these two words remembering and forgetting are powerful action words..because if you do remember – you respond and you do act..

Recall the great Jewish prayer ..”if I forget thee O Jerusalem” .No Jew ever forgot Jerusalem existed ..but they had to actively desire its restoration

To the Jew -Active forgetting happens when you choose to ignore what you do know or to ignore the past – **you choose to forget** and so do not act as you should

By deliberately forgetting or mentally burying what **you do know to be right** - you can justify acting in a perverse way.

God is the prime example of Active Remembering (Come to GEN 8

- Gen 8v1 ..God remembered Noah..Had God lost track of the only individual and his family left..? (ALMOST COMICAL) -it was time to act
- God had to ensure this 45000 tonne boat had to land softly on a flat piece of ground in the mountains
- Gen 19v29..God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of Sodom. Had God forgotten who Abraham was..?
- Gen 30v22..God **remembered** Rachel..at last she had stopped blaming others and prayed correctly..God **now** could reward her with the fruit of the womb.
- Later God **remembered** Israel groaning ..in Egypt - and moved mightily to extract them Exod 2v24, SEE ALSO 6v5 Sent Moses/plagues.

THIS RICH HEBREW WORD REMEMBER ...is so vital to our connection to God because it's the basis of our response

Remarkably – we find it 18 times ...here in Deuteronomy (cp to just 6 uses in Exodus /Numbers and Leviticus combined)

We recall- Deuteronomy is the second Law ..Not a new law , But a totally different way to look at the law -an enhancement ..a positive approach

Deuteronomy takes the same commandments as you find in Exodus , Leviticus and Numbers ...but now Moses restates some of them with emotions, and motives and reasons attached to them

Now Instead of dire consequences for disobedience , and lots of **Thou shalt nots** ..Moses now introduces motives and love to keep the law – Moses now talks largely in positive outcomes instead of penalties..

PP We also find some very vital qualitative words are added to THE LAW ..like the word Heart 48x CONSIDER, UNDERSTAND, HEARKEN, LOVE GOD, THIS DAY and today's theme word REMEMBER

So today as we have come to remember our salvation in Christ..ets briefly look at some of the places in Deuteronomy where this key word REMEMBER occurs

Each REMEMBER context has a lesson for us ..some easy to see the exhortation contained for us ..others take a little more thought ..

REMEMBERING EXAMPLES

1. **Deut 25v17 Remember what Amalek did** ..murdering the stragglers in the wilderness , showing no mercy..the world still picks off those who fail to keep close contact with the ecclesia .Even when we feel weary and faint..we must be “faint yet pursuing” ..We should should resent this subtle indoctrination from this evil world that kills of faith in those we once walked shoulder to shoulder with ?
 2. **24v9 Remember Miriam’s rebellion** and how God reacted to brazen challenges to his roles and appointments (same anger with Korah)
 3. Ecclesial life is not the place for ambition, rights and pride- Nor is it the place for the demanding of absolute equality . Whatever our roles - Let us serve with humility so that God can exalt us in due time
 4. **ANOTHER Remember...8v18 Dangers of prosperity** – there is real danger of feeling no need for God (being all financially secure and fully insured) – this is a great concern for us in our very materialistic age
1. **32v7 Remember the days of old** – and ask the experienced people ..listen to them
 - **It is always wise** to ask the elders with experience and learn from them. This is something the educated rising generations are often reluctant to do. Many of us oldies feel marginalised by the incredible technological revolution and fast paced age we live in.....
 - **Young people are expert in knowing how to quickly find information** **But godly** knowledge and divine wisdom cannot be found on Google- especially spiritual thinking.. it is often remarked “that experience is the best teacher – but the school fees are high”
 - **I am alarmed by the way many young people today tend to shape their values and conclusions from ill-informed facebook and chat room**

discussions. Often the smartest comment wins ..not always the exact one ..and so many unscriptural opinions are projected into cyberspace

5. There is no substitute for Godly experience and a lifetime of learning in the Truth ..We do well to seek the wisdom from the hard won conclusions of life (some of it learnt by bitter mistakes)

NOW LETS LOOK AT THE MOST COMMON REASON TO REMEMBER THAT ISRAEL WERE GIVEN BY GOD

- the rescue from Egyptian slavery and darkness

1. **5v15 Servants had to have the Sabbath off too –why?-remember your time in Egypt.** We must never forget that we were all once slaves to sin. Let us show compassion and ensure treat others with care and consideration. Whatever their social or financial status in this life they were one before God and worshipped together
2. **-The same reason is found in 16v12 –This was about keeping the Feast of Pentecost ..n unspecified freewill offering made.. see v10**
3. **The context here is care for the poor by joyfully bringing the firstfruits and tithes to share . v11**
4. **V10- Note giving with JOY was only possible if one recalled the magnitude of God’s blessings and goodness (otherwise it would just be resented as merely hated taxation)**

Note- -there is a another qualitative word about tithing which Moses inserts in Deuteronomy 14 that we should notice - Lets Look at 14v22 (truly tithe)

This is a prime example of the Deuteronomy approach

This indicates that God instituted a self-assessing taxation process..no auditors would come –only God would know your integrity or otherwise in this matter

How do we go ? – even in our government taxation system where fines can be imposed for cheating...do we realise that though we

might cheat the law..or use every legal loophole ..We never fool God . Honesty does matter to Him.

NOTE 26v11 When donating the Firstfruits (note- there was no inspection done of how much firstfruits one actually gave).., But in giving it **the only sentiment that was acceptable was to rejoice** in what God had given us in life- and happily donate for the less fortunate and the keep of the Levites and the poor

v5-9 NOTE THE SPEECH THEY MADE as they brought the firstfruits to God
(Recalled Jacob went out with nothing- came back hugely blessed)

Based on Jacob...who went out with just a staff ...came back with huge flocks (the goodwill present to Esau was 583 animals)

Remembered the nations deliverance from Egypt v8 /the land

But imagine most Jews grudgingly sorting their firstfruits -Not easy being self regulated (hard decisions had to be made)

See 26v11 Giving back to God..should be a cause for rejoicing

28v47 In midst of the terrible cursings that hung over the Jews..
God explains it was not just failing to obey commandments grudgingly and legalistically that mattered to him ..there needed to be a joyful and appreciative attitude – reflecting that **we have never forgotten** how much God has given us.

How do we render the firstfruits to God today.? Prov 3v9

(Pro 3:9) Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase

THIS REMEMBERING THEIR DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT BECAME THE BASIS FOR SO MANY EXAMPLES OF GENEROSITY and care ...

2. **24v18 ...Absolutely no oppression of the powerless was allowed – Remember** you were once badly treated in Egypt ..do unto others as you would be treated .Things you think are not important- may matter a lot to others – especially if someone has one task they love to do or field of service and you take it away or despise it.

3. EXAMPLES OF ACTIVE REMEMBERING

4. **Note 24v14** The day laborer – Cant get regular work..family goes hungry for days ..then he gets a days work..desperate for that days wage (hungry family waiting) But at the end of the day the Rich man goes home to his sumptuous meal.. but forgets to pay the day laborer . That poor man has to go home and face an angry wife .. the sad faces of hungry , crying children.

5. **Look at the emotions Moses adds here (see how he paints a graphic picture of this family) .**

6. **This is repeating the regulation found in Lev 19v13 Where God just states the law..”the wages of that is hired shall not abide with thee till the morning.”**

7. Now Moses expands that law- and we get the sense of appreciating the other persons perspective . And we see how angry God is about thoughtless people who fail to see the perspective of the less fortunate-those with less opportunity

8. We don't have day laborers , but we need to appreciate that others have different needs and priorities. Put yourselves in their shoes.

9. **24v22 For the same reason they must Leave gleanings on the trees /vines .and corners of their fields...because we do remember that we were once delivered by God's generous hand –fully provided for . But how much corner would you leave ..how many olives left on you tree . Boaz had that generous spirit for Ruth and others that God desired to see**

THE LAW ALSO PRESCRIBED THOUGHTFUL CARE FOR THE POOR AND SERVANTS

Lets get one thing clear first about servants in the LAW
...God did NOT encourage or permit slavery like the cruel slave trade that prevailed in America.

However often Jews got into debt (perhaps by misfortune ,illness or bad choices)or incurred fines for crimes and had to work the debt off. Other times captives taken from distant cities (and the Gibeonites) were allowed to live , providing they worked by assisting Israelites with their farms. Many of these captives became converts and married Israelites.

- We noted Hired servants were included in much of the worship life of the family – they were treated as spiritual equals . See 5v15 Servants also kept the Sabbath – did not work that day

Now Note Deuteronomy 15 .. This chapter contains so many concepts totally foreign and impossible to a legal mind.

- We have here the Laws about providing for the poor and the releasing of Hebrew servants once their term of service had expired, or the year of the release came around... Also here we find instructions about giving or lending to the poor. Jesus said .will always be poor and needy this side of kingdom
- The Requirements here are so deliberately unspecific and are designed by God to test hearts
- This chapter must have so frustrated the legal minded thinkers.
- Note- several phrases here that defied legality. v7.”Not harden thy heart” “.Thou shalt not shut thine hand”

- Open wide v8. such open terms totally frustrated the LEGAL mind. "lend him sufficient?" What is sufficient ?
- And v9 "beware a wicked heart" ..failure to lend
- Strict warning here against a calculating spirit..v9 not an evil eye, not a grief to give ..(evil eye is always a stingy mean spirit)
- v10/v11- Note the "heart" must be generous (not grieved)
...and it **can only be so if it first appreciates** God's generosity
- 15v12 **Laws of release** -every 7th year all remaining debts of the Hebrews were cancelled. ..all Hebrew brethren who had been servants were freed.. could now go homethis in itself was an extremely generous provision
..there was always hope of new start in life after a business failure or disaster
- But in their absence their home farm had been neglected/ no herd while they worked elsewhere. So to ensure they could restart life properly ..they had to be provided for generously by their master
- See v13-14.."furnish him liberally" ..go and take whatever you want.../ Jews would say - Give me a number!....
- Instead God watched your motivation - How much gratitude do you feel to God v15 ..it should not seem hard..v18..Dont we ask God to bless us in so many ways in lifewell be generous to others at every opportunity
- Jews would have to fight our natural selfish justifications v18
- The decision depended on How much you appreciated God..

SO HOW DO WE READ THIS SECTION OF DEUTERONOMY

While this command about servants has no natural relevance to us (as we don't keep servants) ..However there are often situations where we need to be overly generous in our relations to the less fortunate

Do good unto all men, especially to those of the household of Faith.

It is so easy to say..well **if they had been more careful** with their money like me ...or look how they made a silly investment.... its so easy to justify doing nothing ... but do we ever think how often we

have let God down.. how often we have made dumb decisions and poor choices -how much we spend on our interests and pleasures

When we read in Moses about being gracious to debtors and generously forgiving others - we recall how Jesus talked of “forgiving as we hope to be forgiven;.. Our brotherhood can only survive because we move on from past offences and forgive the hurtful things done to us - and by us..– Always remembering how much God has forgiven and has blessed us with.

Paul said it well in Eph 4v31-32

*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

Ignore the chapter division (another example of one in wrong place)
EPHESIANS 5 v1-2 ..ESV Gk Mimics ..of God

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.
And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

13/ **See 9v27 Moses prayer**..remember Abraham and forgive this people . We pray God will still include us in the fulfillment of his great and precious promises –despite our failings ..

Does God forget our sins ?..No- He literally cant do that ..but He chooses not to act on them ..to no longer hold us guilty of them.

PP. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. (Psa 103:10-12)

Do we remember other peoples sins ..can we really forgive and forget?

Not entirely - some hurts are so deep we will never completely block them out of our memory ..**but we must choose to never retaliate nor to react on the offence we have suffered , or to ever use their failings against them.**

One sure way is to stop recounting them to others

To be really Christlike is never to render railing for railing, to render blessing for cursing..and we must sincerely pray that God will forgive the offender...even those who spitefully use us .

TRUE Forgetting is to never rejoice at their subsequent misfortunes ...We must forget the past and move forward/ no grudges /no wariness ..always remain conscious of how much we have needed forgiveness ourselves .

Another REMEMBER is found in the very context our Lord used to fight his temptation in the wilderness – come to Deut 8v1-2

14/ Thou shalt remember all the way

- **8v2 Remember all the way** you have come ... Israel were encouraged to reflect on the whole wilderness journey of 40 years
- So should we reflect on our pilgrimage ..What have we learnt from God's chastening hand since our baptism ?.
- What have we gained spiritually from our failures , our struggles, our moments of success.
- Surely above all..we have learnt the most vital lesson v3 .."that only God's Word matters".

LETS REFLECT TODAY ON OUR JOURNEY SO FAR...

1. We also have had a great deliverance from Egypt-REDEEMED FROM bondage and darkness/Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us
1. **Remember all the way..**We have been surrounded by **daily blessings** through the wilderness of life , small miracles every day that are often unnoticed...(note-v4 God did not mention the most dramatic miracles here -such as quails, Amalek,Korah destruction, MT Sinai shaking etc
2. Rather the almost mundane things like clothes not wearing out ...Things focussed them **on the daily constant care..** and in v3 **especially the amazing provision of the manna every day..**

3. God's Word has always been made available to us –without fear of persecution here .Plenty of sound exposition at our fingertips
 - Even the tribulations of life v5 should be accounted as long term blessings from God..that we might be ultimately inherit the land of promise .
 - Moses introduces another exhortational word here ..v5 **Consider** in thine heart ..Even in adversity- be thankful God is chastening us for our ultimate good.

SO WE COME TO REMEMBER THE DECLARATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS .

Note latter part of 16v3 - We come every Sunday to remember Christ our Passover- for us it must be more than a ritual . We need to live what we come to remember. Paul talked of “dying daily’ and being “alive unto Christ’

Keep the Passover v1- Keep is another a very expansive and rich Hebrew word ..This Passover feast not just a mindless ritual..we must always intelligently remember the sacrifice that gave us deliverance from slavery and death in the land of darkness . the whole process was designed to be was thought provoking

Note ..first Passover was in each individual home in Egypt ..now it became a UNITED national service at Jerusalem. ..v5-6

NOTE v3 ...The Passover was kept in **haste-** (another unique word- only 3 times in OT (twice in ref to Passover) ..There was to be always a sense of imminent departure -we keep **this remembrance until he come and we finally leave Egypt and mortality behind at last.**

- When we meet remember Christ...what do **we remember?**
- Let us consider God's incredible Love to us..
- Is our remembering the active kind –that leads to active response .
- Was there anything about Jesus that doesn't teach wholehearted and devoted service to the eternal welfare of others ?
- What is our attitude to ecclesial service, involvement, supporting each other ?

- Sometimes you hear people say..the only meeting we are **commanded to attend** is the memorial meeting
 - And that is true..if you want to live by law and be a legalist . go for it
 - But what about giving joyful service and generous care for others .
 - What about scriptures describing those who were ‘addicted to the ministry’..”fellowhelpers to the Truth “
 - WE are exhorted about “ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..”
 - Paul REMEMBERED the words of Jesus- a saying which become his driving motto in life ..”it is more blessed to give than to receive’..
 - These exhortations are not values that can be measured in numbers – they are all about a wholehearted devotion to God by serving his people
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- AS WE NOW REMEMBER - Let us respond be imitating the Great and Terrible God and His beloved Son
 - They both loved and cared for the widow , the poor , the lost sheep, and the stranger .
 - Our God has is still the same all powerful and holy God.
 - His law is holy just and good

SO LET US REMEMBER ALL THE WAY WE HAVE COME...and NOW WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US IN CHRIST

- **1Co 15:58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.**

Thanks so much for having us ..it has been so nice to renew many old acquaintances and make new ones.

WE TRUST we might all read God's law with eyes that see his kindness, his generosity , his holiness, his care for his chosen people....and not let the blasphemous spirit and vicious criticisms of the new atheists affect our minds.

JUST 3 SCRIPTURES THAT COMMENT ...on the intended impact of THE HOLY JUST AND GOOD LAW

JEREMIAH 7

(Jer 7:4) Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, *are* these.

(Jer 7:5) For if ye throughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye throughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;

(Jer 7:6) *If* ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:

(Jer 7:7) Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

(Jer 7:21) Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh.

(Jer 7:22) For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices.

(Jer 7:23) But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.'

(Jer 7:24) But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.

PSALM 50 v7-16

Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God.

I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, *to have been* continually before me.

I will take no bullock out of thy house, *nor* he goats out of thy folds.

For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills.

I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.

If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

And to him ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

Perhaps Micah said it best

- ***"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?***
- ***Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"***
- ***He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?***

ANOTHER Remember is in 9v7 ..This time it is given lest we ever imagine that God's love is because we deserve it

It is not OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT MATTERS TO GOD .

Three times Moses says be sure we understand this .. 9v4, v5 v6

- It is God's righteousness and faithfulness that saves
- It is God's love that give the opportunity at eternal life
- **Instead of becoing Judaistic we must remain humble of mind .**
- And remember its God's righteousness that saves us.

THERE IS A DISTINCT SECTION FROM- From DEUT 9v7 to 10v11

Moses reminds them of their history during the last 38 years and how many times he had saved them by fervent prayers to God. See 9v18-19, and v22, v25-26 at Kadesh, and 10v10 .

- Moses is now talking to the new generations- 11v2 and v 7 (these are the children who were under 20 in Num 14 when faithless older generation was written off) – They are now about to go in to the Land - the oldest of them were now 58- most were less than that)
- Their last 38 years had been a history of continual failure –saved only by Moses and his mediatorship - that God had not justly destroyed them.
- We must also remain conscious of the lessons of past failures
- At best we are always unprofitable servants and prone to sin – let us never forget that God could justifiably have given up on us many a time ...that we have been so often unworthy of him..but that God has so continually forgiven us
- We are forgiven because our Mediator who has ascended on high ..the prophet "Like unto Moses" has brought us mercy - Our faith in Jesus Christ has constantly saved us

Because GOD has done great things for us .We have also made our covenant with God individually.....and we come to renew it weekly...