

Lest we Forget to Remember

For the church to forget to remember can be compared to the Crisis of Spiritual Alzheimer's in the People of God. The Biblical call to Remembrance in the Old Testament was told in the Book of Exodus about how God delivered the people from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 5:1; Deuteronomy 5:15, 15:15, and 16:3). The deliverance story in the New Testament narrative is of Jesus on the cross. How he delivered us from the bondage of sin. St Paul summarized it in this way; "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again (2 Corinthians 5:15).

The people in the Bible knew that the greatest danger to their identity and the community at large was communal forgetfulness of what God did. So, the daily medicine for their malady of forgetfulness was to tell and re-tell the story. For them, Remembrance was an act of covenant renewal for future generations; without it, the covenant will not be renewed. Through Remembrance, God had shown up and would show up again.

Thus, it is important for the church to remember always. Jesus says; "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Pastors and ministers today are called to be like the judges and prophets in the Bible, calling the people of God to remember how God did it. Because God did such and such and that is why we can be here today. Forgetting to remember is the spiritual Alzheimer's of the people of God.

On this Remembrance Day, we remember how the soldiers on the battle field did it with the help of God. For the great wars seen from the air in Flanders field until the wars were won, we are all called on this Remembrance Day, to remember lest we forget. The Armistice that ended the First World War and other wars can easily pass out of the memory of the living given that it is receding further into the past with few people left to "remember" it directly.

Thus, this call "to remember" is a call to remember the mighty work of God and to praise God for it. All through the Bible, Remembrance was more than individual recollection; Remembering was a communal activity about how the people encountered God and how God saved their Nation - covenant. The remembrance of the past works of God, which continues today in this world.

Today, we remember them for the scale of their sacrifice which must forever remain a fundamental part of our national consciousness. God did it through them. As we pray not to any longer be caught between the horror and the hard place, we remember them who gave their lives that we might live. We shall remember them. Lest we forget! "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old; Age shall not weary them, nor do the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them." To those who fought and lived, and those who fought and died. To those who gave much and those who gave all. We shall remember them!