

[Image] I don't know about you but I can tend to forget things. My wife told me that no one is more surprised than a husband hearing his wife's plans for the second time. This happened after I after her for probably the fifth time what her plans were because I forgot about. Now all of us forget things. But we especially forget things that we are apathetic about. If you come to talk to me about fishing or golf I will forget everything you have told me as soon as you walk away. Because I am utterly apathetic about those things. They do not interest me. But if you came to talk to me about my favorite fantasy author Brandon Sanderson, then I will probably remember every word of that conversation. Or if you talked to me about something I was really interested in then my memory is probably going to work. But we have a hard time remembering things we don't care about.

2. [Need] Unfortunately we are often apathetic not just about the things people tell us. We forget not just the things we don't care about, but we can forget things we wish we wouldn't. Sometimes we are even apathetic about remembering the things of God. The reformer Martin Luther told a member of his church that the reason he preached the gospel every single week was because they forgot it. We not only forget the gospel but all of the things of God. This is still true of us today. Our spiritual memories can be apathetic. Not that we don't have Bible verses memorized, but that we forget the primary truths of Scripture.

3. [Subject] This is why over 237 times the Bible commands us to "remember" something. Clearly there is a lot we should remember. But as we finish the book of Malachi this morning there is something he wants Israel to remember. This morning we will look at three things Malachi wants us to remember in Malachi 3:16-4:6
Remember an object, a time, and persons.

Point number 1 in your bulletins is the first thing we need to remember. We need to **Remember the book (3:16-18). Remember the book (3:16-18).**

The last verses bring Israel's attention to a book.

And the book is called **"a book of remembrance."**

It is both a book they should remember and a book about remembering.

Verse 16, **"Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name."**

Finally something wonderful happens.
Malachi has been a hard and harsh book.
The prophet has not held back on rebuking the spiritual apathy of his day.
But some people pay attention.
Some hear the prophets call and wanting.

But a remnant remains in the land.
And they fear the Lord.
Despite their apathy, a fire burns in their hearts for God.
And they speak with one another.

It appears that this speaking together is one of repentance.
They are telling each other that the prophets words are convicting.
They are telling each other that they want to turn from their sins.
They are telling each other that they want to bring the proper sacrifices.
They are telling each other that now they want to bring the full tithe.

And this is no idle talk.
It appears that God responds to their obedience.
"The Lord paid attention and heard them,"
It is not just their voices make their way to God's eardrums.
Because God hears everything.
But God hearing means that He does something.

It is like if you ask your spouse hand you the remote sitting beside them.
And they don't move.
They don't say anything.
So your next response would be, "Do you hear me?"
Because hearing is active.

Well, God does hear.

And He does something.

He pays attention **"and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name."**

Every single Israelite who fear God.

Each one that repented because of the prophet Malachi.

Every priest who stopped allowing false sacrifices.

All of their names were written down before God.

Each name was read aloud before the great heavenly host.

And there were recorded in a place of honor.

They were placed in a book that was bound.

Not like a book that sits on your shelf, or ones your grandchildren made.

This is a book written in heaven before the face of God.

How beautiful do you think that book looked?

Do you think it looked plain and ordinary?

Or do you think it would be a book any collector would love to have on their shelves?

And it goes into God's collection.

Because God remembers a great many things.

The records in heaven store everything.

Psalms 56:8 tells us **"You have kept count of my tossing; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?"**

All of our sleepless nights,

Every single tear you have ever cried,

They are all noticed and heard by God.

Revelation 20:12 tells us that one day all of the books will be opened.

The books that record everything we have ever said, thought, or done.

That sounds terrifying and should be.

So why would their names being in the book of remembrance be good news?

Because of verse 17, **"They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him."**

Their names are in the book because they belong to God.

They are his.

They are described as being His treasured possession.

Do you have a treasured possession?

Maybe yours is a family heirloom passed down through generations.

Maybe yours is something sentimental.

My treasured possession is a book.

It's a 1st edition of President Ulysses S. Grant's memoirs.

It's my favorite book I own and it sits beside my bed.

If I had to get rid of all my books but one, that would be the one I kept.

What is God's most treasured possession?

What is the things He would keep above all?

It's you.

It's people who put their faith in God.

People who live out that faith through their obedience.

And on the day of judgement when all the books are opened,

They will be spared.

"and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him."

God will spare those who have faith because He loves them.

Because through Christ's blood we have been adopted into the family.

Many people will be cast into the lake of fire, but not God's treasured possessions.

But how do we know if we are God's treasured possession?

How do I know if my name is in that book?

Verse 18, **"Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him."**

God tells us that there is a way to distinguish between righteous and wicked people.

The primary way is not by what they say.

It isn't what they put their religious down as on facebook.

The primary way in Malachi 3 is **"one who serves God and one who does not serve Him."**

Those who are righteous serve God.

Their faith in Jesus is observable through their works.

They are distinguished by how they live.

If I stood outside Walmart and asked people whether or not they were Christians, I bet most people would say yes with their mouths.

But if I followed them for the rest of the week, would they act like it?

The question is what about us?

Do we serve God in our lives?

Have we given our lives to Jesus?

Some of you might need to remember this book because you know your name is not written in it.

You do not serve God.

You have never placed your faith in Jesus.

If that is you, then I want to invite you to Jesus.

Heed the ancient call of the prophets and the current call of the Holy Spirit.

Come embrace Jesus.

He loves you, He cares for you, He died for you.

He wants to save you from your sins.

Stop running from Him and come home.

All of us need to remember the book.
Because your name is written down somewhere.
And if you have put your faith in Christ.
If you have pleaded with Him for salvation and grace,
Then you have been forgiven.
Your name is not written in the book of remembrance but in the book of life.
It will never be erased.

As you go through your day Christian,
Remember the book.
Your name is written inside the book of life.
And it says you are Christ's prized possession.
A possession He was willing to die for.

Point number 2 is the second thing we need to remember. We need to **Remember the day (4:1-3). Remember the day (4:1-3).**

The day we are to remember is the day that is to come.
It is the day of judgment when Jesus appears.
The prophets often talk and warn about this day.
Just last week in chapter 3 Malachi warned about it.
And he does so again because they need to remember it.

Verse 1, **"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch."**

Behold is such a fun Old Testament word.
We don't use it much but it basically means "Hey look over there!"
Picture someone telling all the kids back in the nursery "behold a train is coming!" They're excited running to the window is the proper response.
So we are told "Behold the day is coming like a train."

Malachi uses a lot of fire metaphors to describe that day.
It will burn like the inside of a wood fire stove.
The arrogant, the evildoers, all of the wicked will be burned inside.

On that day they will all be set aflame.
And God says that **"it will leave them neither root nor branch."**
They will be completely dealt with.
God's justice is not some half measure.
It is not compromise.
It is not impure or corrupt.
God's justice is complete.
And His justice will completely remove wickedness and evil.

Not just as punishment for evil people.
But it is a purifying fire that renews the world.
God will remove all memory and trace of evil from our world.
There will be no stump to mark where evil once was.
No monuments raised in it's memory.
It will pass and fade like the snow.

We will do well to remember that day is coming.
And there is good news for this day in verse 2.
2 "But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. 3 And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts."

First, this is only good news for those who fear God's name.
Only for those who have put their faith in Christ will escape judgment.
But for them the day of judgment will bring healing.
Yesterday, Calvin my 4yo asked me, "Dad what would happen if I would touch the sun?"
And I told him it was so hot it would catch him on fire and burn him away.
But because we are far enough away from the sun it makes us warm.

That is a picture of that day.
For the unbeliever it will be as if they touched the sun.
For the Christian it will be like the rising of the sun after a dark winter night
And they will find healing.

What kind of healing can we expect on that day?

All of it.

We can expect physical healing.

Those of you with chronic pain will have it no more.

You will gain a glorified body that will work as God intended it to.

But we will also be healed mentally.

The parts of our minds that don't seem to work.

Your memory will no longer fail.

You will be sharp as you were on your best day only better.

And most importantly we will be healed spiritually.

Our sinful natures will be cured and purified.

There will be no part of us that wanders from the Lord.

No longer will we desire to do things that we don't want to do.

You won't lose your temper any more.

You will no longer struggle with doubt.

It will be so wonderful that we will all go **"You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall."**

Like a dog excited to finally get outside after weeks of snow.

Like a calf that has been cooped up all winter.

We will run, leap, and frolic with pure joy on that day.

Verse 3, **"And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts."**

I think this is less about us participating in that day.

I think this means that God will so remove wickedness and sin from the world that it becomes barely an inconvenience.

The wicked who have taunted and destroyed so much of our world will be ash and dust.

Those who have kept their boot on your neck will be nothing beneath your feet.

I also want you to see who brings about the day of judgment.

"on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts."

We cannot forget who brings about that day.

We cannot forget who causes that day to happen.

We cannot forget who participates in that day.

God is the one who acts.

Not you,

Not me,

Not any king or government.

Only the King of Kings.

We would do well to remember that.

One of the reasons we are to remember this day is because it reminds us why God commands us to not take revenge ourselves.

God is going to handle things.

And His vengeance is more terrible and just than we could possibly imagine.

Because of that we can wait patiently in hope.

We can resist our urge to take vengeance in our own hands.

And we can remember the day that is coming.

We remember that on that day God will act.

He will judge and He will heal.

Remember that your healing is coming.

Point number 3 is the third thing we need to remember. We need to **remember the prophets (4:4-6). Remember the prophets (4:4-6).**

There are three prophets we should remember.
Two are mentioned in the passage and you might be able to guess the last one.

The first prophet is in verse 4, **"Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel."**

They are called to remember Moses.
They should remember the law and commandments that He gave them.
Most of this book has been calling them to repent because they have not kept the commandments.
They have strayed away from the law.
They have not keep doing what God commanded.

And God wants them to remember Moses.
Because Moses was considered the greatest prophet.
He was their first prophet.
He appeared out of the wilderness and saved them from slavery.
He led them through their wanderings and brought them into the promised land.
He reintroduced them to the God of their ancestors.
He established their nation and all of their traditions.

But they have forgotten him.
They have acted as if all these rules and commandments are optional.
But they are not even from Moses, they are all that **"I commanded."**
These are God's commands.
Because the prophets are only supposed to speak for God.
And they have forgotten them.

Malachi specifically mentioned "Mount Horeb."
If you can't remember what that is, it is another name for Mount Sinai.
The mountain where Moses ascended up into a crowd of glory.
And on the mountain he spoke with God face to face.
On Mount Horeb God gave all of the commandments including the 10
which were written on stone tablets.

And the book of Deuteronomy repeatedly uses the name "Mount Horeb."
Specifically Deuteronomy 18:16, The people say **"let me not hear again
the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I
die."**

When Moses was on top of the mountain speaking to God, the mountain
was on fire and surrounded by smoke, thunder, and lightening.
The people wanted God to be quiet and to leave them alone.
They wanted just Moses to hear it.

Here in this passage God again has been reminding them of the fire that is
to come.

And they should heard God's voice.
They should heed the voice of the prophets speaking to them.
Otherwise that fire will come down and burn instead of heal.

But there is another prophet they are to remember.
Verse 5, **"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great
and awesome day of the Lord comes."**

They are to remember Elijah the prophet.
Elijah is one of my person favorite prophets.
Mostly because they stories of him are so incredible.
Stories like him commanding bears to attack mockers.
Stories of him being carried away into heaven on a chariot of fire
Stories like his prayers causing the land to be in a drought for years until
he prayed for rain.

My favorite was the story of him taking on all of the prophets of Baal. They have a contest to see whose god is real. They bring out bulls and take turns calling on their respective gods to send down fire from heaven. Elijah mocks them the whole time while they flail and cut themselves begging Baal to send fire. And when it is Elijah's turn he has them dose his bull in buckets and buckets of water. Then when Elijah prays God sends down fire.

It's such a great story. How many Hebrew boys do you think pretended to be Elijah? I bet many of them did. And God wants them to remember those stories.

But technically they are not to remember the prophet Elijah that has come. They are meant to remember that God has promised to send Elijah again. Look at verse 5 again, **"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes."**

When they think of all of those stories. They need to remember that Elijah is coming again.

And we have been studying this in the book of Luke. After we finish Malachi this morning we will turn back to Luke. And Luke's gospel told us that Elijah has come. He has come in John the baptist. John comes in the spirit of Elijah.

This is why we sang that song this morning. These are the days of Elijah. Because Elijah has already come. He came to warn us that Jesus would come.

And John comes right before Jesus is born.
Before the one who heals.
Before the one who rises like the sun.
The Son of Righteousness.
John paves the way for Jesus just like Elijah did.

And he does this so that we will be ready for the day He appears.
John came first to prepare Israel.
John wanted them to repent and be ready for the day Jesus appeared as Savior.
He also came so we would be prepared for the day Jesus comes again.

Because the day Jesus returns will be a great day.
It will be a day we all stare at the sky in awe.

Look at verse 6, **"And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."**

What does this turning of fathers and children's hearts mean?
Well this turning is usually thought of to describe repentance.
And part of what Elijah will do is restore the familial relationship.

Because one indicator of a broken and sinful society is when the family is destroyed.
When the father is abusive and neglectful of his children.
When the children are rebellious and hateful towards kind and loving parents.

So the prophet will come to bring transformational restoration that begins in the family.
Because if their nation is not transformed then they will be punished again.
Their land will be once again struck by enemies.

The land will be burned and salted by nations like Babylon.
And the only hope for salvation is if they turn from their sins.

But the problem is that this salvation and redemption can't come from the prophet.

But this salvation can't come from Elijah.

It can't come from Moses.

They can tell people to change, but they cannot make them.

They do not have the power to make sinners righteous.

It can only come from the true and ultimate prophet.

It can only come from Jesus.

All of the prophets were just foreshadowing and foretastes of Christ.

Elijah pointed towards John.

And John just pointed at Jesus.

And in Jesus everything the prophets spoke about is fulfilled and revealed.

Because Jesus came as king, priest, and prophet.

The role of a prophet is to speak on behalf of God.

They are a mediator between us and God.

They let us know what God wants to say.

Their words only have authority as much as they reflect God's Words.

And Jesus was a prophet because He spoke for God.

He even prophesied the future and everything He said came true.

He told His disciples over and over again that He would die and be resurrected after 3 days.

And He was.

Jesus is the best prophet because He not only speaks for God,

But because He is God.

The second person of the Holy Trinity is truly God.

Every word Jesus speaks is spoken from the mouth of God.

And Jesus does what none of the prophets could do.
Jesus is actually able to turn people's hearts.
The old prophets called people to repentance, but were rarely heeded.
But Jesus can bring repentance.

Jesus can transform our hearts of stone into new hearts.
Jesus comes into our lives and restores dead bones into new life.
Jesus allows us to be born again.

And Jesus is the only prophet who can save us from the day of judgement.
The previous prophets always warned that Israel must repent.
And if they failed to repent, then judgment and destruction would come.
So, their salvation often seemed dependent on their obedience.

They needed works.
They needed true and full obedience to save them from judgement.
Jesus came to be our true and full obedience.
Because only Christ was perfect.
And because of the perfect life of Jesus we can be saved from judgment.
That deliverance is available to any sinner who wants it.
Any sinner who remembers the prophet Jesus.
Who remembers that all who call upon the name of Jesus will be saved on
that final day.
So remember the prophets.
But above all remember the prophet Jesus.
Because only in Jesus can our salvation and true life be found.

As you go through your day.
As you feel your memory fade and spiritual apathy set in.
Remember the prophet Jesus.
Remember the priest Jesus who sacrificed Himself because He loves you.
Remember the King Jesus who rules on your behalf.
Remember the wonder of salvation.

CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] This morning we have talked about the three things we need to remember. We need to remember the book, the day, and the prophets. Remember the book. Remember the day. Remember the prophets.
2. [Challenge] Beloved, do not forget. Remember the book, the day, and the prophets. Let your remembrance of these things sustain your faith in Jesus. But even if you forget. Even if your memory starts to fade as you age. Know that Jesus will never forget you.