

One of my recurring nightmares is that I will get up here to preach without my notes and forget everything I am supposed to say. That isn't happening right now don't worry. But I can be forgetful of other things. Ask my wife, she will tell you how often I forget things she has told me about over and over again.

All of us are often forgetful. We can forget where we put our keys or phone. We forget an appointment we made. But the problem is that we can often be spiritually forgetful. We can start to forget God. We forget all of the times in our lives He has shown up and worked miracles in our lives. We forget the truths we have meditated on for decades.

How can we stop our forgetfulness? Or at least stop our spiritual forgetfulness. The conclusion of the book of Esther is going to show us how. We are at the end of the book. Esther has been saved. The Jewish people have been delivered from extinction. But this week they are going to put practices in place to keep them from forgetting what God has done.

Turn with me to Esther 9:20-10:3

I. Because we forget, we need tangible and continual reminders of God's miraculous work.

Verse 20, **"And Mordecai recorded these things and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far,"**

We see that Mordecai writes down everything that has happened.

He writes out possibly the entire book of Esther.

Or he is sending out a shortened version of it.

A record of how God delivered their people from the wicked Haman.

About how God use the unlikely Esther in the unlikely Mordecai to help bring about their salvation.

Mordecai is recording it and send it out to all of them so that they can all get the full story.

So they don't get the wrong idea of what happened.

So nobody thinks oh I guess the king just changed his mind.

So that nobody thinks what happened with anything less than a miracle of God.

So that everyone can understand their deliverance and their salvation because of what God did.

God miraculously showed up and God saved them.

It needs to be written down that they don't forget it.

Verse 21, **"obliging them to keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, year by year,"**

They are not just to have a record record of it, hidden away in a book somewhere.

Instead, they are to celebrate a new national holiday.

Every year when the day comes when they would've been killed, but we're saved, they will gather.

And it will not just be a holiday that they had once on the day that they were saved with every year, they will be reminded of this fact.

Verse 22, **"as the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and gifts to the poor."**

So they take the day that was a day of sadness and it was supposed to be turned into a day of morning and a holiday.

Even give some instructions on how specifically they should celebrate this day.

They should celebrate the day with feasting and with gladness.

Celebrating with feasts is fitting because that is what Esther did.

Throughout the book, there was lots and lots of feasts.

And each feast was a moment in the story of how God would save them.

So they are to have feast themselves again.

And it's not just so they should have a feast and celebrate those feast they should and remember the feast the king hazard hat where he got rid of Vashti because she wouldn't come.

And that decision led to Esther becoming the queen.

Remember the feast that Esther had in order to entice the king in order to get the king to deliver to save their people.

Other things to celebrate.

They should send gifts of food to one another.

The fee should be overflowing.

It also seems like this needs to be a communal thing.

It is not just for them to celebrate by themselves and their family but it's something they're supposed to share and spread.

You make a meal and you go give it to your neighbors and your friends.

They give gifts to the poor.

The celebration is not just for them and what God did for them, but also how God saw them when they were poor and they were forgotten and they were desperate, and God provided for them.

So they should also provide for others.

You notice that these are all tangible physical things that they have to do and reenact.

It is not just a command "Don't forget!"

It is that there is a ritual and an act that they are to partake.

And because of something it helps them remember.

Having a holiday and having a meal is the time when they celebrate.

Just like how we are getting ready to have the Fourth of July.

And there are things that we do to remember it.

We normally have a cookout or a meal outside.

We shoot off fireworks.

We wear lots of stuff that has our flag or USA on it

Those are specific things that we do when we know we do that at this holiday.

They do something similar.

This is why all of the feasts and all the things that God command people to do to remember are tangible and continual.

They're supposed to be things that you can see and you can touch

They are things that make their children look and ask them. Hey why do we do this?

And then you tell the story.

Verse 23, **"So the Jews accepted what they had started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them."**

So the Jews accepted and they do this they do exactly what God has written.

They begin to have this holiday so they can remember what God has done.

Notice it says "started to do."

Because remembering is an active and continual process.

Not just a one time thing.

Verse 24, **"For Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur (that is, cast lots), to crush and to destroy them."**

They recall Haman's plot and scheme.

Reminds that he was the enemy of all the Jews.

Because they're not just supposed to be remembering be thinking about what God did here and Esther's day, but it's to remind them of all the times that God has defeated their enemies.

Look what Mordecai zooms in on.

Mordecai pays special attention to how they cast lots.

Haman kept rolling the dice to see when the right day would come so that they could destroy the Jews.

Every day Haman was casting lots and rolling dice to wait until his gods told him the time was right to move forward with his plan.

Verse 25, **"But when it came before the king, he gave orders in writing that his evil plan that he had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows."**

But the day that the dice finally told him it was time to go everything went against him.

Haman can roll the dice and man roll the dice, but Yahweh God determines how the dice land.

And all of the plans are the enemies were turned on their own heads and they died instead.

Verse 26, **"Therefore they called these days Purim, after the term Pur. Therefore, because of all that was written in this letter, and of what they had faced in this matter, and of what had happened to them,"**

The name of the holiday is Purim.

The holiday is supposed to be named after the dice that rolled.

So that every time they even say oh hey, tomorrow is Pam they would remember that there is no chance and that God is in control.

Verse 27, **"the Jews firmly obligated themselves and their offspring and all who joined them, that without fail they would keep these two days according to what was written and at the time appointed every year, ²⁸ that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, in every clan, province, and city, and that these days of Purim should never fall into disuse among the Jews, nor should the commemoration of these days cease among their descendants."**

Notice in these two verses that there was an obligation to the offspring.

That every generation in each place should continue to celebrate.

That every single one of their descendants needs to read these letters to celebrate this festival.

They need to recount and retail of what Esther did.

And this needs to happen because every generation forgets.

Or they don't care in the same way.

What was incredible and a miracle to you,
Your children won't care quite as much about it.
And they definitely won't know about it unless you tell them the story.
And if Israel does not be sure to continually tell the story throughout the
generations and it will be lost.
Each generation has to be reminded.
They need to be reminded tangibly of what God has done for them.
To be reminded to be told that the only reason that they exist can be
around is because of what God did for their ancestors.

We too still need to be told the story.
This is why we read and reread the stories in the word of God of how God
has worked miracles for his people.
Because we forget.
Because if we don't reenact them, then the generations after us will forget.
And every generation needs to remember and know what God has done.

Verse 29, **"Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew gave full written authority, confirming this second letter about Purim."**

It seems like they send out another letter with more instructions about the
holiday and about remembering it.
Esther appears to have a lot of input in this one.
She has her own voice, which she wants them to know about what God
did.

Verse 30, **"Letters were sent to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, in words of peace and truth, that these days of Purim should be observed at their appointed seasons, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther obligated them, and as they had obligated themselves and their offspring, with regard to their fasts and their lamenting."**

We see that Mordecai and Esther are also obligating themselves
That they don't want to forget either.

This isn't just that they're telling other people to remember what has happened to them.

It isn't just if they want their own fame expanded of people to know all about what they did.

They two are obligating themselves to tell themselves the story.

Every year we gather again and remind themselves of what they did.

To remind themselves of they prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed, and God answered.

To remind themselves of the tension and the fear and the anxiety that they had.

To remind themselves that they God answered their prayers.

That their God heard them and God delivered them.

It also appears that the end that they are not just to feast to celebrate, but they also are supposed to fast and lament.

That part of remembering how God saves there to react and remember the three days of fasting that all of the Jews underwent.

Lamenting and weeping in the morning that they did out of fear and wonder.

Because it's one thing thing to tell yourself the story of our people fasted for three days and then got answered them.

It's another thing to spend at least a day fasting and not eating so that you can remember what your people did for three days and how God answered it.

The people really are almost to reenact into relive into live out the stories of what they did.

So they do not forget.

Verse 32, **"The command of Esther confirmed these practices of Purim, and it was recorded in writing."**

They received the command and did it.

And Esther's political influence helps all the people put it into practice.

So no generation will forget.

10:1 **"King Ahasuerus imposed tax on the land and on the coastlands of the sea."**

These verses are sometimes noted as a strange endnote.

We have all the drama of God's people being delivered.

Then we get a note about the holiday they continue to celebrate and remember today.

And we go right into hearing about King Ahasuerus's tax policy.

Why would it do that?

Because life goes on.

There is something miraculous that happens after something miraculous.

The days continue.

Life returns to normal.

We still have to go to work.

We still have to pay taxes.

King Ahasuerus did save God's people.

But massive revival did not break out.

Heavens did not come down to earth and remake Eden.

Things went back to normal.

And it is here in the normalcy they have to remember.

They cannot forget what God has done.

10:2 **"And all the acts of his power and might, and the full account of the high honor of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?"**

It reminds them that all these things are written down in books.

Like in the books the king had read to him at night while he slept.

There is something boring about those books.

10:3 **"For Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Ahasuerus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brothers, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people."**

Because it is in the ordinary every day, grind of life that we start to forget.
And we all felt this.

I can look back and think of so many miracles that God has worked in my life at the time felt incredible .

But then things move on, and it doesn't seem as incredible anymore.

When I was young in high school, I thought that if I could see God Work, just some kind of miracle it would really strengthen my faith.

I thought that it might take me to the next level spiritually and maturity wise.

I remember praying and thinking and begging that God would just do something amazing that would help me.

And then it actually finally came.

One of my friends in our men's Bible study with other high school guys had broken his foot.

He asked for prayer that would heal fast so we can get back to sports and you know doing every every day life.

And we thought well we're gonna pray for it just lay hands on and heal right now.

So we did that we laid hands on his foot and we prayed, and God actually healed immediately.

It was one of the craziest things that I've ever seen at that moment.

I remember at the time thinking wow this will change everything for me.

Now I'm gonna serve the God of miracles.

I'm not gonna doubt my faith is gonna stay strong.

You know what happened?

It didn't quite work that way.

Time went on and I forgot.

I actually forgot that this is even happened.

It was only this week as I was preparing the sermon and going back and trying to remember all the miracles got it done in my life that I remembered this one.

I haven't thought about over a decade.

So much time gone by I start to go back. Oh well did that happen.

Did God really heal his foot immediately?

There must be another explanation.

This can happen on just with small things, but with big things.

Some of you may remember there was a few years ago at the office having a normal day.

Kids went with Bri to have a regular check up.

Calls me crying because the doctor just told him that Grant has leukemia and we need to get to the city right now to figure out next steps.

At the time it felt like a whole fell apart.

I remember looking at him as we're driving up to the city just thinking how could this be true look at how happy he is.

I'm starting to wonder how many more these days I would get.

And we prayed the whole drive up in that whole long evening.

Just praying and begging God for help.

I know our church was praying for us.

And within 24 hours the doctors up there saying he's fine then they must've been a mistake because everything looks great.

It was miraculous.

It was an answer to prayer.

And it's the kind of answer to prayer that we don't often get when we have those diagnosis.

I felt unbelievable relief and gladness for quite a while after that.

But what happens?

Is returning normal life goes on.

Grant has more birthdays and doctors visits that are fine.

He has plenty of days and annoy me, and I want them to knock it off.

Time goes on and I forget.

I forget the despair that I felt, and I was begging to do and I forget that God did it.

I hear whispers in my ear that maybe wasn't a miracle at all maybe it was just somebody made a mistake somewhere. It was all a misunderstanding. It just happened to be a coincidence that so many people were praying at that time. It becomes a funny story. Do you remember they told us Grant had leukemia a while that's crazy.

God doesn't want the people to forget what he did for them. They need to celebrate tangibly and continually so they do not forget. So that they don't start to think wow that was a crazy time. I wonder what happened. So that they don't begin to believe that someone other than God did that .

It's the same for us. Now we might not celebrate Purim. We don't observe Passover the feast that God commanded the Jews to do so. But all of us still need these tangible physical, continual reminders of what God has done. Because if we do not continually ourselves, then we will forget. And when we begin to doubt, and our faith begins to wane. The way for us to reverse the forgetfulness is to be intentional about reminding ourselves.

Now, how can we do this? There's a lot of different ways that we can do this. First, I want to talk about some ways that we can do this as a community. Not just how you and I can make sure that we remember. But as a people of God we can remember together.

Because Mordecai and Esther weren't just commanding individual Jews to remember God deliver deliverance.

They were commanding them as people and as a nation wherever they are to together remember and together remind themselves.

And so it is our job as well as a church to remember what God has done . And we actually already do some of these things whether you realize it or not yet.

The way that we do this is as we gather weekly.

Part of what we do as the assembly in the gathered church is that we remind ourselves of gods deliver deliver deliverance.

We sing songs together remind us and praising God for what he has done. This is why so many of the psalms were recounting the mighty acts of God throughout history.

So we gather to sing a remind ourselves of what God has done.

We also gather to read his word to remind ourselves of what God has said. This is one of the reasons I'm passionate again about reading all of God's word at once.

And if you notice, I'm usually reading it twice as we go through the sermon.

Because we've probably already forgot some of it after we read it before. And we all need to be reminded of what God has said what God has done.

We need to be reminded of the stories of God's deliverance and God's grace.

This is why we go through a benediction. At the end of our service.

We remind ourselves of the blessings that God has spoken out over us.

We remind ourselves of how God has bless us in the past and how he will bless us in the future.

We also do this as we practice communion.

Communion is one of the New Testament practices that Jesus has commanded us to follow.

And he's asked us to do this regularly as we gather together.

And each time that we do it, we remember and remind ourselves of the gospel.

We tell ourselves again, the story of how Jesus broke his body, and he spilled his blood for us.

We do this physically.

Physically eat something and drink something so that our bodies act out the gospel.

We do this on Wednesday as we gather together in our time of prayer and praise and teaching.

We praise God for what he has done just in the last week and the way that we have seen him move and deliver us.

We do this as a church we gather on Christmas and Easter.

Those aren't holidays. The Jesus commanded us to observe that we have annual times where we gather together and say this is the day we will remember the resurrection.

We gather together the day we will remember the wonder of the incarnation that God came to earth and was born as man to deliver us from our sins.

We give each other gifts ourselves and our children so all the generations will remember what Jesus has done.

It was part of the idea behind the larger Christian calendar of having other days to remember epiphany the day that the wisemen came to see Jesus.

Why they observe the time of preparation and leading up to the cross.

You don't have to fall the calendar, but it's purpose in a good way of using it is to let it remind you the story of what God has done so you do not forget.

Just like you have to look at the calendar to remember if it's already July or you look at the calendar to remember the story of the gospel.

Some churches recite the fundamental essentials of the faith that we call the ancient creeds.

I have been in churches that do this and I always love it.
Because it forces me to remember and recite.
To remind myself of the foundations of our faith and what we believe.

All these things we do the tangibly and continually remind ourselves each week.

Some people don't want church to become routine and boring.

They want something new and exciting each week.

Some kind of experience they have never had before.

But we don't need the new and exciting.

We need to remember the old miraculous things God has already done.

We gather together, we celebrate, and we remember the gospel in the story of Jesus has done.

Practically, we're already doing some of this.

But how can we do this as well individually?

I think it's good to have regular tangible rituals that you engage in.

Remind yourself to remember the miracles of what God has done for you.

Maybe there needs to be times and days that you set aside to remember what God did.

There was a moment where God answered your prayer in your tangible amazing way.

Maybe you remember the day that you were baptized and that you recall, and remind yourself of how God saved you and how you became a follower of Jesus.

Another way to do this would just be to sit down and record all of the miracles God has worked in your life.

This really would be a great practice for many of you.

Just take some time and sit down and go back over your life.

And just write down again, the significant crazy miracles and amazing moments you've seen God show up for you.

The times that you've seen God deliver you or your family.

I know there are some of you who keep a book in a record of answered prayers.

I think that's an amazing practice and if you don't do that, I'd encourage some of you to start doing that.

Because there is something about doing this.

About forcing yourself, even just to sit down and recall and recount the way you've seen this.

If that sounds like too much work or if you're discouraged about the things that you can't remember anymore.

Then maybe just today while you're at lunch or the next time you're out with some friends just take some time go around the table and just tell each other the story of one time that you saw God do something incredible.

Maybe it's the most recent thing maybe some significant but just something that you want to remember.

Because you remembering it will encourage us and will teach us.

And us remembering accounting the way that we've seen God will encourage you as well.

Maybe you can have a ritual or memorial.

You could set up some kind of marker or thing in your house. Looks like the Israel lights put up stones are made monuments so when they walked by people would say hey why are all these stones here and they could tell their children we put them here because God did this.

Let me tell you the story of God delivered us.

You could make a memory box or there's there's really no end of things that you can do.

Random illustration

One thing that I do as I try to set up Reminders on for myself of how God has worked.

And one of these that I do drives Brianna nuts she does not like it and she doesn't understand it.

I have a set my phone to remind me of the day that I found out. I was losing my job as a pastor at church didn't have enough money anymore. That was a really hard day and I didn't like.

But every year goes by and every time that comes up it tangibly remind me of how God has used that God is blessed me.

And that pop up on my phone to tell me if anniversary is way that that can become a tangible thing that I'm continually and regularly reminded about.

That way, it doesn't just become something that I forget about how God delivered me from it.

Because the point isn't the particulars of what you do remember.

The point is that we need to remind ourselves.

We need to do something.

And if you're not regularly doing something even a simple as putting a reminder in your folder on your calendar, then will forget.

Someone encourage you do something.

Do something regular and repeated and tangible so that you can remind yourself of what is done.

So you can remind yourself of how you have seen God show up in your life.

Do it so you don't forget.

CONCLUSION:

II. Because we forget, we need tangible and continual reminders of God's miraculous work.

III. Most of all we need to remind ourselves of the miracle of the gospel. Of Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

IV. Don't forget.