

Voices: Remembering matters to God and to us

April 10, 2019

Memaw—my late grandmother—took pictures of everything. Her house was full of scrapbooks, collages in frames and printouts from the Facebook pages of her grandkids. She never seemed prouder than when she was showing off those pictures.

I don't recall a time—whether it be just the two of us or the family all together—when Memaw wasn't working the room getting snapshots of everyone and everything. My siblings and I poked fun at this for years and how much it irritated us that no person or situation would stop her from “gettin’ her pictures.”

Interestingly, it seemed everyone who was so irritated by her as she walked around with her camera suddenly loved flipping through all the scrapbooks she made. We'd laugh at unfortunate clothing choices or hairstyles and have a wonderful time remembering all of the life events, emotions and activities in the larger context of each picture.

The importance to God of remembering

Remembering is an important part of life, and it seems to be an incredibly important thing to God. Over and over in Scripture, he commands his people to remember. With every account in the Old Testament, God seems to list everything he had done up to that point.

As a young Christian, these lists used to bother me. Why would God do this? Why would he repeat himself over and over again?

Why? Because we have spiritual amnesia. You can see this on display throughout the Psalms, which is why I think Psalms is so relatable.

In one paragraph, you will find the psalmist praising the Lord for his faithfulness and making sweeping statements of his unwavering confidence in the Lord. Not two sentences later, you will find the same guy wallowing in anguish, crying out to God, questioning God's apparent absence and apathy towards him and his current circumstance.

How we so easily forget God's faithfulness, love and character in the face of our daily lives, temptations and struggles really is laughable.

Why is remembering so important to God? Because remembering isn't simply about recalling. It's about realignment.

Remembering realigns us

When we are tired or beaten up with our circumstances and struggles, we can hear God say: "Remember what I've done. Remember that I see you, I know you, and I'm not going anywhere."

When our sin-riddled minds and emotions scream things like: "God doesn't love you! He has left you! He doesn't care!", we can hear him clearly and lovingly in his word say: "Remember, I love you and I care more than you could ever know."

God is constantly saying to us: "Remember Abraham—how out of my goodness and love I pulled him from obscurity and made an entire nation of my own from a barren womb? Remember what I did there? Remember Egypt—deliverance from oppression by the mighty works of my hand? Remember all the other countless ways I've shown my love for you? This is who I am. This is what I do. So, as you remember that, let it bear fruit in worship of me."

When Jesus gave the Lord's Supper, he used the same language, saying in essence: "Make sure every time you do this to remember what I've done, and as you remember, let it bear fruit in worship."

During this season of Lent, we have the wonderful opportunity to remember who God is and all he has done—and as we remember—to allow God to realign our hearts to his once more.

Jason Dunton is the pastor of contemporary worship arts at First Baptist Church of Bryan, Texas.