Remember Jesus

**Intro:**

Well, now what? Three and a half years, CapCity has been working meticulously for this moment. Now what? It's time for the future, right? Let's go a different direction.

Have you ever been to a wedding? Maybe you've been in a wedding. Maybe you've been married. There's this moment that happens in a wedding ceremony that I think is strange, but nobody else thinks it's strange. No one even thinks twice about it.

It happens in the middle of the service as the groom and the bride exchange rings. Now, that's not strange. It's not strange that the two of them would give each other a gift in a ceremony of commitment to one another. But typically, when I do a wedding, I'm going to read something like this: I'll tell them, "As you wear these rings, whether together or apart for a moment, may they be constant ***REMINDERS*** of these glad promises that you're making today." I think that's strange. That word "reminders" is strange. Why would newlyweds need to do something in that moment so that in the future they would remember? Why would newlyweds need to be reminded about the biggest day of their lives and these massive commitments?

Because it's already a huge moment. They've planned it for months, if not years. They've brought together all of the most important people in their lives to witness this moment — all of their best friends and all of their family. And they exchange the rings. And in this super huge, monumental moment that will shape the rest of their lives, the minister says there will be a day when they will need to remember that they got married. It’s ridiculous. The minister says that one day you're going to need to look back at this moment and remember these vows. A husband and wife couldn't possibly forget their wedding and promises to each other, right?

You know that it sometimes happens. Sometimes people … forget. In fact, you know the stories. Maybe it's your story. Forgetting leads to sin, and it leads to a long line of pain for more than just the married couple. Bad things happen when people forget.

We need reminders. It's partly why we gave you a key ring a couple of weeks ago. We have more in our welcome center if you would like to grab one, but these key rings serve as a simple reminder of this church and what it is that we're about. Even more so, they serve as a reminder of who our God is — a God who is full of grace and full of truth.

If you've ever experienced the grace of this God … if you've ever come face to face with God's truth … you couldn't possibly forget, right? Surely that moment would be so significant, so powerful, so heavy on you and on your soul that you would live in the constant memory, the constant idea of that moment. So why in the world do we need to give you a keychain? Why in the world do we have to do something to make it so that you are … ***REMINDED***? Because sometimes people … forget. Forgetting leads to sin and sin leads to consequences. It's not good for you to forget what God's done. Bad things happen when people forget.

**Transition**

Doc has spent a lot of the month of July building up to this specific moment, and Doc looked to the future. He asked the question, "Are CapCity's best days behind us or in front of us?" He took it even further. He asked, "Does God want our best days at CapCity to be behind us or in front of us?" We even signed posters last week where we made commitments to be all in at CapCity. If you missed out, if you weren't here last Sunday, but you want to express your commitment to this church, you are welcome to sign those posters. We've got the markers sitting out by them. You don’t need to sign all of them, signing one is signing all.

Now, I think this is fascinating. The month of July, Doc excitedly looked forward at the future of this church. Man, I appreciate that. He's done a great job of setting me up for success. It's been great. But my role, now, is to look forward. My job and what I'm going to have to be for this church is someone who's looking forward and seeing what's next.

But … there's something really big and important about looking backward and remembering.

If you look to the Old Testament, there are going to be several leadership transitions that are paired with that word "remember." Because sometimes people forget … and forgetting leads to sin … and bad things happen when people forget.

**Leadership Transitions**

In Deuteronomy 32, Moses is finishing his leadership over the nation of Israel. He's accomplished a lot with them over his lifetime, but it's the end of his time. It's time for him to hand it off to a guy named Joshua. God gives Moses a song that he is to teach the nation of Israel. It’s a warning to the future. But in this warning and this strange song that he's supposed to teach the people, there's a key word. And it doesn't look forward at the future, even in the context of a warning of the future, but instead it looks backward. And it's that word "remember." He tells them in this song to, “***REMEMBER*** the days of old.”

Why? Why do they need to remember? Because sometimes people forget. The very reason that Moses had to lead the Israelites for 40 years through a desert was because they had forgotten God within days of escaping Egypt. What should have been a short trip to the promised land turned into 40 years of wandering because they were impatient with Moses being on a mountain with God and they began worshipping a fake god they made on the spot. They forgot God even though he was physically present before them leading them and protecting them. Forgetting led to sin. So, God punishes a generation with a desert. Bad things happen when people forget.

Then you fast forward to Joshua 1, right after Moses’ speech. It’s some of Joshua’s first words as the new leader for the nation of Israel. He's replacing Moses. It's a key moment with a people looking to the future, and he starts by telling them to look backward. He says, "***REMEMBER*** the command that Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you." Remember.

Why? Why do we need to look backwards? Because sometimes people forget. It's a warning to the nation to not replay their past and their forgetting of their God because forgetting leads to sin and bad things happen when people forget.

Later, in Joshua 23, Joshua has now finished his time as leader of this nation. He's getting ready to step out. In fact, this whole section is called Joshua's Farewell to the Leaders, and the nation wants to know what's next. Joshua says, "Remember." They want to look to the future, and Joshua tells them, "No, keep the past in your prime view." "Remember how I have allotted an inheritance for your tribes,” basically meaning remember how God has blessed you and the promises he made to you about the promised land.

Why? Why remember? Because sometimes people forget. This may be a spoiler to you, but the nation of Israel and their relationship with God is a story of forgetting and then struggling because they forget. Their forgetfulness leads them to sin, and they endure a lot of pain and a lot of suffering because of their forgetting. Bad things happen when people forget.

**Jewish Remembering**

It's the theme throughout the whole Old Testament. It's everywhere. Some people even put it this way: Israel doesn't have a history; they have a memory. To Jews, the past and present are linked together. It impacts their present and their future. They have a memory, not a history.

But it isn't some idea that Israel came up with where they decided to be a people who cared deeply about history. Remembering is something that God commanded.

There's a word, the Hebrew "zakar," that shows up 231 times in the Old Testament. Sometimes when that word shows up, it's God remembering His people for His covenant or His promises. But mostly, most of the time when this word is used, it's God ***TELLING*** the people to remember. And they did some strange stuff with it.

God commands them to remember his commands. They respond in some very strange, but practical ways. They put tassels on their clothing, long strings hanging from their clothes. Maybe you’ve seen them before. They made small boxes, tied them around their heads, and placed small writings of scriptures inside of them. So, they wouldn’t forget. They would write scripture on their door frames, and then, every time they walked through a doorway, they would reach up and kind of high five the door frame. All so that they would remind themselves of God’s word and his commands.

It's the same kind of concept we see in our culture with stuff like tattoos — someone who has a cross or a fish or some sort of scripture written on their body. It's the same thing we see at Lent with the ashes and the cross on the forehead. Remembering in physical ways.

It's more than that, though. God tells them to remember the day of Exodus, and He tells them to remember their condition that they had in Egypt, and He tells them to remember what He did to Pharaoh, and He tells them to remember that He led them for 40 years in this desert. One of the biggest themes is God telling his people to remember his provision and care. God wanted them to remember how He had cared for them and taken care of them for so many years, so many different times.

In fact, part of this remembering causes God to tell the people to throw parties, festivals. God instituted holidays, parties, festivals for his people to have as ways of remembering. So, He tells them to have a Feast of the Passover. It was supposed to be a remembrance. It was for them to be able to recall back to that time when God led His people out of slavery and out of oppression in Egypt and He led them into freedom and into their promised land. He has a Feast of Tabernacles, a different holiday to remember how the Israelites had lived in temporary dwellings for 40 years in that desert. They were wandering around in the wilderness for 40 years, and they were being sustained, daily, by God Himself. These festivals, these holidays, were all about Israel being able to remember God's saving power and His miraculous provision in the lives of His people.

We do that too. We have Memorial Day, Veterans Day, we have Labor Day. We have bigger holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter, each of them causing us to remember something. God commands his people to remember specific events. I think God wants us, in a very similar way, to remember. Because what's happened in the past isn't just something that we should know with facts and details, but it's something that has bearing, it has relevance on our lives today and tomorrow.

On a day like this at CapCity, where people want so desperately to be able to look forward and know what's coming, we need to start by remembering. We can’t know what's coming next. But there's this really big idea here that you've got to catch: the best way to know what God is going to do in the future – if you want to know what God's going to do in your future … my future … the future of this church — the best way for us to know what God will do in the future is if we look backwards and we see the things that He's already done. The best way to know what God is going to do in the future is to look backwards and see what He’s already done. Remembering gives us confidence for the future.

And it isn't limited to the Old Testament.

**NT Remembering**

The New Testament gets really serious about remembering as well. It’s in Jesus’ language and it’s picked up by the rest of the NT authors. And … a consistent theme that keeps coming up, over and over again, is the big idea that we have to ***REMEMBER JESUS***.

Now, that may be the most simplistic statement you've ever heard in a sermon of any church ever at any time, right? Well, duh, of course we have to remember Jesus. Maybe you would argue that a church couldn't possibly forget Jesus, right? He's too important. He's a really, really big deal. What a simplistic, small, little idea to lay out that we would have to remember Jesus.

But … sometimes people forget and forgetting leads to sin. Bad things happen when people forget.

The early church leaders knew this intuitively. So, you have this guy, Paul, and he's a church planter. He's the key theological leader of the early church, and he writes this letter to this young guy named Timothy who's trying to lead a church, and he tells Timothy to remember Jesus. Paul, the great leader, great theologian, great thinker, big-time mind and leader for the first church — says something that is seemingly so simplistic. It's a big, big deal to Paul – Remember Jesus. Seems obvious … but you know it isn't. How often do you go through life forgetting Jesus's impact on your daily interactions?

Notice this. Paul says, "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead." It's absolutely core to everything that we believe and everything that we do. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then everything we do in this space is a waste of our time. But … if Jesus did, then every moment we spend not in that reality, not in that remembering, is a waste of our time. The resurrection changes history, and it changes our present, and it changes our future.

He takes it further. He says, "Remember Jesus, the descendant of David." Now, that's significant to Jewish people that he would be writing to, but listen, it's a bigger idea than just knowing that Jesus was Jewish and from David. It's telling Timothy that this was no mistake. This was on purpose. This Jesus guy who showed up, it was intentional. It was planned from the beginning. God had promised this 2000 years before to a guy named Abraham. Jesus showed up where He did, in the family He did, on purpose. Remember that Jesus.

Paul calls this his gospel. Remembering Jesus is foundational. It’s participating in the gospel – good news. But sometimes churches forget. Sometimes we forget Jesus. In fact, I bet you know a church who forgot Jesus. I bet that you can see that church isn't doing so well if it even exists at all. Forgetting leads to sin. Bad things happen when people forget.

Paul isn't the only one. Peter, another big dog leader of the first church — Peter writes something similar about remembering. In 2 Peter 1:12, he says, "I will always ***REMIND*** you of these things, even though you know them and even though you're firmly established in the truth that you now have. I'm going to keep reminding you anyways." So, what are these things that he's going to remind us? Just before, starting in verse 5, he says, "For these very reasons, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, knowledge, and self-control, and perseverance, and godliness, mutual affection, and love." And he says, "Whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins."

Remember Jesus and what he taught us. Not making every effort to live in this way is the same as forgetting what Jesus has done for you. Surely no one would ever forget the incredible grace and mercy that we received from our God. Surely no one would forget this incredible sacrifice of what Jesus has done.

But … sometimes people forget. According to Peter, forgetting looks like being blind. It's not the way that it's supposed to be. Forgetting leads to sin. Bad things happen when people forget.

**Prompters**

So, church, we need some wedding rings. We need something that will serve as a reminder so that we don't forget. And to our benefit, Jesus Himself gave us two really significant reminders.

The first one is baptism. Baptism is a powerful reminder. And of all the things Jesus’ commands, baptism is unique in that it’s the only thing that He commands us to do one time. Baptism isn’t something we have to do over and over again – it’s a one-time expectation. There's something significant in that because your baptism is kind of like that marker in history. It's that moment in time. It's something that you can look back on over your life, and you can look to the exact point in time, and you can remember the decision that you made. You can remember the key moment in your life that brought you to this point where you put your flag in the ground, when you put the stake in the ground. You said, "This is when I started following Jesus." Baptism itself is a powerful reminder. It's a powerful marker in the history of your life to be able to tie you to what God has done for you.

The second reminder Jesus gives us is the Lord's Supper. It comes from Luke 22. He's at the table with the disciples, His last night of His life. They're sharing the Passover meal – part of that festival celebration God commanded in the Old Testament that we mentioned earlier. They are actively remembering the past, remembering how God called them out of Egypt and the ways in which God provided for them. And Jesus takes that moment, and He twists it. He kind of turns it on its head. It’s like Jesus is saying, this moment isn't about that moment in history. In fact, that moment in history is about what's happening here in Jerusalem right now. That moment that happened thousands of years ago has relevance for us in this very specific moment right now because God's doing a new thing. And in the same way in which there was a sacrifice that took place, a Passover, to care for the people and an incredible provision and leading them out, in the same way, God's going to do that again right now. But you're not going to need the blood of a lamb painted on your doorposts. You're going to need Me.

And so, when you sit down to eat a meal together, anytime you sit down to eat a meal together, you take some bread, you take some wine, and you remember. He said, "Because this is My body that's given for you, and this is My blood that's poured out for you, and you do it in remembrance of Me." Our communion is different than baptism. It's not a one-time act like we see with baptism. This is something that we do all the time, every time that we're together, so that Jesus can be front and center in all the things that we do. And so, we remember.

Jesus with his disciples in this scene is a huge moment in history. It's a big transition moment. It has a little bit of a feel like Moses and Joshua. The disciples don't know that this is a transition moment, but it is. Jesus is getting ready to hand the keys of this movement to His disciples, and these are some of His very last words, and He tells them to remember.

These guys who spent three years with Jesus, who learned from Him, who watched Him perform miracles, who were called out by Jesus, who were encouraged and loved by Jesus — how could they ever possibly forget? These men would, within hours, watch Jesus get publicly executed on a cross. How in the world could they ever forget that? Three days later, they would see Him alive again, resurrected, walking out of a tomb. How could they ever possibly forget that?

Sometimes people forget. In fact, these disciples kind of had their own moments of forgetfulness for a time. When Jesus dies, they didn't remember most of these things that Jesus had said because it didn't make sense to them. A lot of it didn't make sense until the resurrection, and that's when they … ***REMEMBERED***. Guys, don't forget, because forgetting leads to sin and bad things happen when people forget.

If you'd like to know what the future of Cap City looks like, I don't know. I'm not sure. But I do know, unequivocally, that one thing we will never forget is Jesus. Every week, on the first day, we'll get together. Getting together, just the act of us coming together and worshiping together regularly, causes us to recenter on Jesus. And if we don't, we drift. We forget. Doc talked about it last week with the idea of attending faithfully. When we attend faithfully, we are setting a model of a life that revolves around Jesus, a life that revolves around God.

And when we get together, we will remember Jesus crucified and resurrected because we can't risk forgetting Jesus. It's too important. So, we're going to take the sacraments. We're going to take the body and the blood as reminders every single week.

Maybe you need more. Maybe you need the keychain for your drive as you're going around town. Maybe you need that as a reminder. Grab a keychain on your way out. One of the reasons we challenge you to read your Bible every day is that you would live in the constant reminder of Jesus's presence in your life. It’s not the biggest reason you should read your Bible every day, but it is a big reason. It’s why we have plans and ways for you to go about reading scripture on a regular basis with one another here. We have those plans and details available at the Welcome Center and on our website.

It's one of the reasons that many people pray before every meal. It's wanting to live in the constant reminder that as often as we remember we have to eat, we want to remember that we are so very blessed by our God, that He's met all of our needs. Maybe your house is littered with wall art and scripture all over the place. Maybe this week you need to go home and write "Jesus" on your mirror in your bathroom with lipstick or something so that every day when you're getting ready, you see His name, and you remember the importance of who He is in your life. Maybe you print out some scripture references every week, and you put them up on your mirror, and you work through memorizing God's Word every day so that you will live in the constant remembering of Jesus.

Because if you don't work to remember … you’ll naturally forget. And it will lead you to sin. Don't forget — bad things happen when people forget. We want to remember a God who forgives. We want to remember a God who takes the first step. The best way for you to know what God's doing in your life right now … the best way for you to know what God will do in your life in the future … is not by guessing as to what may happen. We're not trying to crack some code. The best way to know what God will do in the future is by looking backwards at what God has already done. He’s faithful, he’s consistent. And remembering helps us walk confidently into the future.

So, let's practice some remembering. Let’s remember a God who is not going to compromise on His love for us, and it's best proven on a cross and outside of an empty tomb.

**Lord’s Supper Set Up**