

# We must remember

Luke 24:1-12

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Can you imagine what it must have been like for the followers of Jesus on Saturday, the day after Jesus had been crucified? All was lost. Jesus was dead. They had given up everything to follow Jesus. They believed with all of their hearts that He was the promised Messiah and Savior who had been prophesied about for hundreds of years.

Yes, they had run away when Jesus was arrested. Yes, they feared death as much as the next person, but they truly believed. Every verse of prophecy that had been foretold about the Messiah came true in the life of Jesus Christ. It was beyond imagination.

For those who had ears to hear and eyes to see there was no mistaking that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah. He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the mute to speak. In addition, He had turned water to wine. He had fed thousands with just a few loaves and fish. He healed a leper. He cast out demons. He calmed the sea. He even raised the dead to life again. Truly the Savior had come . . . and now He was dead.

It must have been like a nightmare that you keep trying to wake up from, but you can't. Jesus of Nazareth, their Messiah, the Messiah, was dead.

Now what? How could this have happened? He was God in the flesh. Even though Jesus had warned them multiple times, it was as if they never saw it coming (John 2:18-22; Matthew 12:39-40; Matthew 16:21; Matthew 27:62-64).

Even with the fulfillment of all of the Messianic Prophecies and Jesus' predictions of His own death, burial and resurrection, Jesus' followers must have been devastated on that Saturday as Jesus Christ lay dead in the tomb.

Have you ever experienced a "Saturday" in your life when everything went wrong and you were ruined? When God seemed to be gone and life seemed to be hopeless? In those moments, what did you do?

So, there they were, in hiding. Scared for their own lives and devastated that Jesus was gone. But then we read about the courageous women who, despite their fear, went to the tomb on Sunday morning to put burial spices on Jesus' body. Luke 24:1-12 says it like this:

*But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup> And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." <sup>8</sup> And they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, <sup>11</sup> but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup> But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.*

The two angels could have spoken many words of truth or direction, but in that moment of desperation they told the women to "remember". That was to be the way out of their darkness and despair. That was to be their path back to faith. Remember. Remember what Christ had said.

The women were familiar with the prophecies. They had heard Jesus' words about his upcoming death, burial and resurrection, but in the midst of their struggle and brokenness they had "forgotten" the words of Christ. So, in response to the angel's words the women remembered, and then shared the good news with others.

When we look to scripture, we see that these women were not the first to struggle with "spiritual forgetfulness".

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We struggle with forgetfulness in our Christian lives as well. Throughout scripture we are encouraged to remember and not forget.

Isaiah 46:9 instructs to, *"Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other."*

1 Chronicles 16:15 exhorts the people to, *"Remember God's covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations."*

In Deuteronomy 6:12 we read, *"Take care lest you forget the Lord."*

Psalms 103:2 declares, *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."*

We read of a similar struggle of the psalmist in Psalm 42:5-6 as he spoke to himself,

***“My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.”***

The solution to the psalmist’s being cast down was to remember God’s faithfulness in the past.

Jonah 2:7 tells of Jonah’s prayer from the belly of the fish, ***“When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.”***

How many times have we failed to remember? Life has suddenly become so difficult that we focus our attention on the storm that rages around us, and we forget the rock that our life is built upon (Matthew 7:24-27). In Christ, the solution and solace are right there within our reach, but we forget the promises of Christ.

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In the Easter story the women’s “remembering” was a redefining of the information that lie before them. The facts were still the same. Jesus had been crucified and died three days earlier. The tomb was open . . . and it was empty. Their hearts were broken. But now the angels were giving them a different lens through which to view their situation. The angel was pointing them towards the truth and it was based on remembering the words of Christ.

Because of the resurrection of Christ, Christians can now view the world through the lenses of Christ. We can now see the world through the lens of grace. The lens of eternity. The lens of forgiveness. The lens of hope. The lens of love. The lens of God’s faithfulness. The lens of God’s sovereignty. The lens of God’s character. The lens of God’s promises.

But we must remember. It is possible for one to have correct theology, but not walk in it. In Christ we now own the right lenses, but it is “remembering” that actually puts them on. It is the remembering that actually allows us to walk by faith.

Remembering who God is and what He has done is essential as we grow in our faith. So much so that even the Holy Spirit helps us. In John 14:26 Jesus told His disciples, ***“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”***

We must join with the Holy Spirit to remember. To keep God and His truths on the forefront of our minds we are to think on His Word and come into His presence in prayer (Psalm 143:5). If not, we fall prey to the perspectives and desires of the world.

As we read in Psalm 73, Asaph recounted how his ***“feet had almost stumbled, and his steps had nearly slipped”*** when he saw how the wicked prospered. He felt that his efforts to keep his hands clean and his conscience clear had been in vain. His soul became embittered towards God. Asaph had “forgotten” the truths of God. But then in verse 17 it says, ***“Until he went into the sanctuary of God.”*** It was there that he remembered, and his perspective was reclaimed by the truth of God. He remembered the eternal end of the wicked and the eternal end of those who are with God.

Still seeing the unfairness of the world, Asaph was now able to say to God,

***“<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. <sup>24</sup> You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. <sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. <sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”***

This type of prayer is our goal. Where God becomes our chief desire and the source of our strength. Where Christ is the truest reality in our lives. Where Christ is the place that our minds drifts to and the joy that our heart seeks. Where He is the lens through which we view and understand all that we encounter in life.

We must remember the Gospel. We must rehearse it. We must preach it to ourselves. We must keep it near. We must speak its truths to each other. We must turn up the volume of the Gospel so that it drowns out all the opposing voices of the world and of self that seek to draw us away from the truth.

Some do this through daily Bible reading and prayer time. Others memorize scripture. Some are part of a small group Bible study, or journal about their day each evening, seeking to discern what God is doing in their lives. Some listen to Christian music, while others prayerfully focus on an area of life that needs God’s help. At times others just make a point of getting together with other trusted Christian friends on a regular basis.

Regardless of how one does it, we must remember that we were lost, sinful and without hope. We must remember that the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. We must remember that all who turn from their sin and put their faith in Jesus Christ are forgiven and will live forever in heaven. We must remember that Christ’s resurrection is the proof that our sin debt has been paid in full. We must remember that His grace is sufficient, that when we are weak, He is strong, that He works all things for the good, that we can cast our cares upon Him, that He will never leave us or forsake us, and that nothing can separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Like the women at the tomb, as we remember the words of Christ we gain the perspective and the peace that is found in Christ.

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My father tells the story of sitting with an elderly Christian man. He was visiting him in the nursing home. The man’s mental capabilities had decreased to the point that he was hardly able to function with the world and the people around him. As my father sat with him he had no idea if the elderly man could hear or even understand anything that my father was saying. Towards the end of their time together my father suggested that they pray, and in that moment everything changed. The man began to pray as if there was nothing wrong with him at all. The work of God, the Spirit of God, the memory of God was so imbedded in His heart and mind that somehow, even in this hindered state, the words flowed as he returned to a very familiar place.

That is the kind of memory we should long for as Christians. That the memory of God and our strength of faith would be so imbedded in our hearts, minds, spirits and souls that even in that type of situation our spirits would continue to remember the blessed of God.