TITLE: REMEMBERING!

TEXT: Deut. 32:7; 1 Chr. 16:12; Deut. 6:10-12; Lk. 12:48; Deut. 8:10-20; 2 Chr. 7:14; 1 Peter 4:17

INTRODUCTION: A man who flew his own plane got tired of the long car trip from the airport to his country place which was situated on a lovely lake. So he had the idea of equipping his plane with pontoons so he could land right in front of his cottage. However, on his first trip up to the country with his newly-equipped plane, he headed for a landing at the airport just as he always had done in the past. Old habits are hard to break. But as he was going in for the landing it dawned on his wife what was happening and she hollered, “What do you think you’re doing? You can’t land this thing on the runway. You don’t have any wheels, you’ve got pontoons on it!”

Fortunately, her warning shout was in time and he pulled up from his landing pattern and swung the airplane around and headed the plane for a landing on the lake.

After the plane landed safely on the lake, he heaved a really big sigh of relief and turned to his wife and said, “That’s about the stupidest thing I’ve ever done!” Then he turned, opened the door, stepped out, and fell directly into the lake.

 This morning I want to talk about the importance of remembering. Do you realize just how important it is for us to remember? That the act of our remembering is a very important and potentially powerful thing in our life.

 The ability to remember is one of the greatest gifts that God has given us. If you don’t think so then just try to contemplate what your life would be like without the ability to remember. Not being able to call to mind all the good times of your past. Not being able to remember your wedding day or the birth of your first child… Not being able to remember the raising of your children and all the special things that they said and did growing up…Not being able to remember a loved one who has passed on….

 This is why Alzheimer’s is such as terrible disease. It doesn’t necessarily directly affect the health of the body but robs the mind of its ability to remember.

 Even the ability to remember painful and tragic things in our past has tremendous importance to us. If we didn’t remember the stove was hot we would most probably spend our entire life getting burned by its heat.

 And how terrible would it be if we weren’t able to remember Gods faithfulness to us in our times of adversity Remembering His sustaining grace to us…

 The reason that we celebrate holidays is to bring what they represent back to remembrance.

 Christmas causes us to remember the birth of our savior.

 Easter causes us to remember the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and the price that He paid to atone for our sins and the hope that we have in Him.

 Memorial Day is a day set aside for us to remember loved ones who have pasted on, especially the brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives in military service to our country.

 Today is the 4th of July, the day that we, as a nation, celebrate our national day of independence. This also is a day of remembrance. A day set aside to call to mind past events that have had a great impact and importance to us as a nation….

 Woodrow Wilson once said:
*A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about.*

 In this Christian nation it is important for us to remember from where we came, from where our roots of freedom originated, what motivated our forefathers to make the sacrifices that they did to preserve the freedoms that we enjoy today as Americans…

 In Scripture there are over 100 admonitions from God to His people to remember..

**Deut. 32:7 (NIV)
7Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you.**

**1 Chr. 16:12 (NIV)
12 Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced..**

The words that God spoke to His chosen people of the Old Testament, the nation of Israel, are just as true and pertinent for us as a nation today as they were for them then….

**Deut. 6:10-12 (NIV)
10When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, 11houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, 12be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.**

Our revolutionary war that gave birth to our nation was just as miraculous and God inspired as the Israelites taking possession of the promised land of Canaan was.

 Think back to the time of our nation’s birth…

 The American colonies were made up, not of solders and a trained military, but made up of predominantly farmers.

 At the time, the American Colonies were Colonies of Great Britton and under British domination and rule.

The reason that many had left England in the first place and came to America was because that the King of England had established a one denomination Church in England and everyone was expected to belong to it! The Church of England..

 It would be like President Biden setting up a state or national denomination today----saying that everyone would have to become a Presbyterian or a Baptist or a Catholic or a Muslim or Buddhist …

Most of those who left England to come to America came here to have freedom in their worship of and service to Christ!

In trying to keep the American Colonies under the thumb of the mother country, Great Britton…. unfair and harsh taxes were levied on the Colonies, but the straw that broke the camels back was not just the excess taxes on tea but when the King wanted all guns to be handed over to the British authorities leaving the colonist defenseless and unable to ever stand up against British opposition…

The Colonist refused and ended up going to war against the mightiest known military force of that day!

These Farmers formed militia’s, many of them just armed with hayforks, picks and ax’s, and left their homes, farms and families to fight against the most well equipped and best trained army of the day.

 It would be like Haiti or Bermuda trying to defeat the US militarily today.

And yet these untrained, ill-equipped, undisciplined colonists ended up, not just defeating the British army, but sent them home in disgrace!

How? They depended, not on their own strength, might and sufficiency but they depended on the power and might and sufficiency of their God.

It is interesting to me just how the men taken prisoner in the gallows of a British ship prayed as Fort McHenry was being so mercilessly bombarded by British warships in the war of 1812…

They weren’t praying for their own lives, they weren’t even praying for the lives of those in the Fort, but they were praying that God would keep the symbol of their freedom, the flag from falling.

 Praying that the flag wouldn’t hit the ground.

 Why? Because they knew what that flag flying on that rampart meant! It meant freedom!

 Freedom from the oppressor! Freedom to worship God in the way that they choose!

There were men who died in Fort McHenry under the barrage of British gunfire making sure that the flag didn’t hit the ground which proved the words that George Washington had so adequately spoken….

*The thing that sets the American Christian apart from all other people of the world is that he will die on his feet before he will live on his knees!*

What happened in our Revolutionary War was nothing less than miraculous!

 Sense that time God has blessed this nation like He has blessed no other… with the possible exception of Israel in the days of King David or Solomon….

 But Scripture tells us in:

**Luke 12:48 (NIV)
48 …. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.**

So God calls us, His people, to remember. Remember what He has done. Remember His mighty deliverances and His mighty power. Remember His many acts of grace….

 In speaking to all people who have been miraculously delivered by His grace God has these words of instruction…

**Deut. 8:10 -20 (NIV)
10When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.**

**11Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.**

**12Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.**

**15He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. 16He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. 17You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” 18But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.**

**19If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. 20Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.**

 What is God telling us here? He is telling us to remember!

 Remember from where we came! Remember how we got to where we are today!

**11Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees ….. 12Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of slavery.**

As a nation it is disastrous for us to forget, to not remember from where we came. To not remember how we got to where we are today.

 To forget that all that we have, all that we have become as a nation is but a blessing from God to a people who have called upon His name.

 There is also a warning here for a Godly nation that forgets its past and starts to look at itself as self-sufficient and dependent only on self….

**19If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. 20Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.**

 I believe it is time for America to remember. We need to remember today, more than any other time in our nation’s history, because we have seemed to start to develop a self-sufficient and self-reliant attitude.

 As a nation we have seemed to forget and have forsaken His commands, laws and decrees.

This past century alone we have taken prayer out of our schools telling God He is not welcome there; we have legalized abortion on demand making it legal to kill our own unborn children. We are making a mockery out of the most sacred of human institutions, marriage, by legalizing same sex marriages.

 We have assigned civil rights to things that the word of God has plainly told us are sexual perversions.

There are those who have tried to ban the Ten Commandments of God from being displayed in our Schools, courtrooms and other public places.

And what do you suppose our forefathers, the men and women and children who gave their lives to gain our freedom from British oppression and rule would think if they saw what we have done with the freedom that they gave their life to provide?

 How long will it be before great old national Hymns like “God Bless America” and “My country Tis of Thee” and even our national anthem will have to be re-written because any reference to God will be found unconstitutional.

Even just 50 years ago all of these things would have sounded totally absurd. But they don’t today do they?

We are actually seeing them happen right before our very eyes!

 Possibly the most pertinent words of Scripture to American’s today are found in:

 **Deut 8:19-20If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.**

Why is it that we don’t fear God as a nation today? Why is it that we just keep on passing ungodly and unholy laws and decrees? Legalizing abominable practices? Making Sodom and Gomorrah look like Disneyland in comparison and we have no fear of God!

Do we really think that we are so special a people that God will never judge us for our sins?

 That He will always just turn His head from our unholy actions and say well it’s OK after all they are Americans?

Some of the most insightful words that have ever been spoken in this nation I believe were spoken by George Mason, the Father of our Bill of rights while on the floor of the Constitutional Convention speaking about the difference between individual accountability to God and national accountability to God.

An individual answers to God in the future but not a nation; when a nation dies it is forever dead; it will not be resurrected in the future to answer for what it has done.

 Therefore, when does a nation answer to God?

George Mason explained*: “As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence (God) punishes national sins by national calamities.”*

Are we really so arrogant as Americans that we really think that God will never judge us for our sins?

That is an impossibility! If God wants to remain God, if God is to remain true to His character then He has to!

 If God never judges America for her sins then He owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology!

Church, as American Christians we need to remember!

We need to remember that God is Just and His justice cannot, nor will not, sleep forever.

Thomas Jefferson once said: *And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis---a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: That His justice cannot sleep forever.”*

 If Jefferson was fearful of Gods wrath in his day how much more fearful should we be of His wrath today for the sins of our nation?

So where is the hope for us today as a nation?

There is only one hope for the future of America and it lies with you and I, His Church…

**2 Chr. 7:14 (NIV)** (Gods promise to His people) **14if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**

Church if America is to ever avert the just judgment of God it has to start with us!

**14if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**

 How does one change the course of a nation? One person at a time--starting with ourselves..

 Church we need to remember! Remember the height from which we have fallen! We need to be calling upon His name! We need to be praying and interceding for our nation! We need to humble ourselves before God and turn from our wicked ways, and we need to be praying that our nation does also!

 We need to allow God to change and transform us into whom and what He wants us to be and then we need to be introducing others to Christ so that He can change and transform them also.

 This is the hope, the only hope for America!

 The question for each of us is: will we allow God to use us to be a part of the solution of changing the direction of America back toward God or will we not and remain a part of the problem?

God’s Word says in:
**1 Peter 4:17(NIV)**  **17For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?**

**For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God!**

Church, God remains a great, miracle working God.

 The same God who rose up a bunch of rag tag farmers to defeat the most powerful military of the world wants to rise us up today to defeat the oppressors of our day.

 God has given us that challenge: **14if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**

Will you heed that call to be the answer to our national healing, our national survival?

 Remembering

Just a line to say I’m living,

that I’m not among the dead,

Though I’m getting more forgetful

and mixed up in the head.

I got used to my arthritis,

to my dentures I’m resigned.

I can manage my bifocals,

but God, I miss my mind.

For sometimes I can’t remember

when I stand at the foot of the stair,

If I must go up for something

or have I just come down from there.

And before the fridge so often

my poor mind is filled with doubt.

Have I just put the food away or

have I come to take some out?

And there are times when it is dark

with my night cap on my head,

I don’t know if I’m retiring, or

just getting out of bed.

So, if it’s my turn to write you

there’s no need getting sore,

I may think that I have written

and don’t want to be a bore.

So, remember that I love you

and wish that you were near,

But now it’s nearly mail time

so I must say goodbye, dear.

There I stand beside the mailbox

with a face so very red,

Instead of mailing you my letter,

I have opened it instead.