

## *Memories*

May 28, 2006 Memorial Day Week-end  
Genesis 9:12-15, Exodus 12:14-17, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Tomorrow is Memorial Day, so today I want us to think about Memorial Day and specifically memories & remembering different events from life. I have been reflecting about how the past week & a half for me, brings with it some new memories & lots of opportunities to reflect upon the past.

On Thursday of last week I lead in the funeral service for Ruth Farrell. It was a time to celebrate her life and to reflect on different events within her life and there was also reflection about her husband Buck, who died about 7 months ago.

Then on Saturday of last week, I had the privilege to share in the wedding of Brian & Jenny Deese. At a wedding, we reflect some on what has brought a couple to this point, and we make memories. Brian had a great time dancing and socializing at the reception. As I was leaving he was outside and I heard someone tell him to go back in and make memories.

Last Sunday was Homecoming for our church. Dr. Murphy was with us and preached a sermon focusing on looking to the future, but it was also significant to remember – remembering his 20 years as pastor at Hope Valley. Jack Coffee was here & we could reflect on his leadership during the interim. We recognized our charter members that were with us & celebrated 47 years of ministry.

Monday – Wednesday I was with my son Blake & the 7<sup>th</sup> graders from his school on a field trip. Just going away with Blake & a group like that is memorable. We chartered a bus for the trip & had 2 flat tires on the way there. That made for interesting memories.

The trip was to Washington, D.C. We toured historical sites & many memorials. Our first stop was Arlington Cemetery. That is a place that has such strong history & memories. Memories of nearly 300,000 people that are buried there. It is primarily US military. While we were there, they were setting things up for the Memorial Day services, a time to reflect upon the sacrifices these men and women gave for our country. There are two US presidents buried at Arlington Cemetery, some Supreme Court Justices. There are memorials to tragedies such as the Columbia and Challenger space shuttles. We also observed the changing of the guard at the tomb of the unknown soldier.

In Washington, we visited Lincoln Memorial and the Thomas Jefferson memorial. We visited memorials to WW II, Korea and the Vietnam wars. These were all moving events. At the Vietnam memorial, I pointed out to some of the students, notes that were there with pictures and ages of these soldiers and how some of them were not much older than them (as 7<sup>th</sup> graders) when they died.

Memorial Day is set aside as a day to remember those who have died in military service for our country. May we remember their sacrifices & support them. Outside the White House I met w Vietnam Veteran who had four medals pinned to his hat including a bronze star & a purple heart. He was protesting for better care for veteran.

My memories for this past week continued after I returned, when on Thursday, we had an end of the year party for Madison and her kindergarten class. It was a fun time to remember and celebrate Kindergarten. Then that evening Matthew graduated from 8<sup>th</sup> grade & finished his time at a school he has attended for many years. There was a dinner in honor of the graduates and slides showing different scenes of their lives. It was more remembering.

Remembering significant events from life is extremely important. Earlier I read three passages of scripture, all about signs that could help individuals remember the past. Let's look at them again.

The first one is after the flood that destroyed the earth. It is found in **Genesis 9:12-15** *12 God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: 13 I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.*

When we see a rainbow, it is to remind us that God is present & the world will never again be completely destroyed by a flood. It is a way to remember.

The second passage is found in Exodus. This is when the Israelites were in captivity in Egypt. There had been nine plagues that God had sent on the people, the 10<sup>th</sup> and final plague was the death angel killing the first born son of the Egyptians. The Israelites had been instructed to kill and eat a sheep & put it's blood on their doorpost & their first born son would be spared. Here we find instructions on how to celebrate the Passover. The Passover is celebrating how the death angel passed over the homes with the blood on the door post.

**Exodus 12:14-17** *14 This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. 15 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel. 16 On the first day you shall hold a solemn assembly, and on the seventh day a solemn assembly; no work shall be done on those days; only what everyone must eat, that alone may be prepared by you. 17 You shall observe the festival of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your companies out of the land*

*of Egypt: you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a perpetual ordinance.*

This was a time set up to remember God's work in their lives at Passover. Jesus was executed at a Passover Celebration. This was fitting because he was about to become the ultimate sacrificial lamb. At that Passover, Jesus started a new tradition, that is now known as the Lord's Supper or Communion. It is a time to remember His sacrifice and our sins. The passage about this memorial is found in **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** *23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of **bread**, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my **body** that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This **cup** is the new covenant in my **blood**. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

With the bread & juice, we remember Jesus' sacrifice of his body & blood. Each Sunday is to be a celebration of Jesus' resurrection. We worship on Sunday because Jesus was resurrected on a Sunday. That is the reason that the Christians changed their worship day from Saturday, the Sabbath, to Sunday. And partaking in the Lord's Supper is a special service to remember.

A baptismal service is a memory. It is an act symbolizing a changed life and it is a time to reflect on the commitment we are making. It is a time to remember what Jesus has done for us and to make new memories in our commitment to God.

As we reflect on memories **it is important to think about people whose lives have shaped our lives** and especially today, I want us to remember those who have now gone on before us to Heaven. I specifically think of 6 people from this church who have gone to Heaven over the past year: **Buck & Ruth Farrell, Preston Byrd, Nikki Cooke, Thelma Cooke & Polly Honeycutt**. May we remember their lives & their impact on us & may their lives continue to impact us.

**Today I also want you to remember great points in your life & in your relationship with God.** Henry Blackaby calls these spiritual markers. We can't remain on a spiritual high, but reflecting on these events can be helpful in our spiritual journey. You could reflect on when you became a Christian, overcame an adversity, served in a new way, recommitted your life, or some other high point in your life.

How was God working in your life? In what ways were you open to God that you may not always be open to God?

**Next, I would like for you to remember low points in your life and low points in your walk with God.** They may or may not closely relate. We don't like to remember our low and painful times, but often these are the times that we remember the most. What

lead to that point? How did you grow beyond it? Or are you still there? What do you think it will take to move forward in your life and your relationship with God?

George Santayana has said, “*Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.*” It is important to know history and to learn from it and that can include history in our own lives. Our goal should be to not repeat the same mistakes. We also are not to repeat the same high points. That may sound strange, but we are to learn from our mistakes & our highs to move into the future that God has for us.

**I want you to also think about how you can make some good memories.** My wife Anne often reminds me of this importance of intentionally making memories. This past week, I think I made some good memories by spending a few days with Blake in Washington, D.C. and by sharing in Madison’s kindergarten end of the year party & in Matthew’s 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation. I have recently made memories in celebrating a Homecoming, in sharing with individuals when they prayed to accept Christ and in sharing in a wedding. How can you make good memories in your life and in the lives of others?

Going along with that thought, I would finally, ask **how do you want to be remembered, after you die or after you move away or if others move away?** How do you want others to remember you? What do you desire for your legacy to be on your family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, our church, and others? It can be helpful to think of how we want to be remembered and what impact that we would like to have on others & then do the things that would help that happen. If you want to be remembered as a person that loves Jesus, cares for others, and lets Jesus live in you, then you have something to work toward. If you want to be remembered as someone that is always negative, grouchy and hard to get along with, then you have a goal there as well (not a good one, but you have a goal). How do you want to be remembered?

### **Conclusion**

Tomorrow we celebrate Memorial Day. It is a day set aside to remember those who have given their lives in service for our country. Today we have expanded upon the idea of remembering, so I encourage you to:

- 1) Remember those who have died in service of our country.
- 2) Remember our Christian friends and family members who have gone to Heaven in the past year.
- 3) Reflect on the importance of remembering events – Rainbow, Passover the Lord’s Supper, Baptism, etc.
- 4) Remember great points in your life & your walk with God.
- 5) Remember low points in your life & your walk with God.
- 6) Make memories
- 7) Think about how you want to be remembered.

Through these reflections you may feel a need to make a commitment to God. It could be that you remember what God has done for you, you remember his love or you may be impacted by a loved one, or through remembering highs in your life or lows, or how you want to make memories or want to be remembered.

Your decision could be to accept Christ.

Rededicate life. Pray. Move your membership.