

Message Reflections

a little something extra to keep you connected to Jesus this week

Message Reflections accompany the [weekly message](#).

Did you know the word “remember” is in the bible over 250 times. God tells us to remember because no one knows our weaknesses better than our creator and we have a tendency toward amnesia, especially in times of trouble but even during times of peace and rejoicing.

As we celebrate the 50th birthday of White River Christian Church, we look back at everything the Lord has accomplished through us for his glory but we also remember how he made it all possible even when things seemed impossible. We heard stories about his faithfulness: a parking lot that needed to be paved for a high price and God provided, trucks full of food coming for weeks to the food pantry, a woman finally selling her lot to the church so the church could expand after a little girl approached her, and many more.

Remembering God’s pivotal provisions and rescues in our lives is paramount in how we react to times of uncertainty, trouble, or calamity. It is also how we can remain steadfast in waiting, knowing that God always shows up because he always has before. Keeping our eyes on Jesus instead of on our present troubles keeps us at peace and not flailing about. When a person is drowning, they are in such a panic that a rescuer has to approach from behind in order to make sure they are not taken under by the flailing of the victim. What if the person drowning knew they would always be rescued? What if they had assurance that they would not go under? Would they still flail endlessly, wearing themselves out, and potentially ruining the very rescue they need? I don’t think so.

The Israelites were especially forgetful and they seemed to flail about quite a bit. They recognized this about themselves so they were very good at oral tradition and at making memorials or altars to remind themselves of God’s faithfulness, power, and provision. One such example that kept coming to mind this weekend can be found in 1 Samuel, chapter 7. Here the Israelites are about to be attacked by the Philistines and Samuel tells them the only way to be rescued is to fully repent of their sins, get rid of their idols, and turn to God for aid. The Israelites did as he said and they gathered at Mizpah for prayer, fasting, sacrifices, and confession. The Philistines seized the opportunity of this gathering to attack

the Israelites. Just as the Philistines had arrived to attack them, the Lord spoke with “a mighty voice of thunder from heaven” that confused them and the Israelites were able to defeat them in battle. Samuel then took a large stone and placed it between the towns of Mizpah and Jeshanah and named it “Ebenezer”, which means “the stone of help” saying “the Lord has helped us up to this point”.

So, like the Israelites, I encourage you to practice your own oral traditions, passing down the stories of God’s goodness, faithfulness, power, and rescues in your life. Place your “Ebenezers” around your home and remind yourself of the mighty God you serve so that “whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2-4), you will not flail about in despair but instead REMEMBER.

Questions for further discussion:

- Share a time when God showed up for you in a pivotal way?
- What is a tangible way (like a large stone between two towns) that you can remind yourself of God’s power and rescue? What can you place around your home that will remind you? What are your Ebenezers?
- When you face trouble, what is your posture? Are you “flailing about, exhausting yourself, potentially ruining your rescue”? Or do you remember? Share some examples.