
Doug Hood's Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

October 2, 2016

Remember

READ: Deuteronomy 4:23b (Common English Bible)

“Don't forget the covenant that the Lord your God made with you...”

MEDITATE:

The word, “remember” has taken on fresh poignancy for the citizens of the United States. Recently, our nation observed the fifteenth anniversary of the terrorist attack in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. Commonly referenced as 9/11, the entering High School freshman class this year is the first class to begin High School who was born after these attacks. It is all history to them. Why is it important to teach these young students what happened that September day before they were born? Foremost, it is important because it is a critical part of our shared story as U.S. citizens. That single incident has dramatically reshaped the landscape of how we live today. Secondly, the story keeps all of us wide-eyed of what occurs each day around the world and how our lives may be impacted.

Here in Deuteronomy, Moses asks the people of God to “remember.” Remember their slavery in Egypt. Remember God's leadership, and care for them, as they traveled from Egypt, through the wilderness, to a new land that will be their home. Remember, because all that history has shaped them as a people; has shaped them as a nation. If they are to have any understanding of their identity, they must remember who they were and God's mighty acts among them. Just as important, their future is filled with uncertainties – as is any future – and the very act of “recalling” God's presence and care in the past strengthens them for whatever they would face moving forward. “Don't forget the covenant that the Lord your God made with you.”

This is an important reason for our regular worship and personal reading of the Bible. Like the nation of Israel, we also must remember. In those times when our life has reached the depths of disappointment and struggle, it is easy to remember; to remember and call out to God for help. But when life is sailing from one beautiful shore to the next, difficulty is at a minimum and resources to meet any emotional or physical need are abundant, remembering God is difficult. Little by little, a notion expands upon our consciousness that God can be dispensed with. The tragic result is to face the future alone, with only our strength. Eventually, that strength will be insufficient.

Perhaps a greater concern is that when a nation loses its faith, a sense that each of us belong to something bigger than the present moment, that nation ceases to be a nation at all. What is left is a lot of people milling around with no larger story arc than their own small lives, going nowhere. It is important to remember origins, to remember where we came from and how we got here. This memory dispenses the lie that we made something out of our lives from nothing. Memory becomes the source and impulse to new life; a life full of hope and promise for the future. And the nation that recovers a sense of responsibility, under God, discovers a divine purpose that strengthens the bonds that binds one to another and thrusts it forward into the future with confident expectation.

