

# **“Remember Not to Forget!”**

**Titus 3:1-7**

**Intro.** – An Absent minded man tied a string around his finger to remind himself of something to do at home that evening. After dinner he noticed the string but couldn’t remember why it was there. He decided if he stayed up long enough, the reason for the string would come to him. At 2 AM it came to him – he wanted to get to bed early that evening.

Now, we all have experienced something like this and we all have matters in our lives we would like to forget, but losing one’s memory is a frightening thing. We all know loved ones who have or are experiencing this... Having one’s memory is such a blessing. Why then do we forget?

Illus. – professor was giving a lecture on senility. He said, “There are three causes for senility: 1) age... and the other two reasons I forget.”

One reason we forget and it has nothing to do with aging, some matters are simply not on our list of priorities to remember. For instance, I can’t remember the phone number of our dentist in Bloomington, IN.

Sometimes we forget matters simply because we don’t use them enough to keep them. Anybody here take a foreign language? I took Spanish in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Made A’s/B’s – it wasn’t an intense course and not having used it... Today, I simply put an “O” on the end of everything and act like I know what I’m doing. Truth is, if you don’t use it you lose it.

Interesting fact about the Bible is the OT and NT are always emphasizing the retelling of principles, stories and precepts that will shape peoples’ identity. Never find Scripture saying, “This account will get old if you use it too much; so, don’t bring it up too often.” Don’t hear the Jews saying, “Quit telling the account of the Passover too much because you don’t want your kids getting bored by it.” Won’t hear Paul saying, “Don’t bring up the Cross of Christ because such will wear people out.” Listen, Christians on the road to maturity must remember not to forget!

*Purpose: to reaffirm the need we have to cultivate our memories toward Godly matters*

Remembering is part of the renewing process through which Christians are to be going. Reminding is a key responsibility of leadership. Biblical preaching is not the presentation of new truth. It is making fresh/relevant the already delivered truth of the Gospel. I’m not told to go out, find new truth and pump you full of new truth each time I preach or teach. My responsibility here is to teach it again, retell it again and preach it again and again and again! With this in mind, it’s not surprising the opening words of our text are “*Remind the people...*” Paul is summarizing matters that Christians must remember not to forget:

## **I Remember What We WERE (3:1-3)**

### **A. We All Are Sinners**

1. Vv 1-2 Paul is urging all Christians to “*live above*” the world and to do this why?
2. Read the very next verse (3:3)
  - a. i.e. “you need to remember you’ve been delivered from what you once were.
  - b. look at these words: “*foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts/pleasures, spending your life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.*”
3. Such is the dark and wicked picture of a Christless world – Paul’s description of humanity is in sharp contrast to the typical commercials (beer commercials in particular) that we see today.
  - a. commercials today show slick, clean, “sophisticated,” “pretty,” people having a good time...
  - b. not going to see twisted metal car wreck... e.r. rooms... broken homes... people heaving etc.
  - c. Paul is saying such is NOT the real world!
4. The world you and I live in people are foolish, disobedient, deceived, malicious, wicked, hateful – and you know what, apart from the grace of God such WERE you and me!
5. Paul is saying modern civilization is merely a veneer. That there is a thin lid keeping the cover on savagery and if you get the right situations together, it will explode.

### **B. Life Without Christ**

1. Christians must not forget what we WERE and what we would BE without Jesus – 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 *“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*
2. Some have a tough time identifying with this principle – words: *“foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved, envy, hateful...”* etc. – some say: *“That’s not me! I was raised in the church, pay taxes...”*
  - a. those who refuse to relate to this verse are the same who cannot relate to salvation by grace.
  - b. many won’t say but many think and even act in such a way that salvation by grace is not needed—their goodness (good works) is enough...
3. All who stand accountable before God, there is tremendous potential for evil. If it weren’t for the presence/power of Holy Spirit in us, we’d be as vile as the next person on earth in God’s sight...
4. Illus. – George Whitefield (famous English preacher) one day was along a street as the authorities were marching a convicted criminal to the gallows. The people began to spit and curse at the man. But it was Whitfield who said softly under his breath, *“There but for the grace of God go I.”*
5. Remember what we were and what we would be apart from Christ – We all are sinners!

## II Remember How God RESPONDED (3:4-5)

### A. God Appeared to Save Us

1. Note: two aspects of God are emphasized throughout Scripture: 1) Love...; 2) Righteousness...
2. God “appeared” to hateful, deceitful, disobedient people to save them – such involved His love... BUT it also involved His justice/righteousness...
  - God appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. Why? To pay for the punishment of my sins, your sins and the sins of the world in person!...

### B. Why God Did This

1. It is God’s nature – 3 words to describe God: 1) kind 2) love 3) mercy
  - here we are, sinners by choice, filled with motives unbecoming of God’s holiness, deserving of eternal punishment; yet, God desires that none would perish!
2. We couldn’t save ourselves:
  - a. not because of righteous things we’ve done – if we could save ourselves by our own works or own righteousness, the coming of Christ (life, death, burial, and resurrection) useless...
  - b. salvation by grace is not God *making up the difference* for those of us who don’t have quite enough good works to offer... salvation is by grace and by grace alone.
  - c. one of the thrilling things about heaven = there will be no boasting except in the Cross of X!
3. We must remember and not forget that it all began with the GRACE OF GOD!

## III Remember Why We HOPE (3:5-7)

### A. The Matter of Immersion

1. A lot of Biblical students believe this is an early baptismal hymn of the early Christians.
2. The phrases: *“saved by... washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”* is a clear reference to what? -- Baptism into Christ. All based on other references in Scripture: John 3:5 *“born of water and the Spirit,”* Acts 2:38 *“...for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* Romans 6:1-4 *“As many as were baptized... therefore we have been buried with Him in baptism unto death so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”*
3. All show immersion has nothing to do with salvation by OUR works; instead, it has everything to do with the *occasion* of God’s work – baptism into Christ is a work of God NOT a work of man!
4. All show immersion not man doing a work to impress/obligate God; instead, baptism God’s work!

### B. The Result is Two-Fold

1. Justification – every time used of man in Bible is used in the passive sense – never says we justify ourselves... always says we have been, we are justified by God!
2. We become heirs – heirs are people whom by simply being heirs have hope.

- a. what is Paul saying here? That we have because of what we've done and what we've made of ourselves because we're so good...?
- b. absolutely not – our hope doesn't rest in our ability; instead, is rest in God alone!
- c. why do I have hope...? Because of how good I am?... Hardly, I have hope/promise because of Him with Whom I am identified. I've made my stand with Christ and I've been immersed into Christ (clothed with His righteousness) ready with the right clothing for the wedding feast.

It is so important we remember not to forget why we have hope!

#### IV Remember People WILL NOTICE (3:1-2)

##### A. What Grace Saved People Do

1. They live with such *graciousness* toward others that even secular world takes note.
2. It's our walk, not our talk that will cause the world to investigate the truths upon which we stand...
3. Few non-Christians will come and listen to me talk about grace, BUT they will watch you and me to see if this grace thing is for real or not!

##### B. Walk Grace Wherever You Go

1. 3:1-2 (read) go about your business with graciousness, thoughtfulness and humility.
2. Is it going to be easy? No, but by remembering what we were and how God treated us it will help.
3. When you remember what you were and how God responded you have a powerful motive to respond in kind to those about you, even around unforgiven people.

**Conclusion:** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his book *The Great Boer War* tells the story of how some British soldiers were ambushed by a far superior force. They suffered heavy losses. They had to retreat to safety and a number of their comrades were left bleeding and dying on the battlefield. They knew if they couldn't get under the safety of the Red Cross those men die for certain. But there wasn't a Red Cross representative around; so, a Corporal of infantry took a white sheet and soldiers took blood from their own wounds and made a red cross. They held it up and the enemy held fire long enough for them to get their friend to safety.

What Paul was telling the Cretan Christians, we are people who march under the banner of a red cross. God shed His own blood. It has pulled you out of an evil world, given you hope and taken you out of the rock throwing business. As long as you march under this banner, you hold your fire and learn to share grace!

Memories are important. How many of us are as grateful today for God's grace as we were the day we accepted this indescribable gift? Do you remember the day you became a Christian? If you leave here today saying, "I'm doing pretty good,. I got this 'being good stuff' down to an art..." you haven't a clue of how dangerously forgetful you have become.

Hear me friends. Forgetfulness breeds faithlessness. We must remember not to forget!