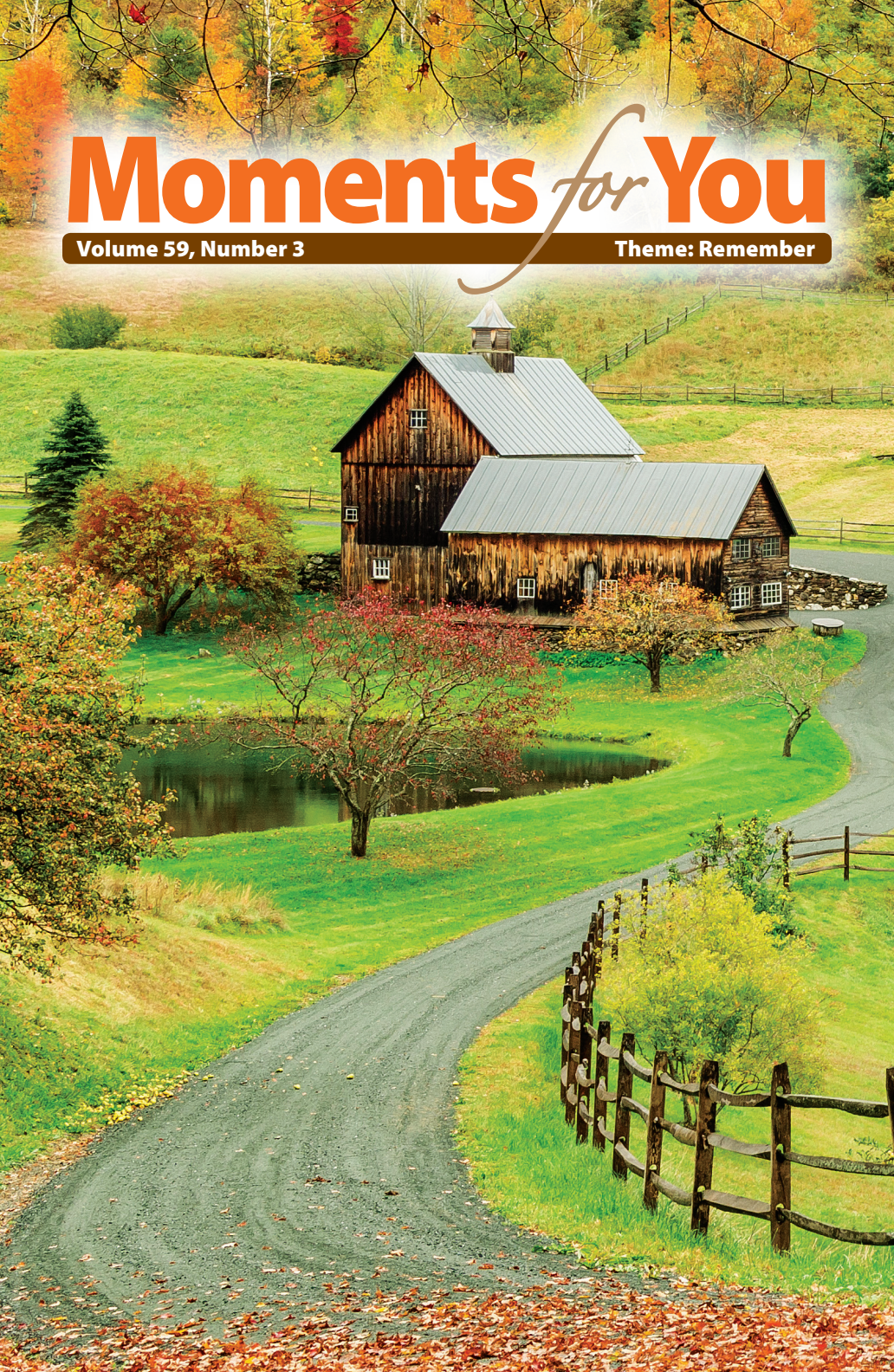


Moments *for* You

Volume 59, Number 3

Theme: Remember



GOD REMEMBERS

Have you ever felt forgotten by God? You prayed, but God didn't answer. You read the Bible, but it didn't speak to you. The trials in your life made you think that God went on vacation and forgot about you and your problems.

Noah may have felt like that after being on the ark for a while. The whole world had been destroyed by the flood. The rain had beat down in torrents upon that lonely ark for 40 days and nights. Finally, the rain stopped and the only sound was that of the water sloshing against the sides of the ark. Noah probably expected to hear from the Lord about then. But if God spoke to Noah, the Bible doesn't report it.

"GOD REMEMBERED NOAH"

What do you suppose Noah was thinking during all that time on the water? At times he probably felt forgotten by God. Maybe you're there right now. You need assurance that God hasn't forgotten you. We read words of hope in Genesis 8:1: "God remembered Noah, and every living thing." When the text says, "God remembered Noah," it does not imply that somehow He got busy with other things and Noah slipped from His mind for a while.

Rather, in the Bible the word is used often of God in the sense of God taking action on His promises. When God was about to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, He "remembered Abraham" and spared Lot on his behalf (Genesis 19:29). When Rachel wanted to bear children, but could not, we read that "God remembered Rachel" and she con-

ceived (Genesis 30:22). When Israel was in bondage in Egypt, we read that "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Exodus 2:24). When Mary conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit, she praised God who remembered His mercy as He had spoken to Abraham and his offspring (Luke 1:54-55). The penitent thief on the cross asked, "Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42). In every case, the idea is the same: God remembers in the sense of taking action on His promises.

So here, God remembered Noah and those on the ark. It points to God's faithfulness. From our point of view, it may seem that God has forgotten. Perhaps He has been silent for a long while. But He will act on our behalf in His time. He remembers. He is faithful to those who are His. God's faithful remembrance is seen in three ways in Genesis 8.

GOD'S REMEMBRANCE IS SEEN IN HIS PAST SALVATION

God's past salvation is seen in the ark. Noah and everyone on board the ark had been spared God's judgment. It was not a luxury liner, but those on board were safe. As Noah and his family felt the ark come to rest on the mountain, even though God was yet silent, they knew one thing for certain—by God's grace they had been spared His awful judgment. If you have trusted in God's only means of salvation, the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, even if God seems silent at the moment, you can rest assured that you are safe in Jesus Christ.

A man once came to D. L. Moody and said he was worried because he didn't feel saved. Moody asked, "Was

Noah safe in the ark?” “Certainly he was,” the man replied. “Well, what made him safe, his feeling or the ark?” The man got the point. Noah found grace (6:8), and so has every person who has trusted Christ as Savior.

John Newton, preacher and author of “Amazing Grace,” was a drunken sailor and slave trader when God saved him. He wrote a text in bold letters and put it over the mantle of his study, where he could not fail to see it: “Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee” (Deut. 15:15). Newton wanted to remember God’s faithfulness as seen in His past salvation.

GOD’S REMEMBRANCE IS SEEN IN HIS PROMISE OF FUTURE PRESERVATION

As he came off the ark, Noah must have had some mixed emotions. On the one hand, he was grateful for God’s deliverance. But on the other hand, he must have felt a bit apprehensive. God had wiped out every other person and all other animals on the face of the earth. Noah must have thought, “What if we disobey Him? Will He wipe us out?”

But those whom God saves, He keeps. Our final preservation doesn’t depend on our grip on God, but on God’s strong grip on us (Jude 24). It doesn’t rest on our great faith, but on His great faithfulness. Aren’t you glad that your future deliverance from God’s judgment depends on God’s faithfulness, not yours? While those who truly know Christ will be growing in obedience, there isn’t a saint who has a perfect track record. Satan likes to come and say, “You claim to be a Christian? Look at your sins! How can you possibly expect God to save you?”

At such times of doubt, I have to say to Satan, “I’m not trusting in my track record to commend me to God.

I’m trusting in the faithfulness of the God who has said, ‘Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more’ (Hebrews 10:17). I’m trusting in His Word which declares that ‘He which hath begun a good work in [me] will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ’ (Philippians 1:6).”

GOD’S REMEMBRANCE IS SEEN IN HIS PRESENT PROVISION

God had provided all that Noah and his family needed to survive, both on the ark and once they set foot on dry ground again. The earth again sprouted with vegetation, as seen in the olive leaf in the dove’s beak. (The olive tree can sprout even under water.) The olive leaf showed Noah that the water had greatly subsided, since olive trees grow at lower elevations than where the ark came to rest.

God’s provision is also seen in that He had instructed Noah to take seven clean animals on the ark, rather than just two. Noah used one of the seven for his sacrifice (8:20). But in 9:3, God ordains that man may now eat meat. Thus the clean animals provided food for the survivors of the flood until they could grow new crops and until the animals multiplied.

Often when God is silent in our lives, it’s because He wants to bring us into a situation where He makes all things new. But sometimes He has to destroy the old before He can remake the new. We can count on His faithfulness during the silence, knowing that He has saved us in the past, He has promised to preserve us in the future, and He is providing for us in the present. Noah clung to those assurances when God was silent for that long year in the ark. You can cling to those assurances right now, if it seems as if God has forgotten you.

—Condensed from “When You Feel Forgotten By God” copyright 1996 by Steven J. Cole.

LORD, REMEMBER ME

“When they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left” (Luke 23:33).

Three men died that day. They were crucified side by side outside the walls of Jerusalem at a place called Golgotha (“skull hill”) where the Romans did their killing. It was located not far from the Damascus Gate so that people going into the city would have to see the executions.

Jesus of Nazareth hangs on the middle cross. Two men were crucified with Him, one on His right and one on His left.

PORTRAIT OF TWO THIEVES

Who were they? The translators use different words to describe them: “Thieves, robbers, malefactors, bandits.” Luke’s word means “members of the criminal class, professional criminals, members of the underworld.” These men were hoods, thugs, cutthroat killers, men who killed for fun and profit, assassins. Beyond that, we know little else about them.

It may appear that these two men are exactly alike. They were both criminals who were sentenced to die together at the same time and place. Both had been severely beaten, both were covered with blood and dirt. Both men were dying and both would soon be dead.

But in reality, no two men could be more different. These two men who were crucified on the outer crosses differed on one main point: how they viewed the Man in the middle.

AMAZING FAITH

Let’s take a closer look at the man who wanted forgiveness. Was any man ever in a more desperate situa-

tion? Brutally crucified, he is dying in agony for crimes he had committed. He is a guilty man, justly punished. He deserves to die and he knows it. This man is as close to death as you can be and still be alive. Now, at the last moment, he makes one final appeal to the Supreme Court of the Universe: “Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42).

I submit to you that here we have the most amazing example of saving faith in all the Bible. Jesus is hanging next to him, a bloody mess, a sight awful to behold. The man’s feet and arms are nailed to the cross, ropes hold his body upright so it won’t fall off. Every movement is agony, every breath torture. Beneath him the howling mob screams for blood. They jeer, they hiss, they curse, they spit, they roar like wild hyenas.

Somehow this thief saw Jesus bleeding and dying and yet he believed that He would someday rule a kingdom. He saw Jesus at His weakest, and still he believed in Him. He is a crucified sinner trusting in a crucified Savior. No man ever looked less like a king than Jesus did that day, yet this man saw Him as He really was.

This is made more amazing when you consider that this man had none of the advantages the disciples had. As far as we can tell, he never heard Jesus teaching by the seashore, he never saw Jesus heal the sick or raise the dead, he knew nothing of Jesus’ great parables and never saw any of His miracles. This man missed all the outward signs of Jesus’ kingship. Yet he believed.

He evidently knew nothing of the virgin birth, the Old Testament prophecies, the conversation with Nicodemus or the raising of Lazarus just one week earlier. The coming

miracle of the resurrection was unknown to him. All the things we take for granted, he knew nothing about. Yet there on the cross, he came to understand the heart of the gospel. In the crucified Jesus—beaten, mocked, forsaken, His life blood ebbing away—this thief saw a King.

One crucified man saw another crucified Man and believed in Him. That made the difference between heaven and hell.

A PROMISE WITH THREE PARTS

How do we know this thief was saved? We know he was saved by the answer Jesus gave in verse 43: “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.”

Jesus answered his request by giving him a promise with three parts.

1. Immediate Salvation. Note the word “today.” Jesus put it first for emphasis, meaning, “This very day, the day of your crucifixion.” Wherever “paradise” is, Jesus told this thief that he was going there that very day.

2. Personal Salvation. The phrase means to be “with Me in a very personal way.” It is not “You over there and Me over here” but “You and Me together, side by side.” It means to be in the personal presence of another person. Wherever Jesus was going, this thief would be right by His side. Heaven is where Jesus is, and to be with Him is to be in Heaven.

3. Heavenly Salvation. “Paradise” is the crucial word. Scholars tell us that it originally referred to the walled gardens of the Persian kings. When a king wanted to honor his subjects, he would invite them to walk with him in his garden in the cool of the day. This same word was used in the Greek Old Testament to refer to the Garden of Eden; in Revelation 2:7 it refers to heaven. It is a place of beauty and inexpressible blessedness.

If we take these three promises together, we can see what a remarkable thing Jesus is saying. He is promising that this thief—who has lived his entire life in crime—will, upon his death, be transferred to heaven where he will be in the personal presence of Jesus Christ. Truly, this thief received much more than he asked for.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

I know that some people feel that they are too far gone in sin to ever be forgiven. Let me put the matter plainly. It doesn’t matter where you’ve been sleeping. It doesn’t matter what you’ve been drinking. It doesn’t matter who you’ve been hanging around with. It doesn’t even matter if you’ve broken the Ten Commandments—all of them, one by one—this week. It just doesn’t matter. You can be saved right now.

If this man can be saved, anyone can be saved. If there’s hope for him, there’s hope for you. If he can make it to heaven, so can you. If Jesus would take him, He’ll certainly take you.

He was pardoned before he lived a single righteous day. In one transforming moment, a man who was not fit to live on earth was made fit to live in heaven. I take my stand with him. I claim the same mercy. We all get to heaven the same way, by the grace and mercy of God.

All that God wants from us—and all that He will accept—is simple faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. When we place our faith in the Lord Jesus, in that very moment we are saved.

The question is simple. Are you ready to die? You have nothing to fear if you know the Lord. You are not ready to die if you don’t. Do you know Him? What will you do if you don’t know Him?

—Condensed from “Last-Second Salvation” by Ray Pritchard.

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE

“Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32).

What about Lot’s wife? She stands as the everlasting witness of the danger of not obeying the word of the Lord. She is like many souls who would like to be saved, but have not reached the point of safety. The Lord says to such, “Remember Lot’s wife.”

Did she want to be saved? Yes. Did she wish to escape destruction? Yes. Did she look like she might escape it? Yes. Did she escape it? No! She could have been saved, but she was not. She appeared to leave the city, and appeared to be going to the mountain of safety, but her heart wasn’t in it. She didn’t really believe the judgment was coming, so she looked back and perished. “Remember Lot’s wife.”

Before God judges, He always warns. Do you know, my friend, that judgment is coming? Jesus said, “as it was in the days of Lot ... even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed” (Luke 17:28-30). This world is like a convicted murderer, sentenced to death. We bring to you a warning of the judgment that is coming. We also bring the good news that there is a way of escape for you: “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

God’s own Son stepped into this world, and has done a work on the cross whereby the sinner may escape God’s wrath. Jesus died on the cross for your sins and mine, and rose from the grave to prove that He has accomplished the victory over sin and death. The very fact that God sent His Son to die for us is irrefutable proof that we are lost, hopeless sinners in need of His salvation. How shall we escape the judgment of God if we “neglect so great salvation”? (Hebrews 2:3).

Do you say, “I will think about it. I will consider what you say”? Then I say to you again, “Remember Lot’s wife.” O, my friend, escape for your life and flee to the mountain! Let not your soul have rest until you own your sin, confess your guilt, and come to Jesus by faith. He will receive you, pardon you, and you shall know His salvation—security and tranquility like you’ve never experienced.

“Flee from the wrath to come” (Matthew 3:7).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).
—W.T.P. Wolston, adapted.

REMEMBER & TRUST

“I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember Thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all Thy work, and talk of Thy doings” (Psalm 77:10-12).

The Psalmist had it right! When we remember and reflect upon what God has done in the past, it isn’t hard to trust Him for the future, is it?

—From *Winning Words for Daily Living* by Charles U. Wagner.

NEHEMIAH’S PRAYER

“Remember me, O my God, for good” (Nehemiah 13:31).

Nehemiah was emphatically a man of prayer. In every trouble, in each anxiety, in all times of danger, he turned to God. Standing behind the king’s chair, Nehemiah prayed; in his private room in the Shushan palace, he pleaded for Jerusalem; and all through his rough, anxious life as a reformer and a governor, we find him constantly lifting up his heart to God in short, earnest prayers.

There was one prayer of which he seems to have been especially fond, for three times Nehemiah asks God to remember him. “Think upon me, my God, for good” (5:19). “Remember me, O my God” (13:14). “Remember me, O my God, for good” (13:31).

Can it be that this prayer was suggested to him by the words of his friend, the prophet Malachi? Can it be, that as he and Nehemiah spoke together of the Lord they loved, Malachi may have spoken these beautiful words in order to cheer and encourage his disheartened and unappreciated friend? “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Malachi 3:16,17).

Can we wonder that Nehemiah longed to know that his name was in that book of remembrance, and that he often turned the desire into a prayer, pleading with God, “Remember me, O my God”? It is a very touching prayer. Look carefully at the wording of it, and you will notice that it is humble in every detail. Nehemiah does not say, “Publish to the world my good deeds.” He simply says, “Wipe them not out.” He does not say, “Reward me,” but, “Remember me.”

Nehemiah passes away from our sight with that prayer on his lips: “Remember me, O my God, for good.” And was the prayer heard? Was Nehemiah remembered? Surely he was, for “the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance” (Psalm 112:6).

The day is coming when those of us whose names are written in

the Lamb’s Book of Life (Revelation 21:27) shall see Nehemiah. In God’s great day of reward, when one after another of His faithful servants appear before Him, we shall hear the Lord proclaim to him, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:21).

—From *The King’s Cupbearer* by O.F. Walton.

CAN GOD FORGET?

“Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 8:12).

What does it mean that God remembers our sins and iniquities no more? Does it mean that our all-knowing God can actually *forget* what we have done? No: if God forgot anything, He would cease to be God! The phrase “remember no more” means “hold against us no more.” God *recalls* what we have done, but He *does not hold it against us*. He deals with us on the basis of grace and mercy, not law and merit. Once sin has been forgiven, it is never brought before us again. The matter is settled eternally.

As a pastor, I have often heard people say, “Well, I can forgive—but I cannot forget!” “Of course you can’t forget,” I usually reply. “The more you try to put this thing out of your mind, the more you will remember it. But that isn’t what it means to forget.” Then I go on to explain that “to forget” means “to not hold it against the person who wronged us.” We may *remember* what others have done, but we are called to forgive them and treat them *as though they never did it*.

How is this possible? It is possible because of the cross, for there God treated His perfect, sinless Son as though He *had* done it! Our experience of forgiveness from God makes it possible for us to forgive others.

—From *Be Confident* by Warren W. Wiersbe.

REMEMBER TO FORGET

“Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil” (Genesis 41:51).

Some things should be forgotten. Joseph could have wasted his life dwelling on the injustices he suffered. As a youth, his brothers sold him into slavery, and he was forced to live in a hostile land. He had to spend his teenage and adult years away from his beloved father. Joseph even spent time in prison. In spite of all he endured, he harbored no resentment. In fact, he named his son Manasseh, which means “forgetting.”

The result of “forgetting” past hurts is illustrated in the life of Pastor William Sangster. A guest who had come to spend the Christmas holidays with Sangster was watching him address the last of his greeting

cards. One of the names on the list startled the friend. “Surely you are not sending a card to him,” he said. “Why not?” the preacher asked. “Don’t you remember what he said about you?” Sangster replied that he only remembered a resolution he made at that time. He had determined that with God’s help he would forget about the man’s cutting remark. The card was sent as planned.

Yes, some things need to be dropped from the Christian’s memory. He shouldn’t harbor wrongs done to him. He must not let some unkind word keep him from maturing in Christ as he should. And he should never use another’s insensitivity as his excuse for not serving the Lord.

Are there things in your past that you need to forgive and forget? It is far better to forgive and forget than to resent and remember.

—D.C.E., *Our Daily Bread*

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Remember
now
thy Creator.
Ecclesiastes 12:1

Remember
how short
my time is.
Psalm 89:47

This do in
remembrance of
Me.
Luke 22:19

Remember
the
poor.
Galatians 2:10

Some trust in
chariots ... but we
will remember the
name of the Lord.
Psalm 20:7

Remember all the
way which the
Lord thy God led
thee.
Deuteronomy 8:2

Remember them
that are in bonds
(prison), as bound
with them.
Hebrews 13:3

Remember His
marvellous works
that He hath
done.
1 Chronicles 16:12

Remember ...
if they have
persecuted Me,
they will also
persecute you.
John 15:20

Remember the
words of the
Lord Jesus ...
It is more blessed
to give than
to receive.
Acts 20:35

Remember them ...
who have spoken
unto you the
word of God:
whose faith follow.
Hebrews 13:7

Remember
therefore from
whence thou art
fallen, and repent,
and do the
first works.
Revelation 2:5