

## **MEMORY by David Webb – Sunday 3 Jan 2010**

Almost two years ago the world laughed and shuddered together when a story broke from Italy that a man had left his wife at a gas stop and then driven six hours before he noticed she wasn't there.

I feel for that man. I have seven children and I fully expect one day I will go into to kiss one of my children good night and find an empty bed, and wonder whose turn it was to pick them up from school.

Memory seems so fragile. Have you ever walked into a room and can't remember why you went there? Have you ever gone back to where you started, then remembered, then went back to the room in question, then forgot again? This happens to men after the age of 40. This happens to women of any age after the birth of their second child.

And yet much of the bible directs us to remember. Remembering is an epic biblical concept.

The good news is that there is no biblical requirement to remember where you put your car keys. But there is a list of things we are encouraged to remember:

### Exodus 20:8

Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.

### Philippians 4:8

<sup>8</sup>... whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

### Jeremiah 51:50

Remember the LORD when you are in a distant land [that is, far from home or far from God]

### Ezekiel 16:22

...you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, kicking about in your blood [remember where you came from]

### Jonah 2:7

When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD [remember Him in crisis]

### Malachi 4:4

"Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel." [remember the ten commandments]

Matthew 5:23

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you..."

2 Corinthians 9:6

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Galatians 2:10

... remember the poor

Hebrews 13:7

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you.

Revelation 3:3

Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent.

There are many things we don't want to forget... but only a few that are necessary. The same God who can raise you up to life on the last day with the same dna and memories that we have today is the ultimate holder of all our memories... trust Him with them!

Even in the natural we understand that memories are valuable. They are part of our identity. Many people keep "baby books" for their children... like this one. I can't tell you how many happy hours I have watched my children pore over their baby books. It brings them security and identity to know where they came from.

I want to speak to the dozens of adoptive parents in our church. There is no explaining the grace for adoption that rolls through this church except that God has given grace for it. But this brings special considerations along the way. How do you have a Baby Book for a child you did not have at birth? Our daughter Ayanda came to live with us at age 7 so we did not have the privilege of knowing the details of her early years. The details we have come from Ayanda and from a friend of the family.

When a child comes to your family by adoption, a LIFE BOOK is important. Knowing that the adoptive child will not have the privilege of hearing family and friends talk about family life before they were born, a LIFE BOOK fills in the gap and gives the child a sense of roots and belonging. Especially when the adoption is cross-cultural, it can be a way to help the child connect with their heritage and their roots. You may need to focus on a life book that gives the history of his or her tribe, if it is known. You may need to show pictures of the place of safety

where they started their life or of the city they were born in. All these things help fill in the gap of what is unknown.

God has life books too. From Psalms to Revelations we read about THE BOOK OF LIFE.

### Psalms 69

<sup>28</sup> May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.

### Philippians 4

<sup>2</sup>I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. <sup>3</sup>Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow,<sup>[a]</sup> help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

### Revelations 3

<sup>4</sup>Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. <sup>5</sup>He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

### Revelations 20

<sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

### Revelations 21

The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup>Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

So you see there is more than one book, but one book takes primacy... the book of life. It is the list of all those who are saved.

Because there are some references to names being blotted out of the book of life, some scholars say there are two books... the first is the one of everyone who has ever lived, and from that your name can be blotted out. The second book is the one referred to in Revelations 21... the

Lamb's book of life. It is a list of all those whose sins are covered by the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Your name can only be added to that book.

But there are other books. Revelations 20 says 'books' will be opened and people judged according to their deeds. Whose deeds are being judged?

It seems the requirements of justice are that the reason be stated why a person will not enter eternity with God. There is a moment when their sins will be enumerated as they are cast out of the presence of God.

And what of those written in the Lamb's book? Won't their sins be enumerated too? Oh yes, but not for the purpose of condemnation, for a weighing up to decide rewards and blessings in the afterlife. There are such things you know. It is the believer's judgement. Thank God saints... thank God that as Christ and the fist judgement doesn't apply to you.

John 5:24

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

We have a Christian friend who has one of the fine mansions at the very top of Northcliff. One day she visited my wife at Baby Haven and encouraged Caroline in the work we are doing and said, You are building up for yourself a great reward in heaven... I can hardly wait to see your mansion there. And then this dear woman got a look of fright on her face and said, "Oh my goodness... I wonder what I'm going to live in." Caroline patted her on the hand and said, "don't you worry, you can always come to my mansion for tea."

Brothers and sisters, GOD has perfect memory. No one else! The old testament writers recognized there was something awesome and uncomprehending about God's memory that made them wonder. They called it Zekor-Yah. The Memory of Yahweh. It is the root of the name Zechariah or as we say in English, Zachary.

The memory of God is wonderful. We should have another word for it really. It should not be compared to our ability to remember where we put the car keys. God's memory is the foundation of history. He not only remembers, he orders those memories and preserves them for the

appointed day. He'll declare at the end of history what was not worth remembering.

You may find on the last day he'll say, "you had a critical attitude towards your wife on that day." You may try to say, "yes but she lost the car keys." And you will know, even as you say it, that you are remembering the wrong thing because you didn't have God's eyes or God's memory.

## GOD REMEMBERS

### Acts 10:31

and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor.

### 2 Corinthians 7:15

And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling.

## GOD FORGETS

As God remembers, there is something still more wonderful... GOD FORGETS. It is his promise.

### Hebrews 8:12

For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

### Hebrews 10:17

Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

There is redemption when God forgets. There is redemption when God remembers. You see when he remembered Rachael, she conceived. When he remembered his promise to Noah, the world was preserved from destruction.

This morning I want you to lay something before God you want Him to forget and some things you want him to remember. Will you take time now and pray over something you need forgiveness for. Then lay a Godly desire before him and ask God to remember it. Good-bye to 2009. Welcome to God's 2010.