

**SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS**  
**Commentary by Michael Sigler**  
**July 12, 2009**

**God Calls People to Remember**

Deuteronomy 16:1-8

**Key Verse: “Observe the month of Abib by keeping the passover for the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 16:1).**

Maybe you’ve heard about the elderly gentleman who said about his diminishing ability to remember, “I know I’m getting older because there are three things I can’t remember: I can’t remember *names*, I can’t remember *faces*, and...well, I can’t remember the third thing I can’t remember!”

The truth is, not just the elderly but all ages have a tendency to forget, especially the things that matter most. In the rush of daily living, we tend to forget and neglect those *spiritual* realities that will matter for eternity. For this reason, as the Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land, God directed Moses to establish the regular observance of Passover. You can read about it in Deuteronomy 16:1-8.

In verse 3, the reason for observing Passover is given: “so that all the days of your life you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt.” By regularly observing Passover, the Israelites would keep alive—for themselves and for their children—the *sacred memory* of God’s great work in their lives.

For similar reasons, Jesus established the sacrament of Holy Communion—so that His followers would strengthen their sacred memory of Christ’s great work. “This is my body,” Jesus said, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this...in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

Jesus knew that His followers would need regular reminders of His love, His sacrifice, His salvation. Jesus knew we would need regular reminders of His call to grow in Christlikeness. So, Jesus said we should regularly celebrate this sacrament of Holy Communion and, when we do, keep alive our *sacred memory*.

Regular worship is another important way that Christians keep alive our sacred memory. So, the Bible tells us: “Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

There is simply no substitute for gathering regularly with other believers for corporate worship. Nevertheless, folks have a never ending list of excuses for neglecting worship.

Recently I heard about two men who were out in a boat, fishing, one Sunday morning. After a few hours out on the water without getting a bite, one of the men said: “You know, maybe we should have stayed home and gone to church this morning.”

His friend replied, “Well, I could have stayed home, but I couldn’t have gone to church.”

“Why not?”

The fisherman answered, “Because my wife is sick.”

What practices in your life help keep sacred memory alive? For me, regular worship and the celebration of Holy Communion are very important. There are also some individual practices that God uses to help me remember those spiritual realities that will matter for eternity.

For example, not too long ago, I experienced a major health crisis that nearly claimed my life. I went into the hospital for a procedure that normally would have required only a brief recovery time. Instead, a surgical complication left me on life support, fighting to live.

During that crisis, God worked in wonderful ways. As word of my illness spread, so did an amazing groundswell of prayer support. Wonderful people in churches across the Alabama-West Florida Conference prayed for my healing. One day my family received an email that read: “How is Pastor Mike today? We are praying for his healing.” That email was sent from an American soldier serving in Iraq, whom I have never met.

Well, God did heal me—in response to the prayers of God’s people. And yet, I know how easy it is, once a crisis passes and the normal routines of life resume, to forget the hard won lessons of God’s deliverance. I don’t want that to happen. So, to this day, I keep on my office desk a card with the following verse written on it: “O Lord my God, I called to you for help and you healed me. O Lord, you brought me up from the grave” (Psalm 30:2-3).

Every spiritual victory we gain is like money in the bank. For when we face new challenges of faith, we can know that *the God who has been faithful to us in the past can be trusted for our future!* Keeping sacred memory alive—that was the purpose of Passover. Keeping sacred memory alive is still important for us today.

(Contact Michael at [michaelsigler@cox.net](mailto:michaelsigler@cox.net))