

Remember

Philippians 2:3, 4

Big Idea: Remembering others makes me a better person.

There's a story about a city fellow who was visiting relatives on a farm and the farmer gave a whistle and his dog herded the cattle into the corral, then latched the gate with her paw.

"Wow, that's some dog. What's her name?" The forgetful farmer thought a minute, then asked, "What do you call that red flower that smells good and has thorns on the stem?" "A rose?" "That's it!" The farmer turned to his wife. "Hey Rose, what do we call this dog?"

Sometimes we humans can we be quite forgetful. Been there, done that, haven't you?

What is your worst happening of forgetfulness? Did you ever get in your car, reach for your keys and didn't have them? Or you couldn't remember your own phone number or house number? Or the street where you lived? Or the names of some of your children?!

If we were put in the right situation at the right time, we all can be quite forgetful.

ILL.- One day after Albert Einstein had moved to his home at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, the telephone rang in the office of the Dean of the Princeton Graduate School. The voice at the other end inquired: "May I speak with Dr. Einstein, please?"

Advised that he was not in, the voice continued: "perhaps then you will tell me where Dr. Einstein lives." The secretary replied that she could not do this, since Dr. Einstein wished to have his privacy respected. The voice on the telephone dropped to a near whisper: "Please do not tell anybody, but I am Dr. Einstein. I am on my way home, and have forgotten where my house is!"

That would be bad, wouldn't it?

ILL.- At a commuter train station a policeman noticed a woman driver with her head bowed over the steering wheel in obvious discomfort. The police officer asked her, "Is there anything wrong?"

Half crying and half laughing, she said, "For ten years I have been driving my husband to this station every morning to catch this train. THIS MORNING I FORGOT HIM!"

Folks, the worst forgetfulness of all is to forget people!

One of the biggest lessons that we need to learn is that God didn't put us here for us! God put us here for others!

II Cor. 1:3-4 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, WHO COMFORTS US IN ALL OUR TROUBLES, SO THAT WE CAN COMFORT THOSE IN ANY TROUBLE..."

Did you hear God speaking to you? God comforts us so that we can comfort others. God ministers to us so that we can minister to others! God loves us so we can love others! GOD PUT US HERE FOR OTHERS!

Phil. 2:3 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."

We live in a very self-centered society. It's every man, woman and child for themselves. And I'm taking care of myself. But in humility we are to consider others better than ourselves.

We need to look around and see the good in others, that good which may well exceed our own good.

ILL.- "I Know Something Good About You"

Wouldn't this old world be better

If the folks we met would say,

"I know something good about you!"

And then treat us just that way?

Wouldn't it be fine and dandy,

If each handshake, warm and true,

Carried with it this assurance,

"I know something good about you?"

Wouldn't life be lots more happy,

If the good that's in us all

Were the only thing about us

That folks bothered to recall?

Wouldn't life be lots more happy,

If we praised the good we see?

For there's such a lot of goodness

In the worst of you and me.

Wouldn't it be nice to practice

That fine way of thinking, too,

You know something good about me,

I know something good about you?

Brothers and sisters, there is something good in us all and we need to look for that good. We need to praise that good. We need to realize that good in others may be better than the good in us!

Phil. 2:4 "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

We should be interested in others for their good, not for our gossip. Most people are only interested in others because they want to spread the bad news. They want to spread any news they can find out about someone, good, bad, or otherwise!

This Memorial Day weekend we need to be concerned about others for their good! For many people, this weekend means picnics, parades, and pubs! It means grills, food, family, and fun.

For a few rare souls, it means going to the graves of deceased loved ones and remembering.

Remembrance may be tough to do, and perhaps that's why some don't do it. But it's generally good to remember others, deceased or otherwise. IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO THINK OF OTHERS, TO LOVE OTHERS, TO REMEMBER OTHERS!

On this Memorial Day weekend, we need to think about people. God put us here to remember people! We need to think of them in two ways:

1- remember people in death

2- remember people in life

1. REMEMBER PEOPLE IN DEATH

Turn to John 11:1-5, 17-44. What a story! What a happening! What a God-incident!

John 11:5 "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus."

Jesus loved people! What an understatement. And at times Jesus loved some more intensely than others. And there is nothing wrong with that.

We are to love all people, but there are times when we love some more intensely.

Or they are needing more love from us than others need. It's all right to do that, to show that at times.

When someone is hurting, don't you want to love them even more? If not, why not? You should.

Rom. 12:15 "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those weep."

Sometimes people hurt a whole lot. They weep. And it's during those time we need to show them greater kindness and a more intense love. THEY NEED TO BE LOVED. THEY NEED TO BE REMEMBERED.

How's your love life? How much do you love people?

We need to remember people in death. Jesus loved Lazarus who had just died. Jesus loved his sisters as well. Jesus remembered them. Have you ever remembered anyone in death? During their death, during the process of them leaving this world?

ILL.- Here's a moving story entitled, "Dad's Glimpse of Heaven." His last words left us with something to look forward to by Edna Hershberger

"At 4:00 a.m. the nurse woke Dad to give him a breathing treatment. "Mr. Hershberger, do you know where you are?" "Goshen Hospital," he answered politely and closed his eyes again.

She wrapped the blood pressure cuff around his arm. "Mr. Hershberger, who's the president of the United States?" Dad looked at me with an expression that said, "Do I have to answer these silly questions in the middle of the night?" She raised her voice, "Mr. Hershberger! Who's the president of the United States?" "Do we have one?" he asked her. "Good answer, Dad," I teased.

The nurse laughed loudly, gave him a mock punch on the shoulder, put an oxygen mask over his face, and turned on the noisy machine. "I guess you're awake and alert."

A week or two. That's how long the doctor said Dad might live, and we wanted to make the most of every minute. I was glad to sit with my father-in-law during the night, while my husband, Dwight, slept on a sofa in the visitor's lounge down the hall.

SWEET MEMORIES. I brushed the damp hair from his forehead. "I wonder how it feels to know that you'll soon see God." "It feels good," Dad said without hesitating. "It's such a mystery. Tell us what you feel and see and hear, to help us understand what you're experiencing." "I'll try," he promised. "Are you scared?" "No," he said, "I feel at peace. I've been wishing to go to heaven all day."

That was Tuesday night. In four days, Dad would be transferred to the nursing center where he hoped he'd never have to go. I thought about Dad falling asleep and not waking up. There were some things I wanted to tell him. "Hey, Dad, soon after Dwight and I started dating, he told me what you said about me. You told him he had picked a good one. You told him I was a peach. No one ever called me a peach before. And I've loved you ever since."

He squeezed my hand and closed his eyes. "I'd better be quiet and let you sleep," I apologized. "No," he said quickly. "I want you to keep talking. I just can't keep my eyes open."

Suddenly Dad jumped as though startled by something. I sat up, held both of his hands in mine, and put my face close to his. "Is something wrong, Dad?" His eyes were open, but he didn't seem to see me.

"I'm leaving," I thought I heard him say in a weak voice. "Did you say, 'I'm leaving?'" I asked quickly. "I'm leaving," he repeated more distinctly. He surely couldn't mean dying. Not yet! I tried to think of some appropriate last words to say in case this really was the end, but my mind went blank. I started to say, "I love you," but he interrupted me with one word. It sounded like, "cold."

"Oh! You're cold!" I tried to reach for the blanket, but he wouldn't let go of my hand. He tensed, and quickly spelled it for me, with emphasis on the g sound, "G-o-l-d, gold. G-o-l-d, gold and silver. G-o-l ..."

I was shivering. My heart was pounding. I leaned my head against the cold metal bed rail. "Lord, please carry him gently," I prayed. "We love you, Dad," I kept repeating, as he took four long, shuddering breaths, and then was still. His hands became limp.

I should call the nurse, I thought. But I couldn't move. I sat there in the darkness, holding Dad's badly bruised hands with intravenous fluids still running into them. My forehead seemed fused to the bed rail. Tears ran down my cheeks.

Six inches from my face, something supernatural had occurred, something far greater than my mind could absorb. I knew God was in the room, but I couldn't see him or feel him. I longed to be able to see what Dad had seen.

I gently laid Dad's hands on the bed, and walked out to the nurse's desk. I dried my cheeks and blew my nose. "Excuse me," I said, "my father-in-law is gone."

She jumped out of her chair. "What do you mean, 'gone'?" "He just died," I said with a sob. "That can't be!" she stammered. "He was just joking with me a few minutes ago."

She grabbed her stethoscope and rushed into his room, turning on lights and calling his name. I walked down the hall to tell my husband that his father had just gone to heaven, and there really is gold there."

Brothers and sisters, have you ever been in a situation like that? That's remembering and loving a person in death.

ILL.- I know of a lady who works in a nursing home who has made it her mission to sit with the dying if no family member is present. I know that's hard to do and not everyone can do that sort of thing. But if your faith in the Lord is strong enough, it can be done and should be done. Her thinking is that no one should die alone. She wants to demonstrate love for the dying as they leave this world. Bless her heart!

We all need to remember people in death in some form or another. Go to the cemetery where your loved ones are buried and remember! It may shock your heart somewhat, but do it anyway.

ILL.- Someone said, "Say goodbye to me, but not to the thought of me." Remember your loved ones who have gone before you. Remember and appreciate them. Remember and rejoice in their good. Remember and praise God for them.

"Say goodbye to me, but not to the thought of me."

Remember people in death.

2. REMEMBER PEOPLE IN LIFE

ILL.- Mark Schultz of Bremerton, Washington, is a fatherless twelve-year-old who likes to fish but who had no adult to take him fishing. When Mark submitted a want ad, asking for adult volunteers to take him fishing, he received twenty phone calls.

Brothers and sisters, we need to remember people in life. We need to remember them in any form that shows we care about them, taking them fishing or some other good thing.

ILL.- Maggie Keeth was a member of the First Christian Church of Iberia, MO. She's been with the Lord for some time now. She once said to me, "I believe in giving flowers to the living."

Flowers for the living. She remembered people in life, while they were still alive. She loved the living. We must do this as well and as well as we can. We may not get a second chance at loving some people. We'd better love them while we can.

See people like Jesus did.

Matthew 9:35-36 "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

Jesus was a looker. That is, he really looked at people. He looked at them deeply and could see their hurt, their pain, their sorrow. Jesus was aware of the people around Him. He was sensitive to them. What about you?

ILL.- Helen Keller once said, "To be blind is bad, but it is worse to have eyes and not to see." Sometimes we are so blind to the pain of others.

ILL.- Someone said, "We cannot heal the wounds we do not feel." (or perhaps the wounds we do not see.)

ILL.- A preacher was in his study, preparing his sermon, when his little boy toddled into the room, and holding up his pinched finger, said, with an expression of suffering, "Look, Daddy, it hurts really bad!"

That preacher/father glanced at him and with a tone of impatience, said, "I can't help it, honey." The little boy's eyes grew bigger, and as he turned to go out, he said in a low voice, "Yes, you could have helped it. You could have said, 'Oh, I'm sorry!'"

Are we so blind, so unsympathetic, so insensitive, that we can't see the hurt around us?

What will make a difference?

What will make the difference in us personally?

ILL.- A man put up a sign in his yard that read: "Puppies for Sale." Among those who came to inquire was a young boy. "Please, Mister," he said, "I'd like to buy one of your puppies if they don't cost too much." "Well, son, they're \$25 each."

The boy looked crushed. "I've only got two dollars and five cents. Could I see them anyway?" "Of course. Maybe we can work something out," said the man. The boy's eyes danced at the sight of those five little balls of fur. "I heard that one has a bad leg," he said. "Yes, I'm afraid she'll be crippled for life." "Well, that's the puppy I want. Could I pay for her a little at a time?" The man responded, "But she'll always have a limp."

Smiling bravely, the boy pulled up one pant leg, revealing a brace. "I don't walk good either." Then, looking at the puppy sympathetically, he continued, "I guess she'll need a lot of love and help. I sure did. It's not so easy being crippled." "Here, take her," said the man. "I know you'll give her a good home. And just forget the money."

Brothers and sisters, when we get to the point in our lives that we realize we too are crippled human beings, then we will demonstrate sympathy and compassion for others in their pain and suffering. We cannot understand what we have not experienced.

Look around you. Look at the crowds. Look at the people, be aware, be sensitive and have compassion. Remember people while they live.

And there is one other thing we should think about in regard to remembering people in life.

Serve people like Jesus did.

Matthew 20:28 Jesus said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Christ was a servant of others. He didn't stand around, waiting to be served. He washed the feet of His disciples. He went about doing good. He healed people. He touched people. He connected with children. Instead of trying to run them down or run them off, He blessed them. Jesus was a servant of servants.

ILL.- One time a man asked his friend, "By whose preaching were you converted?" The man replied, "Not by anyone's preaching, but by mother's practicing."

Few people serve more or better than a loving mother. All of us could learn from loving mothers who have gone about their business, never said a word, never complained, just kept right on serving and loving. We need to remember people by being servants to one another.

Application:

ILL.- Years ago, the Salvation Army was holding an international convention and their founder, Gen. William Booth, could not attend because of physical weakness. He cabled his convention message to them. It was one word: "OTHERS."

Lord, help me to live from day to day

In such a self-forgetful way

That even when I kneel to pray

My prayer shall be for others.

Help me in all the work I do

To ever be sincere and true

And know that all I'd do for you

Must needs be done for others.

Let "self" be crucified and slain

And buried deep, and all in vain

May efforts be to rise again

Unless to live for others.

And when my work on earth is done

And my new work in heaven's begun

May I forget the crown I've won

While thinking still of others.

Others, Lord, yes, others

Let this my motto be,

Help me to live for others That I may live like Thee.

