

Remembrance and Thanksgiving

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1Th 5:16-18, NKJV)

- One of God's universal wills for all of us is to give thanks in everything. Not for everything, but in everything. It is a key He has given us. Do you think He wants us to do it for Him? Do you think the perfect God needs our thanks? Or do you think we need to give thanks for our own benefit?

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." (Jas 1:17, NKJV)

- There is a dynamic around thanksgiving. We will explore that a bit later in this message. But for now, I would like us to take a step back. In order to give thanks, we need to remember and remember rightly.

Thanksgiving requires that we remember.

*"Oh, **give thanks** to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD! Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face evermore! **Remember** His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth," (Psa 105:1-5, NKJV)*

*"We **give thanks** to You, O God, we give thanks! For **Your wondrous works** declare that Your name is near." (Psa 75:1, NKJV)*

*"Oh, that men would **give thanks** to the LORD for His goodness, And for **His wonderful works** to the children of men!" (Psa 107:8, NKJV)*

Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the church, for myself (healing).

Let's talk about Remembrance:

Frederick Buechner from his book of uncollected pieces called A Room called Remember

"...I dreamt that I was staying in a hotel room that I loved. I no longer have any clear picture of what the room looked like, and even in the dream itself, I think it wasn't so much the way the room looked that pleased me as it was the way it made me feel. It was a room where I felt happy and at peace, where everything seemed the way it should be and everything about myself seemed the way it should too. Then, as the dream went on, I wandered off to other places and did other things and finally, after many adventures, ended back at the same hotel again. Only this time, I was given a different room which I didn't feel comfortable in at all. It seemed dark and cramped, and I felt dark and cramped in it. So I made my way down to the man at the desk and told him my problem. On my earlier visit, I said, I'd had this marvelous room which was just right for me in every way and which I'd very much like if possible to have again. The trouble, I explained, was that I hadn't kept track of where the room was and didn't know how to find it or how to ask for it. The clerk was very understanding. He said that he knew exactly the room I meant and that I could have it again anytime I wanted. All I had to do, he said, was ask for it by its name. So then, of course, I asked him what the name of the room was. He would be happy to tell me he said, and then he told me. The name of the room, he said, was Remember. Remember, he said. The name of the room I wanted was Remember. That was what woke me. It shocked me awake.....It was a dream that seemed true not for only me but true for everybody....**There is a deeper need yet, I think, - not all the time, surely, but from time to time- to enter that still room within us all where the past lives on as part of the present,...The name of the room is remember - the room where with patience, with clarity, with quietness of heart, we remember consciously to remember..."** Frederick Buechner

There is power in remembering and remembering correctly. Our hearts become grateful, and our perspective is corrected. Faith begins to rise in our hearts as we remember what God has done, who He has been to us, how faithful He has been, His miracles. As we look ahead, even though it may look impossible, we have an

assurance, a peace, perspective, strength and courage to press on. This is the power of remembrance and thanksgiving.

*"And Moses said to the people: **"Remember this day** in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for **by strength of hand the LORD brought you out** of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten."* (Exo 13:3, NKJV)

"Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt." (Exo 13:17-18, NKJV)

"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people." (Exo 13:21-22, NKJV)

"Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD." And they did so." (Exo 14:1-4, NKJV)

*"So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon. And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. **So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt?"** (Exo 14:9-11, NKJV)*

- How quickly they forgot?
- God wanted them to remember because it would help them to remain in a place of faith, a place of peace, a place of trusting God.

"And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."" (Exo 14:13-14, NKJV)

*"So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; **so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.**" (Exo 14:30-31, NKJV)*

- How easily the Israelites were swayed. How quickly they seemed to vacillate from fearing their enemies (Pharaoh in this instance) to fearing the Lord, and we shall see, they continued to swing from one extreme to the other.
- It seems that remembrance held a key for them and holds a key for us in terms of keeping our hearts and minds in the right place.

*""If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'— **you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the LORD your God did** to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid." (Deu 7:17-19, NKJV)*

- Remembrance is a key to overcome fear.
- Remembrance is key to walking in faith.
- Remembrance is key to overcoming and walking in victory:

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." (Rev 12:11, NKJV)

There is something about remembrance that holds a key for us in terms of victory.

Let's briefly walk through some of the Israelites' history in terms of this:

Three days after the Red Sea crossing. Three days!

"So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"" (Exo 15:22-24, NKJV)

The Lord brings the people to a place called Elim where there were 12 wells of water. They camped there.

So already God has done a number of miracles and provided for His people. Let's see, surely they will remember their God and trust that He will complete what He has begun?

"And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exo 16:1-3, NKJV)

- It didn't take them long to forget and lose perspective!
- Often our immediate fleshly desire causes us to lose perspective if we don't focus on remembering and keeping the main thing the main thing.

The Lord provides manna for His people. Free food. Everyday. A miracle everyday for them. What happens next? Surely this will cause them to remain in a place of faith?

"Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people

contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?" And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"" (Exo 17:1-3, NKJV)

- They had forgotten so quickly!
- We also see their attitude towards the miracle of manna each day:

"We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"" (Num 11:5-6, NKJV)

"Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.'"" (Num 11:13, NKJV)

"Then you shall say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?"' "" (Num 11:18-20, NKJV)

"Now a wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving."" (Num 11:31-34, NKJV)

- Remembrance is key to perspective.
- It keeps us from yielding to the flesh.
- Remembrance is key to thanksgiving.
- Thanksgiving is God's will for us.
- Thanksgiving is key to keeping our hearts.

Let's talk about Thanksgiving:

1. It brings us into the Presence of our King

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name." (Psa 100:4, NKJV)

2. It has a multiplier effect

"And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left." (Mat 15:36-37, NKJV)

3. It unlocks new dimensions of healing

"Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."" (Luk 17:11-19, NKJV)

4. It brings life where there has been death

*"Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, **"Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.** And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."" (Joh 11:39-44, NKJV)*

5. It results in God's peace

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Php 4:4-7, NKJV)

6. It helps us to see

"Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit." (Jer 17:5-8, NKJV)

It gives us perspective. It helps us to see. It helps us to trust in the Lord. Which helps us to live in God's abundant blessings.

"Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name." (Psa 100:3-4, NKJV)

Thanksgiving helps us to acknowledge that we are not self-made. We are His. Every good thing has come from Him. It helps us trust in Him. Lift our eyes to Him. Which brings us into a place of faith.

Let me ask you a question:

When the Israelites had crossed the wilderness and come to the edge of the promised land and the spies had explored the land and come back to report what they had seen. 10 spies were grasshoppers in their own eyes. 2 spies, Joshua and Caleb believed that the Israelites were well able to take the land. Who do you think was most likely remembering what God had done? Who do you think was in a place of gratitude and thanksgiving to the Lord?

"And they returned from spying out the land after forty days. Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan." Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from

the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." (Num 13:25-33, NKJV)

"So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." (Num 14:1-4, NKJV)

Does that sound familiar?

They had forgotten the Lord who had brought them out of Egypt. They had forgotten what He had done. They had lost perspective and faith and were trusting in their own flesh and not in God. They couldn't see correctly. They had lost heart.

Listen to Joshua and Caleb's report:

"But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.'" (Num 14:6-8, NKJV)

It sounds like they are describing a totally different situation. The difference is that they are seeing correctly. Jer. 17: They can see the good. They are trusting God. They are remembering what God has done and have a right perspective. Their hearts are filled with faith and courage.

Conclusion

God commanded the children of Israel to remember His deeds. Remember what He had done. He knew that they would need to do this to help themselves remain in faith and not in fear. They needed this to help keep perspective. Many times they didn't remember and paid the price for it. We can learn from history and learn from

their mistakes. Remembrance is a powerful tool that we need to use as we build a culture of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is important and is God's universal will for all of us. Something about thanksgiving brings us into the presence of our King, multiplies what is in our hands, unlocks a new dimension of healing and brings life where there has been death. Thanksgiving creates a guard of peace around our hearts and minds and helps us to have perspective, see rightly and trust in the Lord. Let's endeavour to remember and create a culture of thanksgiving in our lives, families, church and work places.