

Do You Remember

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Sermon Brief: Judges 6:13-14, 8:33-34; 1 Chron 16:12 Rev 2:2-5a

CIT: 1 Chron tells us remember wonders and covenant. Judges 6 tells us these stories are our might. Hebrew word for testimony means 'do again.'

CIS: The way God has acted in our history with him is our strength. It's the might that we go in. And whenever we share these stories or think on them it's our way of saying 'do it again Lord.'

SO: I desire people to reconnect with God through their testimony and for others to begin walking with him for the first time.

INTRO:

There's a reason that Jurassic World made 100 million dollars it's opening weekend. It was the continuation of a story that started when I was a kid. Star Wars. 4 decades.

It's not just because of the camera angles, or the entertainment value, or great marketing, it's because they tell a story! *They give us the opportunity to **insert ourselves** into the lives of someone else, not just to be entertained but **affected** by their story.*

***I want to begin with just this thought: **There is power in a story.**

There's a reason we have bestseller lists. It's because of the stories they contain. There's a

reason Bob Dylan was just voted the greatest song writer of all time. It's because he was a master story teller.

There's power in a story.

*****T/S:** Stories are what make up the fabric of our lives.

They are the most personal thing about us. They are ours. If I told you to take thirty seconds to think about your life you would arrange it based on a collection of moments and stories and happenings.

And for the Christ follower, the stories we live through on our journey with God are central to who we are, the decisions we make, the world view we develop. My story with God has made me into the man I am becoming. They are foundational.

There's a reason we have a Bible instead of a textbook. There's a long german word called heilsgezchetca that we use to describe the work of

Jesus throughout the Bible. It means 'salvation story.'

God could have come down and handed us a systematic theology textbook but he didn't!

No, he put together a book of books that spans thousands of years and it's full of stories about God and how he interacts with us. There's not a chapter title soteriology in the Bible. **There's a story about a God-man named Jesus on a cross.**

There's not a chapter titled Facts about the Holy Spirit. There's a story of a spirit filled early church showing how God intervened by his Spirit and shaped history.

Even Jesus exercised this principle. He didn't say 'sit down whilst I lecture about progressive revelation and current eschatological realities. No, instead when He began to teach about the Kingdom he said things like 'there was a man that had some seed' or 'a man found a pearl in a field.'

God knows the power of a story!

1) Stories are where we find strength

*****I need you to see that stories, are sources of spiritual strength in our lives.**

In Judges 6 we find that Israel has fallen into slavery. They've disobeyed God, and because of that they are now in bondage to a tribe known as the Midianites.

****11 The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."*

13 "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian."

14 The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

EXP: I want to make an observation quickly because it makes the exchange between Gideon and this angel that much more ludicrous.

This man is revealed as the angel of the Lord, but in vs 14 it says 'the Lord turned to him.' Later he receives Gideon's worship. This isn't an angel, it is a Jesus, pre-incarnate.

And after the second member of the Trinity comes and says 'The Lord is with you.' Gideon's response is insanely sarcastic.

Oh really! God is with us?! Tell me then, where are all his wonders?! Where is his deliverance?

You see, Gideon is saying, I have all these stories of God. I have these accounts. I have these tales of how he moved and all he did, really by this point he is saying 'I have these legends' but **my**

current reality of God is not lining up with what I've heard about God.

God, so much more gracious than I could ever be, listens to Gideon's accusations and stories and says **'Go in this might of yours.'**

What might is he talking about? Disrespect!?

All Gideon did was yell at God about the stories of his people. Gideon went to the movies! Dude saw Straight Outta Egypt and he's wondering why he has all this heritage and these powerful stories but doesn't see how they apply to him right now.

What God is communicating is this.

*******Those stories you just told Gideon. There is might in those stories. There is strength in those stories. There's power in those old stories.

These weren't even his stories! But they were his heritage.

ILL: This is the equivalent of us reading Acts 2 and finding strength in the stories of the early church. We weren't there! But we can still find strength in how God moved then because He's the same God now.

I wasn't at the church in Wittenburg when a man Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the front door. But I find strength in the stories of his passion and love of the Word of God.

I wasn't alive during the Great Awakenings. I've only read about John Wesley and George Whitfield but I find strength in the stories of revival and the masses finding Jesus.

I wasn't alive when God sovereignly poured out his Spirit in Wales or Azusa St in the early 1900's, but oh when I read about it I find strength in the stories of the power of God, the outpouring of the Spirit, in the stories of healing, in the stories of deliverance.

But you see, **the same God that moved then is the same God I serve now.** These stories are part of our heritage and we draw strength from them. We are in the same family. Their stories are my stories!

T/S: Not only is there great strength in remembering our God stories. There is great danger when we stop remembering. Old adage Doomed to repeat it.

2) Israel is so quick to forget!

Judges 8:33-34

****33 No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals. They set up Baal-Berith as their god 34 and did not remember the Lord their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side.*

*****EXP:** This doesn't add up!

Gideon draws on Israel's stories of God moving in power. Gideon rallies an army and defeats a nation with only 300 men! **They had their own story now!**

But as soon he dies they 'did not remember the Lord their God who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side.'

ILL: Have you known anyone like this?

God does something crazy for them. Their lives turn around. The whole family starts coming to church. They were involved in the church, going after the things of God, but now they're back to being involved in the club, back to hustling, back to living in the world. Like a kid in the youth group that goes off to college and loses their ever lovin' mind!

APP: Maybe it's you! Maybe you used to be involved. Maybe you used to really serve God. Maybe you used to pray, read your Bible, be in community with God's people. You used to look forward to church.

But you got complacent and comfortable and didn't even mean to, but you forgot the Lord your God.

APP: Look, you can gain spiritual strength from these stories. God can use you to make history like he did with Gideon.

You can come to church every time the doors open, but if you fail to have an ongoing, private history with God you'll eventually forget him.

Have you forgotten the Lord your God? Or do you remember?

Do you just come to to church? Or do you remember?

Are you going through the motions? Or do you remember?

Yes, you know how talk and you know the lingo. You know when to lift your hands and how to put on your church mask...But do you remember the Lord your God that rescued you!?

APP: Sometimes you have to fight for your faith.

See, I'm convinced that most people that have really known the Lord don't walk away when it's hard.

***Even here in Judges it said that while Gideon was alive they were at peace and free for 40 years. **They walk away when it becomes easy to forget.** They walk away when things seem to be going their way.

*****Rev 2:2-5**

2 "I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. 3 You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

*4 "But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first!
5 Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first.*

Jesus says 'I've seen all that you're doing! I see everything is going right! But you don't love me like you used to. Don't you remember!?'

He's saying 'don't you remember' to many of you right now! Don't you remember what it was like when you first said "YES" to me. What it was like when I was your God and more important than anything else in your life.

T/S: What a tragedy to have so much history with God but because everything is going smoothly, and we feel as if we are doing everything right, we back off our pursuit, and end up walking away from Jesus because we fail to remember God and let our stories give us strength. Let your stories stir you to move!

***I rarely share stories from the pulpit. We are not something special. I'm just a fool that picked up a Bible and was crazy enough to believe what I read. I've seen the supernatural and the move of God abused so much. People sharing about their anointing to get booked at the next conference instead of just sharing about the goodness of God and giving Him glory.

3. Do it Again

I want to share some stories with you, I just need you to know the heart behind it. We don't need more 'atta' boy preachers. We need more leads that have the fear of the Lord. That only give God His glory.

There is so much power in sharing and remembering stories in settings like this. So much so that God tells us to do these things! The writer in 1 Chron 16 is urging Israel to remember stories of wonder and stories of covenant.

There's power in this! Stories of covenant stir up our purpose in the story of God. They propel us forward. They confirm WHO God is.

Stories of wonder and miracles store our faith and hope for the future. They confirm WHAT God can do.

God is so gracious. We have seen some beautiful and crazy things in the short time we've been doing this. Some from years ago. Some from a month ago.

Healing: Little boy heals dad in Arkansas.

Wheelchair guy in Turkana. Tumor in Oklahoma. Staph in OK. 10 years right ear.

Power: Crusade protected by fire. Earthquakes in MS.

Deliverance: Girl's scars in Miami. Depression in an Encounter Conference recently 'if this is real.'

Some of you have stories like these! Some of you have stories of radical salvation! God's intervention! God saving your family! God using you mightily. A private history with God. Communion with him throughout the day.

Do. You. Remember.

These stories aren't just about stirring your faith. These aren't just my stories. These are testimonies. These are things that I bear full witness about. I need you to understand the power of a testimony!

Many of us think of testimony service as a Sunday night service where every week we hear the same story every week from 28 years ago.

EXP: The Hebrew word for testimony is not just recounting stories. It literally means 'to do again.'

It doesn't mean we think about the good old days and try to live in the past. It doesn't mean we get angry at God and wonder why he doesn't do it now.

This was the problem with Gideon. Stories were stuck in the past. He didn't have an understanding that when you begin to stir this history up it is an invitation to God to come and do it again!

He didn't realize that when he found his strength in testifying about what God did to deliver Israel out of Egypt THEN that it would invite God to deliver Israel out of Midian NOW!

I praise God for those testimony services of what God did 28 years ago...but unless you apply pressure to the real POWER of testimony those stories will stay in the past and will never shape your current situation.

If I can get the band to join me.

APP: These stories aren't just to feel good or say 'man, if only God would do that agin.' I don't read my Bible or read church history to relish the good old days.

These stories aren't just to receive strength and hope out of what God did.

I don't remember these stories just so I don't forget the Lord my God.

I remember because when I stir them up and remember what God did then it invites him to come and do it right now!

Do it again. Some of you just need to remember what God did!

Conclusion:

***You know what my favorite story is. May 7th, 2005 there was a man that came into a little church with a hangover. That man man was me. I remember.