



Central  
Peninsula  
Church

...to make and mature more followers of Christ

*Remember!*

2 Timothy 2:8

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March 27, 2016

Easter

There were three sisters—ages 92, 94, and 96—who lived together. One night, the 96-year-old drew a bath. She put one foot in, and then paused. “Was I getting in the tub or out?” she yelled. The 94-year-old hollered back, “I don’t know, I’ll come and see.” She started up the stairs but stopped on the first one. She shouted, “Was I going up or coming down?” The 92-year-old was sitting at the kitchen having tea, listening to her sisters with a smirk on her face. She shook her head and said, “I sure hope I never get that forgetful,” and knocked on wood for good measure. Then she yelled, “I’ll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who’s at the door!”

Isn’t it true, the older we get the harder it becomes to remember things? I was listening to NPR recently and they had a segment where people called in to talk about memories they wished they still had. One lady said, “I wish I could remember more of my time in high school. I must have had lots of fun because I don’t remember a thing!” Another caller said, “I wish I had more memories of my father. He died when I was 12.” My wife and I were recently talking about the different memories we wish we had more of. For me, I wish I had more memories of playing football in high school. Those were fun times! My wife would love to have more memories of the cul-de-sac she grew up in as a child. For her, those were sweet memories.

When it comes to our spiritual lives, I believe there is great power in remembering. But, here’s our problem—we forget the things we need to remember and remember the things we should forget. Instead of reminding ourselves that God loves us and has a purpose and plan for our lives, we tend focus on our mistakes and problems. It’s no coincidence that the word “remember” is stated about 166 times in the Bible. Why is that? Because the God who created us knows how easily we forget what’s most important. We forget who He is. We forget what He has done in our lives. We forget the hundreds of promises He has made to us. And for some of us, we have forgotten the power and importance of the resurrection.

Apostle Paul, who wrote a lot of the New Testament, was keenly aware of our propensity to forget God. One of the letters he wrote was to his young protege Timothy who was pastoring a church in the city of Ephesus. Word gets to Paul that Timothy is facing some major problems in the church. There was a group of people within the church saying Jesus was only a man and he didn’t actually rise from dead. Since Timothy was a sensitive

and timid young man, he didn’t know how to handle the pressure. The church was declining, he was emotionally exhausted, and ready to give up. So, Paul writes two letters to encourage Timothy and to remind him of God’s work in his life. He tells Timothy to remain strong in God’s grace and patiently endure suffering. Paul uses the images of a soldier, an athlete and a farmer all to give Timothy a picture of dedication and hard work. He then gives the ultimate example to Timothy. Let me read just one verse from 2 Timothy 2:8, *“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel...”*

The word “remember” that’s used here in the original language is what’s called an imperative. It’s a command. The word is also in the present tense, which means “keep on remembering.” Apostle Paul is not just giving good advice to young Timothy. He’s commanding him to constantly remember three life-giving phrases about Jesus—Jesus was the Christ, Jesus was raised from the dead, and Jesus was descended from David. Believe it or not, these three phrases say everything there is to say about who Jesus is and what he came to do. Let’s look at each of them.

### **Remember, Jesus was the Christ**

First, remember Jesus was the Christ. Now, it seems a little odd to remind a pastor to remember Jesus Christ! That’s kind of what we’re supposed to never forget! But, that’s what can happen to anyone, even pastors. In the midst of adversity and trials, we become forgetful of even Jesus. There are entire churches in the Bay Area that have forgotten Jesus Christ. They may have beautiful old buildings, they might even have a small group of people gathering to sing some songs on Sunday, but there is no mention of the real Jesus and his resurrection. Just this week a friend emailed a picture she took of a banner in front of a church in Belmont. The banner read, “Share Holy Week with us—and see how this progressive Christian church does Easter! What if we don’t take the resurrection literally?” What that church is saying is the resurrection didn’t really happen. It’s a myth. Jesus was just a really great moral teacher. But, Paul says, no, he is much more than that. Jesus was the Christ.

Let me ask you a trick question. What was Jesus’ last name? Well, he didn’t have a last name like we do today. He was called Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. But, Christ was not his last name. Christ is actually a title that means God’s anointed one, the Messiah. It was a name for Jesus that showed he was the long awaited king and deliverer of God’s people. For centuries

the Jewish people eagerly looked for a prophesied Messiah who would usher in a new kingdom of peace and prosperity. All over the Bible, Jesus was clearly identified as the Messiah. For example, in the Gospel of Matthew 16:16 Apostle Peter declared, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Paul commanded Timothy to look back and constantly remember who it was he was following and serving. Jesus was not just a great moral teacher. He was not only a great man. Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the long awaited rescuer.

### **Remember, Jesus was Raised from the Dead**

The second thing we are to remember is Jesus was raised from the dead. In this statement, it's assumed that before Jesus was raised he was actually dead. That's important because there were people back then and some even today who believed that Jesus didn't actually die. Instead he passed out or "swooned" on the cross and was resuscitated by the disciples later. But that's crazy! Think about it... Jesus was whipped 39 times with a cat o' nine tails. He was then nailed to a cross and hung in the sun for six hours. A spear was thrust up his side and through his heart. He was embalmed with spices, wrapped in linen and put inside an airless tomb for three days. Jesus really died. This is important because Christians believe Jesus died in our place and for our sins. We celebrate Good Friday because the death of Jesus satisfied the wrath of God. Sin had to be atoned for. The death of Jesus Christ also revealed the depth of God's love. God loved you and loves you so much that he willingly sent his one and only Son to pay the price for your sin with the blood of his own Son. At the cross both the wrath and justice of God was satisfied. Jesus, who is God, became man to restore a right relationship between God and man.

Jesus not only died, he was "raised from the dead." He was bodily resurrected. The resurrection confirms his deity. Jesus was not only a man, he was God. He was God incarnate, God with flesh on. Christians believe that Jesus was 100% God and 100% man at the same time. No other religious figure in history ever claimed to be God and then proved he was God by rising from the grave. The resurrection of Jesus was the public display of God's power and defeat of sin, Satan and death. The resurrection is so important to the Christian faith that Paul told us in another letter that without it, we don't even have a Christian faith! We celebrate Easter because we also believe Christians will experience a resurrection too! On that day, when Jesus returns again, the Bible says his followers will meet him in the air (1 Thes. 4:16-17). We'll have resurrected bodies, new bodies without sin, disease or sickness. That means all suffering and trials in this life are only temporary. Crucifixion leads to resurrection! Death is not the end of life, it's only the beginning! Remember, Jesus was raised from the dead.

### **Remember, Jesus was Descended from David**

The final thing Timothy is told to keep remembering is Jesus was descended from David. If Jesus raised from the dead points to his deity, "descended from David" emphasizes his humanity. Jesus was an actual living person. He was a descendent from David. The focus here is on his dual role as both Savior and King. Jesus is the heir to King David's throne and came to establish a kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Listen to how one of the early follower of Jesus, Dr. Luke, describes this, *"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end"* (Luke 1:32-33).

Paul assures Timothy that God has been doing something in history. Jesus came not only to save us from our sins but to establish an eternal kingdom that will never end. He's working on that right now. The risen Jesus is the reigning Jesus. This is so important for Timothy to remember because he was living under the oppressive reign of the Roman Emperor Nero. Nero was a piece of work. He took great pleasure in persecuting and even killing Christians. He supposedly set Rome on fire so that he could blame and persecute Christians for it. Many Christians, possibly even Peter and Paul, were executed by Nero.

For us today, as we hear about and see yet another brutal terror attack in Brussels, we are left to wondering, "Is God really in control of our world? Does he still rule and reign? Maybe has he stepped down from his throne?" When the world seems out of control, remember Jesus was descended from David. That means Jesus is ultimately in control. Jesus still reigns. Jesus is the true king but his kingdom is not fully established on this earth yet. But, it's coming! Paul is saying something like this, "Timothy (insert your name), I want you to constantly remember, as the living and reigning King, Jesus Christ is able and even willing to help you and to carry you through all your suffering. Not Nero but Jesus Christ, who is now exalted and at the right hand of the Father, who has the reins of the entire universe in his hands and will continue to govern all things for God's glory and your good. So, whatever happens, never lose courage and never give up. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descendant of David, because that's what will keep hope alive in the midst of what seems to be a hopeless situation." And Paul could say that with confidence as one in prison facing death himself. This would be the last letter he wrote.

### **Remember the Gospel**

If you're a follower of Jesus, what's keeping you from remembering? We live in a world of distraction that constantly tries to turn our attention away from God. We're distracted by all the messages we hear from the media and entertainment world saying this is what life is really all about. Go find your true self. You can do and be anything. Buy this. Eat that. Travel there. And

lose more weight all by eating bread! And if it's not the media, then life has a way of slowly distracting us from what's most important. It's easy to forget because of the daily grind of life, work, and family. I think that's one of the reasons why God allows pain and suffering in our lives because it has a way of stripping us of all the things that distract us. It reminds us of our need for God. But when we remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, we remember that our pain, our sorrow, is real, but it won't have the last word.

Paul encourages Timothy and all of us to remember the gospel. Because remembering the gospel gives us strength for the present and hope for the future. Remembering what God has done in the past is vital for living by faith in the future. Think about all the times of struggle that you have gone through and ask yourself, what did God do? Was he faithful? Did he come through for you? And did you grow through that experience? Maybe you feel God has let you down. I wonder if that's because your story isn't over. God's not done with you. Ultimately, we remember Jesus Christ because we don't just want his memory, we want his actual presence.

And that's the hope of Easter. We don't just have a memory of Jesus, we have the power of his presence. Easter is the celebration that Jesus is still alive! He's here right now. That means there is no obstacle or enemy too great for him to conquer. Some of you are facing something that is far greater than you could ever possibly handle on your own. But, like Timothy, if you remember and look to the risen Savior and King, then you know you're never alone. In the face of suffering and pain we don't want answers. We want a person.

If you are not a Christian, there are only three things God wants you to do this morning. First, accept his love for you. Put down your guard and accept what Jesus did for you. Jesus **loves** you.

Second, believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead. That is what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ. It's trusting in who God is and what he did for you in Jesus. Third, commit your life to Jesus. I am not talking about becoming more religious. I am talking about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Today you can invite Jesus into your life to be Lord and Savior.

Apostle Paul also wrote the book of Romans that we've been studying for several months at church. In chapter 10:10-11 he summarizes exactly how to know Jesus personally, ***"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.'"***

The good news of Christianity, what we call the gospel, is that you and I are sinners. We are deeply flawed people. The problem is, according to the Bible, only perfect people get into heaven. And we know that no one here is perfect. We've all missed the mark, and the penalty for sin is eternal death and separation from God. But God, in his love and mercy, provided a way out, a rescue plan. He sent his one and only Son into the world to die in our place for our sin and to pay the price of sin that we could not pay. Jesus was the perfect and final sacrifice for sin by fully paying the debt we owed to God. He was buried in a tomb and in three days he rose from the grave. The tomb was empty, his body was gone. He is alive and living with all of us who have called on his name. "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel..."

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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