

# His Power to Remember

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**Bible Text:** John 14:26

**Preached on:** Sunday, December 29, 2013

## **Grace Particular Baptist Church**

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Let us pray.

*Dear heavenly Father, how glorious thou art, how faithful thou art, how good thou art, how great thou art, O Lord. We thank you, Lord, for preserving us, this people, once again this week, preserving our health, preserving our freedoms, preserving us in thy great grace. Lord, we pray now this hour and the hour to come, that thou would, indeed, breath upon us, breath life into us, breath life upon thy Holy Scriptures. O Lord, speak to us by the power of thy Spirit. Lord, may you be pleased to reveal more about thee this day. Lord, may you use thy word to edify thy church and, Lord, may your name be glorified. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

Well, here we are. We come again and it seems like it wasn't that long ago where it was said from this pulpit that this was the last time we would meet, the last meeting day of the year. I thought about that a lot lately as we just came out of a blessed time: four days of celebrating the birth of the Lord and the presence of the Lord in his children's lives and how great that was and how great it is to have the Lord's presence with us. I thought about this year and I sat down and I tried to remember, I tried to think of all the ways that the Lord revealed himself to me this year. Do you know what? I couldn't. I tried to think of the goodness of God this year and I couldn't.

Wednesday morning as we got up and were opening gifts and giving gifts to one another, I was reflecting upon how good the Lord is and the provision that he makes and I was trying, once again, to think about past Christmases and how good the Lord was at those times and that was hard. So I set out to try to think about all of the things that were said from this pulpit in this last year, this year right here. There was some glorious truth spoken from this pulpit. I went to Sermon Audio and I started looking at all the messages that were spoken this year and trying to remember what they were about, trying to remember the depth of what was said and I couldn't remember a lot of them.

So, of course, that would be my topic today: how can we remember? First, I want to define for you what that means. The word "remember" according to Webster's Dictionary of 1828 has a lot in it. Listen to this: to have in the mind an idea which has been in the mind before and which recurs to the mind without effort. That's a deep truth. That's a very deep truth, "without effort." You and I can think about this precious word

that we hold in our hands. We can think about the goodness of God and all that he's done in our lives but we can't get to what he's done, we can't get to the power of the depth of what he means in this word without the covenant remembrance. That's what Bradbury called it, the Third Person, the Holy Ghost. Really, truly, the Lord says you can do nothing without me but do you know something? We can do nothing without his Spirit. We can do nothing without the Holy Ghost. We can remember nothing. Nothing. Nothing of any worth. Nothing of any value of our Lord.

We're taking the Lord's Supper today. We're told to do this in remembrance of him. As I had a conversation just minutes ago, if we don't remember that it's about him, we make it about us and when we make it about us, we make it about sin. We don't make it about the sacrifice. We can't without him.

To have in the mind an idea which has been in the mind before and which recurs to the mind without effort. I want to tell you how that takes place and that's in John 14:26 which is probably our focus verse of the day but it should be very familiar to us all. Jesus said it. I'll back up to 25, he said, "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you." The Lord was right in the middle of his disciples. This is in the blessedness of John 14, 15, 16 and 17. That blessed time that he had right before he went to the cross of great depth and instruction to his disciples and he says, "You know, these things I've spoken unto you yet being present with you," but that's not going to last. For you and I today, Christ is not in front of us where we can see him, where we can hear his voice.

So, in the perfect design of the Trinity, in the perfect design of the eternal God, he tells us in verse 26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name," do you see the harmony? "The Father will send him in my name and he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance." There it is. He may teach us things. We may learn things about him today but when we go out that door and we get bombarded by everything in this world, as you hear the sirens now, it's easy for our minds to go off into everything. What's going on? Where is it going? Without him, without the covenant remembrance, without the Holy Ghost to bring all things that he has taught us to remember, we're truly left to ourselves and that's not a place I ever want to be, left to my own intellect.

My family knows and I say it a lot, "I don't remember a lot of things." I'm 43 years old now and it seems like every year that goes by I forget more and more. I tried to remember last Christmas and I could just remember bits and pieces. I've been in the room for four births of my children and I can honestly tell you I can only remember maybe one. That's sad but it's not as sad as forgetting, looking at that role call of all of the things that the Lord provided for us in this place and not remembering. Not remembering the depth. Not remembering the precious pearls in the word of God. But I am thankful. I am thankful that in that, the Lord reveals that I need him. I need him every minute. I need the Holy Spirit to bring to my remembrance what he has done, what he has said, what he has finished, what he has accomplished.

Today I want to go to four places in the word of God. Four places, the four places where Jesus says to remember. He begins the verse with “remember.” They don’t link together in any way. I want to talk today about what the Lord said to remember but don’t fret. Don’t fret because we don’t remember these things. There is great comfort in this verse that the Holy Spirit is the one who reveals the things of Christ and brings to our remembrance the things of Christ. That’s why I said not to fret because greater is he that is in you. That’s the Holy Ghost. That’s the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s the Father. That’s the Triune Lord. But it is the Holy Ghost that reveals that Lord to us and he’s so much greater than our thoughts, so much greater than the world’s pulling, so much greater than anything in the world.

Our first stop today, you don’t have to go far, just across the page in my Bible is John 15:20. Before we get to 20, we’re going to back up to 19. Jesus said, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.” Understand that this morning. “But because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” Does the world hate you?

Then our verse in verse 20, “Remember the word that I said unto you.” Remember the teaching of Christ in relation to the world. Remember the teaching of what the Lord is saying here, “The servant is not greater than his lord.” O Lord, if we could just remember that. If we could just remember each day that we’re not greater than our Lord. We’re not greater than our Master. We’re not and we may go around puffing ourselves up and talking about our intellect and talking about the things that we’ve done but we’re not. We’re not greater than the Lord. O, if we could just remember that and that’s what the Holy Spirit teaches his children. He teaches them that they are children, that they are in need to be fathered, to be nurtured, to be lifted up. They are humbled.

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” What do I see in that? What does the Lord reveal in that? That he is the firstfruit. That’s what Paul called him in 1 Corinthians 15. Christ is the firstfruits. He has gone before his children. If they’ve hated him, they will hate you. If they heard his voice, they will hear your voice if you speak of Christ. He’s done it all. He’s performed all things.

It’s a great desire of mine today in this end of the year, it is a desire to remember the Lord in this way. To remember the Lord as high and lifted up, far higher than I’ll ever be. To remember what Isaiah saw. To remember that that’s my rightful place before this Lord. Not as a co-pilot; not as one with a great will that shares that will with his God and we co-exist together and we co-decide in matters for my life. I don’t want that. I don’t desire that no matter how much my flesh rises up and says, “Yes, that’s what you want. You want control.”

I want to remember. I want to remember that I’m not greater than my Lord. I want to remember that he went first in all things. I want to remember why what he has impressed on my soul, why it’s hated. Because he was hated. I want to remember why I’m loved by

the brethren in this room. Because of what he's done. Because of his presence in my life not because of anything I've done. I want to be emptied of myself and I can only say that by the power of the Holy Ghost. To be emptied of all self and to remember, to be brought to remember all that he has done without any effort of my own. That's what it truly means to remember. It's all of him to remember him. To remember that he went first. To remember that my Lord accomplished all and it is finished in him, by him and through him. That's my first desire today in this first passage, is to remember that. Remember him as all that he's done. Remember him and how he went first and to remember the place that he has brought me to and that place is at his feet. Not next to his head, not over his head but at his feet.

The second place I want you to go with me today is back to Luke 17. One of the shortest verses in the entire word of God, verse 32. I want you to notice that all these words today are in red hopefully in your Bible which tells us something, they are the words of our Lord. They are the instruction of our Lord. "Remember Lot's wife." Why is it so important to remember Lot's wife? Children in this room, listen: if the Lord indeed would give you ears to hear today, all of the things that you receive, all of the things that take up your time, adults too, I'm right there with them, all of the pretty things, the electronic things, the things that captivate our minds, remember Lot's wife. Those are the things that she could not leave behind. She could not leave behind the place and the things that were there that were so precious to her. She had to look back. She had to lastingly look back to what she was leaving.

Is there something in your life today that pulls you so far back? Because the part about remembering Lot's wife is that she perished. She perished as a reprobate. She perished as one outside of Christ. She perished as one that had such a desire and a consuming desire for this world that she could not leave it behind. She could not press forward as man would tell you to do today. She could not overcome it as we're told to do in the mainstream religion today. And that may be what she was left to. That may be her understanding. "If I just do this, I can run away from all of this. I can do it." But she couldn't.

There is a lot to be said in that, "remember Lot's wife." The wages of sin is death. The wages of following this world is death. The end result of the world having your heart is death. Eternal death. Not just death, eternal death. That's a sobering reality. It's a sober picture that's before us. "Remember Lot's wife." O, if the Holy Ghost would just instruct us in that each day of our lives. As we get older, we get more, we accumulate more in this life but what is going on with our feet and our hands? Are we clutching the world tighter? Are our feet digging into it? Or are we being weaned from it?

"Remember Lot's wife." That's the question. I can't answer it for anybody in here. I can't answer that. As you believe you mature in the Lord, are you getting closer to him and the eternal place? Or are you finding that you don't ever want to leave this place? "There is too much here for me. There is too much to incite me. There is too much here for the desires that I have."

You know, there's another instruction in "Remember Lot's wife." She came out with a righteous husband, at least that's what the Scriptures tell us. But he couldn't save her. Children, you can't live by the faith of your parents. Husbands, wives, we can't live by the faith of our spouse. We must live by the faith of the Son of God. It must be individual. It's not corporate. They must all be taught of him and this Holy Spirit that resides in every child of God leads them to Christ. Speaks to them of what he has done individually and he speaks to each individual one of his sheep and they hear his voice.

So, yes there is some deep instruction in remembering Lot's wife. As I said from the beginning, we've heard about Lot's wife, it's been in the mind before but we can't recollect why it is so important to remember. Because, see, Lot's wife truly was an antichrist, wasn't she? Anything not of him. The world is an antichrist. The Lord instructs us today in the depth of remembering Lot's wife without any effort of our own. You see, that's when he speaks to your soul.

The next place we will go is all the way back in Revelation 2. Once again, the words in red, Revelation 2:5, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen." That's a deep place to just stop. Have you fallen? Have you fallen? Has the Lord revealed to you a great fall in Adam? Has he revealed to you what you lost in that fall? Or do you believe you've always had it? I tell you, I talked to – I don't talk to a lot of them because I've had my fill of them – but talking to religious people in this world there is never a sense of the fall. There is never a sense of what the Lord has done to bring his children back from death in sins and trespasses. There is always this feel-good, easy believism that resides in this life and when you talk about what the Lord has done in the soul and being set free from sin, there is just no bond there. There is no understanding about the lost communion that we had, the time that we were dead in sins and trespasses. You can try to talk to them about it but they'll say things like, "I don't remember," or "We don't need to talk about those things. Those things are in the past. I'm never going back to those things."

A child of God knows. He knows that deliverance is in Christ and Christ alone and he knows where the Lord has brought him from. He knows that the Lord has brought him from a great fall. He knows that the Lord has – and this is what Jesus is saying here – "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen." Where you have fallen. Where you fell. The depth of what we fell away from and the gloriousness of what he's restored in his Son. That's what he brings us to remember. Those are the things that we forget. Those are the things that when we come to the Lord's Supper, we forget what he's done and we start to focus in on that fall and how we fell again this week and how we fell an hour before we got here and we feel so unworthy and say, "Lord, I can't take this. How can I take the Lord's Supper?" Because it's not about me and my sin. It's about what he's done to cover it.

Can we remember from where we have fallen? Can we get there on our own? We don't like that. We don't like to think back about what we were but it's needful to know what the Lord has delivered us from. And he brings that to the child of God to warn them about what they once were and to show them now what they are in him: triumphant, more than a conqueror, set free of bondage, life, living.

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent.” O, to remember that repentance is a gift of God. That’s what I want to remember today. I want to remember that I can’t repent on my own although I try. Although sometimes I might try to repent with tears, but if it’s not his, if it’s not his gift given to you, it’s not true repentance. Have you ever repented towards someone and you didn’t really mean it? We probably all have. We’ve said it to make peace but yet we went that way with that anger still in our hearts.

Repent. Lord, I want you today to bring this back to my mind without any effort of my own in repentance or to remember what repentance is. Do you know what that takes out of it? That word that a lot of religionists love today? Duty. “It’s my duty to repent.” Is it? Is it? You do all the things that is your duty and the Lord says you’re still an unprofitable son. That’s very deep too. Do you know why that is? Because you’ll never be able to repay grace. You’ll never be able to understand what grace is trying to perform it with a duty.

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.” What are the first works? It’s what he’s done; it’s what we’ve already talked about. Him being the firstfruits. It’s what he’s done at the day of regeneration, the day of the new birth. O, if we could just remember that. If we could remember that in this life that drags us down so much but when the Holy Ghost does bring that to us, he does teach us this is how we can enter into eternal life, the Kingdom of Heaven. This is how we can see him for what he’s done. He’s birthed us from above and that birth is far greater than our natural one because it has eternal life attached to it, not a temporal life that our physical birth has.

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.” O Lord, I want to remember today that you’ve done the first work, that you’ve loved therefore I can love. Because of your love, I love. Because of your faith, I believe. Because of your mercy a hard person like me can have mercy. Because of him.

The last place I want to go is just a page over, Revelation 3:3, “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard.” I hope this year, as this year ends, that the Holy Spirit impresses upon you today how you’ve heard and how you’ve received. In fact, that’s the misnomer about it: you haven’t done either one. It’s what he’s done. He’s given you ears to hear. He’s given you to be a vessel that has received grace. That’s what he’s done. Lord, I want to remember that because when the Lord brings that to my remembrance, do you know what’s not there? Free will. Do you know what’s not there? My ability. Do you know what’s not there? The creature and what the creature has done. I long to remember how thou hast received and heard by him, by the one who has opened my eyes, the one who has opened my ears, the one who has put down the self, the one who has said to me that it’s not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of him that showeth mercy. O, has he shown mercy. If we be his children, what great mercy to reveal to us today what he has done in our lives. That’s my desire from the beginning today. To bring to remembrance what you have done, bring to remembrance thy word to my soul, bring to remembrance as only you can. These great gifts.

And because he's faithful, we get that in the next part, "and hold fast." Boy, I tell you, growing up and being instructed in the free will religion and being told what you have to do and you must do and what you have to hold on to, at first it's exhilarating because you set out like some little super hero thinking you can do all these things but, I tell you what, what a crash it is, what a place of burning it is, to be brought to the end of yourself, to hear the words of your Lord saying, "No more can ye." No more can ye what? "No more can ye do anything. You've tried. You've gone your way. You've kicked against the pricks. You've set out to set your way. I am the way, the truth and the light." That's my desire, to hold fast to him.

"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast," and there's that word again, "and repent." O Lord, impress upon us today the need of repentance every day of our lives. But not only the need for it, Lord, but that you are the gifter of it. You are the author and finisher of our faith to believe it. You are the author of our love because it's your love. O Lord, shine thy light in our souls that we may remember thee above all others, above all other things, above all other worries, above all other things that concern us this hour and this day.

You know, David cried out in the Psalms. He cried out to remember not my sins. He cried out to remember thy tender mercies. He cried out remember me. He cried out remember thy congregation. I looked at all of those and I said, you know, there is only one way David got that and that's in John 14:26 where we started. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." To me, that's rest. May the Lord impress that rest upon you this hour and may he reveal to you that he is remembrance. He is the great Rememberer and he is all that we need.

*Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, add thy power, add thy clarity for thy name's sake and for thy glory alone. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*