

Joshua 1:10-18; I Chron. 16:8-18; Remember the Promises I. The Difficult Task of Remembering II. The Encouragement to Remember III. The Content of this Blessing

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, do you have a hard time remember? I know for myself, if I am told someone's name that the only way I will remember that name is if I write that name down. The fact is, it takes effort to remember! It is easy to forget- to lose track of things and to forget what we once new. So the call to remember is nothing new- even in the Bible. As you might remember from Dt. 6 after we read the 10 Commandments, the LORD instructs parents to teach their children. Instruct them so that they do not forget- talk about the Law when you come and go- write the Law on the corner of your doorframes and inscribe it on your hands. We are to remember what the LORD has said- and remember what He has promised. In I Chronicles 16:15, God's people are told to remember His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations. So as the ark is being placed in the tabernacle, David commands the people to remember the covenant. Interestingly, in Psalm 105, it the LORD who has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations. So God's people are called to remember the Covenant- and our God assures us that He has and will remember His covenant. It is this remembering of the LORD's Word that comforts the Israelites as they are now entering into the promised land. As we conclude chapter 1 this evening, we see that there is a chain of command. The LORD instructs Joshua who then instructs the officers who go on to instruct the people. As He continues to do today, God works through leaders to call His people to faith and obedience. As a congregation, we must remind each other of God's word. And the command that comes to Israel today is this- Remember the Promises of the LORD! We look at this theme: Jesus Christ calls His church to Remember the Promises of the LORD as they wait for God to keep His promises! Our text is v. 13. Remember the Word commanded by the LORD.

I. The Difficult Task of Remembering

In our first point, we will find out why this call to remember is so important. Why did Joshua need to remind the Israelites to remember the Word of the LORD? Had they forgotten? They were standing on the

edge of the promised land- obviously God was going to keep His word, right? Well, we have to keep in mind what the Israelites had gone through. As we saw 2 weeks ago, Moses the servant of the LORD was dead. The one who had spoken the word of the LORD to them was no longer with them! Would the promise die when the messenger did? They were going up against a people that were much more numerous and stronger. Do you remember what happened the last time the Israelites had been here? Back in Numbers 13 the Israelites were camping at Kadesh- on the border of the Promised Land! They could have received the land 40 years ago- but the people forgot God's promises! They doubted! They were overwhelmed by the fear of man- and thus they were sent out to wander in the wilderness for 40 more years! So the people have a history of forgetting and rebelling against the LORD! So the last time the people forgot God's word, they were severely punished as that entire generation died in the wilderness. So Joshua warns their children- do not rebel as your parents did! Do not forget the Word! But it was even more challenging in this specific context. You see, Joshua was speaking directly to the 2 and ½ Tribes of Israel that had already received their possession on the East side of the Jordan- as v. 12 explains. So the tribes of Ruben, Gad and half of Manasseh already had their homes- they were living in their own place. Their flocks were tended, their families settled. In other words, they had already received what they desired. Why would they go over the Jordan and fight the Canaanites when their own land had already been secured. So Joshua needs to remind them not to get secure- don't get too comfortable! Don't forget your brothers- don't neglect your fellow tribes! You may have your land but they do not- so remember the word of the LORD! Think of not only what you have, but what the LORD has promised to your kinsman! Just because you are at ease does not give you the right to neglect and forsake those who need you! Think not only of yourself, but the good of others!

The fact act, there it is always a challenged for God's people to live by faith and not by sight! Our world constantly challenges our faith- tempting us to forget! So what do we see around us? Wars and rumors of war, physical upheaval, sickness, disappointment. Less and less people going to church- the church in

decline. False teaching, prosperity gospel, social gospel. We see a lot of things that tempt us to forget! But we notice one major thing we do not see! We do not now see the victory that Jesus has promised! As II Peter 3 makes clear, it is tempting to think that Jesus is not coming back or that the LORD is slow to fulfill His promise! I do not see my prayers being answered as I want, and I do not see my enemies being trampled under my feet! So we, like the Israelites, are tempted to forget the Word of God! To doubt His promises! So the challenge to our faith remains the same today as it did for the Israelites- will God keep His promises? Will His word come true? We are all tempted to get comfortable in this land while neglecting such a great salvation! So although these 2 ½ tribes have received their land, the call to obedience- to engage in spiritual battle remains! So the main challenges to remembering God's Word are these: the passing of time, challenges and trials, and comfort.

II. The Encouragement to Remember

But the call to remember does not come in a vacuum. There are reasons why the Israelites should remember- why they should not forget! So in order to encourage the Israelites to remember what the LORD had said, Joshua puts this call to faith in the context of God's work. The Israelites should remember what the LORD has promised- basically because God keeps His promise! God is faithful, He will do it! As v. 13 continues, Remember the Word spoken to you- because the LORD will provide that which He has promised. Not only will God go with you as we looked at last week from v. 5- but God keeps His promises! So it is true that God will never leave them nor forsake them- and it is true that God's word never falls to the ground unfulfilled! Does God promise something and then fail to do what He has promised? Is God a man who will lie? As we saw when we read from Psalm 105, He remembers His covenant forever! The steadfast word of God is what encourages the people. As we also read in Mt. 5, not the smallest part of God's word will fail to be fulfilled. Or in I Peter 1, the Word of the LORD endures forever. When doubts and fear fill our mind, God's people must learn to think about the attributes of God! He is faithful- He keeps His word- He cannot and will never break His promises! Peter does the same thing in II Peter 3- when

you are tempted to doubt or question God's work- remember His word! Be stirred up by way of a reminder- as Peter puts it- so that you remember the predictions of the prophets and the commandment of the Lord. That is one of the key ways in which Jesus encourages His people. When we face doubts- He calls us to remember! Remember who God is! He is faithful- a Covenant keeping God! Remember what God has done- look back and bring to mind all that He has already done in history and done for you! Trust in His promises- He will do it! Remember that Jesus presents Himself as the yes and the Amen to all of God's promises in II Cor. 1. Not one word will fall to the ground. Remember- bring to mind God's word! But how are we to remember? Well, one way to remember is to constantly read. Meditate on it as v. 8 put it. To remember God's word you have to read it- and it helps to write it down sometimes. To speak about it when you come in and when you go out. As we find in Dt. 6- when God's word is part of our conversation- we remember it! Do not let it depart. So before the tribes could enter the promised land, they needed to be reminded- remember the Word of the LORD spoken to you by Moses. Remember the promises and bring to mind all the He said. Remember that His word is true and He is faithful! So to fight fear and forgetfulness- you must remember!

III. The Content of this Blessing

But as we come to our last point, exactly what had God promised? What was the content of this covenant that Had been spoken to Abraham and recorded by Moses? Well, the content of this blessing can be divided into three aspects. That the blessings will be gift of grace, the blessing will be land and the blessing will bring rest. First of all, the blessing promised by God will be received by grace. As v. 13 says, remember that the Lord is provide you a place. So the LORD Is providing these blessings to you! They are not a work or something you must earn, it has been graciously bestowed upon you. Conquering the land will not be something that you do in your own military might and wisdom. As we also see in v. 11, the LORD your God is giving you to possess! So possession will be received because of God's promise- God keeps His covenant! Second, the blessing will be seen in the reception of land. As v. 11 and 13 says- you will take possession of

the land- and you will have a place! So the inheritance promised to Abraham back in Gen. 12 will be received- this literal land will be given to you. And third, you will have peace. A place of rest! Now the word for rest here is “Nuah” and it means a place of quiet, where you can sit down and be at peace. After a hard day of work, when you get to take a shower and then sit down in your favorite chair- that is the rest in mind here. Quiet fulfilment! Where there is no fear of enemy attacking, only security and tranquility. Like sheep that find rest by quiet waters as they lay down in green pastures. That is the rest that God’s people will receive. Now one of the reasons we have been considering so many different Bible verses is because we are not in the same historical situation as the Israelites were. We are not 12 tribes on the edge of Canaan. However, there are similarities between our situation and theirs. We are following our NT Joshua! Being led by Jesus, the NT Israel or the church is being brought to the promised land. Like Israel, we need to remember! The reason that the promises of God are good news is because they are graciously promised- fulfilled by Jesus Christ! In other words, as Israel needed to remember, we need to remember that these blessings we receive are received by grace! They are gifts- God sovereignly bestows them on us as He did to the Israelites. And the gift we receive is not the land in Canaan- but the land above! A land flowing with milk and honey- the heavenly Jerusalem where Jesus is building a home for us. As Heb. 11:6 says- we have a better country to look forward to- the Mount of Zion! And we also, like the Israelites, can look forward to rest. We have peace with God in the land of eternal rest! A time of eternal rest exists for God’s people as Heb. 4 puts it. So although our location is not the same, we put our faith in the same God who keeps His Word!

As the Israelites now enter the Promised Land- they must hold on to God and His promises! Jesus Christ calls His church to Remember the Promises of the LORD as they wait for God to keep His promises! As we look forward to God keeping all His promises to us, let us remember that God is faithful- He will do it!