

**Ecclesiastes 12: 1 – “Remembering God in Your Youth” Message # 79 in the Series – “Remember Your Creator”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Now our text says that you should remember now, your Creator God in the days of your youth. Why? Our text gives us the reason. It is because as you grow older there will be difficult days that will come, and in those years you will say I have no pleasure in them. And because you have no pleasure in them, you may actually fall into great unbelief; the kind of unbelief where you will question whether God would listen to your prayers anyway, you have waited so long. But as I begin this message, I would have you to remember God’s good reproof to you in Isaiah 59: 1, and turn to Him with all of your heart – “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear.” “But your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you.”

And remember Isaiah 55: 6 – Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.” “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. Many people who are young people today, are not seeking God as they should. And they wonder why they cannot find meaning in their lives. It is God who gives that meaning, because He created all of life. Why put off to tomorrow, that which God would have you do today? These verses are specifically addressed to youth, but they may easily be applied to all ages of people who can understand them. Therefore, let’s think together about what the young person should remember about God, and how they should remember Him. 3 things to remember:

**1<sup>st</sup> – Remember that God the Creator made you for Himself.**

The memory of many people is a very uncertain thing. Sometimes we can remember certain truths and certain experiences very well, and then other times, even those same experiences which were so clear to us a few days before, are now something which we have to strain our minds to be able to remember them. Why is it that we are so forgetful? Why can’t memory be crystal clear and we be able to draw it up repeatedly and quickly to our minds? I think that the answer to that question is two-fold. It is because of Adam’s sin in the beginning; that is, it is that sin in our nature, which we have inherited from Adam, it affects our memory, as well as all the other faculties of our being.

And another reason is, because God would have you to see how dependent you are upon Him in relation to everything in your physical being; your mind included, and your memory being a part of your mental faculties. There may be many other reasons why you can’t remember things. But the first thing that every one of us needs to consider is that God is our Creator. The young person especially, but really, all people are to remember that God is their Creator. He is the one who has made the young man or the young woman, not they themselves. This ought to be especially apparent to young people who have Christian parents who have brought them to church.

Turn over with me to Psalm 100. “Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands!” “Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing.” “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 unto Him, and bless His name.” “For the Lord is good, His mercy everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.” You can see here that what God is looking for from the young person. It is that they would see Him as the One who has made them. But the reason that He has made you, is so that you would come and worship Him.

All people were created by God in order to worship and serve Him. All lands and all peoples are to make a joyful shout to Him and serve Him with gladness. All are to come before His

presence with singing. This means that you should not only worship Him personally in private, but you should more especially see that God would have you to come to church and learn of Him, and give to Him your praise, young person. When you come to church, you are remembering that there is a God who has created you and He is expecting you to learn to worship Him regularly, and not to forget or neglect that worship. Let me ask whether are you observing the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment of the 10 commandments? Are you remembering the Sabbath Day, the Christian Sabbath Day, to keep it holy? This is something which God would have you to learn in your youth.

Is there anything more important for you to do on Sunday than praising God and pursuing the knowledge of God? If there is something more important to you, on that Day, then you are not remembering God rightly, Sunday by Sunday. Oh, may you learn it early. God made you for Himself. Sometimes I fear that some young people only come to church because they are forced to come by their parents. It is, of course, the duty of godly parents to bring their children to church, and not give them the option of staying home or doing something else. But look with me, over at Proverbs 22: 6. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

This verse is telling us that if the child is to “remember”, that there has to have been something placed there in their mind by their Dad and Mom. But young person, you should understand that both of your parents, if they know the Lord and are walking with the Lord, they desire to have you freely give your heart to them, in order that you might be taught the way of the Lord. They want very much for you to come to church on your own volition. Look over, then, at Proverbs 23: 22-26. “Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.” “Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.” “The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him.” “Let your father and mother be glad, and let her who bore you rejoice.” “My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.”

Young person, here is the truth of the matter. Your father and mother, if they are godly, know that they did not create you. They know that God did. They know that He was the One who formed you in your mother’s womb. They know that God was the One who gave you to them in particular so that they would be your parents. And if they know the Lord, they want the very best for you. The very best for you is, that you would remember God your Creator in the days of your youth. Remember what your parents have taught you about God, from the Bible. Remember what they taught you, about what He expects.

Remember also, that true religion is a matter of the heart. It is a matter of God’s changing your heart, and saving you from what you are in Adam, so that you will early have your heart directed into the ways of truth, and into the right ways of thinking and doing things. Look over at Proverbs 23: 15-18 – “My son, if your heart is wise, my heart will rejoice—indeed, I myself; yes, my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak right things.” “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the Lord all the day; for surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off.” Solomon goes on to make some very practical applications of how a young man should choose his friends wisely, and not run with gluttons and wine-drinkers; people who would forget God in their thoughts, and in their behavior.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Remember that it is only through Christ’s grace that you will remember God when you are young.**

The Original Hebrew of this verse reads, “Remember your Creators (Plural) in the days of your youth”. In other words, remember not only that God has made you, but remember also that Christ was the One through whom all things were made. If you will receive this truth, you should also understand, that finding Him is the only way to glorify God in the days of your youth. The way that a young man will learn to live, walking in righteous paths, and walking in

the ways of truth according to the Bible, will be if he will early seek Christ who is wisdom personified. See how Christ is spoken of in Proverbs Chapter 8, verses 12-17? “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion.” “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.” “Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.” “By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice.” “By me princes rule, and nobles, all the judges of the earth.” “I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.”

You can see here that wisdom is not simply a principle to live by. It is a Person who has it intrinsically in Himself. That Person, we find in the New Testament Scriptures, is Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the grace of Jesus Christ, which God can give to you at an early age, that will enable you to be prudent; that is, full of Biblical knowledge. And by His grace, He can teach you discretion; that is, the right way to go about to do things to God’s glory, with your life. It says here that He does this for kings, for rulers, for princes, for nobles, and for all the judges of the earth when they seek him. He loves people who love Him; those who will diligently seek Him.

Will you not ask Him to do this for you? These last words, “those who seek me diligently”, of verse 17 of Proverbs 8, they have been translated in the King James as “early seek me”. It is He alone who can give grace to the heart of the young person, to reverence Him, and to hate evil. Christ also gives the true humility. He is the One who can give the good and right counsel, on how you should live. In 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5: 5 it says, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders.” “Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

I am saying that it is Christ who gives the true humility necessary for a young man to avoid using perverse or foolish speech. He is the Wonderful Counselor who gives understanding of right ways for you to think upon; right principles and precepts, promises and commands to live by. And if you obey these, by faith in Christ, He will strengthen you to keep them and do them. He will make your heart strong to do the right things with your strength. He will give you wisdom on how you can use your time to the glory of God, and how you can begin to learn more about what God would have you to do for Him, in particular. Those who seek Christ early in life shall find that He will indeed give you the true spiritual riches and wisdom.

Look over at Colossians Chapter 2, verse 1. “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Now look also at verse 8. “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.” “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”

So, you see here, that there can be a problem, dear young person, with your only going to college to learn many earthly “truths” from men who do not know God; men who do not know or believe in the Bible. There is nothing wrong with being taught the arts and sciences and learning useful knowledge to be able to pursue a career, so that you might make money to support yourself and your family. But you need to be careful. Because it is possible that you might actually come to believe the philosophies of men. There are some teachers who will only teach you how to pursue worldly and earthly goals. This kind of pursuit, that of earthly knowledge, and men’s wisdom apart from God, it may cheat you out of what God could give to you; what He could show you through Christian teachers; your coming to see and believe that God Himself, through Jesus Christ our Lord, is the only true and lasting source of wisdom and knowledge. Worldly wisdom and philosophies of men will not avail in your living your life as you should, to

God's glory. They may establish you in popularity, and they may help you in obtaining earthly riches. But you may miss out on God's better things, which are found when you will seek Him diligently; when you will remember your Creator in the days of your youth. God is the One who made you. Christ is the only One who can redeem you and give you a new heart to pursue that wisdom which leads to godliness. Therefore, you should seek Him early, and as it can also be translated, seek Him earnestly.

**Then 3<sup>rd</sup> – You should remember God before the difficult days come.**

Solomon means that you should remember God before you get old; too old to be able to serve Him as you ought to be, all of your days. The word difficult is translated "evil" in the King James. "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come." Old age is the time of many difficulties. There are many difficulties related to the body, as we shall see the next time that we are together around this passage. It is the time when the years will draw near when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them." It is not as though an older person who is godly does not have many pleasures in their older years. You may remember that Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in years when Isaac was born. They called him "laughter" because God had given them this pleasure even in their old age.

But turn to Psalm 71, verses 17 and 18. There is something more that I want to teach you here. It says here – "O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works." "Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come." So, you can see here that there are tremendous advantages to remembering God when you are young. The Psalmist says that he was taught from his youth by God Himself. God Himself showed him the path of life and it was He who showed him the way to live to His glory. He says, "To this day, I declare Your wondrous works".

Let me ask you in closing if this is what you do? If that is what you have done, beginning in your youth, you have every right to pray and ask as the psalmist did here: "Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, do not forsake me" (that is do not let me die) "until I declare Your strength to this generation, and Your power to all who will come." This is what you are able to do, when you have remembered God your Creator, in the days of your youth. You will be able to pray and ask God, that He would declare His strength through you, to this generation. You can pray that other people around you, family and friends, and others that you know, will see that your life has been upheld by God, and it has been lived to God. I trust that this is how we will all want to pray, who are following God according to His blessed Word.