

“Forgetting God”
Judges 3:7-11
(Preached a Trinity, December 28, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 2** the writer of Judges described the situation that would run throughout the entire book, only with increasing intensity. It was a consistent paradigm: Israel's sin, God's anger and judgment against them, Israel's cry for deliverance, God's pity by raising up a deliverer.
Look at the text.
Judges 2:11-12 NAU - "Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, ¹² and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers"
Judges 2:14 NAU - "The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them"
Judges 2:15 NAU - "they were severely distressed."
Judges 2:16 NAU - " Then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them."
2. Beginning in **Chapter 3** we find this pattern working out in practice.
 - A. In **Verse 7** we find Israel's sinful rebellion against God.
Judges 3:7 NAU - "The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth."
 - B. In **Verse 8** we find God's anger and He delivers them into the hand of their enemies.
Judges 3:8 NAU - " Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, so that He sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years."
 - C. Then in **Verse 9** we find Israel crying out in distress
Judges 3:9 NAU - "When the sons of Israel cried to the LORD"
 - D. And then God taking pity in raising up a deliverer
Judges 3:9 NAU - "the LORD raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother."
3. And so we will see this pattern over and over. This would be the history of Israel.
Exodus 32:9 NAU - "The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people."
Acts 7:51 NAU - "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did."
4. **Verse 7** describes their sin:
Judges 3:7 NAU - "The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth."

- A. Obviously this doesn't mean that they lost complete memory of God. It doesn't mean they forgot who He was or of His mighty acts.
- B. What does it mean? What does it mean that God forgets our sin?
Jeremiah 31:34 NAU - "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
 (1) Does it mean that there are things our omniscient God does not know? Does it mean that our sinful acts are beyond His knowledge? If this were true God would have to forget our entire lives for we have not lived a day without committing sin.
 (2) When we say that God forgets our sin it means that He does not hold our sin against us. It means that God does not act upon what He knows.
 Remember this because it is at the heart of the remainder of this sermon.
5. This was at the heart of Israel's sin. It wasn't that they forgot who God was. It's that they were no longer controlled by what they knew. Although they knew what God demanded of them they ignored the truth and turned their hearts over to the gods of the pagan nations. The Baals were false gods and the Asheroth is referring to wooden images dedicated to the fertility goddess Asheroth.
6. This evening I want us to consider this carefully. I'll divide it into three headings:
 I. The forgetfulness of lost humanity
 II. When God's people fall into forgetfulness
 III. The remedy of forgetfulness
- I. The forgetfulness of lost humanity
 A. Paul described forgetfulness as the condition of all humanity
 1. Their problem isn't that they do not know God – they all know God. Paul says they clearly know God
Romans 1:19-20 NAU - "that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."
 a. All men know the power and majesty of God. Creation manifests God's glory.
Psalms 19:1-3 NAU - "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. ² Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard."
 b. David is saying that Creation shouts the glory of God in a universal language that all understand clearly
 2. So what's the problem? How come they don't all bow before Him and follow Him?
 a. The problem is they suppress what they know
Romans 1:18 NAU - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"

- b. The problem is they do not act upon what they know
Romans 1:21 NAU - " For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
3. Because of this the wrath of God is kindled upon all of humanity
Romans 1:18 - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
- B. But there is another class of lost people – The religious hypocrites
1. The Bible describes them in various ways
Matthew 15:7-8 NAS - "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ⁸ 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me.'
2 Timothy 4:2-4 NAS - " preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths."
Philippians 3:18-19 NAS - " For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things."
2. Their problem is they profess to know Him but do not act upon what they know – They know what Christ demands but they are not willing to submit.
3. Peter says it is far better not to know than to know and not act upon it
2 Peter 2:20-22 NAS - "For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, *returns* to wallowing in the mire."
4. They possess only an outward form
2 Timothy 3:5 NAS - "holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power"
a. Although they know what glorifies Christ they have no interest in giving their lives to it – they do not act upon what they know
b. Like Israel, they don't have the heart so serve God
1 Kings 18:21 CSB - "Then Elijah approached all the people and said, "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If Yahweh is God, follow Him. But if Baal, follow him." But the people didn't answer him a word."

- c. It is one thing to have an intellectual knowledge of Christ. It is far different for our hearts to be fully captivated by Him.

II. When God's people fall into forgetfulness

A. The Gospel has transforming power

- 1. The Holy Spirit changes our heart. We have new desires and new appetites.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NAU - "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

- 2. The Word of God informs our consciences and transforms our minds

Romans 12:2 NAU - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

B. But our life is a battle – the Christian life is often described in terms of warfare.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 NAU - "Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."

- 1. We don't always act upon what we know

Romans 7:15 NAS - "For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate."

Romans 7:19 NAS - "For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish."

- 2. It's one thing to know with our heads. It's another to actually obey from the heart.
- 3. It is one thing to profess Christ with our mouths. It's another to have our lives consumed by Him.
- 4. Obedience is hard. The Christian life is hard. It takes diligence and discipline. Sometimes we fall into laziness and apathy. Our zeal can turn to cold indifference.

III. The remedy of forgetfulness – the remedy for forgetfulness is always remembrance

A. The remedy for the lost person is the Gospel of Christ – the Gospel calls us to remember our Savior

- 1. He calls the lost to repent of their sin and follow Him -

Romans 1:16 NAU - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

- 2. God often does this by bringing a person through great trial. He always brings the reality of sin before him.

- 3. Notice the result:

Judges 3:9 NAU - "When the sons of Israel cried to the LORD"

- a. Their hearts were divided. They served many God's
- b. But notice in their distress they cried out to the one true God

- c. God receives those who are willing to forsake all and follow Him – those who cry out to Him alone.
- B. For the believer the answer is the same – The solution is remembrance
1. After lamenting of his weakness in Romans 7 Paul declared the solution—remember Christ!
Romans 7:19 NAS - "For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish."
Romans 7:24-25 NAU - " Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"
 2. One look to the cross awakens us to the greatness of our salvation. The Lord's Supper is a wonderful means of grace to remind us of the glory of Christ.
 3. The Christian life is about submitting our lives to God who is able to lead us unto righteousness
Galatians 5:16 NAU - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
 4. Our problem is forgetfulness – Have you forgotten what you are? Have you forgotten your deliverance from sin? Have you forgotten your gracious Savior? Has this world drawn your heart away? Listen to Peter
2 Peter 1:5-9 NAU - " Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins."
- C. We must be continually reminded
- 2 Peter 1:12 NAU** - " Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them*, and have been established in the truth which is present with *you*."
1. Don't forget who you are – Don't forget your glorious salvation
 2. The Word of God continually reminds us
Colossians 1:10-14 NAU - " so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. ¹³ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

3. Fill your hearts continually with the Word of God. It will deliver you from forgetfulness.
James 1:21-25 NAU - "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."

Conclusion:

1. Chances are I haven't told you anything tonight that you don't already know. Your problem is probably not knowing. The problem with most is they don't act upon what they know.
2. They are guilty of forgetfulness. There is no greater danger.
Judges 3:7 NAU - "The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God"