

Title: **DON'T EVER FORGET!**

Text: Isaiah 51:1

Subject: *A Needful Reminder of What
 God Has Done For Us By His Grace*

Date: Sunday Morning — August 16, 2009

Tape # Z-70a

Reading: *Isaiah 51:1-52:3*

Introduction:

Turn with me to Isaiah 51. I received some very troubling, painful news this week by which I have been reminded again, in a very personal way, of God's distinguishing grace toward me and upon me in Christ Jesus. This text has been on my heart incessantly. I believe the Lord has given me a message from it, a message for me and a message for you. The title of my message is **DON'T EVER FORGET!** My text is Isaiah 51:1.

(Isaiah 51:1) "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit *whence* ye are digged."

I know that Paul admonishes us to forget those things, which are behind and reach forth unto those things, which are before. Certainly in a sense we must do that. We must forget past experiences, past works and past religious feelings, services and sacrifices. In so far as our hope before God is concerned, in so far as our assurance of a saving interest in Christ is concerned, we must forget the past altogether. Trust Christ now, as if you had never trusted him before. Seek him now, as if you had never sought him before.

Yet, there are some things we must always strive to remember, some things we must try to always keep vividly before our hearts and minds. There are some things we must never forget.

1. **We must never, for a moment, forget the price of our redemption** (John 3:14-16; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

(John 3:14-16) "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,

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that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(2 Corinthians 5:21) “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

2. **We must never forget what God has done for us by His free and sovereign grace in Christ** (1 John 3:1).

(1 John 3:1) “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

3. **And we must never forget what we are by nature and what God has saved us from, by His almighty grace** – (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

(1 Corinthians 1:26-31) “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence. (30) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11) “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Proposition: Here, in Isaiah 51:1, the Lord God Himself calls us to

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remember where we were, what we are by nature and how that He has saved us by his almighty grace).

(Isaiah 51:1) “Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit *whence* ye are digged.”

A NEEDED CALL

Here is a very needed call that should never be needed at all! – “*Hearken to Me!*” The One speaking in this text is the Lord God himself, our Savior. He is calling for us to pay attention to Him, to listen to Him, to remember Him and to remember what He has done for us. What a sad fact this reveals! You and I, who should always be filled with vivid, living, relentless, ever-increasing thoughts of Christ, have a terrible tendency to neglect Him and become indifferent to him (Song 5:2).

(Song of Songs 5:2-6) “I sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is* the voice of my beloved that knocketh, *saying*, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, *and* my locks with the drops of the night. (3) I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? (4) My beloved put in his hand by the hole *of the door*, and my bowels were moved for him. (5) I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped *with* myrrh, and my fingers *with* sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. (6) I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and* was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.”

If I speak falsely against you, forgive me. But I find that it is the common lot of God’s people in this world to experience much of this spiritual languishing. Few live on mountain tops. Most of us spend much time in deep valleys, walking in darkness (Isaiah 50:10).

(Isaiah 50:10) “Who *is* among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh *in* darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.”

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We should never neglect our God and Savior; but often we do. So he says, “*Hearken to me!*”

SAINTS DESCRIBED

The Lord God here describes and identifies His people. — “*Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord!*” By these two things God distinguishes His people from all other people. These two things separate true believers from mere religious professors. This is how God describes His saints. They are a people who “*follow after righteousness*” and “*seek the Lord!*”

The believer is a person who follows after righteousness. He does not follow after the righteousness of the law, because he knows that righteousness can never be found in or attained by the law (Galatians 2:21).

(Galatians 2:21) “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

We seek the righteousness of God in Christ and pursue that holiness without which we cannot see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

(Hebrews 12:14) “Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:”

- Imputed Righteousness
- Imparted Righteousness
- He who has righteousness seeks and follows hard after righteousness – He who has no righteousness presumes that he has everything he needs (Philippians 3:8-14).

(Philippians 3:8-14) “Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, (9) And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: (10) That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto

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his death; (11) If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (12) Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. (13) Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, (14) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

The believer follows a path and a career of righteousness. – That is the direction in which his life flows. Believers are the servants of righteousness (Romans 6:18).

- **The rule** by which we live is the Word of God.
- **The example** we follow is Jesus Christ – (John 15:13).
- **The test** by which we seek to determine our actions is the Glory of God and Love for our brethren.

The believer is a person who seeks the Lord. We presume nothing! We have not yet attained! We have not yet apprehended that for which we have been apprehended. We have not yet gotten what we desire. We have not yet arrived. **We seek the Lord Jesus Christ!**

- We know our need of Him.
- We know that all fullness is in Him.
- We seek Him for salvation and life, grace and strength, righteousness and peace – All Things (1 Corinthians 1:30).
- We seek Him earnestly, where He is to be found. — In His Word! — In His House!
- We seek His communion, His fellowship, His favor and His approval.

GOD'S SAVING OPERATIONS

Our text also describes the mighty, saving operations of the grace of God in Christ. Notice how God describes the salvation He performs.

(Isaiah 51:1) “Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit *whence* ye are digged.”

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We were hewn from the rock of human depravity, by the hammer of omnipotent grace.

- We did not break ourselves from the rock. God broke us from it.
- We did not fall from the rock. We were hewn from it.
- We did not gradually evolve from the rock. We were hewn from it, with the violence of God's omnipotent hand!

We were dug from the pit of human corruption, death and degradation by the hand of God's irresistible, immaculate mercy.

- Genesis 6:5
- Jeremiah 17:9
- Mark 7:21-23

(Genesis 6:5) “And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.”

(Jeremiah 17:9) “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

(Mark 7:21-23) “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, (22) Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: (23) All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

Your heart and mine is by nature as black as the heart of Judas. Whatever sin there is, has been or shall be in this world is in your heart and mine by nature. The germ of all evil is in us all. It does not matter who your parents are, that which is born of the flesh is flesh. Corruption brings forth corruption. It can never give birth to purity!

The history of our race, when honestly read, is a history of corruption and depravity.

- Wars!
- Persecutions!
- Ambition!
- Greed!
- Debauchery!

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Things have not changed in our day of enlightenment, education, and reason! If you care to see how far we have advanced above the cannibalistic barbarians of New Guinea, read today's paper! It reads like the chronicles of a barbaric society.

- Self-serving Politicians and Preachers.
- Adultery, Fornication and Rape.
- Rioting, Murder and Abortion.
- Homosexuality, Pedophilia and even Cannibalism. – (Jeffery Dalmer)
- These reprobate practices men and women want to protect and promote by law, while they fret about protecting frogs, trees and worms!

Take a good look at the state and condition you were in when God saved you by His grace.

- Many of us prodigals were saved from the hog pen of corruption.
- You who were less vile in practice were no less vile in heart. – Providential restraints kept you from behaving as you desired.

Illustration: *The Caged Lion*

Look at the pit in which the lost and the damned now suffer the wrath of God.

- There I would be, had God not saved me by his grace.
- You would be in hell now, if the Lord had not kept you from destruction.

But the most vivid reminder I have of the rock from whence I have been hewn and the hole of the pit from whence I have been dug is the present corruption of my depraved heart! I thank God for his forgiveness of my sin and for the imputed righteousness that is mine in Christ. I thank God for a new nature, the righteousness of Christ imparted to me in regeneration, causing me to truly love Him and love righteousness. But there is a real warfare in my soul. (Romans 7:14-25; Galatians 5:17).

(Romans 7:14-25) “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (15) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. (17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (18) For I

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know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. (19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

(Galatians 5:17) “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

Illustration: *David – Psalm 73*

LESSONS FROM THE LOOK

Now, looking to the rock whence we are hewn and the hole of the pit whence we are digged, I want us to learn some things by the grace of God. I pray that God the Holy Spirit will teach us these four lessons and seal them to our hearts.

1. **You and I ought to be a humble people.** Pride ought not exist in us. God hates pride! We have nothing about us that is more despicable than pride.

(1 Corinthians 4:7) “For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it?*”

- Pride of Race!
- Pride of Place!
- Pride of Grace!

2. **This look ought to encourage us!**

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- With regard to Our Own Salvation.
 - With regard to the Souls of Others.
3. **We ought to be kind and tender to others.**
- To Our Brethren in Christ (Ephesians 4:32).
 - To Our Brethren in Adam (Romans 10:1).
4. **We ought to be faithful to Christ, our God and Savior** (Romans 12:1).

No sinner is beyond the reach of God's almighty arm. — Remember what God has done for you!

Illustration: *My Remembrance Room!*

Don't ever forget!

AMEN.