

Sermon – “Re-Membering Losses”
Friday, April 18 2019
Scripture Reading: Hebrews 10:16-25
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This week, we are preparing our hearts for the coming Easter – resurrection of Jesus Christ and remembering our own rebirth with the Risen One. Soon, we will hear and reflect the last leg of the journey of Jesus to remember the sacrifice he made to be our Messiah. The Bible reminds us to that Jesus entered Jerusalem during Passover – a time for remembering and celebrating God’s deliverance of the Israelites from slavery. We were reminded on Maundy Thursday to commemorate the last supper Christ had with his disciples as he continues to share his table with us today; and tonight on Good Friday, we gather to remember the saving grace that Christ endured for all our sakes, giving us a second chance to renewed life.

What is so powerful about remembering? Apparently, this freedom that is allocated to all of us to choose what we remember has the power to predict if a relationship is going to be a happy one or an unhappy one. Psychologist John Gottman and his staff observed over 700 couples over two decades, keeping score of positive and negative interactions. At the end of the study, they came up with a golden ratio of 5:1, meaning for every unpleasant and irritable scenario, there needs to be minimum of 5 affirming, gracious responses to have greater odds at having a happy marriage.¹

I wonder what Christ remembered as he cried out, “my God, my God, why have you forsaken me,”² and “it is finished”³? We need to remember as the people of God that we are his betrothed bride.⁴ I wonder what Christ was remembering as our bridegroom. It is embarrassing and without a doubt that I fail to match that golden ratio of 5:1. It is unjustifiable and incomprehensible that my King would take my place for a sinner like me. So then how is this day, the day we remember Christ dying on a cross, as a ‘Good Friday’ for us?

It is because God does not remember the sin in us, but simply remembers us. Hebrews 10 reminds us,

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying,

“This is the covenant that I will make with them
after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds,”
he also adds,

¹ <https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-positive-perspective-more-on-the-51-ratio/>

² Mark 15:34

³ John 19:30

⁴ Matthew 25:1-13

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

This gives us an insight to what God was planning from the very beginning to rescue us. It starts with the fact that God remembered us, the lost. God was counting the number of people whom God made in God's image and God wanted to save even the last, one sheep that was lost. God remembered even those who are being forgotten, left behind, and even ignored. Jesus went and reached out to the lepers, widows, the orphans during his ministry on earth. Today, God remembers who are dealing with physical and mental health - those who are struggling to deal with and make sense of an illness such as cancer that overtakes our physical body; God remembers and stands by the ones who have lost their beloved ones, those who have lost their child; God remembers and cares for those who are discriminated, neglected, weak, voiceless. God does not remember us by the number of wrongs or sins, but by the hurt and what makes us incomplete.

In return, our bridegroom, the betrothed King, asks us to remember him as our response to God's love and grace. As the Passover takes place during the Christ's Passion week, God is asking all of us, remember me - the One who rescued your ancestors from bondage of slavery. As Jesus shares his table with us, he reminds us to “remember me” as we break bread and share the cup together. As Christ shared with the disciples of the resurrection, he is asking all of us to remember me.

Are we not doing the same when we pray? There is no need to worry about the golden ratio of remembering, when God recollects a perfect record of good memories when our small faith is being made as our righteousness.⁵ Let us tell God that we remember God in our prayers! God remembers who we are, know what we are going through. Let us pray with the confidence that God is remembering us, and ceaselessly thanking God for the works in our lives.

As we lift prayers and remember Jesus on the cross, God not only recollects us, but re-members us – reconstitutes us to God's flock. Through the payment of God's only son on the cross, God reconciled us to Godself, introducing us to the all the saints of all time and place as a proper member of Heavenly realm. According to Gospel of Luke, when a criminal asked Jesus hanging on a cross next to him, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom,” Jesus replied “you will be with me in Paradise.”⁶

So we shall forever remember the day that Christ died on a cross as a Good Friday, for God remembered me: just as I am and declared that I am God's, that I am never alone, and forever I shall have a place by God's side. Amen.

⁵ Romans 4:1-5

⁶ Luke 23:42-43