



“Remember the Words of Jesus”

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I’m glad you’ve chosen to begin another week by considering the word of God together. I want to talk to you today about the importance of remembering the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Far too many of us have forgotten what Jesus said about a lot of things. It would do the world a great deal of good if we would stop and remember what Jesus said and taught. His words are vitally important—so much so that He said His words are spirit and they are life.

In **Acts 20**, the apostle Paul was meeting with the elders of the church at Ephesus for the last time and he told them they would do well to remember what Jesus said.

Acts 20:32-38 “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.”

This was a tearful goodbye from Paul to the church he had grown to love. He wanted them to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. That will be the theme of our study today as well.

The words recorded in our text were spoken during a sad meeting between Paul and the elders of the church at Ephesus. It would be the last time they ever saw each other on this earth. Paul had spent three years with them and would now move to other mission fields. In his final address to them, he made a moving plea for them to watch for false teachers and to care for the needs of one another. He tells them that they need to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how *it is more blessed to give than*

to receive. Interestingly, these words are not recorded in any of the four gospels or even in the apocryphal gospels, for that matter. But the Bible tells us that Jesus said and did many things that the Holy Spirit did not deem necessary to include in the inspired accounts of Jesus' life (**John 20:30-31**). But the Holy Spirit did make Paul aware of these words that Jesus spoke, and they were apparently well known among the disciples because Paul simply told the elders at Ephesus to remember them. To remember the words of Jesus is an important plea for any people of any age. There are many famous words that live in either national memory or infamy; they will not soon be forgotten. But a lot of people don't know much about what Jesus said while He was here on the earth. They might be able to quote **John 3:16**, which is an incredibly powerful, beautiful, and important verse. They may be able to quote the golden rule. A lot of people today seem to know that Jesus said, "*Judge not*," but that's about all they remember that He said.

The fact is, many, many people are unaware of the vast majority of the sayings and teachings of Jesus. The world is a poorer place today because we don't remember His words. His words were so important that God employed a very special process to preserve them for all time. It would be up to the apostles of Jesus Christ to write down and preserve His words for the rest of us. The only way the apostles could remember what Jesus said and to accurately write it down was by the Holy Spirit inspiring them and empowering them to do so.

John 16:4 "But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you."

John 14:25-26 "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

When Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as *the Comforter*, that comes from the word *parakletos*, referring to a help or one brought alongside. Specifically, the Lord is applying this term to the apostles. The Holy Spirit would come alongside them and allow them to remember the things that Jesus spoke. You see, the apostles were mere men, fallible human beings who didn't have perfect memories any more than you or I do. It would've been impossible for them to inerrantly remember all the things that Jesus spoke during His 3½ year ministry. There were also other things that Jesus was yet to reveal to them after He went back to heaven. So, the Holy Spirit came alongside them, filling their hearts and inspiring their minds with the things that Jesus wanted revealed and He superintended the writing down of those things so that we have, perfectly preserved, the life, ministry, words, teachings, and the will of Jesus Christ and the things that pertain to our eternal redemption.

So, the Holy Spirit was sent to remind the apostles of what Jesus said and to guide them into all of the truth, thus enabling them to perfectly write it down for the church of all future ages to read and apply. We today can know the words of Jesus because the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. God intended for the words of Jesus to be our guide and our rule—yes, even today, in the 21st century. Unfortunately though, many don't remember, respect, or care about what Jesus said about much of anything. His word is their last consideration, and only then if it validates what they already practice. But God expects us to make the words of Jesus our first and final appeal. After all, we're told that the words of Christ will meet us one day in judgment and that's serious business.

John 12: 48-50 “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

So, how does one reject Jesus? By receiving not His words. Not only are we responsible for hearing and remembering His words, but we are very foolish if we don't. The fact is His word can settle many fierce debates. His word can calm a lot of storms in our lives and help resolve a lot of issues if we would but remember what He said.

First, we need to remember Jesus' words about the historicity of the scriptures. After Charles Darwin made popular the theory of evolution in the 19th century, religious modernism began to try to broker some compromise between the statements of scripture on one hand and modern theories and discoveries in science on the other. Theologians began to question the historical accounts of the Bible including the creation account in **Genesis 1-2**, and subsequently the flood, and later the virgin birth and nearly all other supernatural claims of the Old and New Testaments. These things had to somehow be explained in such a way as to agree with the theories of science and naturalistic thinking. Miracles had to be explained away because a greater understanding of science and the natural world demanded a naturalistic interpretation of those supernatural claims made in the Bible. Consequently now, almost two centuries later, there are millions of religious people who—strangely enough—claim to believe in and worship the God of the Bible (who by very definition is a supernatural being), but then turn around and deny what the Bible says about creation, the history of man, and the miracles of ages past. Many have long believed the theory of “theistic evolution.” That term simply means that God is the driving force behind all that exists, He is the original power, but that He used natural means—the process of evolution—to bring all that is in the universe about. In other words, the **Genesis** account of creation cannot and should not be taken literally, we're told, as a six 24-hour day event. Rather, theistic and modern-day theologians say that the six days of creation were symbolic of long periods of time. That one day in the Bible could amount to millions of years in which evolution ran its course. But for those who believe in Jesus, that question should be easily settled. It is apparent in reading the gospels that Jesus affirmed the historical accuracy of the Old Testament. He spoke of the specific people the Old Testament claims to have lived, but many today deny ever existed. These supposed allegories and made-up stories of the Old Testament were spoken of by Christ the Son of God as literal events that took place. Never did He hint that those were myths or legends devised to teach spiritual principles. He looked at them as history. There are many examples of Jesus' statements in the gospels that support that fact. We could spend our entire time today enumerating them. Jesus looked at those things as literal events that took place involving historical people.

Jesus even affirmed the biblical model of creation. He did so in such a way that it's almost simply taken for granted. In **Matthew 19**, Jesus was instructing the Pharisees about God's plan for marriage. In so doing, He goes all the way back to the beginning of time to remind them where marriage began in the first place.

Matthew 19:4 “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,”

It might be tempting just to pass by that, but it's a very important affirmation. Jesus says that God created humankind as male and female *at the beginning*. He did not say that God made them male and female through the course of time, but *at the beginning*. What beginning is He talking about?

Genesis 1:26-27 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

The **Genesis** account shows how that God created Adam, the first man, and then seeing that it was not good for Adam to be alone, He created Eve. That took place *at the beginning*. That is not what the evolutionist believes. The evolutionist teaches that everything came into existence by chance through the process of evolution--from a single cell which was the result of a spontaneous beginning, generated by natural forces. The evolutionist claims that a single cell of an unknown and unexplained origin, a non-sex cell, after a period of time divided and eventually (about 180 million years ago to be exact), the distinct Y chromosome made its evolutionary appearance and mammals developed into males and females and so forth.

Folks, the Bible does not claim to be a history book per se, and it certainly doesn't claim to be a science book. The **Genesis** account was not written to give us a scientific look at creation. That is admitted. The book of **Genesis** was written to give the Jews the history of mankind and the history of their own nation. It grants to us the very beginning of the history of redemption. Nonetheless, when Jesus referred to the book of **Genesis**, He referred to the fact of creation being that God in the beginning created them male and female. There is only one way to account for that and that is that the words of **Genesis 1-2** concerning the creation of the man and the woman are true. Jesus' words settled that issue. You know, we either believe the word of God or we don't. More specifically, we either believe the words of Jesus or we don't. If we deny the historicity of the Bible, we deny the teaching of Christ Himself. For those who claim to believe in Jesus, a lot of debate can be settled if we simply remember His words and accept them as truth.

Secondly, we need to remember the words of Christ about marriage. The institution of marriage has devolved into something far different than God intended. Today, we're very confused about marriage and its origin, definition, and structure. Again, we need to remember the words of Jesus. Back to **Matthew 19**.

Matthew 19:3-6 "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Those verses really settle all the issues about what marriage is, who it is between, and what God expects from it. Jesus said that marriage is when a man cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh. That tells us whom marriage involves: a man and his wife. Also, Jesus shows us how many people constitute a marriage: between a man and a woman, one man and one woman. He also intends for that union to last as long as both people in the marriage live. No man is permitted to put asunder what God has joined together.

Now, there have been a lot of departures and deviations from that down through the stream of time. Polygamy was not a part of God's original plan. God may have tolerated it for a time back in the Old Testament dispensation, but it certainly was not a part of the design of marriage and it is not part of His will for marriage today. It soon became commonplace for people to divorce their spouses under the Old Testament dispensation, but that didn't please God either. That wasn't according to His plan or His will for marriage. Nor is it part of Christ's plan for marriage today.

Divorce had become common fare under the Mosaic dispensation. That's what the Pharisees were asking Jesus about on this occasion. You see, the law of Moses allowed for divorce for a multitude of reasons, but Jesus reminds them that God created marriage as a sacred, special bond between a man and his wife, and God expects that bond to last for life. In fact, Jesus said that there is only one reason that a person can scripturally divorce or put away his/her mate and marry someone else and that is for fornication or sexual unfaithfulness. If a man divorces his wife for any other reason and marries someone else, Jesus could not be plainer when He says that person becomes an adulterer in the sight of God.

Frankly, most people don't pay one bit of attention to that today. Our world is so full of divorces and multiple marriages until it's almost dizzying. It's hard to find people today who have not been married multiple times. An increasing number of people have done away with marriage altogether and are engaging in relationships outside of that sacred bond. Friends, we're not remembering what Jesus said about marriage. He taught that marriage is a solemn, sacred, and lasting relationship created by God. It can be and IS to be honored as such if we will apply God's design to the marriage relationship. But, you see, when all of that breaks down, the marriage will break down and everyone ends up out of the will of God if they're not careful. For the sake of our society and the sake of our children and most of all, for the sake of our eternal souls, we need to be remembering His words.

Thirdly, we need to remember the words of Jesus about His church.

Matthew 16:18 "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Here, the Lord made a simple declaration that He would establish his church in this world and that it would not be prevented or destroyed. Yet people today talk about the church of their choice as though Christ has neither church nor choice in the matter. What Jesus says about His church and about Christianity is left out of the equation when people determine their religious practice and belief today. I want to ask you a few pertinent, personal questions. Why are you a member of the church you are a member of? What convinced you to become a member of the church you attend? Was it because it's the one your parents were members of? Is it because it's where your friends attend? Is it the exciting activities and perks, amenities or ministries that it offers? Is it because it's easy or convenient for you? Is it because you like the style of worship or the preacher? What's the real reason? OR is it because you've studied what Jesus said about His church and you went out searching and found the one that He built and speaks of in His word?

Friend, what Jesus' words tell us are this: 1) We don't have a right to build our own church. Yet, there are hundreds of denominations and churches in the world today because people have been busy building their own and establishing new religious movements. 2) He promised only to build one church. That excludes the idea that there are hundreds of conflicting churches and all of them are of God and one is just as right as the next. 3) Jesus said that it would be HIS church. He is the head, the supreme

ruler over the church that He built. Not the pope, not some governing body, council, or convention. Not a general superintendent or president, but Jesus and Jesus only is the head of His church. Again, we all need to remember the words of Jesus about the church. If we would remember what He said about the church, we would actually be striving for the unity that Jesus desired and prayed for before His death on the cross (**John 17**).

Let me say in closing that we need to remember the words of Jesus about death and judgment. Our Lord said a lot about death while He was here. Some of His words were sobering words of warning to the sinner while others were wonderful words of comfort to the saint, but two things are certain: His word teaches us that all of us have an appointment with death and there is a judgment coming afterwards.

Matthew 10:28 “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

We’ve painted Jesus as being so loving and so kind and so forgiving—and He IS. But we’ve forgotten in the process that He taught there will be a judgment day. And there is an eternal hell. Many people are going to go to that place because they reject Jesus, His word, and His way. They live for self, in sin. We need to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. There is a day in which we will all appear before Him. There is coming a resurrection, and some will be resurrected to life and others to the resurrection of damnation. Are you ready for that day? Have you prepared to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and be judged by His word? Are you prepared to spend eternity with Him and be welcomed into heaven by His grace and through obedience to His gospel?

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