

Faithful Remembering

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (CGS #30)

INTRODUCTION – The first word of chapter 15 (“Now”) marks a transition point in the flow of this letter. As a reminder, the book of 1 Corinthians is a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth in response to a letter he had received from them. Evidently, they had asked him a series of questions. Chapters 12-14 contain Paul’s answer about spiritual gifts and rules for orderly worship, and now in chapter 15 Paul is addressing a question about the resurrection. We can’t be certain what the exact question was, but we know it must’ve been something like, “Did Jesus really rise from the dead?” Paul responds with one of the most beautiful and hope-filled chapters in the entire Bible. The first 11 verses are a recap of what he must’ve already told the Corinthian church a thousand times: Jesus really died, was buried, rose again, and appeared to his disciples.

This is a helpful reminder of our need to rehearse the gospel to ourselves every day, and it should sound like something we say at Christ Community: If we stop remembering, we’ll forget. We need to be reminded, over and over, of what Jesus did for us. The problem is not necessarily that we’re so forgetful, but that we’re so easily distracted. Our eyes get drawn away from Jesus basically every day. Sometimes we’re distracted by sin, but many times—I would argue *most* times—we’re distracted by good things like family, friends, hobbies, and work. Hebrews 12:2 tells us to “fix our eyes” on Jesus, in other words, don’t get distracted. We can do this in a number of ways, and the main point of this week’s message gives us two broad categories for avoiding distraction: **Faithful remembering requires engaging your head and your heart.**

Engaging your head is probably what most of us think of when we picture focusing on Christ, and for good reason. There are many ways we can focus our mental energy on who Christ is and what he did, including regular Bible study, listening to good teaching through sermons and podcasts, reading good books, having deep conversations with trusted friends, the list goes on and on. To be clear, we should absolutely do all of those things, but we can’t forget to also engage the heart.

What does this look like? For starters, you can step out of your own perspective for a moment and consider the big picture of your position before the Father. You were dead in your sin. Not only that, but your dead heart was God’s enemy, a rebel who had rejected God and took up arms against him. Out of the infinite riches of his grace in kindness, God not only spared your life, but he gave you a new heart. He not only forgave your rebellion, but transferred your allegiance to him. He not only made you his friend, but adopted you as his child. You were headed for eternal death, but in him your final destiny is eternal life. Keeping that big perspective in mind (engaging the head) will set the heart ablaze with gratitude and devotion (engaging the heart).

Regularly engaging in this kind of head/heart meditation helps us avoid falling into several errors. The first is thinking the gospel only happened in the past or only matters for the future. God did indeed save you in the past, and you will be saved for eternity, but the gospel also has huge implications for the present. Another error is thinking the gospel is something you only need in times of distress. In reality, the gospel affects all of life, and it transcends our circumstances. In hard times, you can rely on the hope of God’s promised deliverance. In good times, you can drink deeply from the well of God’s kindness. In all circumstances, you can be thankful for your deliverance from the ultimate enemy: Sin. None of this happens by accident though. It takes effort and intentionality. We, like the Corinthians, need constant reminders. Preach the gospel to yourself every day. Build habits and rhythms of regular remembrance, worship, connection, and reflection. Doing so will strengthen your “remembrance muscles,” and you’ll start seeing his grace everywhere.

GETTING STARTED – As a group, take time to answer this question: Have you ever forgotten something really important? What was it, and what happened as a result?

IN THE WORD – Let’s dig back into the passage. It’s important to strengthen our muscles in reading God’s Word. On Sunday, we walked through the passage in the sermon. Hopefully, that helped you to see the landmarks of the passage with fresh eyes. Now, with your group, go back through it and see what God is saying to you specifically.

First, before you read the passage, take a moment to ask God’s Spirit to quiet your mind and heart and to illuminate the text to you. Second, read the passage aloud to the group. Then, follow the simple method below (O.P.A.).

Observe: Make 8-10 observations from the passage. Pay close attention to observe and note repeated words and phrases, names, places, and themes.

Principles: From your list of observations, what patterns or big ideas do you see emerging? Can you distill it down into 2-4 big idea truths?

Apply: Moving from your list of principles, it is time to apply God’s Word. Remember, we believe that God’s Word is living and active and that it can change the way we live Monday-Friday. What is one tangible way to apply a truth from your list above?

DISCUSS – Another way to approach your time together is to talk through the following discussion questions:

1. What did you hear God’s Spirit say to you through the passage this week? How does it encourage you? How does it sharpen you?
2. How have you seen God at work in your life this week? Have you enjoyed him? Have you heard his voice and the leading of his Spirit? Big ways or small ways.
3. What does Paul say is “of first importance”? Why is that so important?
4. What evidence does Paul provide for Jesus’ resurrection?
5. Why does Paul call himself “the least of the apostles” and “unworthy to be called an apostle”? Is he correct?
6. What habits and rhythms have you developed that help you remember who Jesus is and what he did for you? Are there any others you’d like to develop in the future?
7. Why is it so important that we engage both our heads and our hearts in our remembrance of the gospel?