

Deuteronomy 5:15

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[0 : 00] In Deuteronomy chapter 5, at verse 15, we read there, Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God draw thee out from a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm.

Therefore, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath holy. We might ask the question, what does remembrance day mean to us?

There are few of us left who remember anything directly about the Second World War, and to most of us it might well be history.

So the question is really very relevant, why do you remember it? What does it mean to us? For some who lost family in conflict through war, at any time it will have really very special memories. But for most of us, it's a very necessary reminder of the suffering and the pain and the sacrifice by ordinary people.

[1 : 21] ordinary people, ordinary people, until they left on the ship to go to war in the interests of their country. And we commemorate this every year.

And perhaps young people, and we sometimes hear the question from not so young people, asking the question, why?

And the trouble is that we so quickly forget. Our memories are so short. And that is why communities have, for example, war memorials.

That's why we have, as I said to the children, the role of honour. That was published, not just in Harris, but in a lot of places over the last several years.

And these memorials are there to help us to remember. They are sort of visual aids to remind us of how, in the mercy of God and through the most ordinary of people, we have been delivered from tyranny, from possible tyranny.

[2 : 36] The Israelites had the same problem of forgetfulness. Because, like us, they were just human. They too had passed through a great liberation experience.

And we all know the occurrence. And it really was a big event and a very traumatic event, which all of them had experienced.

And we know the occurrence. But incredible as it seems, with the difficulties and really the relatively minor difficulties of the journey, they quickly forgot.

That great day of their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt by the hand of God. They forgot that they had an obligation to the God who had so miraculously saved them.

And how that humanity that is. How that us. How that is. How that is.

[3 : 46] Remember. And we read there how God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. And in the years that followed, he repeated these Commandments and stirred the addresses to this new young country, this new young nation.

and that that's where we find this verse at verse 15 that could be a text for today remember that that you were a servant and a slave in Egypt and that God brought you in out of there through a mighty hand and by a stretched arm by a mighty hand he did it with might with his own strength and I wondered when I was looking through this over the last few days about that term by Macahan and by a stretched arm and maybe that's a little point that you must remember and into my mind I saw the image of an elf stretched arm as if somebody going ahead or alongside somebody else and the the inviting arm inviting the Israelites to follow him and that's the image that came into my mind when I wondered uh about that term God would offer the thanks through a mighty hand and a stretched inviting arm come unto me he said all here at labor and at heavy lane that else stretched arm and the call is to remember and that is why remembrance day in this context is so important it's kept year after year so that we so that we can have the opportunity not just to remember but to think and

to reflect and to uh uh and you might in their minds all the blessings that have come with it that we have received through it if we read uh in the chapters around this area that we read we could find that the words of our text are repeated three times in the space of a few chapters as if to emphasize the importance of the fact that they were to remember that they were to remember the past so that they might be better in the present and in the future recalling the past recalling ourselves in the past hopefully it gives us the the the incentive to to strive for a better future remember what we were he is saying to the Israelites and he is saying to us remember what we were at all costs the people of history have got to remember what they were that they were slaves and that god had done something wonderful for them something unthinkable something that they that they couldn't think possible he had freed them from a slavery and a tyranny in which they had been for generations those who came out of Egypt hadn't had known anything else and he had freed them it wasn't something they had accomplished by their own efforts they were entirely dependent on god's intervention and so they were indebted forever indebted to god for what what he had done for them some of us might be old enough to remember just to remember wartime

the second the end of the second world war i remember what anybody else but i remember smoke trails and seeing the airplanes from ben bettila swirling around south harris at the very end of of the war and i remember the destroyers and the mensch uh based in probably flock you and i remember them because they looked to me as a wee fellow then just like a lorry that is almost all i remember of that here but people of many countries occupied by hostile forces have been reduced to slavery and have direct knowledge and memory of of these horrible things and even we see them on television still compelled to work under grim circumstances uh others were captives in their own country others served in the portions and these are the ones that we have we are tempted maybe to think of and to remember more than more than most and they were captured and the the prisoners for years and many many many loved their lives and it still happens to this day and we do want to remember that and we do do you want to remember and and to wonder in our own time just who the oppressor is to think and to wonder who the oppressor is captivity or wash still takes place not only in the physical sense but spiritually as well and we we hear that nowadays probably as much if not more than the world has ever had we all know from our own experience that we are individually and collectively foreign beings the basic tragedy of humanity is that the people who were created by god and for god should now be living so much without god and without thought of god and without realization that god their creator is also their father and and their guide god brought thee then said mooses to the children of israel by a mighty hand and by a stretched arm this was a marvelous deliverance pharaoh was a tough cunning and an evil man and god had to show him that he meant business by inflicting plagues culminating in the death of the firstborn children and the same horror took place in the world wars of the last century and in places it still continues in the 21st century the enemy didn't capitulate without a bitter struggle that affected the innocent as well as the guilty parties and freedom was won only at great cost the whole of the 20th century we remember really is is a story of conflict conflict and it's easy to forget that until it affects us personally for those who have such a personal experience it was traumatic whether whether involved in military conflict or as civilians with the military occupation or wash every remembrance day we we focus on the freedom that was gained with emphasis on the debt of gratitude that we owe to those who made that freedom possible the key to the victory that brought about the liberation from tyranny of both the israelites and their shells was really sacrifice sacrifice that was the key that is the key there was a design it was a plan of action but it was only made possible by sacrifice by laying down the lines of sun that others might live and go free we remember the final plague to be inflicted on the whole land of egypt was the passing of the angel of death the angel of death and with the passing of the angel of death no one was accepted egyptian or hebrew everybody was liable to it except the mooses told his people that the only way of escape was to show the doorposts of each of their homes that they had followed god's instructions and that they had a followed his instructions of offering the sacrifice of an innocent lamb they had to show their colors and they had to show their colors on the doorposts of their homes so that the angel of death would pass by the life of the firstborn may have been due to god but the life of the lamb was offered in its place it wasn't a question of one israelite offering his life in exchange for another it was necessary that something which symbolized a perfect and a sinless life be sacrificed the past overland as a means as a means of their liberation and when jesus commenced his ministry he was announced by remembered by john the baptist as being the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world here here's how john is the lamb of god which takes away the sin of the world the original pass over

lamps were only a symbol which looked forward a sort of prophecy that looked forward to that day when john saw and when john recognized and when john declared behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world lord jesus came to earth to be to be our savior to be our sacrifice by laying down his life on the cross as the sacrifice for our fallenness and for our sin and for our rebellion that we might be saved now that is something to be remembered under the cover of the of the passover event the israelites were able to make their escape from bondage and just assured everybody who trusts in the sacrifice of jesus are immediately and eternally saved and become filled with a sense of undescribable unspeakable gratitude and a sense of unpayable debt the words of our text there in verse 15 are particularly in appropriate on this remembrance sunday we think on of the israelites of over three three and a half thousand years ago or so and of ourselves some decades ago and of christian experience remember he said remember what you were remember you are captives and slaves to sinfulness remember uh what happened remember that the lord thy god brought thee thanks through a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and that they stretched inviting arm as i described it earlier on personified in jesus christ these words therefore are just as relevant for today and for tomorrow as they were then because we are to remember the past so that we can be better in our thinking present in our future in our future on each of these three occasions that the text is repeated it's noticeable that a reason for the call to remember was given remember what we were the first one remember what we should be in the first place the newly freed israelites were to remember the sabbath day and that's also in the verse 15 the end of verse 15 and therefore the lord thy god commanded thee to keep the sabbath day they were covering people and they now had the duty to recognize god's gracious provision for them and it would be it's it would be demonstrated the remembrance of it it would be demonstrated in their observance of the seventh day as a day of rest and we have it in the ten commandments there early on the the the the old testament sabbath as a foreshadowing of the new testament lord's day and sabbath or sunday when the lord jesus christ himself was liberated from the grave in the in the words of our text god raised them from the dead with a mighty arm with a mighty hand and an now stretched arm so it's no wonder that that that christians want to as some people say keep sunday special but how should we keep it some would say that sabbath observance has not a bad name because of the the negativities that some people see associated with it they focus on the the focus on the they'll shock not bits but this wasn't how the first christians used their sundays sabbaths many had to work as usual because they were living in in pagan times in what were really pagan times in a pagan society

[20 : 26] but whenever they could they met for fellowship and for prayer and to study the scriptures and also to express social responsibility and concern for others and that's what we that's why we read that bit in chapter 24.

the new testament writer to the hebrews refers to christian believers as those who have been liberated entering into a sabbath into the sabbath rest for the people of god and that sabbath rest became a symbol and a bunch of the followers of christ the christian believers as the christian believers as the christian believers are called upon to pursue a pilgrimage all day and every day to the end it needs diligence and it needs it it needs it it needs continual thinking and diligence to be a follower of christ's way and it's a costly business someone once said that the the entrance fee into the kingdom of god is absolutely nothing but that the annual subscription is all that we have and all that we are that the entrance fee into heaven the recent one is absolutely free but the annual subscription is all that we have and all that we are it's much easier to respond to the to the ten commandments as if they were mere suggestions and there are those who may be adhered to them mostly in that in that way to refuse to respond as i like or depending on how it sets my purposes but we need to remember that although they were first given to mooses they are uh uh taken up in the teaching of christ as well it's not an option it is a code to a code for living then and a code for living now the second time the call to remember is given was when mooses was passing on god's instructions on how to treat others it was a powerful reminder that in the newfound blessing in the newfound freedom they were not to forget those who were less fortunate than themselves they were told remember that you too were slaves and that that you were redeemed remembrance day is a reminder is a reminder is a reminder that we are all debtors we've entered into the fruits of the labors and the sacrifices of those who went before us the apostle paul remember he wrote i am a debtor and he saw himself as a steward a steward of god's grace it's as if he he'd been given something something precious but not for his own personal use and it was

something he had to hand on to others something had been entrusted to him and in the same way we have been entrusted with heritage to pass on to the generation after us a heritage of faith and that is happening next door a heritage of faith and especially as christians to pass on that good news to to to others

the third time the text is repeated this again in connection with this with the social obligations of the of the israel nations again remember they were told and to take care of the fatherless and the widows and that was in the bit that we write in chapter 24 and it's well worth reading at home and how appropriate that is for remembrance day to remember with gratitude and practical help those who still suffer as a result of war and people are still suffering as a result of wars that have passed people are still suffering as a result of wars that are still going on in the blessing of the freedom that we enjoy the call comes again call comes again to remember that those shall remember that they that you were a bondman in egypt and that the lord thy god redeem these thanks therefore i command thee to do this one of the the saddest moments in the gospels really is that point where um remember when ten lepers were healed and only one came back to back and that that sad point where jesus when jesus asks you came back but where are the other nine it was as if they they they had forgotten what had been done for them they they had they they had experienced such a wonderful release from that mystery of leprosy and still they so quickly forgot after they were healed they forgot so quickly that they didn't think to go back and thank the lord for what he had done for them and told that immediately after the second world war ended that the churches were full of thankful people and then when we look today we we wonder where they all are the sense of thankfulness soon faded many people experienced their exodus of freedom from the the fear of the oppressor and they entered into into into into their promised land uh after the war and then forgot very quickly forgot him who had really delivered them they forgot the god who had delivered them remembrance day is just that for us to remember for us to continue to remember for us to be thankful it's also a personal and very of individual opportunity to recall that but that most of all to remember and to give thanks for our spiritual deliverance through jesus christ by the the but but the strong hand and the outstretched arm of god in jesus christ amen and the god add his blessing to these for me