

February 19, 2023
Transfiguration of our Lord Sunday
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The Road Less Traveled-Remembrance Road

Well, this is the last Sunday of the Epiphany season. It is also called Transfiguration of our Lord Sunday, and it's actually going to fit into our sermon for today. As you know throughout the Epiphany Season we've been looking at how Christ was made manifest through the Old Testament, or the road less traveled. Many people don't like to use the Old Testament but we went right back to Genesis one, and we saw that God is the creator we are the created, we sinned, He promised a Savior. A savior who would come through the seed of the woman.

The next week, we took a little trip down the Harsh Truth Highway which is Noah's flood. And God doesn't accept sin. We saw that man's heart was continually evil and so God destroyed them with a worldwide flood. But at the end, He put a rainbow in the sky and he revealed that He's a God of covenants. Which led us to Covenant Court and Lineage Lane. God made a covenant with Abraham. A covenant is a two way agreement or promise. And his challenge to Abraham was leave three for me; your family, your belongings, your home, and I will bless you with seven blessings. But the last one is the big one. In you all kingdoms will be blessed. This is in reference to the Christ who would come through that lineage.

We followed that with Deliverance Drive as we saw the children of Israel delivered from Egypt, but that led to Passover Parkway, and we saw how in the Passover itself Christ is made manifest. It is Christ in the Passover. And then last week we went to Atonement Ave. And we saw how Jesus became our goat, sin offering, and also our scapegoat as he took those sins on Himself was taken outside of the city and died paying the price of our sin with the shedding of His blood.

Today we're going to start on a little trip down Remembrance Road. I mentioned it in the very first sermon how big that word remember is to the Jewish or the Hebrew people. In fact, I guess you could say the book of Deuteronomy is all about that. The book of Deuteronomy is book number in the Torah also known as the five books of Moses. It was written when the children of Israel were at the end of their forty years in the wilderness on the edge of the Promised Land and about ready to go in. But before they went in, Moses wrote a recap, of well, everything that they really needed to remember. It was very personal. He made the note you have seen, and you have experienced. This was a personal thing for them. He reminded them that God had given them the moral law the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. He reminded them of the Ceremonial Law that God had also given them. God's guide on how man is to come and relate to Him in worship. We talked about that a fair amount last week. And then finally also the Civil Law, how a man is to interact with man.

But they were to also remember. Remember as Moses writes in Deuteronomy 4:9 and 10; “Only take care and keep your soul diligently lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children. How on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, ‘gather the people to me that I may let them hear my words so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth and that they may teach their children also.’ Remember teach; teach your children, teach your children's children.

He continues that theme in Deuteronomy 6 verses 5 through 9. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates.

Remember! Remember what you've been through, Remember what you've been taught, pass it on to the next generation, talk about it from the time you rise up to the time you go to bed. Put it around the door on your house so that people see it. The Pharisees took the whole thing with the hand and the forehead literally putting the law there in there with phylacteries. Don't forget, remember!

It continues to Deuteronomy 11. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, when you're walking by the way, when you lie down, when you rise. Again, you should be doing this daily, all day. By the way, this is why people don't like the Old Testament because it's pretty blunt. It's also found in the New Testament first Timothy 4 versus 10 to an 11. For to this end we toil and strive because we have our hopes set on the living God who is the Savior of all people especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Notice that is written in the imperative. It's not, you might want to consider, passing this on. No, command and teach these things, and it is imperative number 1, for the priests to do. So far as we have heard many times Malachi 2, verse 7, it is the job of the priest or the priesthood to preserve this knowledge, the Word of God.

But we're also see in proverbs 13:24 and over 100 other places in scriptures, it falls on the dad to make sure that this is remembered in the home and that the children and the children's children are taught diligently. But finally, it is the job of all of us the Church, the body of Christ. Now, keeping the importance of remembering and teaching diligently, all these things; we're now ready to turn on to S. St.

We begin at numbers chapter 21 the children of Israel were ready to make the final push into the Promised Land they're approaching the end of the 40 years. We read that when the Canaanites, and understand all this land was known as Canaan, so this is they're close. When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, heard that they were close by, he attacked them, was victorious and he took some of them captive. What was the response of the entire congregation of Israel? They quote "sound vowed a vow, they made a covenant with the Lord. This was a problem, we were just attacked, some of us were taken away. Lord, if you deliver them into

our hand, we're going to exactly what you've said. We will follow your word and we will utterly destroy them. God followed through on his government yeah empower them to overthrow the Canaanites the king of Iran and the children of Israel they followed through they utterly destroyed them; which is where we pick up with our Old Testament reading today.

So, from there they set out for the Promised Land, but they took the long way. They went South around the land of Edom. The people of Edom were descendants of Esau; they still saw them basically as relatives. And it's as they're taking the long way around that we read the people became impatient. It is never good when someone's impatient. What did they do? They spoke against God. They spoke against Moses. What was their complaint? We have no food, keep that in mind. We have no food, we have no water, and we loathe this worthless food. In other words, they had food, they just didn't like it anymore. Every day they were seeing God's Providence for them as the manna was there in the morning, and the quail came in. They were fed they were tired of quail, they wanted something different so they spoke against God, they spoke against Moses, and the Lord sent fiery serpents that bit them and many died.

Ah, Serpent Street. My dad would hate it because he hated snakes. What was their response to the fiery serpents? We have sinned, pray to the Lord Moses, be our mediator-take away the snakes. So, Moses went before the Lord, and the Lord told him to make a bronze serpent, put it on a pole, set it up in the camp. Anyone who's bit, look at it and live. It makes no sense medically does it? But put your faith in that which is on the pole.

This leads us to John chapter three; probably the most quoted chapter of the Bible. Even, I would say above Psalm 23. It's where Nicodemus a Pharisee, a ruler of Israel, an expert, came to Jesus and said, 'Rabbi we know that you are a teacher come from God for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.' Remember that word, signs. Jesus did, It's an important term from the Old Testament because when God worked, it's described as being his miraculous signs and wonders. And Nicodemus saw some of the signs, but Jesus came up to

him “truly, truly, I say to you unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” To which Nicodemus, this teacher of the law, this ruler, this expert, comes back from a total earthly aspect of “how can a man be born again when he is old?” So Jesus says again, “truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” And Nicodemus in modern days, would be going, ‘you're blowing my mind with this!’ He says to Jesus, “how can these things be?” Jesus comes back again, a third time now, “truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know.” What did Jesus know? Well, He goes back to what Nicodemus had said, signs.

You want a sign Nicodemus? Let me give you another one. Let me take you back to your history, that you are supposed to remember, that you are supposed to preserve, that you are supposed to teach to your children. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.” He takes him back to what he was supposed to be preaching. He even asked Nicodemus, ‘are you the teacher of Israel and you do not understand these things?’ I mean that had to hurt and by the way, the teacher of Israel didn't say a teacher. Nicodemus was way up there, you don't understand these things. OK, let's put it your terms here. The history, the snake, the bronze snake on the pole, lifted up, looked at it, have faith, you're saved. Look to me! That's what that serpent was about, look to me. I will be lifted up, Nicodemus, you're going to see it. If you look to me in faith, you will be saved. That by the way is immediately before John 3:16. “For God so love the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

And I believe it hit home, this little journey down Serpent Street. Because about two years or so later, Jesus was lifted up on the cross. Nicodemus saw it and he and Joseph of Arimathea are the ones who then came and got Jesus's body and buried Him. I'd like to think that that's an indication of how strong a message the serpent on the pole was for Nicodemus, that it clicked and he realized, I need to look at Jesus.

We'll know when we get to heaven, but my question today is this. We have just spent six weeks looking at how God has shown us what the Messiah would look like. We've been taking the time to use that Old Testament to make Christ manifest. Understand that there is no other religion in the world that has over 1000 years of prophecies pointing to the answer and then has that answer fulfilling all those prophecies, all that symbolism. But Christianity does through the Old Testament and through Jesus. So, while I don't know about Nicodemus, my real question is what about you? Has Christ been made manifest to you? And if so, will you to follow through on the remember?

Remember these things teach them diligently when you get up, through the day, at the end of the day. Write them on your hands, put them as a sign between your eyes, on your forehead. Let this be that which rules your life. Are you there? My hope and my prayer is that it is a resounding yes as we again prepare to embark on the Passover, the Lord's Supper, a statute forever that reminds us that Christ is the one who died, who was lifted up like the serpent. More than that, He rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven as our advocate, as our savior. And He's going to come and take us home.

In our Savior's name, Amen.