

## Remember... Let's Talk More About Jesus!

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July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56; Ephesians 2:11-22

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In the second text for this morning, taken from Ephesians and chapter 2 Paul commands his audience to remember. Anytime we are commanded to do anything in scripture theologians take note! "This is God saying, "There are no ifs, ands, or buts here!" Yet it's a strange thing that Paul commands us to do. We are commanded here to remember!

Remembering isn't an emotion, although the act of remembering can and does often times carry with it some pretty strong emotions. Remember for example, your first kiss? Remember your first car accident? Remember your first experience with death? Remember the most painful or perhaps your most euphoric experience? Paul commands his audience, which by the way was perhaps at least 5 to 10 churches as Ephesians was written not simply to the church at Ephesus, but as what has been called a circular letter which simply meant it was to be read at all the mail stops along the route that contained the newly formed Christian groups of people (churches).

The word remember in Ephesians 2:11 is the first word in the whole book of Ephesians that Paul puts in the imperative mood. Because that is true, this is an important point that he is making. What exactly is his point? You were once without hope because you are a Gentile by birth. Are there any Gentiles here? If so raise your hands please? Yes, we are all Gentiles unless perhaps someone here is Jewish! And yet there is now hope and yet that hope has become so familiar to us all that is completely taken for granted hasn't it? This hope is all wrapped up in One single Person. This is what Paul says:

**Eph 2:12 (R)emember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.**

I was sitting with a group of 6 pastors a couple weeks ago and we were all having lunch together. There is a group of us that all try to get together for lunch once a month. After meeting and talking for 2 hours about all of the issues that concerned us we were all ready to go and at that moment one of the pastors made an observation.

This one pastor said, “We have been sitting here and talking about issues and about the church and the state of current affairs and yet in all this time we have all never once mentioned the name Jesus!”

Instead of praying and leaving, we started a whole new discussion about “Why Jesus?” and about how it seems that we have all become (as pastors) quite used to the idea of talking about church and faith and God and love and grace and change and theology and everything else under the sun, but talking about Jesus has become something that doesn't go over very well in the denominational circles we are used to hanging out with.

Here is the question this morning for everyone to ponder long after we have left this place... “When was the last time you actually used the name Jesus (respectfully of course) in a normal conversation with anyone? If there's a single point to this morning's message, it has to be tied in both of these scriptures to speaking the name at which the Bible says “one day in all of heaven and earth that every knee and every heart will bow” to... The matchless name of Jesus. “When was the last time we even thought the name of Jesus with the desire to speak it someone else?”

In Mark's gospel lesson for this morning, the disciples have all returned to tell Jesus what their missional trips have been like. They had been given the instructions that would last them long after the resurrection, and if you are interested, you can read about those instructions in Matthew and chapter 11. The disciples are excited, they are tired, and they are still trying to put all of this together and Jesus is discipling them now by listening to the stories of their experiences :

**Mk 6:30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to Him all they had done and taught.**

Do we remember the message we are commanded to hold tight in our hearts? Repent, for the kingdom of God is nearer than we think, and without Jesus, and it's not without the church, it's not without justice, it's not even without the right view of sexuality, rather the world simply has no hope without Jesus. If we truly accepted that, I believe (even as pastors) that we couldn't help but speak His name... There are so many things that could be said about these verses but in keeping with our summer theme of one

point sermons and we could learn something very importantly information from the disciples here in Mark and chapter 6. But for these disciples, now called Apostles for the first time, (those who are sent out) it is only and completely and yes always all about Jesus. Sooner or later I am coming to believe and we are beginning to see that the church will begin to get it right once again and allow it to be all about Jesus.

I chose not to have a show of hands, but I am willing to wager that if a room full of 6 pastors talking about faith and the Bible and belief and change and all of that can talk for over 2 hours and never once mention the name of Jesus, then it certainly seems possibly reasonable that many sitting here might truly not be able to remember the last time they spoke the name of Jesus in any conversation. I'm not talking about praying to Jesus or even in Jesus name. I am talking about saying the name of Jesus to someone else, anyone else in any given day in any conversation!

If you can't remember the last time... don't you think that is mighty strange indeed that without Him you and I would be completely without hope? May it be so... Amen.