

Matthew 2:13-23

December 29th, 2019

“God Remembered.”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Christmas

Vicar Miguel Gonzalez-Feliciano

Grace, Mercy and Peace are yours from God our Father and Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Remembrall]

My wife and I are big fans of the Harry Potter franchise. It’s a fantastic work of fiction spanning several novels and multiple films with a specially crafted theme park at Universal Studios. Growing up, there were so many things I wished I could have from that world, a broom to fly on, a wand to cast spells, but most importantly, I wanted a Remembrall. This tiny sphere was given to my favorite character and he was told that it would fill up with red smoke as a sign that he had forgotten something. One of my favorite parts was when he heard how it worked and red smoke began to fill it, he said, “The only problem is, I can’t remember what I’ve forgotten.”

Growing up, I kept thinking how useful something like that would be! Forgot my phone at home? Left the oven on? Anniversary or birthday? Sphere fills up with smoke, better check. Just the reminder that I’ve forgotten would be so helpful to me.

Problem is, I think it would fill with smoke almost daily.

Because you and I have a hard time remembering things.

[What Has Been Forgotten]

In fact, it’s a pretty common trait throughout the course of human history. People forget things. If you look around, the world has already forgotten that the season of Christmas is more than just one day. People have forgotten the 12 days that follow Christmas and have moved on! Now is the time to focus on the new year, parties, bowl games, and NFL playoffs, Christmas was SOOOO last week.

From New Year's Resolutions to the promises of God, people have a hard time remembering. In each of our readings today, the pages are filled with reminders. Matthew reminds his readers in the Gospel reading constantly that the actions that are taking place are to fulfill what the prophets spoke! Matthew doesn't just say, "Joseph eventually went to Nazareth. He used to be in Egypt, but then he came back." Rather, Matthew wants to highlight the promises made by God through the prophets of old! Jesus isn't some accident!

Matthew is trying to remind the people, Jesus is all part of the plan that God promised, "Out of Egypt I called my son." Matthew highlights that the evil that would be done by Herod was told to the people, they should have known that their worldly rulers were going to fail them! Finally, Matthew highlights that Jesus would be called a Nazarene.

Why would Matthew be so hung up on all of this?

While that may be a thought someone in the 21st century might have I can promise you that it wouldn't have been a question for the original Christians. When they had heard these words, that the promises of God had been kept in what may have seemed like minor things, they would find comfort.

[The Comfort of Remembering]

Now, this isn't like the comfort you or I have when we are sitting at home after a long day and we know for a fact that we don't have anything else on our plate, everything has been taken care of and we can relax. This kind of comfort is something that is much greater and meaningful.

Because God remembers the little things, God remembers us.

It may seem like a small thing that Jesus was moved to Egypt just so he could be called out of Egypt into Nazareth, just so he could be called a Nazarene. It may even seem like a small thing that all the children killed in Bethlehem fulfilled the words of Jeremiah. However, these were promised events by God. God spoke these promises by His prophets hundreds of years ago, before Jesus was born. And they were fulfilled. God kept His promises. He remembered.

The prophet Isaiah spoke about the Lord and his remembering. Isaiah recounts all the deeds done by God, specifically how the people would betray God. However, in verse 11 Isaiah spoke, “Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people.” Isaiah then goes on to list the miraculous works that God did for His people. God provided for His people in gigantic ways that defied belief and created awe and amazement!

The Sea was torn in two so that they walked on dry land!

They ate manna in the wilderness!

They were given a promised land!

All because God remembered His promises. Promises that He spoke through Moses to the people. He remembered his promises to them, just as He remembered His promise to you. By remembering, He sent His Son to be born a helpless babe in Bethlehem. It was meek and mild, but it defied belief and still creates awe and amazement to this day.

[Remember]

Remember, you were once dead in your trespasses. You and I had nothing to offer the one true God that could purchase our Salvation. Left to our own devices, our sinful flesh would choose death, hell, and damnation time and time again. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

God remembered you. He remembered me.

It defies belief and it amazes me. It amazes me that almighty God, Maker of Heaven and Earth, the one who put the stars in the sky and knows them by name remembered me. The God who sees the depths of your heart, He loves you. Hear the words of the prophet Isaiah:

He has redeemed you

He has called you by name

You are His.

[Don't Forget]

But you don't need some fancy magical ball that will fill up with smoke to help you remember this truth! With how often you and I forget the promises of God, it might always be filled up with smoke. Instead, God has given you much greater means to remember. In Holy Baptism, you are reminded that God has given you faith and claimed you as His dear Child. The Lord's supper helps you to taste and see that the Lord is good. The very words written on the Bibles in your pews and in your home are constant reminders being screamed out to you, "You are God's dear child!". These aren't some magical tools or inventions made by man. Instead, these are more of the surefire promises of God.

So, let's not forget today the comfort that you and I find in the Gospel. But you and I should also not forget something else, God wants us to tell others about Him. The promises we read about today were spoken by humans. People God commanded to go and tell them what He said. Just like how Christ commanded His followers to go and make disciples of all nations. He has given you His Spirit. True to form, Matthew wants his readers to focus on the promises of God even at the end of his book. Within the last verse, there's this promise made by Christ, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of this age".

God remembered us. In the Babe of Bethlehem.

Don't forget.

Tell your friends Merry Christmas.

Amen.

As followers of Christ, "Keep loving one another earnestly
And show hospitality to one another without grumbling." AMEN! (1Pt 4:8-9)
