

Remember Me, Lord!

by Cheryl Collins of HealingStrong

Forgotten

Reminders. We write them down on grocery lists, calendars and spare pieces of paper. Birthdays, anniversaries, appointments, even special Bible verses taped to our walls, all designed with one important mission – to help us remember. More importantly, to help us not forget.

I know what it's like to feel forgotten. Years ago, I sat on a bench during my high school basketball game, hoping I would have a chance to play after many afternoons of practice. But sadly, I sat there at the end of the bench – forgotten. To help my cause, I yelled down to my coach, “Hey coach, just letting you know I'm down here in case you want to put me in.” That didn't go the way I expected! I got to sit on the bench the rest of the game watching everyone else play.

It's easy to go through life and have seasons where we wonder if God has forgotten us. We beg for healing, a job, a spouse, a baby, to break an addiction, for a prodigal son or daughter to return home, etc. If you've ever felt that way, you're in good company.

Joseph, as in the guy with the colorful cloak in the book of Genesis, not only felt forgotten, he actually was forgotten! As an innocent man in an Egyptian jail, Joseph helped two prisoners by interpreting their prophetic dreams. His one request of them was this:

“But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison.”
Genesis 40:14

“The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.”
Genesis 40:23

Ouch. You know that hurt. You've probably been there too. In fact, you may be feeling forgotten by God right now as you are on a healing journey or have a loved one that is sick. No matter how dark it seems, nor how lonely we feel, rest assured that our Heavenly Father does not forget us. Whether we sense His presence or not, He's always there! He promises to never leave or forsake us.

In the next few days, we'll explore some famous people of the Bible and the times they asked God to remember them. They prayed for favor,

mercy, healing, battling their enemies, forgiveness – and He heard every one of them. And get this, He acted on their behalf!

Questions:

1. Have you ever felt forgotten? How did that make you feel?
2. Have you ever felt forgotten by God?
3. Does hearing that God will never leave you change your perspective of your situation?

Reading:

Genesis 40

Isaiah 49: 15 – 16

My Heart's Desire

“Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

1 Samuel 1:11

This was the desperate prayer of Hannah, a Jewish woman who couldn’t have children, but it was her greatest desire. To make matters worse, her husband, Elkanah, married a second wife named Peninnah in hopes of having children, and she had plenty. But what seems most troubling is that the Bible says the Lord Himself closed Hannah’s womb.

Have you ever had something you desperately wanted but just didn’t seem to receive it? Is there a heart’s desire that isn’t being fulfilled on your timeline or schedule? That was Hannah’s reality. This was a desperate situation. In her society, women were disgraced if they couldn’t have kids.

Hannah earnestly prayed and prayed for years asking for a child. But in her “remember me” prayer, this time she was willing to sacrifice her greatest desire. She vowed she’d give her child to the Lord for all the days of his life. Could it be that this surrender is what prompted the Lord to act on her behalf?

You may have a need or desire just as desperate as Hannah did. As you cry out to God about your need, consider having open hands and a surrendered heart. Many times, He gives you above and beyond what you ask, as he did with Hannah. She gave birth to Samuel who later became a powerful prophet in Israel. And to top that, the Lord gave her six more children after Samuel.

For bonus reading, check out Hannah’s prayer of praise in 1 Samuel 2. Even though we may go a very long time and not see any change in our impossible situations, with God all things are possible!

Questions:

1. Have you ever desperately sought God for a need or desire? What happened?
2. Have you fully surrendered your heart's desire to God, including the outcome?
3. What can you learn from Hannah during your delays?

Reading:

1 Samuel 1

1 Samuel 2

My Enemies

Revenge. Getting even. Payback. It's awful when we feel like we're fighting a losing battle. Even worse is when our enemies seem to succeed while we flounder. Who doesn't want God's help to battle their enemies?

Enter Samson into today's reading. Yes, Samson, the one who had the long hair and incredible strength given from God. The guy who had a certain penchant for pretty ladies, especially one named Delilah. Samson was set apart at birth by God to begin the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines, an enemy who had ruled them for 40 years.

Samson had many victories in his life through the strength God gave him, but he also couldn't control his lust. Multiple times in his story he saw a beautiful woman and pursued her, even though she was literally an enemy. His love affair with Delilah caused him to be captured by his enemies. Due to her betrayal, the Philistines plucked out his eyes and threw Samson into prison.

But even though Samson got way off course, God still had mercy on him. Samson said his "remember me" prayer at the lowest part of his life, when he was performing like a circus monkey in the presence of his enemies.

"Then Samson prayed to the Lord, 'Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.'"

Judges 16:28

God answered his prayer! He restored Samson's extraordinary strength to push against the pillars of the enemy temple and kill 3,000 Philistines, including their rulers. Samson sacrificed himself in this brave act that began the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines.

Questions:

1. What battle are you fighting right now? Is it an illness?
2. Are you trying to fight this enemy on your own or have you asked God to battle for you?
3. What can you learn about God from Samson's story?

Reading:

Judges 16: 23 - 30

My Faithfulness

Have you ever made a case for yourself when you really wanted something badly? Maybe you tried convincing your parents you deserved a car because of your good grades. Or you tried talking your boss into a promotion. It's totally natural to try to sell our best qualities or accomplishments to someone when we want something.

So have you ever tried to bargain with God? It goes something like this:

- “God if you would just heal my son, I will serve you all the days of my life.”
- “God I’ve given my tithes and my time, and all I ask is for my daughter to return home.”
- “I’ve waited and trusted you for years, please bring my spouse!”
- “I’ve been faithful to my husband and sacrificed my own desires for my family, will you please heal our broken marriage?”

Can you relate to any of these? We’ve all negotiated with God at some time in our lives, which is why today’s story is so good.

Hezekiah was one of Israel’s kings – and a good one. But one day, Hezekiah got extremely ill and was going to die. In fact, the prophet Isaiah came to deliver him the horrible news:

“This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.”

2 Kings 20:1

Wouldn’t you freak out if you heard this doomsday news? Hezekiah did. Weeping bitterly, he prayed,

“Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.”

2 Kings 20:3

What's awesome about this story is that God heard Hezekiah's cry and granted his request to heal him even though Hezekiah pleaded his accomplishments to God. The end result is that God healed Hezekiah and extended his life by 15 years. You can check out his story in 2 Kings 20: 1 – 11, as he makes his case.

Bargaining for yourself won't always result in you getting what you want from God. As a good Heavenly Father, He's going to give you what is best for you no matter what you do in life. His word reminds us that He makes all things good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. He sees you right where you are. He has not forgotten you. God is faithful. His word says so and you can always trust Him at his word.

Questions:

1. Have you ever tried to convince God to do something because of what you did for Him?
2. Was Hezekiah wrong to pray as he did?
3. What have you learned about God and His character through this story?

Reading:

2 Kings 20: 1 – 11

Romans 8:28

Isaiah 49:15

God's Promises

“BUT YOU PROMISED!” Picture a 6-year-old yelling that from his car seat when his parents don't take him to the park like they said they would. Can you identify with that?

Promise is a word that gets thrown into conversations a lot. Unfortunately, we make promises and don't keep them. But thank goodness God is not like that. If He makes a promise to you, He will keep it – ALWAYS!

Remember the song *Father Abraham, had many sons?* The story behind the song starts with a promise. God made a promise to Abraham to create a nation out of him, yet at the time, Abraham and his wife, Sarah, had no kids. Today, scholars call this promise the Abrahamic Covenant. Abraham may have not known how or when these promises from God would come to pass, but they did.

So fast-forward hundreds of years to Abraham's descendants living in slavery in Egypt. They were crying out to God and it looked like that promise of becoming a great nation would never happen. However, Exodus 2: 24 – 25 says:

“God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.”

We never hear a “remember me” prayer recorded in this story, but it's safe to assume the Israelites were begging God to remember them. So God acted on His promise and delivered them from slavery to start their journey to their promised land. Thousands of years later, God kept that promise to Abraham in the form of the nation of Israel.

As you spend time with God, remember his promises to you. It's all right to remind Him of them. There are thousands of promises in the Bible. Here are some promises to encourage you today:

1. Nothing can separate you from the love of God.
2. God will never leave nor forsake you.
3. You don't need to fear because God is with you.
4. The Lord will fight for you.
5. God won't withhold anything good from those whose walk is blameless.

Questions:

1. Has someone made you a promise that they did not keep? How did that make you feel?
2. What did you learn about God and His promises from these passages?
3. Is there a promise that God has given you?

Reading:

Genesis 12: 1 – 3

Genesis 15: 1 – 6

Genesis 21: 1 - 3

Exodus: 2: 24 – 25

Romans 8: 38 – 39

Deuteronomy 31:6

Joshua 1:9

Exodus 14:14

Psalm 84:11

Remember Me

In all of the prayers we've studied, people asked God to remember them. In today's story, the tables are turned. This time it's Jesus asking us to remember Him.

The scene took place during Passover in Jerusalem. Jesus and His 12 disciples reclined around a table. A Passover meal sat in front of them, yet none but Jesus knew what was about to go down later that night. This was the night Jesus would be betrayed. All of their hopes and dreams of a Messiah who would save them from Roman oppression were about to be dashed to pieces in a few hours.

As they sat around the table, listen to the words Jesus said in Luke 22: 19 - 20:

“And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’”

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.’”

Jesus would soon be nailed to a cross, His body broken and bleeding for the sins of the world. Yours. Mine. Everyone's. This act of breaking the bread and drinking the wine was His reminder to us of His ultimate sacrifice for our sins.

If you've ever taken communion at church, eaten the broken wafer and drank from the tiny cup, you've seen a physical reminder of Jesus' love for you. Have you ever really let His words sink into your heart, “Do this in remembrance of me”?

Questions:

1. Why do you think it's important to take communion?

2. Why do you think Jesus would want you to remember what He did for you on the cross?

3. What can you learn about Jesus from this passage today?

Reading:

Luke 22: 14 - 20

My Forgiveness

Think back on a time when you blew it. I mean really, really blew it. You needed forgiveness but weren't sure if you'd get it.

Today's story is about forgiveness. It takes place on a hill called Golgotha right outside the city limits of Jerusalem. Jesus was hanging by nails on a cross, right in the middle of two criminals.

As he hung there dying, spectators on the ground yelled insults challenging him to save Himself since He proclaimed to be the Son of God. The guys on the left and right of Him both joined in on the insults. But Jesus heard their horrible things and said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And that's when I think something changed in one of the criminals hanging next to Him.

This guy had an up-close view of Jesus and how He handled those who hated Him. Jesus didn't fight back, although He could have called in a legion of angels to save Him. He didn't yell at them, although many of us would defend ourselves. He simply forgave them. So as this criminal watched Jesus closely, his hardened heart softened a bit, and he wanted that forgiveness too.

"One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'"

Luke 23: 39 – 42

This is a man that just hours and possibly minutes before was being cruel to Jesus. Now look at Jesus' response to him:

"Jesus answered him, Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:43

Jesus forgave that man, even in his last hour of life. Why? Because that man truly was repentant and believed Jesus was the Savior of the world. He wanted to be there in Heaven with Jesus, but probably felt he didn't deserve it.

Jesus gives you that same open invitation. No matter what you've done in life, there is no sin too great that Jesus will not forgive. It's not too late for you. The door is always open. Have you asked him to forgive you of your sins yet? Have you said, "Remember me, Lord!"

Questions:

1. Have you ever been forgiven of something when you knew you didn't deserve it?
2. Is there someone that you need to forgive today? What can you learn from Jesus' example?
3. Have you asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins and be your Savior?

If you haven't asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life and to forgive your sins, we want to invite you to do that now. Pray this prayer out loud:

"Dear Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe you died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead. I trust you as my Lord and Savior. Please help me to daily surrender to your will. In Jesus name, amen."

Please know that our volunteers at HealingStrong would love to pray for you. You can join us in an online Bible study @<https://healingstrong.org/heal-bible-study/> or you can send us a prayer request. We're here to walk with you in any healing journey you're on!

Find us online at: www.healingstrong.org/groups to search our map for a local HealingStrong group close to you!

Reading:

Luke 23: 33 – 43

John 3:16