

How Quickly We Forget

This week Pastor Regina shared a message about our forgetfulness and God's faithfulness. If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group go to www.prov.church/signup and click on Small Groups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then pray this prayer together:

O God who is with us in the wilderness, guide us ever closer to the promised land. Give us glimpses of your Kingdom. Forgive us for our impatience and complaining. May your provisions in the wilderness be everything we need. Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: EXODUS 17.1-3

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?"

3 But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

- If you've ever been so thirsty that you couldn't think about anything else, you can sympathize with the Israelites. After a dramatic rescue and a promise of a future home, they expected the journey to be easy--it wasn't. Have you ever had to complain out of a sense of desperation? How do you deal with the complaints of others? The Bible contains numerous images of plentiful food and drink for God's people. How do you handle the tension between what you're experiencing in the world and the promises of God?
- *Pray that God would hear your cry for help and for increased faith in the God who rescues.*

TUESDAY: EXODUS 17.4-6

4 Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

5 The Lord answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.

- Moses had a leadership crisis on his hands. The people were turning on him. Instead of telling him to hide or run away, God tells him to go in front of the people with a reminder of God's salvation. God doesn't just teach a lesson, he provides for the needs of the people. Imagine yourself in the scene--would you feel shame, relief, indignation? Has a sign of God's past faithfulness ever put your situation back into perspective?
- *Pray to hear God's instruction to you in the midst of grumbling and complaining in today's world.*

WEDNESDAY: EXODUS 16.32-34

³² Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the wilderness when I brought you out of Egypt.'"

³³ So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it. Then place it before the LORD to be kept for the generations to come."

³⁴ As the LORD commanded Moses, Aaron put the manna with the tablets of the covenant law, so that it might be preserved.

- There were several specific instructions that went along with the manna (bread like substance) that God provided for them. Among them was the command not to store up extra food each day. However, here there is one reason to store up evidence of God's provision--for the days when we forget. Think about items you have saved or collected over the years. What do they do for you when you revisit them? How could this practice connect with your faith in God?
- *Pray for jars of manna that keep you mindful of God's care.*

THURSDAY: PSALM 106.6-7

*We have sinned, even as our ancestors did;
we have done wrong and acted wickedly.*

⁷ *When our ancestors were in Egypt,
they gave no thought to your miracles;
they did not remember your many kindnesses,*

- These words are a reflection on the stories laid out in Exodus. It can be easy to segment our behavior from that of our spiritual ancestors, but this retelling serves as a mirror on today's reality. We too have grumbled and complained. We too have doubted and attacked one another. We too have forgotten what God has done for us. Why do we do that? What can be (or has been) done to break this cycle?
- *Pray for a desire to learn and remember the stories of God's miracles and kindness.*

FRIDAY: JEREMIAH 31.34

*"For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more."*

- It's strange to say that God would forget something. God chooses to let go of our sins, and has removed our guilt through Jesus Christ. Wouldn't it be amazing if we had the ability to forgive and forget like that? We don't. We can forgive, but it is even more difficult to forget. Do you have trouble letting go of wrongs committed against you? Do you have trouble letting go of your own sin even though you have been forgiven by God and others?
- *Pray for a heart of forgiveness towards yourself and others. Pray with gratitude for God's ability to toss our wickedness aside and exchange it for God's glory.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 126

*When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.*

² *Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.*

*Then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."*

³ *The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.*

⁴ *Restore our fortunes, LORD,
like streams in the Negev.*

⁵ *Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.*

⁶ *Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.*

- This Psalm is written from a position of brokenness and gratitude. Do you find it difficult to be grateful when times are hard? How would you pray these lines today? Who says about us, "the Lord has done great things for them"? Who needs to hear that those who sow with tears will reap joy?
- *Pray this Psalm over and over. Pray that people would say about you, "the Lord has done great things."*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pastor Regina shared this litany of remembrance in her message. How could you add to it and incorporate this pattern in your daily life?

Remember the deliverance at the Red Sea when we can't find our way.

Remember the bread from heaven when we're hungry.

Remember the water when we're thirsty.

Remember that we are all God's people and we're FOR each other...not against each other.

- How would you answer this question posed by Pastor Regina?
"Complaining and being quick to anger will leave us in the desert for longer than 40 years. We won't find our way. *Is the Promised Land closer than we think, but we're too flustered to see the pathway to get there or know who to ask in the first place?*"