



## From the Heart of the First Lady

### Remember When...?

1 Chronicles 16:12-13 (NIV) Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced, O descendants of Israel his servant, O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones.

#### I Remember When...

Wow, what a year it has been! It's amazing to find ourselves at the end of 2016 so quickly. It seems like just yesterday we were ringing this New Year in. Now we're looking forward to a fast approaching 2017. This year presented us with some big changes (from breaking ground on our new church building to electing a new US President). No doubt each of us has also experienced personal victories and setbacks this year, and whether you'll look back on 2016 with fond memories or sad ones, the important thing is to remember that GOD was present during every moment.

Since the beginning, GOD has consistently given us this vital charge – remember. You may not know it, but just shy of the number of times the Bible recorded GOD commanding His people “do not fear” (over 365 times) His second most recorded command is “remember” (about 333 times). Both are key elements to maintaining our peace, strengthening our faith and building a strong healthy relationship with Him.

Scripture shows us that every time GOD brought His people through a transition, He commanded them to always remember (or “do not forget”) what He did for them. Moses and Joshua repeatedly commanded the Israelites to remember all that GOD did while delivering them from slavery to the Egyptians and ushering them to the promised land (see Deuteronomy 8). Interestingly enough, the Israelites were commanded to remember several times **before** they even reached the land of Canaan. In the book of Deuteronomy alone, the Israelites were commanded to remember the LORD 32 times.

Why would GOD keep pressing this point? One would think after the fifth or sixth time He'd be satisfied that they got it. But, GOD knew something they didn't (no big surprise there). He knew the human memory can serve as an immensely powerful weapon. (He also knew that Satan knows this too.) Reflecting on past events is not necessarily a bad thing as long as we're reflecting from the right perspective. GOD didn't command the Israelites to remember the perils of slavery (the torment, beatings, wandering in the desert heat, the scorpions, hunger and thirst; etc.). He commanded them to remember **HIM** with them (the miraculous plagues in Egypt, parting the Red Sea, Divine protection, Divine provision, promises

kept, manna from heaven, quail, the pillar of cloud by day, water from a rock and all the miracles that came from His presence with them. GOD knew that remembering Him would safeguard them from pride, fear, lust and idolatry when they basked in the bliss and abundance of Canaan. As it turns out, generation after generation fell prey to all of their enemies' traps and once again ended up in captivity simply because “they did not remember the LORD”.

Mark 8:1-21 provides us with a New Testament example of how essential remembering the LORD is. The chapter starts with Jesus having compassion on a hungry crowd of about 4,000 men with their women and children. Forgetting that He fed 5,000 families with two fish and five loaves of bread just recently, His disciples immediately argued that there was not enough money or a nearby grocery store to accommodate so many people. Jesus not only fed them all with seven loaves of bread and a few small fish, but they took up enough leftovers to fill seven basketfuls. Later the same day, when Jesus was teaching them to protect themselves from the yeast of unbelief (speaking of the Pharisees who questioned Jesus' deity) they completely missed the point because they were focusing on physical bread (their current circumstances). This resulted in them getting a stern rebuke from Jesus because in forgetting the LORD, their hearts grew hardened and they were not able to understand basic spiritual principles. *Mark 8:17-21 (NIV) Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied. "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven." He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"*

As we enter this holiday season and prepare to go in and possess all that GOD has for us in 2017 (which is a Jubilee Year, BTW), my charge to you is the same as Moses and Joshua's to the Israelites – remember the LORD. Remember the miracles, wonders, grace, mercy, Divine provision, the times He made a “way-out-of-no-way”, your personal “fish and loaves” and His goodness. Reflect on the great things that happened as well as the terrible things that didn't. May your memories of GOD's faithfulness fuel your faith and encourage your souls. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

Prayer: We humbly kneel before Your throne of grace when we understand that the baby lying in a manger must one day be crucified to the cruel cross so that my sins could be forgiven.. Father thank You for sending Jesus to be born so that He could die for my sins.. in His name I pray,

Amen