

TRANSITIONAL SERMON: Remember

Text: Deuteronomy 8:1-20

Big Idea: Remembrance of the God we know will get us through the future that we don't know.

I. Remember Where You Came From (8:1-6)

- a.** Think about the lessons that God taught you when things got hard.
- b.** Think about what God did for you.

II. Remember Where You Are Going (8:7-10)

- a.** Life is a series of hills and valleys.
- b.** God promises the hope of heaven for the future and the hope of provision for the present.

III. Remember Who Has Gone With You (8:11-20)

- a.** There has never been a day where God was absent from you or not caring about you.
- b.** There are bad consequences for choosing to neglect God.
- c.** There are good consequences for choosing to remember God.

INTRO

Good morning! My name is Jon; I'm one of the pastors here at the church, and it is a joy and a privilege to open up God's Word with you today – especially on this day.

We are having a special Sunday to celebrate those who are going into **New Territory**...there are some students in our church who are graduating high school; there are also other students who are starting new grades, celebrating new ages...

It really is that one time of year where all of us are entering in to the **Fall Reset**.

Typically speaking, there are two major “resets” that we go through each year.

- The first reset happens in January with the start of the New Year
- and then the second reset happens around the end of August/beginning of September, very close to where we are right now.

That second “reset” is really significant for students.

- Some students are **freshmen**...they're discovering their new school/their new campus for the first time, and they're getting ready to lay the groundwork for the next four years of their life.
- Other students are **seniors**...they've got four years' worth of friends, familiarity, and memories that are coming to an end, and now they've got to figure out what happens next.

In addition to the reset that the students are facing, maybe you are facing a reset as well.

- Perhaps you've moved...houses, cities, even across the country...
- Maybe you've started a new job.
Maybe you've said goodbye to a loved one.

Or maybe...just maybe...maybe you're heading into a total "Reset of the Unknown"

- Perhaps you're in that place where everything familiar to you has been taken away and left in the past.
- You have no idea what the future looks like...
- ...or how you're going to make it to the end of 2022 with your sanity intact.

You're stepping away from where you've been and you're finding yourself in completely new territory.

And that **new territory** is exactly the place where God's people, the children of Israel, found themselves in the passage of Scripture that we're going to read today.

TRANSITION TO CONTEXT

If you have your Bibles, I invite you to turn to Deuteronomy 8.

And as you're turning there, let's look at the context – the back-story – of what we're about to read.

CONTEXT

Deuteronomy is part of an historical timeline in the Bible that we call ***The Exodus***. At the beginning of the Exodus, God's people, the Israelites, were slaves in Egypt.

- They suffered under a brutal regime that mistreated them, terrorized them, victimized them for 400 years.
- And just when it seemed that they had no hope, God called a man named ***Moses*** to set His people free and lead them out of Egypt into a new land, the Promised Land.

The Promised Land was going to be a good land...a land of **freedom**, **vitality**, **security** – everything that Israel needed. God set His people up for tremendous success.

And initially, the Exodus got off to a pretty good start.

- Israel escaped Egypt in a miraculous move from God
- Moses and his brother Aaron led the Israelites through the wilderness
- Then they eventually got to a point where they were just about to enter the Promised Land.
- They were **right** on the edge of an amazing future...
- But something went horribly wrong.

The Bible says in the book of **Numbers, chapter 13**, that when Israel arrived at the border of the Promised Land, they got spooked by the natives.

They got distracted by the enemies and the challenges that they would have to conquer in order to enter **New Territory**.

At this point, what Israel should have done was to **stop** and **remember** what God had done for them thus far.

- God had freed them from slavery in Egypt;
- He had kept them safe and provided for their needs throughout the whole trip
- and He was **not** about to abandon them after bringing them this far.

But instead of REMEMBERING God, the people REBELLED.

- **Numbers 13** describes how those who scouted the Promised Land went off the deep end.
- They got everybody riled up with a negative report about how impossible the land was and how vicious the enemies were that God had placed in their path.
- That led to a ***national rebellion / temper tantrum*** that we read about in **Numbers 14**.

Numbers 14:1-2 (HCSB)

Then the whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night. All the Israelites complained about Moses and Aaron, and the whole community told them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to

die by the sword? Our wives and little children will become plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?

And God said, "Well then! If you would rather die in the wilderness, I'll give you what you want. And on top of that, all of those children that you accused Me of abandoning...they're the ones who will survive to see the Promised Land, and you won't!"

Numbers 14:21b-23

“^{21b} ...as surely as I live and as the whole earth is filled with the LORD's glory, ²² none of the men who have seen My glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tested Me these 10 times and did not obey Me, ²³ will ever see the land I swore to give their fathers. None of those who have despised Me will see it.

An entire generation – everyone age 20 and over, according to Numbers 32:11 – missed out on a glorious future because they neglected to remember God. The parents died and their kids ended up as wanderers in the wilderness for 40 miserable years.

That brings us to the passage that we're looking at today in Deuteronomy.

- 40 years after that initial rebellion happened...
- the children from Numbers 14 are now adults with families and children of their own.
- *This new generation has an opportunity to succeed where the previous generation failed.*

Moses at this point in time is in his final weeks of life; he will ultimately not survive to see this next generation enter into the Promised Land. **So the Book of Deuteronomy, where we're hanging out today, is Moses' Last Will and Testament.** These are the final instructions – the last words that the new generation will hear from him before **he** dies and **they** enter in to **New Territory**. Let's go to **Deuteronomy 8**. We're going to read the whole chapter; and as Moses outlines how God's people were to enter New Territory... let's think about the New Territory we're celebrating today as God's people in 2022.

PRAY

Deuteronomy 8:1

“You must carefully follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase, and may enter and take possession of the land the LORD swore to your fathers.

² Remember that the LORD your God led you on the entire journey these 40 years in the wilderness, so that He might humble you and test you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commands.

³ He humbled you by letting you go hungry; then He gave you manna to eat, which you and your fathers had not known, so that you might learn that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

⁴ Your clothing did not wear out, and your feet did not swell these 40 years. ⁵ Keep in mind that the LORD your God has been disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. ⁶ So keep the commands of the LORD your God by walking in His ways and fearing Him.

⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams of water, springs, and deep water sources, flowing in both valleys and hills; ⁸ a land of wheat, barley, vines, figs, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land where you will eat food without shortage, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you will mine copper. ¹⁰ When you eat and are full, you will praise the LORD your God for the good land He has given you.

¹¹ “Be careful that you don’t forget the LORD your God by failing to keep His command—the ordinances and statutes—I am giving you today. ¹² When you eat and are full, and build beautiful houses to live in, ¹³ and your herds and flocks grow large, and your silver and gold multiply, and everything else you have increases, ¹⁴ be careful that your heart doesn’t become proud and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

¹⁵ He led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its poisonous snakes and scorpions, a thirsty land where there was no water. He brought water out of the flint-like rock for you. ¹⁶ He fed you in the

wilderness with manna that your fathers had not known, in order to humble and test you, so that in the end He might cause you to prosper.

¹⁷ You may say to yourself, 'My power and my own ability have gained this wealth for me,' ¹⁸ but remember that the LORD your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm His covenant He swore to your fathers, as it is today. ¹⁹ If you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods to worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will perish. ²⁰ Like the nations the LORD is about to destroy before you, you will perish if you do not obey the LORD your God.

TRANSITION TO BIG IDEA

The Scripture we just read contains a central theme that we need to zero in on, and that theme is Remembrance.

The whole book of Deuteronomy revolves around this theme, but just in **Chapter 8** alone, Moses gives at least seven different commands regarding Remembrance.

Seven different times, he uses words like “keep”, “remember”, and “do not forget”.

Here's why Remembrance is so important when entering New Territory:

Remembrance of the God we know will guide us through the territory that we don't know.

The whole reason Israel originally failed to enter **New Territory** was because they failed to remember God.

- It wasn't just that they got **scared**... (because we'll all feel scared at one point or another)
- It wasn't just that they ran into an **obstacle**...(because we'll all face obstacles and challenges on this side of heaven)

The reason that older generation died in **Numbers 14** was because they failed to remember God.

The failure of the old generation and the success of the next generation hinged on REMEMBRANCE.

So in keeping with this theme, I want to examine **3 Areas of Remembrance** that will help us enter into New Territory.

- 1. Remember Where You Came From**
- 2. Remember Where You're Going**
- 3. Remember Who Goes With You**

Let's look at that first one: **Remember Where You Came From.**

1. REMEMBER WHERE YOU CAME FROM

Deuteronomy 8:2-6

Moses starts out by reminding the Israelites about the hard lessons that they learned in the wilderness.

- He even goes so far as to say that God led them in the wilderness **to “humble you and to test you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commands”** (Deut. 8:2b).
- There is a **divine fatherly tension** where God is providing for Israel, while also disciplining them. **8:5: “Keep in mind that the LORD has been disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.”**

In these first few verses, Moses is saying, “Remember where you came from.”

- ***Remember*** the hard lessons that you had to learn
- ***Remember*** what God had to teach you
- And ***also remember*** how God provided for you during that painful wilderness season

POINT 1 – APPLICATION

I'm sure a lot of us – especially those who are older – can think about some very hard times that we went through. **But out of those hard times, if we remember our past the right way, we will see the hand of God at work.**

- We'll see Him ***teaching*** us...
- ***breaking*** us...
- ***shaping*** us into who He wanted us to become...

I think back to 2019 when I was living in Edmonton and waiting for my visa to come through so that I could move to North Carolina. That was a really discouraging wilderness season.

- I was working part-time at a rental car company, which was a decidedly non-Christian environment.
- To keep my ministry credentials active, my former Canadian district had me serving as an interim worship pastor at a small church which at that time was going through some very painful circumstances.
- I didn't know when I was going to leave Canada; I wasn't sure how soon my visa would come, so I had to turn down a lot of ministry opportunities and music gigs that I really wanted to participate in...stuck in limbo.

And I can remember some very frustrated prayer times during that season. I'd have my Bible, I'd have my prayer journal – and I'd pray, “God, why aren't You moving? Why am I still stuck here in limbo? Why aren't things turning out the way I wanted them to?”

And it's only now after 3 years of being in the United States that I am able to **look back** and remember what God was teaching me in that season.

- With the car company, God was teaching me how to engage with non-believers.
- With the small church, God was teaching me how to carry myself in ministry.
- With the visa, God was teaching me how to wait...teaching me how to serve Him and love Him faithfully, regardless of the limbo and the uncertainty that I saw all around me.

So if you find yourself going into **New Territory** today...always make sure to **remember where you came from**. Take self-inventory of the lessons that God has been teaching you, and remember how He has provided for you.

Second...

2. REMEMBER WHERE YOU ARE GOING

If you look at **verses 5 and 6 in the text**, you will notice a particular word which connects those verses to **verse 7**: “for”.

“⁵ Keep in mind that the Lord your God has been disciplining you... ⁶ So keep the commands of the Lord your God by walking in His ways and fearing Him. ⁷ FOR the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land...” And then Moses goes on to describe the good land; all the benefits, blessings, and resources that God will make available to His people. So the main principle we see here...

...is that **DISCIPLINE prepares for DESTINY**.

The reason God disciplined His people in the past was so that they would be ready for where they were going.

When it comes to the Exodus, one of the things we often take for granted is that the **Promised** Land was not an **easy** land.

Yes, it's a good land; that word “good” in Hebrew means favorable, pleasant, beautiful, without trouble...but even pleasant things require effort and discipline.

- A pleasant **marriage** and **family life** requires discipline.
- A pleasant **career** requires discipline.
- Pleasant **health** and a pleasant **physical body** requires discipline.

And in Israel's case, God knew that the New Territory where they were going was going to require a lot of discipline and hard work on their end.

- There were still enemies to be fought and battles to be won.
- The giants that the old generation failed to conquer were still unconquered.
- Not only that, but there was ore to be mined; crops to be harvested...

There was a lot of work to be done in the Promised Land!

But none of that changed the fact that the Promised Land was STILL an amazing gift from God...and as long as God's people walked with Him, the land where they were going would be a source of tremendous blessing.

How true is that for us?

- Life is a series of ***hills*** and ***valleys***; of ***ups*** and ***downs***.
- On this side of eternity, all of us will experience the extremes of ***victory*** and ***defeat, glory*** and ***tragedy, joy*** and ***pain***.

But when we remember where we're going, we can strengthen ourselves in the 100% reality that God's New Territory is a Good Territory. It's a good destiny that will bring about His purposes and His fruit in our lives.

Listen to what Moses says in **Verse 16**: “[God] fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers had not known, in order to humble and test you, **so that in the end He might cause you to prosper.**”

It's kind of like what the Apostle Paul says in **Romans 8:28**.

“And we know that in all things” – in every territory, wherever God leads you – **“God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”**

POINT 2 – APPLICATION

Listen: God has good plans and a good destination for us.

- But ***good plans*** are not necessarily “easy plans”
- ***Good territory*** is not necessarily “easy territory”

There are going to be times when New Territory will demand deep sacrifice.

- You'll have some very hard decisions
- Costly “***yeses***” and painful “***no's***”

We see this clearly in the Bible:

- **Abraham** had to say “no” to **familiarity** and “yes” to **uncertainty**
- **Esther** had to say “no” to **security** and “yes” to **danger**
- **Jesus** had to say “no” to **heavenly glory** and “yes” to **earthly humanity**

We also see this today:

- Many **pastors** (at least 99% of them) have to say “no” to a **lucrative career** and “yes” to **obscure ministry**
- **Missionaries** have to say “no” to their **homeland** and “yes” to a new way of life in a completely foreign country
- **Many Christians around the world** have to say “no” to **safety** and “yes” to **persecution** – persecution that includes loss of **freedom**, loss of **property**, loss of **family**...even loss of **life**!

How can these people make these sacrifices?

IT'S BECAUSE THEY REMEMBER WHERE THEY ARE GOING!

They know that no matter what comes their way, good or bad...God's New Territory is ultimately a good territory.

When you enter **New Territory**...

- 1. Remember where you came from**
- 2. Remember where you are going**

And finally: **3. Remember Who goes with you**

3. REMEMBER WHO GOES WITH YOU

At the end of **Deuteronomy 8**, Moses gives the people a warning:

17 You may say to yourself, ‘My power and my own ability have gained this wealth for me,’ **18** but remember that the Lord your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm His covenant He swore to your fathers, as it is today. **19** If you ever forget the Lord your God and go after other gods to worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will

perish. 20 Like the nations the Lord is about to destroy before you, you will perish if you do not obey the Lord your God.

You might think, “Whoa, that’s dark! Do we really need to talk about this?” **Yes, we do!**

God knows that New Territory has new temptations. And if we’re falling asleep at the wheel, and not being mindful of the God Who goes with us, those new temptations can entice us to a darkplace...

- where not only do we reject the **vitality of relationship** with God
- but we expose ourselves to the **consequences of rebellion** against God.

That was the whole reason the first generation of Israelites got in trouble back in **Numbers 14**. They did not remember the God who went with them...and that lack of remembrance exposed them to the consequences that Moses describes at the end of **Chapter 8**.

New Territory has new temptations. That applies to all of us (no matter who we are or where we are.)

If you’re entering New Territory at an OLDER age...you might be tempted by **new discontentment**...obstacles that you never had to deal with when you were younger.

- Woe is me, my best days are behind me
- I’ve got sickness, loneliness, family problems, or something else that I didn’t ask for but got anyway
- Why can’t I go back to the “good old days”?
- Why did God bring me into this crazy New Territory?

That’s the exact temptation that got the previous Israelite generation in trouble.

On the flip side, if you’re entering New Territory at a YOUNGER age...you might be tempted by **new distractions**...new thoughts and voices that you’ve never had to consider before.

- None of my college friends care about church or about Jesus...so why should I care about Jesus?

- What my textbook says about origins and sexuality sounds a lot more convincing than what the Bible says about origins and sexuality; so why should I believe the Bible instead of my textbook?
- Life without God looks a lot more exciting than life *with* God, so why serve God when it'd be a lot more fun to serve myself instead?
- That was the temptation which future generations of Israelites were ensnared by.

All of us are going to face new temptations in New Territory. Moses talks about those new temptations in **verse 12.**

¹² **"When you eat and are full,** and build beautiful houses to live in, ¹³ **and your herds and flocks grow large, and your silver and gold multiply, and everything else you have increases...when the New Territory brings new temptations...** ¹⁴ **be careful that your heart doesn't become proud and you forget the LORD your God** who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

Then right after warning about new temptations, Moses gives the antidote for temptation. That antidote is Remembrance...Remembrance of the God who goes with us.

Verse 15:

¹⁵ **[God] led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its poisonous^[a] snakes and scorpions, a thirsty land where there was no water. He brought water out of the flint-like rock for you. ¹⁶ He fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers had not known, in order to humble and test you, so that in the end He might cause you to prosper.**

Moses tells Israel, and he also tells us, "Look at your history!

- Remember what God has **done**
- Remember what He's **doing**
- And remember who He **is**.

God's history proves that He is faithful...He is holy...

- He is **Provider** to the poor
- **Refresher** for the tired
- **Healer** of the sick
- **Resurrector** of the dead
- **Sustainer** of the living

That is the God who has written your history, and He is the same God who goes with you into New Territory!

Psalm 107 is a passage which calls God's people to remembrance. Listen to how the Psalm ends:

Psalm 107:43 (NLT): "Those who are wise will take all this [remembrance] to heart; they will see in our history the faithful love of the LORD."

How many of you can see the LORD's faithful love in your history?

I look back on some of the hard times that I went through when I was in high school and college; some of that was self-inflicted, some of that was beyond my control...

But when I remember the God who has gone with me, I can see in my history the faithful love of the Lord.

- When I was wounded in a **dysfunctional church** as a teenager...and when the pain of my church experience left me with more questions than answers...God's faithful love was there.
- When I was **fired from a job** at age 17...and when the boss who fired me told me: "you're more trouble than you're worth and we're better off with no one"...God's faithful love was there.
- When I started Bible College **as an angry young man** who had a lot of bravado on the outside, and fragile woundedness on the inside...God's faithful love was there.
- And **ten years ago**, in January 2012... When all of that unresolved anger and pain found me at the edge of my bed with a knife in my hand...and when I

wrote in my prayer journal, “I don’t want to live anymore, but I’m afraid that suicide might send me to hell, so I’ll just wait for an accident instead...”

When Satan was waging war for my LIFE...God’s faithful love was there.

I can see in my history the faithful love of the Lord...
...and that same faithful love can be found in your history too,
no matter what anyone says!

CONCLUSION/ONLINE ENDING

Remembrance of the God we know will guide us through the territory that we don’t know.

Maybe you find yourself in New Territory today.

- A new ***beginning***.
- A new ***ending***.
- Something ***exciting***.
- Something ***painful***.

But wherever you find yourself...**keep remembrance at the forefront of your mind.**

- **Remember where you came from...**how God has led you, provided for you, and brought you so far.
- **Remember where you are going...**how God has a good plan for you! It’s not an easy plan, but it’s a good plan. It’s *His* plan...written out **PERFECTLY** for *your good* and *His glory*.
- **Remember Who goes with you...** You have never gone through this life alone. Even before you were born, the Bible says in Psalm 139 that all of your days have been pre-written...perfectly orchestrated, timed, and established by a loving Father who created you, who is guiding you, and who wants to be in relationship with you.

As you walk with Him...as you seek Him... as you remember the God you know, He will guide you through the territory that you don’t know.

I want to close by looking at a passage from **Jeremiah 29**.

This is a personal letter that God wrote to His people when they were about to go into exile in Babylon.

- God's people had rejected Him;
- they had abandoned Him for other gods;
- and just as Moses forewarned at the end of **Deuteronomy 8**,
- God's people were facing some painful consequences because of their lack of remembrance.

But even as God has to discipline His people, listen as He describes the relationship that He wants to have with them.

Jeremiah 29:10-13 (NIV)

This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, [when this exile/season of discipline is over] I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart."

Friends, may that be our prayer. As we move into **New Territory**...may we always remember to seek the Lord and pursue Him with all of our heart...

So that no matter where we find ourselves...we can be assured that God we know will guide us through the territory that we don't know.

Perhaps you're wondering, "How can I know that God is with me? How can I be sure that I'm not alone going into New Territory?"

If that's where you're at today, I'd like to pray a prayer with you. We'll have some music playing in the background; we'll have some contact info on the screen so that you can message us privately.

As we share this moment together, let's pray...

*DISCLAIMER: This manuscript was written and preached by Jon Engler for the weekend of August 21, 2022 at EAG Church in Rocky Mount, NC. The manuscript is solely owned by EAG and has been published online for reflection and deeper study. The reproduction and/or distribution of this manuscript, either in part or in full, without the author's express written consent, is strictly forbidden.