



Remember

What do we remember?
How do we remember?
Why do we remember?

Gathering (20 minutes)



Welcome

Acknowledgement

The Ancient of Days, breathed life into this Land and her Peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation have blessed this place through their care and concern.

From river to ocean, from campfire to hearth
may the First Nations who have cared for this land be blessed.

From breath to song,
from step to dance
may those who follow your Songlines guide us on the journey to living honourably in this place.

From greeting to Amen,
from silence to chorus
may our worship join with the voices of the First Nations of this Land.

(c) 2017, A.Koh-Butler, This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here

Listen - By The Waters of Babylon (Psalm 137)

This psalm is said to come out of the time that the people of Israel were in exile. Their homeland had been ransacked and the people taken to a foreign place.

With the events of our world in mind, try to remember here that the references to Zion and Jerusalem were not just about the land itself, although that is important, it is also about the covenant between God and God's people.

- ¹ By the rivers of Babylon—
there we sat down and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.
- ² On the willows there
we hung up our harps.
- ³ For there our captors
asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!'
- ⁴ How could we sing the Lord's song
in a foreign land?
- ⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!
- ⁶ Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy.

Prayer

Introduction

What kinds of things do you "remember"?

Birthdays, anniversaries, appointments, shopping lists, words of songs, perhaps?

Some of us have a good memory for dates and times.

Some remember detail of events - who was there, what were they wearing etc

Some people even remember sermons they have heard (I wish!)

As a nation - we remember Anzac Day, and today, Remembrance Day.

We remember World Wars and the people who fought or served, who died or returned injured in body, mind and soul.

We remember...

We remember the good times,

and we remember the not-so-good times.

Psalm 137 is a cry from the people of Israel in exile:

By the rivers of Babylon—

there we sat down, and there we wept

when we remembered Zion

So remembering can bring both joy and deep sadness

How do we remember?

Some of us have to write it down!!

Some of us need to be nudged - often.
And then, perhaps we write a card or phone someone to say "hi".
Maybe we take a quiet moment to ourselves to think of the person or event.
As a nation, we gather - we hold special services to remember.

Why do we remember?

Sometimes to hold a special person close

Sometimes it is to not forget the lesson we learned - peace is preferable to war, war brings with it an extraordinary cost that is felt for generations.

And then there is a tension between "remembering" and putting the past behind us so we can engage in what is new (see Isaiah 43:15-21 (below)).

As we mark Remembrance Day today, you are invited into some reflection about remembering, particularly in the context of our Christian faith.

Listening for God's Voice (40 minutes)

Remembering:

The word "remember" occurs over 200 times in the Scriptures.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the focus is on remembering the covenant between God and God's people, and on remembering their story, the stories of their ancestors and how they interacted with God:

- After the flood, God promises to remember the covenant (Genesis 9:15-16)
- The people of Israel find themselves enslaved in Egypt because the new ruler did not remember Joseph (Exodus 1:8)
- The Passover Festival is about remembering that God rescued them from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 13:3-10)
- When God gets angry with God's people, Moses pleads with God to remember the covenant (Exodus 32:11-14)
- When the people of Israel are given the law, they are instructed to put fringes on their garments to remember God's commandments (Numbers 15:37-41)
- Several times the law is described in the context of remembering that you were once slaves (Deuteronomy 15:15, 16:12, 24:18)
- the story of Nehemiah and Ezra includes the "remembering" of the covenant and of God's law

The prophets and the psalmists draw our attention to remembering what God has done and who God has called God's people to be.

And in Isaiah 43, we find God imploring God's people to *not* remember what has gone before because God is doing something new (Isaiah 43:15-21)

We have the gift of the gospels and the letters of the New Testament because the followers of Jesus wanted Jesus' story and the story of the early Church preserved in our memory.

Read: Isaiah 43:15-21

- ¹⁸ Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
- ¹⁹ I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
- ²⁰ The wild animals will honour me,
the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
- ²¹ the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Read: 2 Peter 3:1-2

¹This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you; in them I am trying to arouse your sincere intention by reminding you ² that you should remember the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour spoken through your apostles.

What do we remember?

Christian faith centres around remembering and engaging with a story:

- the story of God's interaction with the people of Israel
- the words and teachings of the prophets, of Jesus, of the early leaders of the Church
- the story of God coming amongst us in the person of Jesus
- the story of ordinary people who live and work in the faith of Jesus

What parts of the Biblical stories, writings and teaching do you remember?

What parts are perhaps less familiar?

Is there anything that you need to let go of (or not remember) so that God can reveal something new to you?

How do we remember?

- we tell and re-tell stories
- we sing songs
- we recite Scripture verses
- we keep photographs and trinkets (souvenirs and mementos)
- we re-enact the stories and the truths we have discovered - perhaps most significantly, we "remember" around the communion table
- we remember through our living as we choose to re-enact the love of Jesus
- often we do all of these things in the company of others - our family, our friends, our church family, our community

How do you "remember"?

How do you "remember" the stories of faith - your own and the Biblical stories?

What parts of the remembering of the people of faith are most important to you?

Why do we remember?

- to hold someone we love close
- to learn from past experiences (good and not-so-good)

Why do you remember what you do?

Who are the people you remember? Why are they special?

What are the experiences (your own and the experiences of the authors of the Scriptures) that are most important to you or that have taught you something important?

What do we do if/when we forget?

How often do you re-read the stories of Scripture?

How often do we ask the people around us to re-tell a story that has grown dim in our memory?

Responding (40 minutes)

Spend some time thinking about your “remembering”.

Is there something that you have discovered for the first time?

Is there something you have rediscovered?

Is there anything you want to think about or explore more?

What is one thing you will take from this time of reflection today?

Re-engaging with the World (15 minutes)

Sharing

Listen - Remember (Lauren Daigle)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWjxJVNU668>

Prayer and Blessing

Retreats in 2024
2 or 16 March - tbc
29 June
31 August
2 November