

A TIME OF MEMORIES

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December 3

It doesn't take much to trigger a memory from a distant moment in time. It could be the sight, sound, or even aroma that floods our mind with a vivid memory. For Dwaine, any time he hears the song *Tonight Is A Wonderful Night To Fall In Love*, he is instantly transported to the summer of '97. It's the end of a 3-day drunken rock fest where he cleaned portable toilets for 16 hours a day in 33 degree weather. Standing in a dusty farmer's field, leaning against the work truck, sewer hose in hand, when the closing band, *April Wine*, takes the stage. For those few minutes, all of the chaos came to a sudden halt as the music washed over the crowd.

Rebekah's memories ignite with the sound of a Kitchen Aid mixer whipping at high speeds. She is brought back to late night chats with her mom in the kitchen, usually with every square inch of counter space used for cooling mass amounts of cookies or the next wedding cakes to be decorated. Whether it was filled with conversation, both serious and lighthearted, or silently watching her mom skillfully work, these were moments she treasures.

Memories are an incredible gift, holding a unique power with the potential to bring us to laughter, personal reflection, and even tears. Sharing memories of the past is one way we strengthen our shared connections and identities. It plays a significant role in who we have become and who we grow to be. Keeping this in mind, it is not surprising to note that God uses the memories of his people, past and present, to point us to his faithfulness.

Please read Luke 1:67-80

So many of the stories written in the Bible are multi-layered – God is doing something big in the individual lives of the people in the story while at the same time doing something big for the people of Israel or the world. We learn earlier in Luke 1 that Zechariah has been praying for a child, but that he and Elizabeth are old and she is barren. An angel appears to Zechariah to tell him that his prayers have been heard. He does not believe the messenger and as a result is muted until this moment. The faithfulness of God to Elizabeth and Zechariah are on full display and Zechariah pens these obedient words, "His name is John". Zechariah is unmuted and permitted to finally speak. Those long mute months gave him time to think and to hear from God. With Zechariah's experience, he is compelled to prophecy.

Zechariah declares now is a time for memories. Do you remember God's promises, His holy covenant, His faithfulness? Now is the time that this is being fulfilled. God has visited, has redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation – He is doing this now! What God is doing now lacks significance without the memories. And even now, it seems that the prophecy may not be what was expected – this redeeming and deliverance from the hand of enemies – brought about beginning with Zechariah's son, pointing to salvation, the forgiveness of sins because of the tender mercy of our God. A different way to peace.

In this advent season, take some time for memories. Recall your stories and how God was faithful even in a different type of outcome. Recall first encountering your Savior, of your first taste of His grace and of the tender mercies of our God. Give thanks. Peace be with you – He is faithful.