

⁸“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, ⁹for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained. ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. ¹¹Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him, we will also live with him;

¹²if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;

¹³if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”

(2 Timothy 2:8-13]

I think that many of us will remember the winter of 2007-2008 for quite some time. This will be a year we’ll talk about, mark in our memories, and judge winters to come by.

Remember in ’08, we’ll say, when it seemed like it snowed every day. Remember in ’08, when we had thunder in the middle of snowstorms. Remember in ’08 when it rained all day and then the freezing cold came to make an absolute mess of everything. Remember how slippery it was. Remember how high those snow banks were. Remember the cold. Remember the potholes! This is the year we will remember—unless the next one is worse!

It would be good to remember this winter season when spring and summer finally come. On the one hand, remember this winter when the bugs are tormenting and biting you. Remember that it isn’t frost-bite. Remember this winter when the humidity is pushing 80%. At least the pipes in the house or the car aren’t frozen up. Remember this winter when the lingering heat of the day is keeping you from getting a good night’s sleep. At least there is no sleet rattling against the windows and you don’t have to worry about the furnace quitting.

It’s our nature to forget winter and complain about things like bugs and humidity. This winter, however, was such that perhaps we will be different this summer. Maybe when spring first comes and it’s finally 50 degrees and sunny that, that we will all stand out in the sun and bask awhile. When the snow melts for good into sparkling, erratic streams, maybe we’ll smile at the sun’s victory. When the robins come back tugging worms from once frozen ground, maybe we’ll give thanks that new life has returned. This winter could make us newly appreciative of all that is warm and bright and good.

That’s why Lent and Easter are well placed at this time of year. We are ready to remember the dark cold of our past and look forward to life returning.

The Lenten season we are now in gives us a chance to remember by our midweek worship what a cold failure our spiritual lives are by themselves. We are given a special opportunity to remember our ongoing sins of faithlessness and disowning Christ.

During the somber time of Lent, we are drawn to say, “The good that I would do, I have not, and the very evil that I would not do, that I do.” This season comes soon enough after good intentioned resolutions of the New Year that we can still remember them and see how quickly we fail to keep them. Like this winter has so far been, remember how slippery and pot-holed our own promises to God have been; how high our piled need for forgiveness is; how bitterly cold our grave leading to eternal death for all our sin would be.

But remember also this: Remember the faithfulness of Christ even when we are faithless, for He cannot disown Himself. Remember how our Savior dared to enter the darkest, coldest, day ever on that Friday we now call “good”. He freely gave Himself up for us that we might endure through the winter of this life.

Remember how, out of the complete blackness of His sealed tomb, He rose with healing on His wings (Malachi 4:2). Remember how the sunlight that poured into His tomb reached through the centuries all the way to you. Like the sun opens the world to new life in the spring, His victory over death and the devil opened new life to everyone through faith in Him. He cannot disown Himself. He offers to touch us all with His healing rays of forgiveness.

We can celebrate Easter well only when we have remembered our great Lenten need. As is the pattern in our post-modern times, midweek Lenten services continue to be a very low priority for far too many people who profess themselves as Christian. Yes, age or health or transportation issues are valid reasons to forgo a midweek Lenten service in church. But those issues just stated do not negate the need to set aside a private time at home with the Word or some other devotional to remember just who we are by nature and how lost we would be without our Savior. Only when we take time for Lent, can we celebrate Easter well.

If you have missed any or all of our Lenten services so far this year, please have my encouragement to attend the remaining two on March 5th and 12th. As long as there is breath in us, it’s never too late to start remembering. God grant you to seriously also set aside time for Maundy Thursday on March 20th and our two Good Friday services on March 21st. Come Easter, we will praise our Lord for His great victory and gift of heaven to us. We will give thanks that God has returned life to us. We will bask as a congregation in the light of His worship. This will be because we remember . . . Jesus Christ, raised from the dead!