

“Forget about it!” Isaiah 65:17-25
Saints Triumphant Sunday November 14, 2004 Pastor Jon Bergemann

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble, Amen. The Word of God for our consideration this morning is found in Isaiah chapter 65 (read text). In the name of Jesus, our victorious Savior, dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

What do we all do to remember? What measures do we take to make sure we don't forget things? We have calendars and appointment books, daily planners and those little electronic notebooks. We can even suck down vitamin supplements and sip herbal teas that promise to promote our memory. And yet, if you're anything like me, you still forget things from time to time. My favorite is when I make a long list of things I need to remember to do, and then forget where I put the list!

What do we all do to forget? What measures do people take to forget things? Maybe they take a long vacation to forget the stresses of work. Maybe they flip on the TV or turn on music to forget the stresses of the day. In some cases, they might sip or smoke to sweep away bad memories.

We put in a lot of effort to remember, and at the same time, we put in a lot of effort to forget, don't we? Life seems to be a constant balancing act of remembering what we need to and forgetting what we would like to.

But the problems arise when we just can't seem to forget a pain or a pressure. When we just can't seem to put out of our mind a memory that haunts us. When we just can't seem to let go of a trouble that terrorizes us.

That was a problem with God's people in the Old Testament, as well. The nation of Judah had a number of things they would have liked to forget. Many would have liked to forget about the blatant sexual immorality and idol worship in their past, but the maligned moral virtues and crumbling values in their society made that hard to forget. Many would have liked to forget about the times they failed to trust in God to deliver them and guide them throughout life, but the constant threat of invasion from their dangerous neighbors – nations like Assyria and Babylon – which God had foretold would happen to them if they took their eyes off of Him, made those times hard to forget.

In fact, it seemed like everywhere they looked – there was something they would have liked to forget. When they looked at their families, they saw loved ones pass away – whether old or in some cases very young – which would remind them that the wages of sin is death - a fact that they would have liked to forget. When they looked at their own possessions, they saw houses which needed fixing, vineyards which produced weeds, work which never seemed to be done – reminders of all the disappointments of this sinful world which they would have liked to forget. When they looked at themselves, they saw people with flaws and imperfections, people who from time to time made poor judgments and had poor priorities, people who sinned in many ways - ways that they would have liked to forget.

Sound familiar? We might live in a different culture at a different time, but I don't think that these people are all that different than you and me in many ways. Maybe we would like to forget about the declining morals in our nation over the past 50 years, but the crumbling values of our current society make it hard to forget. Maybe we would like to forget about the imperfections of this earth, but our houses that need painting, our cars that need fixing, our bills that need paying, make it hard to forget.

Maybe we would like to forget about all the terrible effects of sin. But when our loved ones get sick or pass away, it makes it hard to forget. And when we look in the mirror and see someone who has made poor decisions, who has disappointed others, who has done things and said things and thought things that are disgusting and deserve damnation from our Holy God, that sin can be hard to forget.

All of which means what? It means that we would do well not to forget the words that our God gives us in our text today. What does He say? **“Behold, I will create new heavens**

and a new earth.” Everywhere we look on this earth, we can find reminders of sin and its effects. So God says He will make a new earth! But then what?

Listen to some more of this preview of paradise. God says that **“Never again will there be in it (heaven) an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.”** What’s God saying? In a picturesque way, He says that we won’t have to remember the pains of aging or death in heaven! If you could die at a hundred in heaven (which won’t happen, there is no death in heaven, this is picture language), you would be considered a baby! Indeed you will live forever! Death and sickness and pain will not be a memory.

What else makes it so great? God says in verse 22, **“No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat.”** In verse 23 he says, **“They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune.”** What’s He saying? There will be no more disappointment in heaven. There will be no more unfinished projects or failed tasks. Those things won’t even be a memory.

But even more important, look at what He promises in verse 19. **“I will rejoice over Jerusalem (a name for God’s people) and take delight in my people.”** God will rejoice and delight in you and me! He will gaze upon us with affection and pride!

Why? Don’t forget what His Son Jesus did for you and me. He lived a perfect life in our place, paid for our sins on the cross, and rose from the dead to make us look perfect to God. Because of this, God promises that He will forget our every failure and flaw in heaven, and take delight in us for the rest of our days!

All of which leads to one final statement that God makes about our eternal life to come. A statement so beautiful that we don’t ever want to forget it. He says in the second half of verse 17, **“The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”**

What will heaven be like? It will be so wonderful that none of the pain of this earth will even be remembered. It won’t even come to mind.

Think about what that means!

In heaven there will be no communism versus capitalism, no Democrats versus Republicans, no cold coffee or hot flashes, no sinful nature versus saintly nature, and no fear, wondering whether or not God likes us.

In heaven there will be no sleepless nights, no sluggish days. There will be no more sneezing or suffering, sickness or sin.

In heaven there will be no more traffic. There will be no more taxes. There will be no more tornados. There will be no more temptation.

In heaven there will be no more guilt. No more greed. No more gut wrenching worries. And no more good-byes. No more heart burn, heart ache, or heart attacks. Indeed, as verse 19 tells us, **“the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.”**

In heaven we will be so far separated from the sin of this world and so perfectly united to our loving Savior that we will not remember a single pain. In fact, you could think about the seemingly most painful experience, the most tragic, horrible event that life could ever give you – multiply the pain by 10, and still know that heaven will be so perfect, so beautiful, so wonderful, that you wouldn’t even remember that pain! That’s how great it will be! That’s what’s waiting for you!

Have you ever seen a picture of a championship team moments after they’ve won a title? Picture the scene after a team wins the World Series, or the Super Bowl, etc. What does it look like?

You have grown men or women jumping on each others backs! They’re tackling each other in joy! They’re spraying bottles of beverages around the locker room and dumping barrels of Gatorade over each other’s heads! They’re doing funny little dances and shouting and exclaiming with wide eyes and big smiles, “We’ve won! We’re #1! It’s all over!”

And at that moment of triumph, at that moment of victory, they aren’t upset about how hard the season was. They aren’t reflecting upon the ups and downs of the game or the year.

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
12368 Dillingham Square • Woodbridge, VA 22912
703-897-7373 • www.telc.org

They aren't depressed at the disappointments that might have happened during the season or their own failures. No way! They're champs! It's over! It's party time!

Friends, that's what you and I will be like when we join all the other saints – all the other believers in Jesus – in heaven! We won't even think about the things that hurt us or harm us now. Our worst pains won't even be a thought! We will be celebrating! We will be victorious!

Can you picture it? Can you see it? There's Abraham running over to give you a high five! There's Moses dumping Gatorade on your head! (if there is Gatorade in heaven ☺) There's Peter or Paul patting you on the back! There are all of your loved ones who have ever died in the Lord, now alive and celebrating and shouting and being silly with joy in victory with you! And there's Jesus, the One who died to bring you there, the One who carries you through the pains of this life – there's Jesus, wrapping His arms around you and saying, "Welcome home, my child. Forget about your earthly troubles. Victory is yours!"

Friends, you're headed for heaven. You will be victorious. Don't you ever forget it!
Amen.