

# Today We Remember

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

## Participation

I would like to do something special today. I want the entire room to remain silent. One at a time, I would like for those who feel compelled to do so, stand up and state the relationship and name of someone special that you are remembering today. I would like for the room to remain reverent as we recite the names of those spouses, parents or children that you so dearly miss.

## Preface

Tomorrow we will celebrate Memorial Day, the day we remember the lives sacrificed for the freedoms we so often take for granted. It is also the day when we bask in the memories of our very personal and precious loss of loved ones who have left this earth.

There are some of you have lost children and brothers and sisters seemingly before their time. No doubt their memories are on the forefront of your heart this weekend. It is my prayer that you are comforted and strengthened during this hour.

## Scripture – Read

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 NIV*

## Introduction

In my bulletin article, I wrote “Only through accepting salvation through Christ do we enter into heaven. Without Christ, we are destined to Hell. No decision is a decision to say NO. It sounds harsh, but it is God’s Universe, and He sets the rules.”

God is a God of His Word! God is also a God of comfort and compassion. I’ll share some brief thoughts on our text and death.

## Content

### 1. Cherish The Rich Memories

Illustration: John H. Powell’s, Mr. Powell to me; was rough on the outside but that stopped at his leather-like skin. Inside, he was a gentle loving man with a big heart. He would do anything for anyone. He was more than a father-in-law to me. He was much like a father to me. I don’t know if he loved me for me, or because I married his precious daughter, for he loved her dearly.

The memories are rich and filled with laughter. One year I boxed and wrapped a cow patty as a Christmas present and labeled it, “To John from Frances (his wife).” As he opened it, he instantly knew it was my doing. I have never seen anyone laugh so hard.

I suppose he got me back when he was fishing with my brand new rod and reel that was an anniversary gift. He fell asleep and when the fish hit it jerked the rod right out of hands.

I could go on about the many memories like the time we were going to haul some cattle to the stock yard and as I was driving up the steep hill, the trailer full of cattle came loose and went rolling back down the hill into a ditch. I have never seen cows so upset in my life and we all know what cows do when they are upset.

I have many fond memories of my years with John Powell. But the most valuable memory is that of knowing that he loved the Lord.

Everyone has memories of people in their life like John Powell. **The memories flow like bitter sweet rivers.** Most memories are rich with wonderful heart warming thoughts of simple times and meaningful words. Other memories are full of questions and doubts about what we might have done to better express our love or make life better for our deceased love one.

“If only I had told him I loved him?” “If only I had kissed her one last time?” “If only I hadn’t spoken so harshly?” **Don’t allow the ‘If only I had...’ questions to haunt you.** If you failed to do more, you will have your opportunity in eternity.

Thank God for your memories. **Treasure the memories as the greatest treasures here own earth.** Talk and walk with God, speaking freely of your loved one and the deepest feelings of your heart. Jesus Christ understands death and he knows the emotions of your heart.

Cherish the memories and thank God for them. They will bring you more joy than all of the riches of the world.

## 2. Experience God's Comfort & Compassion

Paul refers to God as the "*Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.*" When we are struggling with life's wounds, God is here to give us His divine comfort.

When someone dies, the family usually has a wake and we all go by and speak words of comfort to family. Usually, we stand in line with an empty helpless feeling asking ourselves, "What will I say?" Though we can offer comforting words, they are limited. *Note: We go into halls and converse with hollow laughter.*

**Only God can bring real comfort.** God is the only one who can give the real comfort we need because He is the author of life. He is the creator of these frail bodies and we must have reassurance from Him that all is **still in control even in our time of emptiness and hurt.**

Illus: A man put a sign in his yard that read: "Puppies For Sale." A young boy came by to inquire about buying a puppy and learned they were \$10.00 just the amount he had. He asked to see the puppies. "Of course," said the owner. The boy's eyes danced at the sight of the five furry puppies. "I heard one had a bad leg," he said. "Yes, I'm afraid she'll be crippled for life," answered the man. "Well, that's the puppy I want," said the boy. "But she'll always have a limp and she will need a lot of extra love and help," the man replied. Smiling bravely, the boy pulled up one pant leg, revealing a brace. "I don't walk so well either," said the boy.

**God understands your every emotion and pain.** He made sure He understood first hand through the death of His own son. God knows that the loss is so deep. He understands it hurts so bad, deep in your chest and soul. He hears your cries and He is present with compassion and comfort.

*"For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." Psalm 100:5*

*"But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness." Psalm 86:15*

Why does God send His Holy Spirit? To comfort us and to draw us close to Him. Why does Jesus prepare a place for us? It is not because of our great works but because He loves us.

There is an old saying, "**You never know Jesus is all you need until He is all you've got.**" Go to God with your heart and receive His divine comfort.

## 3. Let His Comfort Overflow To Others

Paul makes it clear that God's comfort is to flow through us and to others. We are alive today for a purpose and **our purpose can be summed up in two words, "God & Others."**

Gal. 2:20 says, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*"

Illus: Helen Keller once said, "**To be blind is bad, but it is worse to have eyes and not to see.**"

Do you see? There are hundreds of people just like your loved one right here in your community. They need your comfort! They need your Savior!

Look around you. Look into the eyes of the people and see the hurt and confusion. Look at the self destruction, confusion and lies that are consuming people's lives today. You have the answer. You know the answer in God. We must live! We must live to share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Illus: Several years ago my wife rented a movie we watched as a family. The title of the movie was "Pay It Forward." It was about a young man who had a plan to help three people and in turn those three people were to help three others and so on. Soon the entire community was being changed through his "Pay It Forward" plan. God is the author of the Pay It Forward concept.

*<sup>5</sup>For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows." 1 Cor 1:5*

With all of the tragedy around us there should be no one idle. We should all be keenly aware of the importance of people knowing Christ as their savior.

You might say, "Well you don't understand, I am not comfortable talking about my faith in God." Brother, it is time I speak the truth about that comment. You are right, I don't understand.

Are you not saved by the blood of Christ, forgiven by the grace of God, redeemed, filled with the Holy Spirit, comforted by the hand of God himself and given eternal life? Doesn't your entire hope and existence hinge upon your faith in these facts? Not only should we be able to speak of our God, it should be impossible for us to keep quiet about God.

Let God's Comfort Overflow from you to others.

What about your friends and loved ones who are living? Do they know Christ? Will they have eternal? **How do you know the answers to this question unless you talk to them about God?**

People need the Lord!

### **Conclusion**

Illus: Last week we sang the song "I'll Fly Away." Bro. Mike asked everyone to raise their hand who are ready to go. I didn't raise my hand. I am not ready. Sure I know I am going to heaven when I die but I am not ready to go just yet. There is much still to be done on earth. God is not through with me on earth. There is living to be done and much to learn. I have not yet become who God wants me to be. When it is time, it will be time for me to go. But for now, I God calls me to live for Him.

Mourn the loss of your lost loved ones.

Cherish your memories and photos.

Experience God's comfort.

But Live Also! Don't retreat, Live!

**You have been given life. What are you doing with your life?**