

Immerse Day 57 :: April 20

The call to “remember” flows through scripture like a stream, watering all of these stories and giving them life in our lives. A story forgotten shrivels up and dies, but a story retold and remembered lives on. And it is these live stories of the past that feel our lives, helping us to grow with the lessons they teach.

As I read today about the tassels God commands the Israelites to sew on their clothing, I’m reminded of the constant reaction of people to these seemingly pointless Old Testament rules. “Why does God care whether they have tassels or not? Why does God care whether they use 2 kinds of material in their clothes, or plant 2 kinds of crops in their fields? Why does God always need to make us stand out and look so weird?” Usually the Amish come up at this point as examples of how unnecessarily weird we can look if we really follow God’s commands.

I think the answers to these questions vary and are various. But today I want us to think about how these odd commands fit God’s call to remember. When we wear tassels on our clothing, or a cover on our heads, when we have to be careful about what we eat, and are constantly celebrating some religious festival or fast, when our lives consist of all of these things, we can’t help but remember God. Every time I dress and have to put on my tassels, every time I have to check my food to see if there are any unclean bits, every time I have to travel to the tabernacle to present an offering, I am forced to remember. I am forced to remember God, and remember His acts among us, and remember His reality and presence in our lives.

And even when the memory is a bad one – like rebellion against God and His servants – it is still a memory that puts God in His rightful place as center of our lives. My biggest concern for us as a Christian people today is the compartmentalization of our faith. We have a part of our lives that is our family time, and then we have work or school, and then we have relaxation, and then we have church/faith/the God part. And the fact that we section off these parts only causes us to forget God during those times when we are focused elsewhere. People talk to me regularly about the dryness of their prayer life and often say, “Pastor Steve, I go days without even thinking about God.”

What can they do to remember God all the time? It’s obviously not something we can just try harder to do, or we’d all be able to. It’s not just a matter of putting bible verses on your computer or bathroom mirror – those become part of the background too quickly. How do we help people to remember God even when they’re at school, or work, or home, or on vacation, or in a plane, or in a car?

Maybe they need some tassels.