

Memory is a funny thing. We don't know what we don't know, and it's usually only after we're halfway there that we realize we forgot something important like the keys or the reports we needed to hand out. Especially as we age, we see that our memory wasn't what it used to be. It can be absolutely aggravating to temporarily forget the name of a friend or relative. It can be embarrassing.

In 2016, A program on NPR, This American Life, interviewed a couple of individuals with hyperthymestic syndrome. This is also known as highly superior autobiographical memory or HSAM for short. People with HSAM have perfect memory. One person was upset because her mother threw away an old calendar, but she was able to promptly recreate it from memory. From age fourteen, she could recite from memory the details of every day of her life. This lady made a living as a production assistant, always remembering where everything was between shots, so film producers could avoid the classic gaffe such as a cup turning from blue to red in a moment's notice because somebody forgot how everything was laid out.

Wouldn't that be nice? Wouldn't that be nice never to forget someone's name. Wouldn't it be nice never to leave keys behind or forget your loved one's birthday? With enough training, you could make thousands of dollars on Jeopardy. You could seem all-knowing just like God. Wouldn't that be an amazing gift?

As we approach our Old Testament text, the Lord starts with an amazing gift. **“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,”** What an amazing gift. The first covenant was a wonderful thing that set the people of Israel apart from the nations. It gave them a reason to life and a way to know the one and only true God!

But the other shoe drops. The Lord continues, **“not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.”** There's another side to HSAM, you can never forget. This lady with HSAM could not forget that her mother threw away a calendar, even decades later. This lady lost her husband and was unable to get over it because the day she lost him went on repeat and was always present before her.

There was plenty in the history of Israel that they would have easily just forgotten. Worshipping a golden calf, complaining in the wilderness, straying from the Lord and needing a judge to rise up to save them, demanding a king and then kings ultimately leading them astray. We could go on. Through their sins they broke that covenant with God.

Sometimes, there's days we can't remember the things we want to remember, and the only things we can remember are those things we'd rather forget. It could be a horrible breakup. It could be something embarrassing you did in fifth grade. It could be loss of a loved one.

But what's worse, Satan is working to bring to memory those sins we'd rather forget. A way that we majorly disrespected our parents when we were younger. We

remember hurtful words we said to a friend. Maybe we remember a date night with a guy or a girl that we wish never happened. We took something that wasn't ours, and we burned a bridge in the process. We told a lie that snowballed. Memories can bring regrets, sorrow, and guilt.

Today is St. Patrick's Day, and likely the way many people celebrate this holiday is on Third Street at the bars. Some drink to remember; some drink to forget.
3. There are things in this life we'd rather forget.

Yet, the Lord is calling us to remember the good. We continue with our text: **“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD.”** There is a new way of doing things in this new covenant.

This covenant was established in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, we will celebrate this new covenant later in the service. The Apostle Paul recalls the words of Jesus: **“In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”** This is not just a symbolic meal where we remember Jesus like you might remember what you ate for breakfast yesterday. Communion is a meal where Jesus makes us a promise. He is making us a new covenant.

This covenant was sealed in His blood as He died to forgive each and every one of those forgettable moments in your life. The Father confirmed this covenant as He raised His Son from the dead, declaring that He accepted this sacrifice. The Holy Spirit delivers these promises to you in a meal later in this service.

Many times throughout the Bible, people cry out to God, remember me. One notable example is the thief on the cross who cried out **“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”** And so too we cry out, Jesus remember me.

Why ask for such a silly thing? Jesus has more than highly superior autobiographical memory. As God, He knows all. He is omniscient. All of history is revealed to Him like we might look at a map or a painting. However, this remembrance is not for Him, but for us.

In remembering this covenant, we are remembering the promises He has given us. The promises that He will never leave us nor forsake us. The promises that He has forgiven us. The promises that He is with us always, even unto the end of the age, and part of this being with us always consists of His real bodily presence in with and under bread and wine. We remember the promises even set forth in Jeremiah's prophecy of the time when Jesus comes again wherein the Law will be fully and wholly written on our hearts, and we will live in the city of God wherein all will know

the Lord and there will be no more sin. 2. Jesus is calling us to remember His New Covenant.

Why? Our text concludes, **“For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”** There is one thing that God can do that those with highly superior autobiographical memory can’t do, and that is to forget. He can choose to forget.

As we come to the altar this morning, we come as those who are remembering that God forgets. The Lord not only forgives your sins; He forgets your sins. People with HSAM are haunted by the past and can hardly get over past grudges and mistakes. Maybe that describes us also. But take heart, because the Lord forgets your offenses.

At the beginning of the episode of this American Life, host Ira Glass recalls the advice of a mother to a son who was going through a rough time. She said to forget thinking about the bad stuff. “you have to take the bad thought and put it into a box in your head. Then, you have to take the box out of your head, and put it in a cupboard, and shut the cupboard.” Easier said than done.

But not so for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The prophet Micah ends his book of prophecy in awe writing, **“Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”** Better than put in a box and set into the cupboard, your sins are buried with Christ, forgotten forever, and cast to the depths of the sea.

We admire the example of St. Patrick, who despite six years of slavery in Ireland, forgave the Irish and returned to Ireland to share the Gospel with them. The island of Ireland attributes their conversion to Christianity in large part to the work of this man of God.

Rather than getting even, rather than drowning your sorrows in alcohol or drugs, rather than spending sleepless nights trying to forget, join us at this church where we call out to God to remember us, and He does. He remembers us and renews us with the new covenant sealed in Jesus’ blood. He forgives and forgets our trespasses because of Jesus’ blood, and we receive new life as we gather around the table to receive Christ’s true body and blood to help us to remember that He forgets.

1. Jesus' new covenant is one of forgiving and forgetting. THROUGH A NEW COVENANT, JESUS INVITES US TO REMEMBER HE FORGETS.