# Let’s Remember

## Week 1 – Sunday 18 February

#### ‘God can be trusted to keep his promise’ (Hebrews 10:23b, NLT)

We begin Lent by reminding ourselves of God’s unending, unfailing faithfulness to us. We let ourselves be amazed again at how good God has been and how trustworthy God is. Only then can we begin to consider what our faithful response might look like. So let’s take this first week to remember the myriad ways God has blessed us.

## Sermon Outline

#### Psalm 106:1-48

(For a shorter reading use verses 1-13 and 39-48)

‘Then they believed his promises and sang his praise’ (v12)

(Unless otherwise stated, all Bible references are from the *New International Version*)

### Introduction:

Invite people to think about what life would be like without the ability to remember.

* Impaired short-term memory = unable to order/co-ordinate our daily lives or manage our personal affairs, etc.
* Impaired long-term memory = inability to know where we’ve come from and who has been part of our life thus far, etc.

(You may have someone who can tell what it’s like to lose memory themselves, or to watch a loved one lose their memory.)

Verse 1: ‘Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures for ever.’

This phrase is something of a refrain throughout the latter part of the Book of Psalms, and we often think of it as a future-focused word – ‘for ever’ means from now until eternity – but ‘for ever’ goes backwards too, right back to the very beginning of time and beyond.

God has been faithful to us. The only question is, do we remember that?

### Remembering stirs up thankfulness.

This is just one of many psalms of praise. As people sang or recited the words, they would have been reminded of God’s goodness, and the natural response would have been gratitude and praise.

#### Verse 48: ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the Lord.’

Apparently we remember best when we speak things out loud, so it’s a good idea to keep telling our stories of God’s faithfulness. When we do that, it stirs up thankfulness in us and in those who hear us.

### Remembering helps us move forward.

Remembering means remembering the bad bits as well as the good.

Verse 7: ‘When our ancestors were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember your many kindnesses …’

When God’s people stop remembering, things tend to go wrong.

The whole psalm captures the image of God’s people going round in circles: they get into trouble, God saves them; they rejoice, then they forget what God did and get into trouble again. Every time they go round the circle, they have the same fears and the same guilt.

If they’d remembered and obeyed, they could have crossed the wilderness in a few weeks, rather than 40 years, and they could have saved themselves an awful lot of fear and guilt.

Are there repeating patterns which we fall into? An honest remembering can help us move forward.

The reflection/action cycle:

* Experience: we remember an experience we’ve had.
* Reflection: we think about what we might learn from that experience.
* Action: we do things differently in future, as a result of what we’ve learnt.

(This cycle could be used as a reflective prayer activity at some point during worship.)

### Remembering helps us trust God

Verses 12-13: ‘Then they believed his promises and sang his praise. But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his plan to unfold.’

When we remember our own story, we’re reminded of the faithfulness of God. God has made promises to us and has kept those promises; God has done countless good things; God has saved us and helped us on numerous occasions.

It’s easier to trust God for the future when we remind ourselves of God’s goodness in the past. If we forget, then we forget that God has a plan and that God will bring all things to fulfilment.

### Conclusion:

Over the coming weeks we will be thinking about building habits of faithfulness into our lives, and those habits will require some energy and positivity. Remembering acts like a rechargeable battery, charging us up with gratitude for what God has done and hope for what God will do. Whenever you feel lacking in energy, stop and remember.

## Prayer and Worship Ideas

### Testimony Time

Make time in the meeting to hear testimonies – stories of God’s faithfulness.

### Make a Timeline

The Israelites celebrated God’s faithfulness by telling their own story to one another, over and over again. What about telling the story of your corps by setting up a timeline?

* Clear a space either across the front of the hall or around the edge.
* Mark the beginning (the date the corps opened) at one end of the space, and the current date at the other end.
* Identify significant events in the life of the corps or the local community and represent them with objects or printed signs placed along the line.
* Having explained the timeline, spend time in prayer, thanking God for the story so far, and looking forward to what comes next.
* You could also identify a space beyond the ‘now’ point and invite people to write prayers or dreams for the future to place there.

### Write a Corps Psalm

Invite everyone in the congregation to think of something good that has happened in the corps or local community. Then ask them to write one sentence, structured as: ‘We thank you, Lord, for …’

Gather them in and arrange them into a psalm of thanks to God which tells something of your corporate story. You could either ask someone to do this during the meeting, for reading at the end, or during the week, for reading at the following week’s meeting.

### Story-sharing Blog

Invite people to write down and email to you stories of God’s faithfulness in their lives, or the lives of their loved ones. With their permission, publish those stories regularly throughout Lent, either on a blog or through an email to the congregation.

### Aide-memoire

We often need physical prompts to help us remember. Invite each person, when they go home, to find an object which they can wear or carry with them through Lent, as a reminder to keep remembering the goodness of God. It might be a particular piece of jewellery, or something that fits in their pocket.

### 40 Days of Thankfulness

It’s just over 40 days till Easter, so it’s a good time for people to begin a habit of choosing one thing each day to give thanks for, and to share that thankfulness with those around them either by means of social media or just in everyday conversation.

### Supporting those with Memory Loss

The inability to remember is a real and present problem for many. Could you get in touch with someone involved in dementia support and ask them to give you some prayer requests which you could include in the prayer time in your meeting? Is there anything your corps could do to support dementia services in your area?

Older People’s Ministries provide a helpful and informative resource which helps**to inspire and equip leaders to support older people, with the focus around the topic of dementia. Find out more** [**here**](https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/discipleship/closer-look-dementia)**.**