

Ellen DeGeneres as *Finding Nemo's* Dory who keeps forgetting everything is kind of cute, ... but there's nothing funny about memory loss. There's nothing funny about any form of dementia-driven amnesia, be it Alzheimer's or any other associated diseases. 'Remembering' is an essential element of our being fully human. As we lose our memories, we lose so much.

Scripture tells us some 1200 times to '*remember*', and '*not to forget*' some 300 times. In scripture it's usually to do with some aspect of remembering God's faithfulness – we are being urged never to forget our experience of God acting in our lives with kindness, goodness, justice as a way of encouraging us to embrace the hope of that happening now and in the future.

For us today, on this 'Remembrance Sunday', we remember to honour the best of ourselves – thinking particularly of those who have paid enormous sacrifices during wartime, the very many who have died, or worse. We are choosing to acknowledge the courage and bravery of so many whom we understand 'do not grow old as we who are left grow old'. *We them remember to honour them...*

But we also remember so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past, so we can learn from the worst of ourselves, learn our lessons, notice the disastrous outcomes which are always the result of the worst of ourselves acting out. *One definition of madness, they say, is to keep repeating the same actions but to expect a different outcome.* It seems to be that we're not so good at that. It seems we don't learn so easily. As we see humanity's inhumanity repeating itself in one horrendous warring encounter after another, it seems that learning from the past is a very difficult lesson for us to embrace.

But scripture describes a third reason for remembering. When Jesus told his disciples, and through them, us, at the Last Supper to '*do this in remembrance of me*' - the words we find carved into almost every communion table - it may have been an instruction both to honor his memory and to learn from his teachings, but if that is all our faith is, it's not enough.

The word scripture uses here for 'remembrance' is *αναμνησιν*, which means, literally, to 'up-remind' or to 'call-back-to-reality'. It's a call for us to live a life that is kind of about resurrecting a past event! This is about us remembering something that happened *then* to make present once again *now*. It's telling us to relive now all the fullest effects of an event from the past. That's a call for us to be developing an attitude of constant re-appreciation, of re-appropriation, a posture of readiness, a posture of *αναμνησιν*.

Matthew 25:1-13 is a parable, we get that. Jesus is sharing a story, a simile really, to describe a vital element of what life as a Christ-follower is intended to be, the life that we are intended to be living, what he called life within the kingdom of heaven.

But surely this has much less to do about how some are included while others are excluded, and much more to do with the life orientation that leads us to the including or excluding of ourselves. It's the call for us to be living our lives in a posture of 'ever-readiness' because Christ as the groom is not only *ever-coming*, but even actually already *ever-here*. Christ's call for

remembrance is a call for us to be open/ aware/ awake to that reality! Because if we are not, we miss it! And we DO miss out! Elsewhereⁱ Jesus explicitly demands that his disciples not fall asleep in their awareness of holy presence – even as he did in the Garden of Gethsemaneⁱⁱ when he asked them to remain conscious while he prayed!

‘Eschatology’ is the study in Christian theology of ‘end times’ when it’s understood that history as we know it will end and Jesus will return to take the faithful home to heaven. What most thoughtful scholars now teach is a form of what is called a *realized eschatology*. This means we believe that whatever may happen at the end of time, *if there is ever to be such a thing*, we believe is happening now. Already. Realized.

It’s for us to realize it as we are given to open the eyes of our minds and hearts to an awareness of it. And then to live lives as a function of that awareness!

Our most faithful ‘Remembrance Act’ is not confined to just one day that we choose to celebrate in the here and now but is a constant remembrance of Christ’s actions in our lives. It is for us now and, like those well-prepared maidens, regardless of the challenges of our life circumstances, today and every single day of our lives is when we would join them in that love fest banquet.

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ⁱ Mark 13:33-35

ⁱⁱ Mark 14:37