



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

Memories

By Pastor Brian De Jong

When I concentrate, and there are no distractions, I can almost still hear his voice as he used to greet me on the telephone. “Bri, this is Dad...” That was how those talks usually began. In the months since his passing, those thoughts come to mind less often. Yet the memory of the sound of his voice is still vivid.

When we were helping my mom clear out some of dad’s things from their room, I ran across an 8mm movie roll marked “Wilma Wedding.” I was curious, so I sent it off to get it digitized. A movie that is 64 years old is not in great condition, and the person who shot the movie didn’t have very good lighting, yet there they were – the fresh-faced newlyweds. So young, so beautiful, so handsome – quite the couple. There were my uncles, looking like recent college graduates, mugging for the camera. There were my grandfathers, toasting the couple with cups of punch. Everyone in our family loved seeing the digitized video, and more than a few tears were shed.

As I’ve thought about these things, it has occurred to me that God has given us a tremendous faculty in our memory. We have the ability to think back to days gone by, to recall people and events and even conversations and feelings.

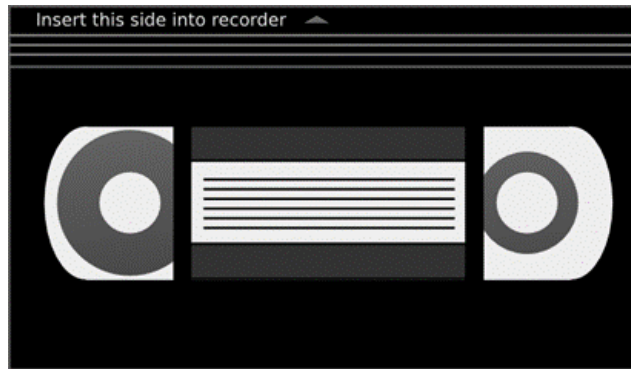
The capacity to remember doesn’t come from nowhere. God himself remembers things. He often tells us that He remembered His covenant. In the days of Noah, after the flood, God put His bow in the cloud as a mnemonic device. In

Genesis 9:16 God says, “When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”

God also chooses not to remember certain things. Because of the cross, God says, “For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more.” He will not keep rehearsing all of our failures, all of our sins, because Jesus has paid the full price for our redemption.

Though most theologians might be reluctant to say as much, our capacity for remembering may be one small aspect of the image of God in man. Just as He remembers, so we too remember. Our memories reflect His memory.

When it comes to our memories, we ought to point them in specific directions. One of my favorite passages is Hebrews 13:7-8 *Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* As we call to mind those leaders who spoke God’s word to us, and as we think about their conduct and the results of their lives, we see a faith worthy of imitation. And the person who should chiefly be in our memories is the unchanging Lord Jesus Christ.



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Mnemonics...

- **5/6 Worldview Movie Night**
- **5/8 Pulpit Swap with Rev. Paul Freswick**
- **5/10 Session Meeting**
- **5/15 Joseph Wan preaching evening**



www.merf.org

MERF News

Middle East Reformed Fellowship—“Declaring the Whole Counsel of God”

April 2022



Shining the Light in Farsi

Even before the rise of the Persian empire, Isaiah 44 & 45 prophesied the name of its great leader. That king returned the Israelites from exile in 538 BC, to rebuild Jerusalem, anticipating the coming of God's promised Messiah to bless all peoples. His dynasty extended Persian rule over a vast empire that then included almost half the world's population.

Several centuries after Christ's coming, Islam swept most of these areas. The Persian or Farsi language, however, is still spoken in Iran, areas of

Afghanistan, Iraq & the Persian/Arabian Gulf states and Tajikistan. Yet, travel and turmoil of our age, has carried Farsi-speakers to every corner of the globe. Most are Muslims, yet all celebrate the traditional pre-Islamic Persian New Year 'Norooz' on the first day of Spring.

Like the Arabic online ministry, MERF's Farsi gospel ministry shares God's Word in both indirect and direct formats. It uses online radio websites as well as multiple social media platforms. The internet serves the spread of the



“Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.” - Psalm 74:12

good news. The message now reaches Farsi-speakers far and wide 24 hours a day. There are many encouraging responses.

Shadkami.org is the indirect outreach format. ‘Shadkami’ in Farsi means *Rejoice*. This online radio takes a magazine format. Its programs tactfully introduce Farsi-speakers to the life and teachings of Christ. It uses appealing audio, visual and print presentations suited to different ages and interests. Sometimes this includes poetry or prose, drama, topical discussions, songs or videos of nature along with Bible quotations.

All presentations gently lead to the core of the scriptural message. It

points to the hopelessness of sinners, on the one hand, and to God's gracious hope in Christ, on the other. Every month over 200 thousand view Shadkami YouTube channel videos. Tens of thousands visit the website monthly.

Roshdino.org is the direct outreach online format. It is meant for those already seriously interested in Bible knowledge, many of whom have already made a profession of faith. ‘Roshdino’ literally means *New Growth*. Every book of the Bible, other Farsi Christian literature and audiovisual resources are available to be read or downloaded from the site. Thousands visit the website monthly. Many regularly download materials. Every



Radio ROSHDINO - Persian New Year greetings



"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." - Acts 4:12

month over 80 thousand view Roshdino YouTube channel videos. Some visitors become regular subscribers. Others make contact with questions and comments. These are carefully followed up. Some of the most interested contacts meet online with the Farsi team leader regularly for Bible study and prayer. This is very valuable because many Farsi-speaking people live in places where there are no churches or it is unsafe for them to attend a church.

M from Iran in Turkey asks for prayer after the rejection of his asylum case.

S from Iran says, "... Your programs of Radio Shadkami are really the cause of my joy and comfort!"

MERF's Farsi Team

The Farsi team is made up of dedicated Farsi native speakers eager to use their gifts to share Christ's gospel which has liberated them from the darkness of Islam. Although team members live in different

places, they coordinate their work together over the internet. Their own spiritual journeys, from darkness to following "the Light of the World," enable them to understand and identify with the thoughts and struggles of their fellow Iranian listeners.

Some believers are having to flee their homeland. Praise God that after years of uncertainty, waiting and recent endangerment, the Lord has answered prayers for resettlement of a MERF Farsi team member refugee family at the end of this month with church sponsorship in a safe country. Pray for their adjustment and for others like them.

Iranian believers greatly rejoice in their Savior. Some do so in the midst of loneliness and suffering. Online ministry provides them with comfort and at times enables them to link together for fellowship. For example, recently a very

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live"
 — John 11:25

distressed Iranian sister in Christ connected with the team. She spoke of her painful circumstances. Her husband suddenly passed away. Even though he had confessed faith in Christ and received Christian baptism, his burial in Iran had to be according to Islamic rites. Praise God for the comfort she received that he belongs to Christ, the "Resurrection and Life," and that no matter what happens to the body, every soul who clings to Christ is safe for eternity. Halleluiah!



YouTube discussion on biblical fasting

PATIENCE is better than wisdom: an ounce of patience is worth a pound of brains. All men praise patience, but few enough can practice it. It is a medicine which is good for all diseases: therefore, every old woman recommends it, but it is not every garden that grows the herbs to make it with. When one's flesh and bones are full of aches and pains, it is as natural for us to murmur as for a horse to shake his head when the flies tease him, or a wheel to rattle when a spoke is loose. But nature should not be the rule with Christians, or what is their religion worth? If a soldier fights no better than a plowboy, off with his red coat. We expect more fruit from an apple tree than from a thorn, and we have a right to do so. The disciples of a patient Savior should be patient themselves. Grin and bear it is the old-fashioned advice, but sing and bear it is a great deal better. After all, we get very few cuts of the whip, considering what bad cattle we are; and when we do smart a little, it is soon over. Pain past is pleasure, and experience comes by it. We ought not to be afraid of going down into Egypt when we know we shall come out of it with jewels of silver and gold.

Impatient people water their miseries and plow up their comforts; sorrows are visitors that come without invitation, but complaining minds send a wagon to bring their troubles home in. Many people are born crying, live complaining, and die disappointed; they chew the bitter pill which they would not even know to be bitter if they had the sense to swallow it whole in a cup of patience and water. They think every other man's burden to be light and their own feathers to be heavy as lead. They are hardly done by in their own opinion: no one's toes are so often trodden on by the black ox as theirs, the snow falls thickest round their door, and the hail rattles hardest on their windows. Yet, if the truth were known, it is their fancy rather than their fate which makes things go so hard with them. A litany would be well off if they could but think so. A little sprig of the herb called content, if put into the poorest soup will make it taste as rich as the Lord Mayor's turtle. John Ploughman grows the plant in his garden, but the late hard winter nipped it terribly, so that he cannot afford to give his neighbors a slip of it; they had better follow Matthew 25:9, and go to those who sell and buy for themselves. Grace is a good soil to grow it in, but it wants watering from the fountain of mercy. To be poor is not always pleasant, but worse things than that happen at sea. Small shoes are apt to pinch, but not if you have a small foot; if we have little means it will be well to have little desires. Poverty is no shame, but being discontented with it is. In some things, the poor are better off than the rich; for if a poor man has to seek meat for his stomach, he is more likely to get what he is after than the rich man who seeks a stomach for his meat. A poor man's table is soon spread, and his labor spares his buying sauce. The best doctors are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet, and Dr. Merryman, and many a godly plowman has all these gentlemen to wait upon him. Plenty makes dainty, but hunger finds no fault with the cook. Hard work brings health, and an ounce of health is worth a sack of diamonds. It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness. There is more sweet in a spoonful of sugar than in a cask of vinegar. It is not the quantity of our goods, but the blessing of God on what we have that makes us truly rich. The parings of a pippin are better than a whole crab; a dinner of herbs with peace is better than a stalled ox and contention therewith. Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. A little wood will heat my little oven; why, then, should I murmur because all the woods are not mine?

When troubles come, it is of no use to fly in the face of God by hard thoughts of providence; that is kicking against the pricks and hurting your feet. The trees bow in the wind, and so must we. Every time the sheep bleats it loses a mouthful, and every time we complain we miss a blessing. Grumbling is a bad trade, and yields no profit, but patience has a golden hand. our evils will soon be over. After rain comes clear shining; black crows have wings; every winter turns to spring; every night breaks into morning.

Blow the wind never so fast,
It will lower at last.

If one door should be shut, God will open another; if the peas do not yield well, the beans may; if one hen leaves her eggs, another will bring out all her brood. There's a bright side to all things, and a good God everywhere. Some where or other in the worst flood of trouble there always is a dry spot for contentment to get its foot on; if there were not, it would learn to swim.

Friends, let us take to patience and water gruel, as the old folks used to tell us, rather than catch the miserables and give others the disease by wickedly finding fault with God. The best remedy for affliction is submitting to providence. What can't be cured must be endured. If we cannot get bacon, let us bless God that there are still some cabbages in the garden. "Must" is a hard nut to crack, but it has a sweet kernel. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Whatever falls from the skies is, sooner or later, good for the land: whatever comes to us from God is worth having, even though it be a rod. We cannot by nature like trouble any more than a mouse can fall in love with a cat, and yet Paul by grace came to glory in tribulations also. Losses and crosses are heavy to bear, but when our hearts are right with God, it is wonderful how easy the yoke becomes. We must go to glory by the way of Weeping Cross; and as we were never promised that we should ride to heaven in a feather bed, we must not be disappointed when we see the road to be rough, as our fathers found it before us. All's well that ends well; and, therefore, let us plow the heaviest soil with our eye on the sheaves of harvest, and learn to sing at our labor while others murmur.

Sad But True

submitted by Ellen McNeese

Unfortunately many homes, yes even so-called Christian homes, are like the one in which the little girl pointed to the Bible on the mantle that was never opened, and said to her mother, "Whose book is that?"

Her mother, quite startled by her

daughter's question replied, "Why honey, don't you know? That is God's book!"

The child demonstrating that she had a very practical mind, turned to her mother and said, "Don't you think that we had better give it back to him? No one around here ever reads it."

"If you wish to know God, you must know his Word. If you wish to perceive his power, you must see how he works by his Word. If you wish to know his purpose before it comes to pass, you can only discover it by his Word."

C.H. Spurgeon



MAY BIRTHDAYS

Gracie Froh	6 th	Linda Damkot	17 th
Jean Wilke	6 th	Stuart Ver Velde	17 th
Steve Boss	9 th	Scott Onnink	20 th
Roman Bingham	15 th	Deborah Arndt	27 th
Ivan De Master	16 th		



May Anniversaries

Rodney & Sanna Nyhof
May 15th 1 Years

Warren & Mary Gillmer
May 31st



KIDS KORNER

(Also for Kids of any age)

TREASURE HUNT

Come dig for treasure with me. Where is this found in the Bible?

“Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Sibling Scramble

Use lines to connect the names of brothers and sisters from Bible stories.

Benjamin	Shem	Ishmael	Cain	Leah	Martha	Aaron
Rachel	Moses	Jacob	Ham	Abel	James	Mary
Miriam	Isaac	John	Joseph	Lazarus	Japheth	Esau

Give Thanks to your Mother this Mother's Day FILL IN THE BLANKS

Proverbs 31: 30-31

30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is _____. But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be _____.

31 Give her the product of her _____. And let her works praise her in the gates.

Worldview Movie Night

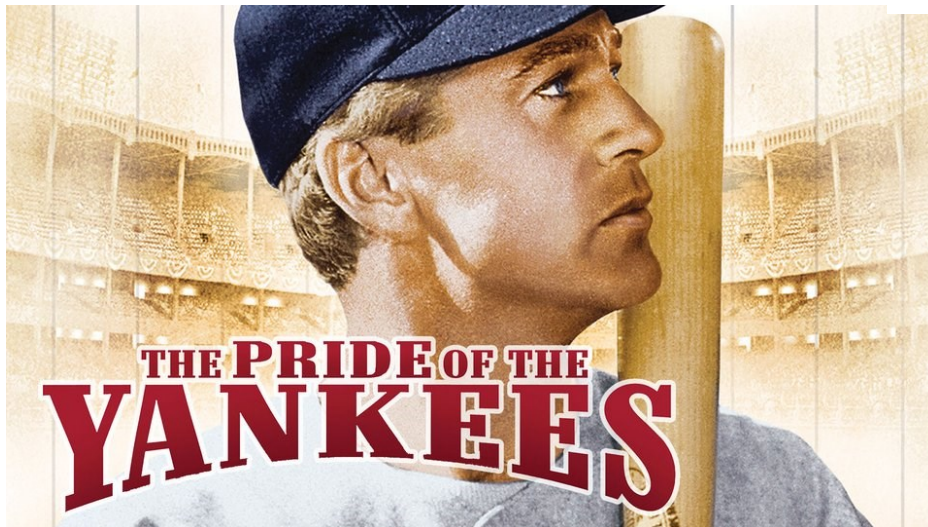
Friday, May 6

7:00 pm

Movie: The Pride of the Yankees

Popcorn & Drinks provided

Other refreshments welcome



Treasurer's Update as of 3/31/2022

General Fund Balance at the start of 2022: \$19,548.74

General Fund balance as of 3/31/2022: \$8,500.63

Decrease in General Fund Balance: \$11,048.11

Note that several of our larger one-time expenses per year are paid at the start of the year. These annual expenses totaled \$8,681.00.

Missions and Benevolences giving is under the budgeted by \$20.25 for the year.

The current balance in the Capital Fund is \$34,404.56

The current balance in the Malawi Fund is \$1,973.00



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

May 2022



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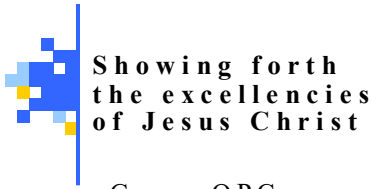
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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6 Spring WV Movie Night	7
8 Pulpit Swap in the evening— Rev. Paul Freswick	9	10 Session Meeting	11	12	13	14
15 Joseph Wan preaching in evening	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Lord's Supper	30	31				

SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES 2022

January 9, 2022	Evening Fellowship Meal	Ladies Group 4
February 11, 2022	Pizza / Game Night	Ladies Group 1
April 10, 2022	Fellowship Lunch	Ladies Group 2
May 6, 2022	Worldview Movie Night	Pastor Brian
May 15, 2022	Evening Fellowship Meal	Ladies Group 3
June 3-5, 2022	Hospitality Weekend	Pastor Brian
June 24, 2022	Bonfire	Rodney & Sanna
June 30, 2022	Mini Golf	Wendy
July 10, 2022	Men Serve Fellowship Lunch	Pastor Brian & Crew
July 14, 2022	Angela Bridal Shower	Ladies Group 4
July 29, 2022	Bonfire	
August 4, 2022	Church Picnic	Ladies Group 1
August 15, 2022	Bay Beach	Bob & Debbie
August 26, 2022	Bonfire	
September 8-10, 2022	Church Campout / pitch in supper	Pastor Brian
October 1, 2022	Presbyterial	Lady Groups 2 & 3
October 7, 2022	Worldview Movie Night	Pastor Brian
October 29, 2022	Reformation Conference – Snack	Ladies Group 1
October 30, 2022	Reformation Conference Lunch	Ladies Group 4
November 12, 2022	Harvest Home	Ladies Group 3
December 4, 2022	Evening Fellowship Meal	Ladies Group 2
December 29 or 30, 2022	Bowling / Pizza / Game night	Pastor Brian
February 17, 2023	Tacos and Talent	Ladies Group & Jeff Froh 1
March 25, 2023	Pacific Garden Mission	Roger & Deb
April 28, 2023	50 th Anniversary Banquet	Committee
April 30, 2023	50 th Anniversary Fellowship Lunch	Ladies Group 2

Please note there are two changes from the copy that was put in the mailboxes. The date for the church 50th Anniversary (changed from January to April, 2023) and the addition of Presbyterial on October 1, 2022.



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Grace OPC

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Spurgeon Corner

“Marvelous lovingkindness.”

Psalm 17:7

When we give our hearts with our alms, we give well, but we must often plead to a failure in this respect. Not so our Master and our Lord. His favours are always performed with the love of his heart. He does not send to us the cold meat and the broken pieces from the table of his luxury, but he dips our morsel in his own dish, and seasons our provisions with the spices of his fragrant affections. When he puts the golden tokens of his grace into our palms, he accompanies the gift with such a warm pressure of our hand, that the manner of his giving is as precious as the boon itself. He will come into our houses upon his errands of kindness, and he will not act as some austere visitors do in the poor man's cottage, but he sits by our side, not despising our poverty, nor blaming our weakness. Beloved, with what smiles does he speak! What golden sentences drop from his gracious lips! What embraces of affection does he bestow upon us! If he had but given us farthings, the way of his giving would have gilded them; but as it is, the costly alms are set in a golden basket by his pleasant carriage. It is impossible to doubt the sincerity of his charity, for there is a bleeding heart stamped upon the face of all his benefactions. He giveth liberally and upbraideth not. Not one hint that we are burdensome to him; not one cold look for his poor pensioners; but he rejoices in his mercy, and presses us to his bosom while he is pouring out his life for us. There is a fragrance in his spikenard which nothing but his heart could produce; there is a sweetness in his honey-comb which could not be in it unless the very essence of his soul's affection had been mingled with it. Oh! the rare communion which such singular heartiness effecteth! May we continually taste and know the blessedness of it!

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SERMONAUDIO.COM/

GRACESHEBOYGAN

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM



Morning, May 20th, C. H. Spurgeon

Memory is also vital to our enjoyment of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Luke records the institution of this sacrament on the night when Jesus was betrayed. He says, "*And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'*"

Let us thank God for the ability to remember and recollect the past. Let us use our memories for good and Godly purposes, bringing to mind again and again all that the Lord has done for us. And in this remembering, may our faith be spurred on to maturity in Christ!