

Title: Do not forget what God has done

- **Personal Journey:** The speaker shares their journey to ordination, highlighting experiences in different church traditions and the challenge of feeling unwelcome in a high-church setting.
- **Deuteronomy 4 Context:** The Israelites, about to enter the Promised Land, are reminded by Moses to remember God's laws and the history of their deliverance from Egypt. The laws were given to guide them as free people and to showcase God's wisdom to surrounding nations.
- **Purpose of God's Law:** The laws were meant to help the Israelites live counter culturally, demonstrating compassion, justice, and the goodness of God, ultimately fulfilling God's promise to bless all nations through them.
- **Mark 7 Context:** Jesus challenges the religious leaders who prioritise rituals like handwashing over the true purpose of the law. He emphasises the importance of the heart in religious practice, warning against the danger of focusing on outward rituals while neglecting inner spiritual health.
- **The Heart's Role:** In biblical times, the heart was seen as the centre of a person's will and decision-making. Jesus urges examination of our hearts, warning against allowing them to become hardened, leading to a lack of compassion and the dehumanisation of others.
- **Call to Authenticity:** The sermon calls for radical honesty and vulnerability before God, acknowledging our need for forgiveness and grace. Authentic Christian living involves being aware of our inner thoughts and motivations, and allowing God to transform our hearts.
- **Mission of the Church:** The church's primary mission is to reach those outside its doors. By waking up to this mission and living authentically, the church can powerfully impact the world, as illustrated by the quote from St. Augustine about the church being a "sleeping giant."
- **Invitation to Reflect:** The sermon concludes with a call to remember God's faithfulness, to examine our hearts, and to seek God's guidance in living out our faith in a way that truly reflects His love and wisdom to others.

Questions:

1. **Reflecting on Tradition vs. Spirit:** How do we distinguish between the necessary observance of religious traditions and the spirit of the law that Jesus emphasises? In what ways might we be missing the heart of worship in our own practices?
2. **Remembering God's Faithfulness:** The Israelites were urged to remember God's deliverance and to pass on these stories to the next generation. How can we ensure that we, too, remember and share God's work in our lives with others, especially in a modern context?
3. **Examination of the Heart:** Jesus speaks about the importance of the human heart in religious faith. How do we regularly examine our hearts to ensure that they are aligned with God's will rather than filled with "evil intentions"?
4. **Addressing Hardness of Heart:** How do we recognize and address areas in our lives where our hearts may have become hardened, particularly in our attitudes towards others who are different from us or who we disagree with?
5. **Authenticity in Faith:** The sermon suggests that Jesus calls us to live authentic lives, acknowledging our need for forgiveness and grace. What does living an authentic Christian life look like in practical terms, and how can we cultivate this authenticity?
6. **The Church's Mission:** St. Augustine's said "the church is a sleeping giant." How can we, as individuals and as a church community, wake up to our mission to show God's wisdom and love to others, especially those outside our doors? What practical steps might we take to embody this calling?