

Amnesia: Weightless Glory

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[0:00] Well, we are talking about the fear of the Lord in this Sunday school class. And today's lesson is called Amnesia.

! And amnesia is basically when we forget something. And like I said last week, remembering and forgetting in the Bible are not so much cognitive things.

They're not so much, oh, I forgot where my keys are, I forgot where I put my phone. They're proactive. They're practical remembering, practical forgetting.

It's, I might know them, but I don't act upon them. They don't have any bearing in my life. And so today what we're looking at is what does it look like in our lives?

How does forgetting God's glory, forgetting God's awesomeness, how does that end up looking in our lives? We sort of looked at this last week, but this week we want to go even further.

[1:05] So forgetfulness. Or another way of thinking about it is being blind. Where we are blind to the glory of God that is all around us. We are blind to the glory of God that's revealed in the scriptures.

Not that we don't know it cognitively, but it doesn't weigh anything. It doesn't impress upon us anymore. So this morning I want to just start with the Creation Museum.

I know a lot of you have been there to the Creation Museum. And I think my family must have set the record for the quickest tour of the museum. We did everything, including riding the camels, in about two hours.

We bought the two-day tickets. Because all of you said it was so great. And of course two days are the same as one day.

So we might as well get two days. It's going to be that good. And I think it probably would have been. From what I saw of it, it was pretty cool.

[2:10] The problem is my... I'm going to blame my family here because it's not my fault. My wife isn't big on museum exhibits.

That's just not her cup of tea. My children aren't going to stand and read long descriptions of what I'm supposed to be looking at here.

And Cademan was four at the time. And so for Cademan, it was all about getting to the next room. The next room. And so there we went, zipping from room to room.

And we passed people like they were standing still. And they were standing still because they were reading. And we were moving on through. And so big dinosaur, check.

Little dinosaurs, check. Adam and Eve, check. Check. Noah and his ark in the flood, check. The bookstore, check. Five dollars a ride for a camel, check.

[3:09] Check. Deciding I'm never spending five dollars on a camel ride again. Check. And we saw everything. And we saw nothing.

And sadly, that's how many of us live our lives. We go through the museum of God's glory.

And we're in such a hurry that we don't see it. We don't. It doesn't impress us. We see it. But we don't see it. God has designed this world as a glory scope.

And what I just mean by that is, that's what Paul Tripp uses, the glory scope. A telescope points out the stars and planets. Kevin, when you look at the stars in your telescope, when you look at the moon and the planets, how do you feel?

Amazed. Amazed. Amazed. Amazed. Amazed. Amazed. How small we are compared to that.

Yeah. That's how we were meant to look at this whole creation.

[4:19] Everything around us. And the creation points to the glory of God. And so when we look at a telescope, we feel wonder and we feel awe.

And God has designed the whole of creation to put that feeling in us of wonder and awe. So it's not just the stars and the sky and the moon and Jupiter and Saturn and all the rest.

It's every beautiful color. The sparkling dew on the grass. Go for a walk in the morning and you see that sparkling dew everywhere. The smell of the woods.

The taste of chocolate chip cookies. The cold bite of winter air. The warm sunshine on your face.

I'm building a shed and so there's a lot of fresh sawn wood smell.

And it's all this huge, magnificent glory scope that's pointing out God's glory to us. And none of it just exists for its own reason.

[5 : 25] None of it exists for itself. Everything exists for this great purpose of showing the beauty and the glory and the wonder and the goodness of God.

I just read Psalm 97 this morning. And he said, the heavens declare your righteousness. And I thought that was interesting. In the heavens we see the righteousness of God.

The goodness of God. And there's a lot of passages that talk about that. And I just want to read a few of them at the beginning. Would you turn in your Bibles to Psalm 19?

Psalm 19. This is a very well-known passage. The heavens. This is verse 1.

Psalm 19 verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Day after day they pour forth speech.

[6 : 27] Night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth.

Their words to the ends of the world. And then it goes on to talk about the sun. So the whole earth is full of God's glory.

Isaiah 6 verse 3. You don't have to turn there. You remember Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up. And the seraphim are singing or chanting or yelling back and forth to each other.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. It's full of his glory.

So a swimming pool is full of water. The whole earth is full of God's glory. There's no place where his glory is not shining.

[7 : 30] There's no place where it's not saying something to us. We're not seeing something of his wonder and his awesomeness. So we're swimming in an ocean. We're breathing the air of God's glory.

But we don't see it. We don't remember it. Maybe it impresses us one time. But the impression is soon gone.

And so we have spiritual blindness. We have spiritual amnesia. So the whole world is this mnemonic device. It's a memory device to remind us, to be jogging us, to be hitting us with, oh, this is God.

This is who God is. This is how he is. And it's all reminding us that I'm not at the center. This isn't about me.

It's not about my story. There's this grander story than the little story that I'm trying to write. There's a bigger kingdom than the little kingdom that so much of my time has spent building.

[8 : 39] But so often, what are we doing? We're doing what my family did at the Creation Museum. Running through it all. Running through it all.

Room to room. Not seeing it. Not remembering it. Uninspired. Bored. Going on to the next thing.

And so, in our spiritual amnesia, in our spiritual blindness, we lose our vertical awe.

We lose our awe for God. We lose the fear of God. And so, instead of looking at the heavens and seeing his righteousness, instead of seeing his wisdom and his power, the work of his hands, we look at the sun.

We look at it and we don't see anything. We're uninspired. We look at the stars and we just see stars. We look at the sunshine and just see sunshine.

And all of that, that way of living, it has an effect on our lives. It has an effect on us. And so, what I want to do today is look at some of the symptoms of this blind amnesia.

[9 : 51] What does it look like when we live in God's world? We live with all these wonderful gifts. James pictures all these gifts coming down like a light, just filling our lives.

And we're living in all of this beauty. And what does it do when we're missing it? Well, it's a disease that looks different in different people.

It's going to manifest itself in your life differently than it's going to manifest itself in my life. It doesn't look the same in all of us. And so, this morning, I just want you to see, where is the Spirit, where is

the Word of God putting the finger on you?

And that place of conviction, let it lead you to repentance, and let that conviction turn you to Jesus. It is a painful thing to find out, oh, this is how I'm doing.

This is what my problem is. But let it drive you to Jesus. And so, this morning, I have 12 symptoms of you've lost awe. You've lost your vertical awe.

[10:57] You've lost the fear of God. Or you're forgetting how awesome God is. And so, we have 12 of them. And we're going to go through them fairly quickly.

The first is self-centeredness. Self-centeredness. Remember last week, we said that when we don't have the awe of God, what replaces it?

Awe of self. I live in awe of me. And that doesn't mean like I'm always going around saying I'm awesome. But I weigh the most in my life.

I'm the most important person in my life. And so, awe of self can look like guilt. It can also look like self-righteousness. It's just all about me and how I feel.

And what I think. And so, the first symptom is you put yourself in the center. You are the main character. The world is about you. The story is about you. Maybe you are the hero. Maybe you're the villain.

[12:03] But either way, it's mostly about you. You see it in the entitlement of the teenager. And you see it in the self-righteous response of the parent to that teenager. You owe me this.

I don't owe you anything. You see it in the demands of a young bride. You see it in the demands of a young groom. A married love turns into this tug of war.

Where we want to see who can get their way. Or maybe it's more like spy versus spy. It's not direct conflict. But it's manipulation versus manipulation.

My demands have to be met. My expectations need to be satisfied. And it can all be so subconscious. It can all be so under the surface. But it's about me.

And so, you become obsessed with your own happiness. And you will make others happy. In order for them to make you happy. And so, look at your...

[13:06] Well, you can see it in your agenda. Your to-do list. You can see it in your... This is what I did list.

So, look at your to-do list. Is it for God? Or is it for you? Is it for you? Or is it for others? What did you end up doing?

Was it for you? Or was it for God? Was it for you? Or was it for others? Self-centeredness is a symptom of someone who's living blind to the glory of God. You're just living for yourself.

You don't see any of this. You don't remember any of the glory. The second symptom is entitlement. Entitlement. And these are all connected in one way or the other.

They're all sort of layers or different strands. The second symptom is entitlement. Looking at your life... Well, looking at your life and looking at yourself and looking at God, looking at others and say, Well, I deserve this.

[14:20] This is my right. And once I think I'm entitled to something, then I'm going to think it's right for me to demand it.

So entitlement leads to demanding. And then something else happens. I start to judge God and I start to judge others based on their willingness to give me what I have demanded.

So entitlement leads to demand. Demand leads to judgment. Whether they do it or not for me. And I think so much of our anger with one another...

And you can think about this in the married context or the friends context or the context at work. So you can think of those people in your life. And so much of our anger with everyone in God, it doesn't just come out of the blue.

It doesn't even come necessarily out of our circumstances. It's not that just the circumstances made me angry. It comes from my sense of entitlement.

[15:27] And so look at your life. Where are you making demands on people? Where are you making demands on God? Or another way of looking at it is, where do you get something from God and then you don't thank Him?

Because ingratitude and entitlement are just different sides to the same coin. So right now I have some friends helping me build my shed, as I mentioned.

And I am so thankful for it. Because I don't have really much of an idea of what I'm doing. And they're helping me. And I'm not paying them. And they've let me know I'm not paying them.

No. They're doing me a favor. And I don't deserve it. And I'm very thankful. Beggars aren't choosers. And I'm certainly a beggar.

But entitlement always shows itself in ingratitude. So where is there ingratitude in your life? That's a sign that you're living an entitled life. You're forgetting who you are.

[16 : 36] Forgetting who God is. Forgetting what you've done. You're forgetting who God is and what He's done. So entitlement and gratitude.

Then the third one is discontentment. Discontentment. It's the third symptom. And again, you see the relationship between all of these.

Between entitlement and discontentment. If I feel entitled and I'm not getting something, I'm going to be discontent. And if I have ingratitude, then I'm going to have a lot of discontentment in my life. Thankful people are contented people. They're satisfied people. People who are living with a sense that I live on God's grace. I live on His grace.

I'm not entitled to anything. People who are living like that, they're content people. But people who think they're at the center, they're always, we're always going to struggle with contentment.

[17 : 45] If that's where we see ourselves. We're always going to struggle because the world just doesn't work that way. The world doesn't work with me at the center.

It's just not the way it is. God is at the center. And so, the world doesn't exist to do my bidding. So, your husband or your wife, your employees, your children, your extended family, your fellow church members, your neighbors don't exist to make you happy.

They don't exist to make you content, to give you everything that you want. And as a matter of fact, because of sin, they're going to be trying to do what you're trying to do.

They're going to try to get you to make them happy. And things don't stop and start based on our whims and our wishes. And so, every day, all the time, you're going to be running into things that frustrate you.

That deny you. That deprive you. And the result is discontentment. So, real contentment comes from living for something bigger than yourself.

[18 : 53] It's living out of your little kingdom. It's living in something bigger. Paul was a contented guy. He was a contented man.

Do you remember what he said? I have learned what? Contentment. Now, what was his level? This is such a powerful verse.

What was the level of his contentment? With what was he going to be satisfied? Whatever state I'm in. What else does he go on?

Pardon? He was in poor need. What did he say that if I have this, I'll be content? Yeah. If I have food and clothing, with that, I'll be content.

A lot of clothes? A lot of food? No. If I have clothes on my back, I'm not running around naked, and I have some food in my stomach, I'm not starving, then with that, I'll be content.

[20 : 02] Well, where did that come from? Because just like Jesus, his food and his drink wasn't food and drink.

The things that powered his life, that gave him joy, wasn't the things that he had, and it wasn't the things people were doing. He says, I'm called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. This is my passion.

This is my life. This is what God wants me to do. This is where my joy and all my gifts come together. I want to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. And when I'm doing that, I'm content. I'm living for something bigger than myself. And so, there was Paul. He was content with his lot in life. Not because he was in great circumstances. But because he wasn't stuck on himself.

He saw, he felt, he knew the glory of the gospel. He felt it in himself. He said, he loved me. And he gave himself for me. So, there was that.

[21 : 04] That was the engine of his joy in his heart. And so, the question here is, where are you dissatisfied? Are you living a discontented life?

Not just for things. Not just for money. But are you content with the place that God has called you to? The marriage.

The children. The job. Even your own personality. Your gifts. The life God has called you to.

Or are you always looking at your neighbor? Looking at your fellow brother and sister? Saying, ah, if only I had that. So, contentment.

Or discontentment. The fourth symptom is. Is relational dysfunction. Relational dysfunction. What I mean here is.

[22:09] Your relationships. Have a tendency. To be. They're perpetually hurting. They're perpetually broken. Do you have a lot.

Of relationship problems. Is there always drama? Now, why is that a symptom. Of living blind. At the glory of God.

Forgetting who God is. Well. It really. It works like this. When I'm not. Living on God. When I'm not seeing his glory. When God doesn't have my heart.

And my awe. I look. I look. For people to do. What they can't do. I'm looking for people. To be my God. And people don't ever measure up.

To that. And they can't measure up. To that. And so. I look for people to do. What they have no ability to do. And so. We want our children. To give us. Our identity. I want to be a good.

[23:06] I want to be seen. I want to be. I want to feel myself. To be a good dad. And so. My children. Better not disobey. We want our spouses.

To be our saviors. We want them to. Tell us that we're good. That we're okay. That we're secure. We want our friends. To make us feel good. We want our brothers.

And sisters. Here at the church. To make us feel important. And right. And so. People are where God should be. And when people are where God should be.

It's always going to lead to disappointment. It's always going to lead to disappointment. We expect. And we demand. And then we get hurt. And then we get disillusioned.

So. Do you have consistent. Relational problems. Relationship problems. Where. You're. It seems like. A lot of your relationships.

[24:08] Have falling outs. And you can't come together. And you're done with each other. And you're fed up. And all the rest. So. If it's always what the other people are doing.

If you seem to be in the right. A lot more than others. There's always problems. And most of the time. It's mostly their fault. Then let me say. Maybe it is you. You. I'm not speaking to anyone in particular.

Maybe it is you. You seem to be the common denominator. Your expectations. Your demands. And so. Are you trapped in that cycle of. Unrealistic expectations.

And disappointments. Well. Only when God takes the rightful place in your heart. And people take the lower place. Where they fall. Where they need to be. That's the way these relationships will work.

So. That's four. Here's number five. The fifth symptom. That I've forgotten God. That I'm running through the creation museum. And I'm not seeing his glory. As I want control.

[25:09] I want control. I want control of people. I want control of circumstances. I want control. You name it. I want control. In these relationships.

I want control. Acts 17 says that. God determines the exact locations. The exact places where we live. He decides where. Each one of us lives.

And he decides. How long our life is going to be. Now God does that for every person. And we talked about this. God's sovereignty.

It's over every situation. Every location. Every relationship. R.C. Sproul says there's not a single rogue molecule. In the whole universe.

There's not a single atom. That's out of God's control. He was ruling the world before it began. And he decided.

[26:09] And he decreed the end. From the beginning. What that means is. He was at the beginning. And he decided where this is all going to end. His kingdom rules over all.

His throne is above the earth. He sits above the circle of the earth. He's above heaven. He's above earth. He's above hell. And. Now you and I. We were meant to live in awe of that.

That God is in control. This is his world. To live in the happy reality. That God rules. That he's in charge.

And that should amaze us. And that should comfort us. And that should give us wonder and awe. But when we forget all that. What we are going to do is. We're going to want control.

We're going to take control. And so we'll. We'll want power. And we'll trust our own wisdom. Instead of his. And we won't rest. Until my will is done. And so.

[27:09] You'll try to control. What you can't control. You'll try to control things. That you can't control. And you'll get frustrated. About what's going on.

And people in this world. Will intimidate you. They'll frustrate you. You'll be fed up with them. Because you'll want to control them. But you can't. You'll want them to change. But they won't. Just because you want them to. And that's not. Really so much a control problem. That's an awe problem. You're just blind to.

The fact that God is in charge. And that he is in control. Well let me give you three more quickly. Number six. The sixth symptom of living not in the awe of God.

Is fear. It's fear. Either you will live in reverential fear. An awe fear. Or you will live in unbelieving fear. You. Everyone's going to live in some kind of fear. And so are you afraid of people.

[28:12] Afraid of the future. Afraid of circumstances. Is fear a constant strain. In your life. Well Daniel was courageous.

Because he feared God. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were courageous. Because they feared God. We shake. We are afraid because our God isn't big enough.

Ed Welch wrote a book called. When people are big and God is small. And it's about the fear of man issue. In his ultimate answer. He gave a couple of basic solutions.

But his real. His final ultimate answer for the fear of man. Was the fear of God. When you're afraid of God. And you're living in awe of him. That puts man in his place.

That puts circumstances. In the future. In the past. In the present. In other people. It puts everything in its place. So. Are you living a life of fear?

[29:09] That's a small God. Big me. Number seven. Anger. Anger. A lot of people are angry. And a lot of people are angry with God.

Christians can even become angry with God. And they get angry at the world. And they get angry at God. They get angry at their mom and dad. And then they get angry at God.

For giving them their mom and dad. They get angry at their circumstances. And then they get angry at God. For putting those circumstances in their life. And here's the reality.

Most of the time. Most people. Are angry at God. Just because he is being God. Let me repeat that. Most people who are angry at God.

Are angry with him. For being God. They are angry. Because he failed to do. What he promised. They are angry. Because he didn't give them.

[30:07] What they wanted. What they demanded. What they had hoped. So what is that? That's a big self. And a little God. God isn't our waiter.

Not our divine concierge. Waiting for us. To tell us. What we. What we. Tell him what we want. His job isn't. To make every day.

A good day for us. He doesn't deliver the good life. On a platter. And. He's God. And we're not. And that makes a lot of people angry. Big self. Little God. Number eight is envy. Envy. You're probably starting to see these connections. Envy. When you're in awe of God.

You appreciate. His providence. You appreciate his gifts. You appreciate his grace to you. You appreciate his justice. And his mercy. But when it's all about me. I become the scorekeeper. Did you hear where they went on vacation?

[31:07] I've worked for every bit I've had. But it's still less than. What she has. And when I see other people enjoying God's gifts. I can't be happy for them.

I'm envious of them. And when I see. Them using their gifts. All of a sudden. I'm not happy with God's gifts to me. That's envy. Again.

Small God. Big. Big me. Number. We're going to have to go through these next four quickly.

Number nine. Drivenness. Drivenness. Is it all up to you? Is the world on your shoulders?

Can you enjoy Sundays? Or when you stop working. When you stop moving. Is there a part of you. That is still churning on the inside.

[32:05] Saying this isn't good. This isn't right. I better get. I better shorten this up. I don't need this much rest. Is your schedule too full? Are you working too much?

Or too hard? Now we did a whole. Sunday school series on work. And work is a good thing. But that's not what I'm talking about here. I'm talking about.

Where you're. You've gone too far. You've forgotten God's goodness. You've forgotten his love. You're afraid. And so you work. That's.

It's not the fear of God. Because God promises to provide. And God promises. To give his. The ones he loves rest. And so if it's always go, go, go. Working too hard. Not resting. Again. That's me trying to be God. Every. I mean. That's. Probably one.

[33:03] Theological reason. Why. We need sleep. Because for eight hours. Every day. We're reminded. That the world runs without us. That I'm not God. That I'm just going to be unconscious.

Unprotected. Unable to do anything. And yet. My God is so big. He. He takes care of things. Number ten. Is exhaustion. If you're always driven.

You're always envious. You're angry. You're afraid. If you have perpetual relationship problems. If you're always trying to control things you can't control. Then how are you going to feel?

Tired. Tired. Exhausted. Worn out. Like you're on a never ending treadmill. That's an awe problem. That's a fear of the Lord problem.

And the cure is to recapture your awe of God. To have a big God. And a little you. And to see how full of love God is. And to see how full of wisdom he is.

[34:02] And so when you can. When you see his wisdom. And his love. And his glory. That you trust him. That's where rest comes from. Rest for our souls.

Rest for our bodies even. Rest comes when we see how big and strong and loving God is. Is he big enough to catch us? Is he big enough to control everything? Is he big enough to take care of it? He gives his loved one sleep. Number 11. Doubt. The more you focus on yourself. And your dreams. And your desires.

The more you're going to define. God's love. By his willingness. To give you. What you want. Let me say that all over again.

The more you focus on yourself. And your dreams. And your desires. And what you want. The more you're going to define. God's love. Not by the cross. Not by his word.

[35:00] Not by his promises. But by his willingness. To give you what you want. And if he gives it to you. He loves you. And if he doesn't give it to you.

Must mean he doesn't love you. And what's going to happen then. Is you're going to start doubting God. You're going to start doubting his love. His wisdom.

His goodness. God's going to give you what he promised to give you. He's going to give you what you need.

He's going to give you what's good for you. But. If all you're focused on.

Is your dreams. And your desires. And your. What you want. All of that. Is not going to register. On your radar of love. He'll be doing these things for you. And you won't see it as love.

[35:57] Because you've defined love. By what you want. And then you'll start doubting God altogether. Again. This goes back to the angry thing.

People are angry with God. Not because he doesn't give them. What he has promised to give them. But. They're angry with him. Because. They're not giving him.

He's not giving them what they want. Number 12. Where does all this end? It ends with spiritual coldness. Dead worship.

A cold heart. The Bible is useless. Doesn't speak to you. Church is a chore. God's people are a pain. God's day is a waste.

God's grace is meaningless. Jesus Christ is far away. That's where self. This focus on self takes you. But it takes you to this cold dead heart. Because.

[36:59] Now you're doubting God's love. You're doubting. What you think are his promises. You're doubting. His character. The word of God isn't talking to you.

Where you want it to talk to you. And so. It all. You just. You dry up. So.

If that's where you're at. I just want you to. To leave with these words. We went through 12. Things. So.

If. The Lord has put. His finger on one or two or three. Or more than that. Then. I just want you to take these words with you. Jesus said. It's not the healthy. Who need a doctor.

But the sick. But go and learn what this means. I desire mercy. Not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous. But sinners. So.

[37:56] Are we spiritually sick? Are you spiritually sick? And I think. And I think we all have to say. To some degree or other. We are. I mean. These 12 things are pretty. Pervasive.

They start to happen. In each one of us. And at least in some way. Well. Jesus is the doctor. And I don't want to leave you here. With all these. 12 fingers pointed at you. They're pointed at you. But I want you to leave with Jesus. If you found yourself here. If you've seen yourself here. Then go to Jesus. Go to the doctor. Confess. Repent. He delights in mercy. He delights in having. In showing mercy. And so you confess it all. You unload your heart. You ask for a bigger view of him. And that's a prayer. That he's going to answer. Isn't it? He's going. If we say. God. I want to see how big. And glorious. And good. And loving. And kind you are. [38:52] I want it to be so big. That it fills my life. I want to be able to look at the creation. And see the glory of God. He's going to answer that prayer. Because that prayer. Is all about glorifying him. And he will give you that prayer. He will give you that answer. He came. He's going to answer you. Jesus didn't come. And live and die. To shame you. To turn you away. He came to redeem. To bring you healing. So if you found yourself here. Make a beeline to Jesus. Make a beeline to the doctor. We're dismissed.