



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

October 9, 2022

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

Moses: Grave and Scroll (Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 34:1-10)

Notre Dame football players touch a sign every time they leave the locker-room. The sign reads “Play Like a Champion Today.” It is a mantra that has become synonymous with the program and is meant to remind the players every time they step out on the field who they are supposed to be—Champions.

At the Apollo Theater, the heart of African American culture, there is a tree stump. It stands on the stage and is known as the Tree of Hope. Every performer touches that tree stump, including greats who were discovered at Amateur Night like Ella Fitzgerald and Lauryn Hill. Every performer knows that to touch the tree is to touch the roots of American music.

There is an ancient tradition for Jewish families to affix a scroll to the doorframe of their homes. The case is called a *mezuzah*, which means in Hebrew “doorpost.” Within the case is a piece of scroll that has been inscribed with passages of the Torah, including portions of our reading today.

“Israel, listen! Our God is the LORD! Only the LORD!” (Deuteronomy 6:4) This verse is known as the Shema, which means “listen.” It is the foundation of our faith. God is God. Nothing else. So we should love God with everything we are. The love of God is the beginning of our faith. Everything comes from this idea. This is why the next commands are comprehensive. It is a plea to remember this is the root of everything. Remember it. Teach it to your children. Repeat it as a mantra. Hang it from your doors. Ingrain it into your brain so that you never forget. God is God. Love God.

Jesus famously quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 when asked about the greatest of all the commandments. Paraphrased: “Love God with everything you are.” Your whole being should be devoted to loving God. Then Jesus added a bit from Leviticus 19:18 when he said “And love your neighbor as yourself.”

While Bible memorization isn’t what it once was, the “Greatest Commandment” is still remembered by many Christians. It is in art. It is on wall hangings, pillows, key chains, refrigerator magnets. What is on your wall? What would be in your personal mezuzah? What are the Scripture verses you hold onto and know by heart? How have they shaped you?

The purpose of the mezuzah, like the sign and the tree stump, is to remember.

Remembering is an important part of faith. Remembering—not as an act of living in the past or dwelling in toxic nostalgia—but truthful remembering of how God has guided us through uncertain times in the past can inspire us to trust God as we move into the future. Truthful remembering can help us know who and whose we are.



Top: A Notre Dame football player touches the “Play Like a Champion Today” sign. Left: An artist touches the Tree of Hope at the Apollo Theatre. Right: A mezuzah is affixed to the door frame of a Jewish home.

Moses led the people to the brink of the Promised Land. He would gaze at it, but not enter. The first generation of fugitive slaves would not enter. Yet those who would take the first steps into Canaan would have enough. They had God’s Torah. They had the instruction. They could remember God’s guidance and remember God’s provision and know trust that God would be with them in the next thing. The Torah ends unfinished. The Torah ends and Moses dead and the people on the brink of fulfilling their promise. It is left for us to finish the story. Remember God’s place in our life. Slap the sign. Touch the stump. Remember the Instructions of God, and walk boldly into the Promised Land.