

TEXT: Deuteronomy 8:1-10

THEME: THE CURE FOR BLESSING AMNESIA

Tryptophan—it's a naturally occurring substance found in turkey that makes people sleepy. Even if you are not familiar with tryptophan, you are undoubtedly familiar with its effects. Every Thanksgiving is roughly the same: Gorge yourself on turkey for one hour and then slip into a food-coma while you watch the Lions lose again. Whether it is the spike in blood sugar or the tryptophan, something about eating turkey makes you downright sleepy.

Besides making you sleepy, the turkeys you eat at Thanksgiving do something else to you: They give you amnesia. Yes, you heard that correctly; Thanksgiving turkey can give you short-term amnesia. This might come as a surprise to you. Perhaps you are thinking, "I've never had Thanksgiving turkey-induced amnesia; I've never been sitting there munching on a turkey leg and said, 'Whoa, where am I? What am I doing?'"

No, the type of amnesia you get from frozen turkey is "BLESSING AMNESIA" and it is a grave ailment. BLESSING AMNESIA is the state of forgetting that all things are a gift from God. It is the delirious belief that the Thanksgiving turkey sitting on your table is the result of your hard work and efforts. BLESSING AMNESIA happens when you stop living a life of thanks to God. And, left untreated, BLESSING AMNESIA can lead to spiritual cancer, comatose prayer life and even death.

If you suspect that you have suffered from BLESSING AMNESIA, you are not alone. In fact, ten out of ten Americans have been afflicted. BLESSING AMNESIA is easy to contract, especially at grocery stores. At these climate-controlled, fluorescent-lighted buildings, you can purchase a pre-butchered, shrink-wrapped frozen turkey with a plastic card. Hidden is God's work to deliver the blessing of that turkey. Hidden is the farmer raising the turkey, the grain that it was fed, the soil that supported the grain, and the rainwater and sunshine that caused the grain to sprout from the land. You see none of it! All you get is the finished product—a great, mouthwatering turkey. No wonder BLESSING AMNESIA is so easy to get!

To be certain, we are not the only people to be afflicted with BLESSING AMNESIA. God's people have always struggled to remember where their gifts come from. We have a well-documented and very tragic case of God's people contracting BLESSING AMNESIA in Deuteronomy 8. They suffered from BLESSING AMNESIA in the Old Testament version of a grocery store—the land of plenty, the Promised Land.

God's people were at the sliding glass doors of the Promised Land. After forty years of wilderness wandering, they were finally ready to enter this land of plenty. Unlike their time in the wilderness, Israel now had everything they could want: Agricultural bounty, homes, fertile flocks and monetary wealth.

Yet, just before this epic shopping spree, Moses gave Israel one piece of shopping advice. He did not tell them to check if their coupons were expired. Rather, Moses gave God's people the remedy to BLESSING AMNESIA. Moses told God's people to do one

thing: Remember. He said, “**Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years**” (Deut 8:2). Moses told them that a dose of remembrance was what they needed. Remember when you were living day-to-day and God fed you with manna. Remember when your clothing did not wear out. Remember to live out your thanks. Finally, Moses said “Go!” and they ran in to pillage the blessings of the Promised Land. The image I get is of the people rushing into Wal-Mart when the doors open at midnight on Black Friday.

Faster than the swine flu, BLESSING AMNESIA set in, spreading from one person to another. Instead of seeing God as the source of all blessings, Israel saw the land as the source of all blessings. Their BLESSING AMNESIA metastasized as they began worshiping themselves, looking for kings, for government, to provide for them rather than God himself. Finally, as their BLESSING AMNESIA took hold of their every cell, death set in. Israel began worshiping the gods of the land and the gods of their neighbors. BLESSING AMNESIA, though it started as a whisper, took hold and destroyed an entire community, an entire nation.

Brothers and sisters: If you suffer from BLESSING AMNESIA, it is not too late! The remedy that Moses offered Israel still works today—Remember! Remember what God has done for you. Remember to live out your thanks. Remember, your blessings are not from progress, technology, or personal achievements; your blessings are a gift from your heavenly Father. God is the author of all blessings. The next time you stand at the sliding glass doors of the grocery store—pause! Pause to say thanks to God. This land of plenty that we call a grocery store is actually a stockpile of God’s blessings. And when you enjoy a turkey dinner with your family, pause to live out your thanks, prayerfully remembering that the food you eat is completely and utterly a gift from God.

Moses was not the only one to offer up a cure for BLESSING AMNESIA; Christ himself has told us to remember. At his Last Supper with the disciples, Christ said: “**Do this in remembrance of me**” (Luke 22:19). Christ was telling us to remember what he did for us, telling us to live out our thanks for his work. Remember that his body was pierced for you. Remember that his blood flowed forth for the forgiveness of your sins. Remember that your salvation is completely and utterly a gift! While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Truly, we are living in the land of plenty today. Before we can live out our thanks we must first remember what the Lord has given us. Remember that the Lord has given you all you have, from Thanksgiving turkeys to your very salvation, God has given you everything. And he does this, not because you have earned or deserved it, but only because he is our good and gracious Father in heaven. This is most certainly true. Amen.