

Remembering Our Enemies, and Even More, Our Friends

There is only one passage in the Torah that we are commanded to hear—not the Ten Commandments, not the parting of the Red Sea, not the giving of the law—but a simple, haunting imperative: remember what Amalek did to you. Hundreds of years ago, the rabbis advised everyone to listen to this one verse of the Torah being read in synagogue—not just to read it, not just to know it, but to hear it aloud, to take it in as a living command.

Every year, on the Sabbath before Purim, men, women and children gather silently in the sanctuary to hear these haunting words: “Remember what Amalek did to you.” We listen, we remember. But why?

Amalek was the embodiment of hatred for its own sake. No provocation, no reason—just an attack on the weak, the weary, the vulnerable. And yet, of all the lessons in the Torah, this is the one we are told never to forget.

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This year, standing in the synagogue, hearing the words read aloud, I understood them in a way I never had before. Before October 7, we believed the world had changed, that humanity had learned, that Never Again was not just a phrase, that the Jewish people, scattered across the world, could finally exhale.

And then, that Shabbat morning—the bloodshed, the brutality, the massacre of innocents. And the chilling realization: we had forgotten Amalek.

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We forgot that there will always be those who hate us simply because we exist. We forgot that security can breed complacency, that prosperity can dull our vigilance. We forgot that evil does not sleep, even when we do.

This past week, I stood in Eilat, about to inaugurate the first MRI machine in Israel's southern Arava region, a project made possible by the Fellowship. A moment of healing, of hope. I had been here a year ago, too. That time, a siren—missile incoming from Iran—running for shelter like so many times before. This year, another siren. But this time, an earthquake warning.

And it made me pause. Was this a message? A reminder that disaster can strike at any moment? That even when we think we stand on solid ground, the earth beneath us can tremble?

And then it hit me. It wasn't about fear. It was about readiness.

To remember Amalek is not just to remember our enemies; it is to be prepared, to stand guard, to ensure that when hatred comes, as it always does, we are strong enough to face it. But that is only half the story.

The Torah does not just teach us what to resist; it teaches us what to embrace.

For every command not to steal, there is an unspoken call to respect another's dignity. For every command not to murder, a call to cherish life. And for every command to remember Amalek, there is an equal and opposite imperative: remember those who love you.

I was reminded of this last month when, after pledging not to leave Israel until the war was over, I traveled to Texas for a Fellowship event. I braced myself for hostility—the protests, the campus disruptions, the rising tide of antisemitism. But what I found was something else entirely. Thousands of people

lined up to shake my hand, to offer their unwavering support, to say again and again: "We stand with Israel. We love the Jewish people."

And in that moment, I understood something crucial.

Yes, we must remember those who seek our destruction. But even more, we must remember those who stand with us in our time of need, those who give, those who lift us up, those who, when the world is darkest, bring light.

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Because remembering Amalek is not just about the past—it is about the future. And it is not just about the Jewish people—it is about anyone who believes in good and evil, anyone who understands that justice does not defend itself, anyone who knows that silence is complicity, that forgetting is surrender, that evil only triumphs when good people stand aside.

This is why the Fellowship exists. Christians and Jews together, we are the people who remember. We are the people who refuse to look away. We are the people who know that history does not change unless we change it. That righteousness is a choice. That standing with Israel is not about politics—it is about moral clarity.

Because Amalek is not just a Jewish story; it is a human story. Hatred does not limit itself to one people. Evil does not stop at borders. And so the question is not just, will the Jewish people remember? But will the world remember? Will our friends stand with us, not just in words but in action? Will they speak when it is unpopular? Will they fight against hatred when it is easier to stay quiet? Will they refuse to let history repeat itself?

Because if they do, then maybe for the first time, remembrance will not just be about the past. It will be about changing the future. It will be about ensuring that what happened before can never, never happen again.

This week is Purim, the festival that recounts another Amalekite enemy—Haman—another plot to annihilate the Jewish people, another moment in history when we stood on the brink of destruction and another time when we survived. But the way we mark Purim is not through vengeance, not through power, but through radical generosity, through giving, through kindness.

We are commanded to send gifts to friends, to feed the poor, to celebrate not just our survival, but the world we choose to build in response. Because that is our answer to Amalek—not just to fight hatred, but to drown it in goodness. Not just to mourn destruction, but to strengthen those who build. Not just to remember our enemies, but to hold close our friends.

And if there is a message for this Purim, for this moment in history, it is this: the story of the Jewish people is not just a story of survival. It is a story of purpose. Of choosing light in the face of darkness. Of choosing to remember not just the harm done to us, but the good done for us. To see not just those who curse us, but those who bless us.

And that is what the Fellowship stands for—Christians and Jews together. In a world that is uncertain, in a world that still shakes beneath our feet, we stand for goodness, for hope, for faith, for the certainty that even in a world of Amalek, we will choose to be Esther. We will choose to be Mordecai. We will choose to be the people who do not just survive history, but shape it.

Because yes, we remember Amalek. But even more, we remember those who stood with us, who stood for us, who stood beside us. Because that is how we endure.

And that is how we prevail.

Together.

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