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Joshua 4
Leading into the Future
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Discussion Questions:

1. What sort of every day reminders do you use in your life? Are there spiritual applications to them?
2. God's word, God's people, baptism or communion are useful for us to remember, but when might they NOT work to remind us about God or a relationship with Him?
3. Do you or have you ever thought about how to set someone up for the future? How did it work or not work?
4. Who is a leader in your life? Why do you follow them?
5. Is there anything God has done in your life or through your life that you can remember now?

Last week the Jews finally stepped into the Jordan river.
It was a step of faith and demonstration of God's faithfulness.

Joshua is the one who led the people to this place...
... and will lead them into the next place.

Today I'd like to consider how can we lead others into the future?
Where should we be leading them to?

Title: Leading into the Future

Leading into the future by remembering the past.

It is an often quoted line that has become nearly a cliché that those who don't learn from history are destined to repeat it.

Big Idea: If you want to lead and succeed in the future, you must not forget your past.

This morning I want to point out a few leadership ideas from...
...**Joshua 4...that will help us lead and succeed for the future.**
And it came to pass, when all the people had completely
crossed over the Jordan, that the Lord spoke to Joshua,
saying: **2** “Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one
man from every tribe, **3** and command them, saying, ‘Take for
yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the
Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood firm. You shall
carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place
where you lodge tonight.’ ”

This crossing was a national baptism...
...they were dying to their old life...
...and entering into the new life of faith to follow the Lord.

Baptism is a sign and symbol to show and remember...
...the new life we have in Christ.

1. Leaders create reminders.

People forget things.

Memories that were vivid and alive, fade and fail over time.
So we try to make things sticky with reminders.

We have wedding bands to remind us of our marriage covenant.
We have statues to remind us of battles.
We have sticky notes to remind us of what we need to do.

We easily become forgetful with relationships.

We take people for granted that we see all the time.
We forget to tell someone how much they mean.
We forget how much someone has helped us.
We forget sacrifices that were made for us.

One of the relationships we can become forgetful with is God...

...Life is going great, we are busy, and we forget about the Lord.
...Or things are not great, we are overwhelmed and we forget about the Lord.

A memorial is not something to worship.

It is something that reminds us why we worship.

Thankfully God gave us a book and a church body to help us

4 Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; **5** and Joshua said to them: “Cross over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel,

2. Leaders remember personally.

Each tribe leader needed to go and get a stone themselves.

God performed this miracle for all the tribes and for every tribe. But each leader grabbed a stone.

Our history with God is both corporate and personal.

We celebrate communion corporately and baptism personally.

If you are going to lead people forward...

...you must know where you have come from.

We need to remember what God has done for us, in our lives.

Don't just have second hand stones.

Make it personal.

Journal, remember, memorialize for yourself.

Forgetting can happen personally...

...but it also happens generationally.

6 that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones *mean* to you?' **7** Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

3 Leaders plan for the future.

God knows that people forget over time...

...and generations forget over life times.

When a person forgets...it impacts one life.

But when a generation forgets...it impacts a society.

They can be in danger of repeating failures & failing completely.

Only 30% of family businesses survive the first to the 2nd gen.

Only 12% survive from the second generation to the third,

Only 4% survive from the third generation to the fourth

One of the strongest indicators for the success of a family business is shared vision.

They must have the big picture.

Some people don't think about where they are going...

...and they forget where they came from...

...because they are too caught up with where they are.

Future generations needs to be present...

...but they also need the bigger picture of...

...where we came from and where we are going and why.

This is true in a family, a city, a country and a church.

In Kid Life and student life...

...We are not babysitting or just providing child care.

...We are not just playing games and eating pizza.

We are teaching God's word and leading our young people to have a real and right relationship with God.

The future of our families, our nation, our local churches depends on Christ working in the next generation.

Though Israel tried, they did not really succeed...

...They set up these rocks, but rocks were not enough.

4. Leaders are living stones.

Joshua covers about 40 years of victories by faith and obedience.

Judges, the next book, covers over 300 years of defeat and failures because of forgetful, unfaithful people.

Judges 2:10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. 11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; 12and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt...

We may have some stones, some structures set up.

We may have habits, rituals, or daily practices...

...But unless it is real in your life...

...unless you own it spiritually and pass the baton personally...

...the faith you hope to pass may be dropped because...
... of the gap in our authenticity.

They can't hear what we say because...
...it doesn't match what we do.

They can't hear the words we say because...
...the lives we live is louder.

I Peter 2:4 You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. 5 And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.

The best shot we have for passing on our faith to our kids is to actually be living out our faith in front of our kids.

We need to build lives with Christ as our cornerstone in which we are alive and really offering spiritual sacrifices that please God.

8 And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the Lord had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. 9 Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day.

So the stones were set up for all the tribes to see.

But Joshua takes it a step further...
...he sets up stones **inside** the Jordan.

5. Leaders remember the middle.

I like that Joshua memorializes where the Lord brought them thru.

He could say, “We walked through the middle of that river!”
God did that, we did that, I did that.

When you are in the middle of something hard or challenging...
...remember what God brought you through.

It is exciting to start and it always feels good to finish...
...but the middle part can be hard.

God has brought you this far, He will not fail you now.

10 So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the Lord had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua; and the people hurried and crossed over. **11** Then it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over, that the ark of the Lord and the priests crossed over in the presence of the people. **12** And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them. **13** About forty thousand prepared for war crossed over before the Lord for battle, to the plains of Jericho. **14** On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.

'Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't.' Margaret Thatcher

Being a leader is the same...
...you can't force people to follow for very long.

At some point people will choose to follow...

6. Leaders are followed.

People need to have a reason to follow...

...usually it is because they trust you...

...because you care for them...

...and for Joshua, he delivered on His word.

15 Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, **16** “Command the priests who bear the ark of the Testimony to come up from the Jordan.” **17** Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, “Come up from the Jordan.” **18** And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord had come from the midst of the Jordan, *and* the soles of the priests’ feet touched the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before.

The priests were like the marines...first in and last out.

7. Leaders step in and step out.

If we are going to lead for the future, we need to step in.

Lead humbly with love and truth.

We hear a call, see a need, or have an opportunity, and by faith we step up to serve the Lord and bring the love of Christ and the truth of God’s Word in the power of His Spirit.

But besides stepping in...we need to step out into new things

(Not nothing)

With wisdom and timing, we have to let go of certain things...

... and move to other things.

Leading for the future means helping everyone move forward

...first we hold on and later we hand off.

19 Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. **20** And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. **21** Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: “When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, ‘What *are* these stones?’ **22** then you shall let your children know, saying, ‘Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land’; **23** for the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, **24** that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it *is* mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”

8. Leaders bring people the destination.

The ultimate destination for the people we lead as Christians is to the pursuit of a real and right relationship with Christ and others and become leaders themselves.

We don't lead people to get more power for ourselves.
We don't lead people so we have a bigger following.

We lead people to pursue Christ for themselves.

God has a unique calling and purpose for each one of us...

...and we want you to know God and pursue that for yourself.

We are not trying to build up our kingdom, we are trying to build up His kingdom because His kingdom is what will last.