

“Remembering God”

Joshua 4:1-24

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Intro. What are some of the great things that God has done in your life this year? We tend to forget what God has done.

Subject: The Memorial Stones

Object: Remember God’s past goodness (and be encouraged)

Thesis: Remembering God’s past goodness encourages our faith in the future.

A. The call to create a memorial [1-11]

1. Create a memorial for the crossing of the Jordan and the entering of the PL

1And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying: Israel had crossed the Jordan and was on the western side of the Promised Land.

a. The Jordan River is a symbol of a mighty experience in the life of faith

i. Elijah and Elisha [2Ki. 2], John the Baptist’s ministry + Jesus Baptism [Matt.3]

b. *What have been some of your Jordan River experiences? [BZ re ministry, CP*

i. How are you remembering and how are you sharing the story?

c. *What is the challenge to your faith that you need to cross like the Jordan River to experience God’s promised blessings?*

2. Create a memorial that all participate in [2-5]

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.’

4Then 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,

a. The representatives from each tribe would gather a large stone that would be taken to the place where they would camp and establish their base [Gilgal v.19]

b. Remove stones from place where the ark was, & where river was stopped by God

3. Create a memorial for generations to come [6-8]

6that 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.

”8And 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.

a. The memorial should encourage the faith of later generations and help keep the works of God from being forgotten.

b. Ps. 78:4 We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

4. Create a memorial to encourage in difficult times [9-11]

9Then 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.10So 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. 11Then 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.

a. Joshua set up memorial stones in the midst of the Jordan where the priests stood with the ark – the tangible presence of God – where God made the river stop.

b. In times of drought when the River was low, and the people were struggling, the stones could be seen and it could strengthen the faith of the struggling people.

c. Joshua voluntarily sets up the memorial in the riverbed

d. Stones in the river represent Christ’s death, stones in PL rep. resurrection

B. The people created the memorial [12-24]

1. The tribes of the East fulfilled their promise [12-13]

12And 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. 13About forty thousand prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho: The tribes that were to settle east of the Jordan R. crossed over to fight [1:12-16] and to establish the memorial

2. God fulfilled His promises [14-18]

a. God fulfilled His promise to exalt Joshua [14] [3:7]

14On 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: Joshua the humble servant of Moses was elevated and revered as Moses [Cf. Jesus

b. God fulfilled His promise to stop the waters of the Jordan [15-18]

15Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, 16“Command the priests who bear the ark of the Testimony to come up from the Jordan.” 17Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, “Come up from the Jordan.” 18And 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.

i. As the priests exit the Jordan with the ark and stood on dry ground the Lord allowed the Jordan to once again overflow.

3. The memorial fulfills its purpose [19-24]

19Now 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 setb. up in Gilgal:

a. The memorial would remind and encourage that generation [19-20]

i. The stones would inspire that generation re what God had just done to encourage them to believe and possess the promises regarding the conquest of the PL

ii. Gilgal would be the base for the conquest of the PL.

iii. 10th of first month [Nisan] is the day of inspection of the Passover Lamb 4 days prior [Ex. 12:3]. Remember God's faithfulness re the Passover + Exodus

b. The memorial would remind and encourage future generations [21-23]

21Then 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

i. Connected to future and prior generations [your children [21], Red Sea [23]

ii. Telling the next generation the stories of God's work in your life

c. The memorial would remind and encourage new believers [24]

24that 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."

i. Testimony to those who would come to faith, to encourage reverence for God

Conc. Remembering God's past goodness encourages our faith in the future.

What is the challenge to your faith that you need to cross like the Jordan River to experience God's promised blessings?

[Communion & the cross are great memorials of the Christian faith [Lu. 22:19-20]

Discussion Qs

1. What are some of the great things that God has done in your life this year?

2. What are some tips that you have discovered to help you remember?

3. How does God's past faithfulness impact your present?

4. How would you like God's past faithfulness to impact your future?