

## Remembering What God Has Done

Joshua 4:1-5:24

Though we've been honoring our fallen soldiers since the 1800s, Memorial Day didn't become a federal holiday until 1971. When the day was first observed as Decoration Day, it was only used to recognize those killed in the Civil War, not in any other American conflict. World War I prompted the country to expand the meaning of the holiday, recognizing members of the military killed in any war. In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday.

In the Civil War approximately 620,000 Americans died. The union lost almost 365,000 and the those of the Confederacy lost about 260,000, but what you may not know is that nearly have of those died from diseases not the war.

In World War 1 116,516 Americans died and once again more than half from diseases.

World War 2 405,399 Americans died.

The Korean War there were 36,574 Americans who gave there life.

The Vietnam conflict had 58,220 Americans who died. Nearly 47,000 were killed in Action and nearly 11,000 died from other causes.

For all those that have died this day is for us to remember that you gave everything so that we can walk free.

Now I also know that God realizes that we often forget what he has done for us.

Psalm 106:21 - They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt,

In Deuteronomy. 6:12 Moses issued a final warning to Israel just before they entered the promise land, “beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt...” The meaning of word for memorial is “to remember.”

Now in today's text we see God command his people to erect a memorial.

Notice that according to verse one, “when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the LORD gave more specific instructions in verses 2-5, “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.’” (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.”

According to these verses twelve men chosen earlier (3:12) were to go back to where the priest were standing in the middle of the river, holding the ark. Each man was to pick up a large rock or stone from the middle of the Jordan and carry it to the side of the river where Israel would camp in the land of Canaan.

Notice with me three reasons that is given for this action.

1. IT IS TO BE A TIME OF REMEMBERING WHAT GOD HAS DONE

“And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.” (v. 7)

First, the memorial stones were to be a reminder of their own personal experience. Notice that in verse six this memorial will cause the children to ask; “What do these stones mean to you?”

These stones are first of all to be a reminder to those who were present of their personal experience, what they saw, heard and felt.

What we need to do is “Tell your story, Keep a clear memory of what God did for you. Keep on telling your stories so that you never lose your own sense of awe and wonder of what God has done in your life.”

I want you to consider with me: “What kind of memorials do you have in your life?” Whether you realize it or not we all have memorials in our lives, no not a monument of stones, but one built of memories.

There are memories of places, places that trigger memories just as the memorial stones in Gilgal. There are some significant places in your life that elicit memories. The little church where I was saved is such a place for me. It was there that I was saved as a teenager. It was there a few years later that I was called to preach. It was there that I married my lovely bride. It is a special place for me. It reminds me of things that God had done in my life. You no doubt have such a place in your life.

Secondly, the Memorial stones were to serve as a basis of sharing faith with their children (vv. 6-7). In two places in this chapter, parents are reminded of their responsibility for the

communication of God's Word and his calling on their children, generation to generation.

First in verse 6-7, "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. these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

And again in verses 21-23, "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.

As with other memorials in the Old Testament, the intention of the memorial was to provoke questioning especially from future generations.

Church we need to realize that Christianity and am talking about relationship not religion, is never more than one generation away from extinction.

If we can demonstrate what Jesus means, show what he has done, we are destined to see others walk away from what we know.

Third, the memorial stones were to be a signpost to a lost world. (v. 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.”

Not only were these stones a time of remembering what God had done but. . .

For Israel these stones were a reminder of the old defeats being rolled away.

v. 19-20 - “ 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.”

It is significant that this happened on the tenth day of the first month, this is exactly forty years to the day, since Israel marched out of Egypt.

Leaving the edge of the river, the Israelites went to a place called Gilgal to make their camp. Gilgal was “on the eastern border of Jericho (v. 19). Gilgal means “the reproach has been rolled away.”

Because of what Jesus did for us our reproach has been rolled away. We are a new creation.

(Talk about old and new man).

Forty years of spiritual defeat and failure have been rolled away. It was the dawn of a great new beginning in a new land. The days of complaining was ended, hopeless wandering in the wilderness was behind them. They were now a people with a powerful new sense of purpose, determined to take new territory with God.

For us today we should be able to look back and see those monumental occasions which stand out as times in which God has changed our directions and give us new hope and a new sense of purpose.

For us today we need to remember another event. Jesus died, sacrificed Himself so that we can live. So that we can walk out the destiny He has called us into.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 - For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

He goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 15:13 - 17 - If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

It's important to remember the resurrection. It is really the basis of the New Covenant. Of our new life.

As a matter of fact in the Book of Acts the emphasis of much of the book is on the resurrection of Christ

Look at Acts 4:10 for example.

Acts 4:10 - then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

Acts 4:33 - With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all

Just to show a couple, read the book and see.

Paul continues it I'm a few of his epistles.

We need to remember Christ. He made the ultimate sacrifice.

I honor our fallen men and woman they have allowed for my freedom here. But I was bought with a price and that was Christ. Christ saw value in me, in you, in each of us. We must never forget.

The monument that was built with those twelve stones that we looked at in our text was to serve as a visible reminder of the faithfulness of God.

And church know this Philippians 1:6 tells us, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.