

## The 12 Memorial Stones -- 5-22-24

Memorial Day – the unofficial start of summer. Since 1971, official fed holiday. Began Waterloo, NY (1866) annual event. **May 30, 1868** - ‘**Decoration Day**’ **1971** –officially became **Memorial Day**, last Mon – 3 def weekend for feds!

Despite the beach & barbeque get togethers, it’s our most Solemn Holiday.

It’s a day for Remembering: Honor the fallen; don’t repeat history’s mistakes

Remembering is important.

**2 Peter 2:5-9** – grow in godliness to be effective & productive.

If we forget our past sins have been cleansed by Jesus, we won’t be effect/prod.

God has always been concerned about us forgetting & not remembering.

Passover – a time of remembering how God saved them.

Lord’s Supper – do this in remembrance of me.

Share a story tonight about remembering.

**Joshua 3-4** – after the spies meet Rahab, they prepare to take Jericho.

Set out and go to Jordan, camped before crossing over. 3 days later... Get ready.

■ Follow the Ark. Jordan River - Priests carry the Ark into the river and stand.

As soon as they set foot in the Jordan, the water stopped flowing. Like a Dam.

Priests w/ Ark stood on dry ground in the middle, nation of Israel crossed.

12 tribes pick a representative, take 12 stones from where priests were standing.

Put the stones in the place you stay that night as a memorial.

When your children ask, “what do these stones mean?” Tell them... God/water.

The 12 stones “are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever” **Josh. 4:7**.

God had Joshua lead the gathering/stones to never forget what God did.

Set up **12 stones** in our lives. Here’s what this story teaches us:

**1 – God goes before us.** Priests **1st** carried Ark to the river before people crossed.

When you follow God... know that He has prepared the way. Gone 1st. Stepped

**Josh. 3:3-4** – “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. <sup>4</sup> Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before.”

God has a promised land for you ... a destiny ... you’ve never imagined!

Who you meet – what you experience – divine destiny. All for His purpose.

**2 – The top of the Ark is a Mercy Seat of pure gold.** Exod. 25:17-22

No matter where you go, what you have done – God offers you **mercy**.

**Psalm 100:5** – *“For the LORD is good; His **mercy is everlasting**”*

- **Heb. 4:16** – *“let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, & we will find grace to help us when we need it most”*  
God offers us forgiveness & compassion instead of punishment & pain

**3 - 2 cherubims** stretch their wings over the mercy seat & face each other.

Cherub is angelic being; differs from an angel. Not messengers, they are guards.

- Cherubim guarded the Garden of Eden w/ flaming sword.
- **Exod. 23:20** – *“I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared.”*

**4 – God stands in the River with us.** The Ark signifies God’s presence.

He is in the water with you. You aren’t going thru anything alone.

Not a distant god, watching. He’s in the storm – battle – problem – river w/ you.

- **Isaiah 43:2** – *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned”*

**5 – God prepares us for the future.** They **waited to cross**; camped & rested.

**Josh. 3:5** – Joshua told the people: *“Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.”*

There are times in our lives it seems we’re just **waiting**. . . we are being **prepared**.  
Amazing things are before you!! Don’t get **discouraged**. You’ll have what u need.

**6 – Take slow steps.** We like to rush; hurry & get there. Hurry & fix it.

Nation of Israel crossed the Jordan. . . . can’t have happened fast. Crowds/slow

- Take your time, look around – enjoy the view. You’ll miss the **Amazing**.
- **Josh. 3:13** – *“the water will stop flowing and pile up as if someone had built a dam across the river.”*

**7 - God does the incredible.** . . the unanticipated . . . amazing . . . **impossible!**

We look at rivers & expect to get wet. But they crossed over on dry ground.

- Whatever river you face, God can make it possible. He can **flip your world!**
- Created earth from nothing; man from dust. Moves mountains, rolls stones,

**8 – Be willing to follow.** That day, 2 leaders: Joshua & God. They made the path. Our pride wants to be in charge; we look for the easy way. . . Shortcuts. God is the Great Shepherd; trust Him & follow the Shepherd.

- Jesus said – **John 10:4** – “After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice.”
- We can follow God b/c we know His voice, His goodness, His love . . .

**9 – Want to serve God, help others? You’ll cross some rivers.**

You’ll take journeys you never thought possible. Remember? 10 spies doubted.

- We’ll go thru difficult stuff! Face challenges . . . test strength/patience.
- But God gives us strength for the journey we never thought possible.
- **Psalm 46:1** – *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”*

**10 – Take a stone from river.** There’s a **lesson** to learn from **every river you cross.**

Every journey we take - battle we fight - problem we face **exists to teach us.**

- We learn how good God is. We learn He changes things. Take lesson with us.

**11 – Remember.** Reason they took stones **was to recall** what God did for them.

Every stone is a reminder: God heals. God restores. God fights for us.

God changes things... turns things around. God does the impossible, amazing.

When face the next storm - **remember.** God is w/ you. Nothing/impossible

**12 – Explain the stones. Share your story.**

When your children ask, “what do these stones mean?” Tell them...

- **1 Pet. 3:15** – *“Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope”*

Song of the week – “Just Beyond the Jordan River”- Melissa Brady & David Phelps