

Giving Thanks

A Lasting Memorial

Pastor Jake Spencer November 22, 2015

Giving Thanks — A Lasting Memorial

- **Joshua 4:1-9**

- And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying: "Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, 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.' " Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; 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, that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' 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." 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. 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.

Things to consider about this Event, and the Memorial that was established

1) **Firm Footing** (vs. 3) – Even in unsettling circumstances!

Think **Reliable** – This isn't out of character for the Lord – He had done this all along the way:

- a. Leading them out of the plagues
- b. Crossing the Red Sea
- c. Leading their path through the wilderness wanderings

2) **Presence of the Lord** (vs. 5, 7) – He was in the midst of it with them!

- a. Notice this time they had to step out prior to the water parting
- b. But the ark of the Lord went in with them!
- c. He not only causes us to stand firm on solid ground, but we step out with Him!

3) **Specific & Tangible**

- a. A specific reminder – The Stones
- b. From a specific moment – taken from the very river bed they crossed
- c. During the event – the memorial is made in the moment!

4) **Solid & Lasting** (vs. 7) – Stones were to be a memorial forever!

- a. 1st pile of stones taken with them as an eternal memorial!
- b. 2nd pile set up by Joshua right in the Jordan riverbed where priests stood
- c. So Joshua stops looks back to the miracle, looks forward to their children, and then looks really forward to an eternal reminder – WHY?
- d. Because These Stones and The Firm Foundation on which they walked – **All point to Jesus!**

The Old Testament spoke of one who was both the sure foundation and the chief cornerstone

- **Isaiah 28:16**

- Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

- **Psalms 118:22**

- The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.

- **Luke 20:1-4**

- Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?" But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?"

- a. They aren't sure how to answer – they don't want to validate John and they are afraid of the people
- b. So since they refuse to answer, so does Jesus
- c. He then tells them the Parable of the Vineyard and the wicked Vinedressers:

The vinedressers left in charge abuse and mistreat the servants of the Master of the vineyard and eventually kill his Beloved Son! Jesus wraps up the story by saying the Vineyard owner will punish these servants by killing them & handing the vineyard to others!

- d. The chief priests cry out "certainly not!" (knowing Jesus is speaking of them)

Then He said...

- **Luke 20:17-18**

- Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE'? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

- a. Jesus points to John's Baptism – The Rock was baptized by John, where? In the Jordan River!
- b. Joshua – same name as Jesus: entered the river & left stones there as a marker of God making a way into the Promised land
- c. Jesus – "The Cornerstone" entered that same river, and was baptized!
- d. Jesus – points back to that baptism and ahead to his death during the week leading up to His Crucifixion!

Context for Acts 4

Fast forward approximately 2-3 months — Peter has preached at Pentecost; then a short time later He and John heal the man born lame; and are now brought before the exact same people Jesus confronted in Luke 20; the same men who had Him killed. Now Peter and John stand before these men and are asked by what authority they speak and healed this man born lame.

- **Acts 4:8-13**

- Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED BY YOU BUILDERS, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.
- a. The Rock – is baptized in the very same Jordan River!
- b. This same Rock is hung on a cross on the rocky hill called Calvary ...
- c. But three days later this Rock comes forth as the grave stone is rolled away!
- d. And now He remains the firm foundation upon which the lame may walk on solid ground!

And who tells this story?

Peter – “*The Rock*” —and he has one more thing to add to this story

- **1 Peter 2:4-10**

- Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE," and "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.
- a. The Living Stone – Jesus
- b. The Living Stones – His church – Us!
- c. What do we as living stones do? Proclaim the praises of Him!

So our Thanks should be...

- a. Thanks for the **Firm Foundation**
- b. For **His Presence** along the way
- c. Our Thanks should be **Specific & Tangible**
- d. Our thanks should be something we remember that is **Solid & Lasting** because... It's ultimately meant to point to the **One who is Solid & Lasting!**

e. **Personal**

We should be able to tell others these are my stones and answer the question —

- **Joshua 4:6**
 - ...What do these stones mean to you?

Discussion Questions

1. Read Joshua 4:3. How do we know that our feet can stand firm, even in unsettling circumstances?
2. The stones were a tangible memorial about a specific event — to tell future generations. Do you have a specific event that is a tangible memorial in your life?
3. How do these Old Testament stones point to Jesus?
4. When someone asks (or you need to tell someone) “what these stones mean to you” — what will you say?
5. Read 1 Peter 2:4-10. Peter says that Jesus Christ is a “living stone” — AND — that WE are also “living stones.” What does that require of us? What blessings does that give us?

House of Prayer

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