

Stones of Remembrance
Lynn Haven United Methodist
September 11, 2016

Introduction

¹⁴ So the people left their camp to cross the Jordan, and the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant went ahead of them. ¹⁵ It was the harvest season, and the Jordan was overflowing its banks. But as soon as the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark touched the water at the river's edge, ¹⁶ the water above that point began backing up a great distance away at a town called Adam, which is near Zarethan. And the water below that point flowed on to the Dead Sea until the riverbed was dry. Then all the people crossed over near the town of Jericho. ¹⁷ Meanwhile, the priests who were carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed as the people passed by. They waited there until the whole nation of Israel had crossed the Jordan on dry ground.

4 When all the people had crossed the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ² "Now choose twelve men, one from each tribe. ³ Tell them, 'Take twelve stones from the very place where the priests are standing in the middle of the Jordan. Carry them out and pile them up at the place where you will camp tonight.'"

⁴ So Joshua called together the twelve men he had chosen—one from each of the tribes of Israel. ⁵ He told them, "Go into the middle of the Jordan, in front of the Ark of the LORD your God. Each of you must pick up one stone and carry it out on your shoulder—twelve stones in all, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁶ We will use these stones to build a memorial. In the future your children will ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' ⁷ Then you can tell them, 'They remind us that the Jordan River stopped flowing when the Ark of the LORD's Covenant went across.' These stones will stand as a memorial among the people of Israel forever." (Joshua 3:17-4:7 NLT)

Digging Deeper

Spiritual Markers provide...

Tribute

- Much like 9/11/16 marks a new era for our church as we launch a new Sunday morning worship schedule, certain events from our past can serve as tributes that leave a permanent mark on our lives. Talk about a person, place or thing that helped shape the person you are today.
- In the calm that follows a storm, we tend to forget about God sightings and try to explain away His presence during turbulent times. This is sometimes referred to as "spiritual amnesia." How do you think spiritual markers could be helpful in preventing this condition?
- When we hear the story of Joshua and the 12 stones we are reminded that God's power is endless. When we establish physical reminders of spiritual markers, we ensure that future generations will see how He makes all things work together for our good. (Romans 8:28). That is, of course, the purpose of the 9/11 memorial erected in NYC in the very spot that terrorism attempted to diminish our faith. If you came to church this Sunday, you were given a small stone of remembrance. In what way will this stone serve as a spiritual marker for you? (If you missed church, we hope you feel better or you are back in town! Find something you can use to serve as a reminder of how God has moved in a remarkable way for you.)

Testimony

- 1 Peter 2:5 says: “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.” As living stones, what spiritual sacrifices can we make in an effort to please God? Christians carry the great responsibility of living our lives in such a way that others see Jesus through the things we say and do. Talk about ways your lifestyle could have an impact on the spiritual development of a seeker, or non-believer?

Tangible evidence (of God’s presence)

- “A spiritual marker identifies a time of transition, decision, or direction when I clearly know that God has guided me.” (Henry Blackaby, *Experiencing God*, p. 103) Describe how you could use spiritual markers to help you discern God’s direction at a time of decision.
- Rainbows are a physical sign of God’s promise to His people. Prayer shawls and squares given to those in need; ramps built by our Hardly Able team; meals prepared for new moms or grieving families. These are all examples of physical items that can be seen or touched that provide comfort. What do you have to lean upon when tragedy strikes or doubts arise? What are your “stones of remembrance”?

Conclusion

How we choose to commemorate the things that spiritually mark our lives can have a lasting effect on future generations. As we prepare to build our monuments to the Lord, let’s pray this prayer – for some a reminder of a spiritual marker in the past, for others a spiritual marker for today.

Dear God, I know I have sinned, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe your Son Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead. I trust and follow Christ as my Lord and Savior. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and guide my life. This I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.