

REMEMBER AND RETURN

THE PROMISED LAND WEEK 7 | DAVE D'ANGELO

Joshua 4:1-3

When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, “Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, ‘Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests’ feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.’”

Rememberance: the spiritual discipline that we tend to forget.

Joshua 4:21-24

And he said to the people of Israel, “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”

Joshua instructed the people to not forget to remember.

- The stones are **physical reminders** to help us to not forget to remember.
- Remembering is a spiritual practice to turn our eyes from the wilderness and onto God.

FIVE THINGS JOSHUA TEACHES BOTH THE ISRAELITES AND US:

1 Remembering matters because forgetting has consequences.

- In all of life there is great danger in forgetting everyday things, but there is *grave* danger in forgetting spiritual things.
- The Israelites ended up in slavery in Egypt because the king of Egypt *forgot* who Joseph was and what the God of Joseph did.

→ Forgetting God leads us to put our God who loves us to the test.

Psalm 78:41-42

They tested God again and again
and provoked the Holy One of Israel.
They did not remember his power
or the day when he redeemed them from the foe...

→ Forgetting is subtle but powerful.

- Forgetting is why the Bible has so many feasts woven into worship.
- The Sabbath is a way for remembrance; a break from work to remember God's faithfulness.
- Tithing and giving are ways of remembering who our provider is. We are stewards, not owners.
- Communion is a physical way to pause and remember Jesus, his body, his blood, and his forgiveness of our sins.

→ Yes, there are grave consequences when we forget God, but there is also great reward when we remember him.

Psalm 77:11-12, 16, 19

I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your wonders of old.
I will ponder all your work,
and meditate on your mighty deeds.

When the waters saw you, O God,
when the waters saw you, they were afraid;
indeed, the deep trembled.

Your way was through the sea,
your path through the great waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.

- When we remember God, our fears are put in their place: away from us.

Lamentations 3:21-23

But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

- **Hope** is found in remembering God.
- The way to stop the wandering is by remembering God and his character.

The Israelites' story is our story. Before Christ, we were enslaved to sin, like they were enslaved in Egypt. But, they're not exactly the same.

2 Our stories are similar, but we have different stones.

- Be intentional about gathering your stones.
 - If we want to stop wandering, we must first gather our stones.
- Spiritually remembering involves being intentional and reflecting, or gathering up physical stones as reminders from the moments God was faithful.
- All of us have unique and different stones.

Dave's stones:

- **Bat:** Our God is a God who still speaks. He proclaims over desperate fear of insignificance.
- **Truck:** The Lord is merciful and gracious. His grace is sufficient for me in my weakness.
- **Cowbell:** God is slow to anger even when we run from him.
- **NJ Exit Sign:** God abounds in steadfast love and faithfulness, even when we are broken or exhausted.
- **Green E:** In spite of the Church's shortcomings and imperfections, God keeps his steadfast love and plan through his bride of the Church.
- **Rock:** Forgiveness is the only way, and we need forgiveness too. God forgives our iniquity, our transgressions, and our sin.

Question: What are your stones? Have you gathered them?

3 Our stories are similar, our stones are different, but most importantly, our GOD is the same.

Malachi 3:6

For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

- How God described himself to the Israelites is the same way he described himself to us now.
- These stones don't just tell a story of what happened in our lives, they tell the story of who God has been in our lives.

The story is not about the waters parting, but about the God who parted the waters.

Exodus 34:6-7a

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands...

- God reminded Moses who he is.
- Stones tell the story, not just of circumstances, but of God’s character.
- When collecting stones, we also have to connect the dots.
- Rememberance isn’t just something that happens in our minds or journals, it happens in our mouths.

4 Rememberance involves telling your story.

- Rememberance is well short of the mark if it’s not spoken out loud.

Joshua 4:6

that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’

- Be bold and share your story. That is how hope is experienced.
- Our stones are only powerful if we tell the story of God behind the stones.
- Declare Exodus 34:6-7 every time you can out loud to the world.
- The nations were in awe of God: How will transformation happen if nobody hears?

Find the fifth thing Joshua teaches the Israelites and us about rememberance on our podcast, *Behind and Beyond*.

Question: How do we respond?

We need to unashamedly declare the truth of God’s character in our lives.