

We will remember them:

Lest we forget

Overarching point:

God calls us to remember.

Key scripture: Joshua 4:1-7

Key takeaway: God calls us to create memorials to stir our memory, to share our faith, to shape our worship and to shake-up our past.

Introduction

- › Remembering is not just the process of committing information to memory but also the process of understanding, retention and recall. The process of remembering requires the learner to understand a concept, retain it over a period of time and then recall the concept when it is needed.
- › In our reading this morning, we see how God instructed Joshua to set up a stone memorial as a visual reminder to all who passed that way.
- › Sometimes God asks us to build monuments too. Why are they important? Today we will look at four reasons.

1. God calls us to create memorials to stir our memory.

- › We tend to forget. All of us are susceptible to bouts of memory loss.
- › “I have a photographic memory, the only problem is I keep running out of film!”
- › Our lives and our world are filled with ‘memorials’ to help us remember, for example, plaques to help us remember accomplishments, wedding rings, headstones.
- › The pile of stones in our reading would be a visible reminder to the Israelites. Every time they passed that way, it would remind them of what God did at Gilgal.
- › It was a common practice to erect a monument of stones to God after a great event took place.
- › We, too, have memorials in our life. They’re not built of stone, but of memories.



- › But unfortunately, we forget or misunderstand these events. Why?
 - We become rushed
 - We feel helpless
 - We are hurt
- › These stones were there to remind them of what God did for them at the Jordan River.
- › How can you prevent ‘spiritual amnesia’? What are some ‘stones’ that you can erect to help you remember what God has done in your life?
 - Write it down
 - Tell it to others
 - Use it as a guide
- › We tend to forget. That’s why Remembrance Day is so important. That’s why we need to place some ‘stones of remembrance’ in our lives to remember what a great God we have!

2. God calls us to create memorials to share our faith.

- › Children like to ask questions. One of their favourite questions is “Why?”
- › “Why are these stones piled up over here? How did they get this far up on shore?” This gives parents an opportunity to share about the faithfulness and power of God. The memorial was a teaching tool, to share the mighty works of God.
- › Parents have a responsibility to share their faith with their family.
- › If we don’t set up some stone, that is, make a conscious effort to share what God has done in our lives, the next generation will forget what God has done in our generation. Each generation has a responsibility to pass on the story of God working in, on and among his people.
- › Like these stones, our Christian lives should reflect God’s work and power.
- › “And now you are living stones being used to build a spiritual house. You are also a group of holy priests, and with the help of Jesus Christ you will offer sacrifices that please God” (1 Peter 2:5, CEV).
- › We are “living stones.” When God’s people looked at the stones in the memorial pile, they asked, “What do these mean?”
- › When people look at your life do they ask, “What does being a follower of Jesus mean?”



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- › The greatest memorial stone you have is the day that you said “yes” to Jesus and became his follower. Reflecting on that day should ignite anew your passion and zeal for Jesus.

3. God calls us to create memorials to shape our worship.

- › These stones told of a mighty and powerful God who was to be worshipped.
- › Why does God allow us to go through some of the trials that we go through? So that we (and others) can witness the mighty power of God ... and worship him.
- › Why does God prevent certain bad things from happening to us? For the same reason. So that we can witness to the mighty power of God ... and worship him.
- › The problem is we don't see what bad things God prevents from happening to us.
- › Everything that happens to you in your life is an opportunity for you to “look at the stones” and see the power and majesty of God and worship him.

4. God calls us to create memorials to shake up our past.

- › Reading on in Joshua 4, before the priests came out from the middle of the dry Jordan riverbed, Joshua went back in to set up 12 stones in the middle of the river. When the priests came on shore, the river flowed again and covered the stones. Joshua 4:9 states that they are there to this day, a permanent memorial.
- › ‘Gilgal’ means ‘circle’ and comes from the Hebrew root ‘gil’, meaning to roll away. The 40 years of failure, defeat and wandering were all behind them ... buried like the stones in the Jordan River.
- › These 12 stones indicated it was time for a new beginning.
- › Maybe you've built a monument of failure, shame and regrets.
- › Do you need to put them (figuratively) in the Jordan River this morning?
- › Do you need to let the healing waters of God's love and grace cover them?
- › Two sets of stones were set up. One set was for remembering God's goodness and faithfulness. The second set of stones, in the middle of the Jordan River, was to remind them to forget their failures of the past.



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- › “I forget what is behind, and I struggle for what is ahead. I run toward the goal, so I can win the prize of being called to Heaven. This is the prize God offers because of what Christ Jesus has done.” (Philippians 3:13b-14, CEV).

Conclusion

- › This morning, I want you to consider what memorials you have in your life. Do you have mementos or reminders of the things God has done? What would it look like for you to have those reminders in your home?
- › As we worship together now, let us remember God’s incredible faithfulness and let’s worship him — our good and faithful God.

