

**Remember Lest we Forget!**  
**Deuteronomy 6:12, Joshua 4:1-8, 19-24 (3:9-17)**

**Intro:** Tomorrow makes the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of the deadliest days in our nation's history. A day when 19 crazed religious fanatics took control of 4 airplanes and flew 3 of them into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon and except for the brave actions of a few on the 4<sup>th</sup> would have flown it into another building someplace in Washington DC.

So we will take time out to remember the events of 5 years ago. Our nation has all kinds of days of remembrance: July 4<sup>th</sup> to remember our struggle for independence, Memorial Day when we remember those who have fought in defense of our freedoms, Thanksgiving a day we set aside to remember to give thanks to God for all He has given us, and last weekend it was Labor Day where we remember the working men and women of our nation. We set aside these days to remember because we have a natural tendency to forget things as time goes by. In our text today, God tells the children of Israel to not forget. But what does God want us not to forget? This weekend we know what we are to remember but what is that God wants us to remember? Our text today tells us three things God doesn't want us to ever forget.

**[Read Joshua 4:1-8, 19-24/Pray/Dismiss Jr. Church]**

One of the great tragedies of the human mind is that every so often we have to be reminded of things or we forget them. Following WW1 the phrase *Lest We Forget* was found on war memorials and on grave markers for fallen soldiers. It comes from an 1887, poem by Rudyard Kipling; it formed the refrain of his poem *Recessional*, a warning about the perils of pride and the inevitable decline of imperial power. The basis of the poem was a spiritual one. The history of western Christendom shows a recurrent pattern. When nations rise to wealth and power they are inclined to forget their God. The understanding was that it was Divine Providence who brought them the material and spiritual blessings that nurtured them into a position of greatness among the nations. Here are the telling lines of Rudyard Kipling's poem:

*Far-called, our navies melt away;  
On dune and headland sinks the fire:  
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!  
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet.  
Lest we forget - lest we forget!*

In the years following Pearl Harbor everyone was in agreement that what happened that day was horrible and that the nation had responded correctly. But today, 65 years after the surprise attack, you can find all kinds of young Americans who have grown up in a world devoid of any real understanding of December 7, 1941 making statements that would have certainly won them a black eye 65 years ago. Responding to an article written by Ben Stine in the Loyola University paper, *The Phoenix*, speaking about America's response to Pearl Harbor, a young Muslim American makes this comment:

*"Later on in the article, Stein stated, "We won the war and saved the entire future of mankind" as he referred to the U.S.'s reaction to Pearl Harbor. Obviously, his definition of mankind does not include Japan. Forgotten by Stein, or perhaps never known by Stein, many people to this day still are suffering the consequences of America's response to Pearl Harbor. It seemed to me that Stein encourages violence as much as, if not more than, the terrorists did." (Missa Ayyash, The Phoenix)*

God realizes that we often forget what he has done for us that is why in Deuteronomy. 6:12 he says to Moses and the nation of Israel just before they entered the promise land, **"beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt..."** In our text today the meaning of the Hebrew word for memorial (v. 7) is *"a memento (or memorable thing, day or writing):—memorial, record. In other words, to remember."* Given man's propensity to forget it is little wonder then that memorials have frequently played an important role in biblical history. At the foot of Mt. Sinai, Moses built an altar of stones to commemorate God's covenant with Israel (Ex. 12:14). In today's text we see God command his people to erect a memorial.

Notice that according to verse one, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the LORD gave more specific instructions in verses 2-5.

According to these verses twelve men choose earlier (3:12) were to go back to where the priests were standing in the middle of the river, holding the ark. Each man was to pick up a large rock or stone from the middle of the Jordan and carry it to the side of the river where Israel would camp in the land of Canaan.

***From Chapters 3 & 4 in Joshua today we see three specific things the Lord does not want us to ever forget, three things He wants us to remember.***

***He wants us to remember...***

**1. *What He has Delivered us From – Bondage/Sin* V.21-23**

**A. *ILL:*** An elderly couple, a husband and wife were having problems remembering things, so they decided to go to their doctor to get checked out, just to make sure nothing was wrong. The doctor explained to them that when you get too many things on your mind, you will have problems with your memory. He suggested that they might want to start making notes to help them remember things. They thanked the doctor and left.

Later that night while watching TV, the man got up from his chair and started toward the kitchen. His wife asked, "Where are you going?"

"I'm going to the kitchen to get some ice cream," he answered.

She asked, "Will you get me a bowl of ice cream too while you are there?"

He said, "Sure."

She asked, "Don't you think you should write it down so you can remember it?"

He said, "No, I can remember that."

"Well, I would also like some strawberries on top. You had better write that down because I know you'll forget."

"No, I won't forget," he assured her.

"Well, I also want some whipped cream on top. I know you will forget that so you better write it down."

He was obviously irritated, but he managed to say rather nicely, "I don't need to write that down. I can remember that."

About 20 minutes later, he returned with a plate of bacon and eggs.

She stared at it for a moment and then said, "I knew you were going to mess it up - You forgot my toast."

How is your memory?

**Are you remembering the important things?**

**B. Do you remember how God has worked in your life?**

- 1) Do you remember where you were before you were saved?
- 2) Can you remember that day when you responded to the call of God to salvation

**C. Do you remember how God has continued to do work in your life, encouraging you toward Christlikeness, always working for your good?**

- 1) Over and over again, Joshua is encouraged to be strong and courageous.
- 2) He is to go forward and claim that which God has promised – the land.

3) He needs to never fear because God is with him.

**D. The Israelites were reminded of what they had been through to get to this place.**

- 1) When the Israelites came up out of the Jordan that day and took those 12 stones and staked them on the other side the Lord told them to remember that He had dried up the river Jordan just like he had the Red Sea 40 years earlier.
- 2) They had just spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness and before that, 430 years on bondage.
- 3) They had been delivered from Egyptian bondage – a symbol of the worldly bondage and sin
- 4) They were now being delivered from the wilderness wandering – a symbol of not walking by faith.

**E. They are building 9/11 memorials in NYC and at the Pentagon**

- 1) They are building them so we will never forget what happened on that tragic day
- 2) There will someday be a memorial for those who lost their lives in the war on terror so we will never forget the sacrifice they made in delivering us from the fear of their threat.

**God wants us to remember What He has Delivered us From secondly He wants us to remember ...**

**2. What He has Delivered us With – His Power 3:9-17**

A. In Chapter 3 we find the people getting ready to cross the Jordan (Vv. 5-7)

- 1) In verse 5 Joshua tells the people to **“Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you...”**
- 2) Then in verse 9-17 the Lord has Joshua tell the people to stand back and watch – my translation of the first part of V.10.
- 3) The in these verses Joshua finally tells the people just how God was going to bring them across the Jordan.
  - (a) Joshua tells them, you will see him not as a dull, senseless, lifeless *thing* like the idols of the nations, but a *Being* of life, power, and activity to defend you and work for you.
  - (b) The God of the Hebrews, **“the living God,”** proves himself by his ability to direct both nature and history.
  - (c) We see the same thing if we step back 40 years in the life of these Israelites to the time when God brought them out of Egypt.
    - (1) The power he demonstrated over the gods of the Egyptians – 10 plagues vs. 10 gods of Egypt
    - (2) The power he demonstrated as he led them to the Red Sea
    - (3) The power he demonstrated as he led them through the wilderness.
  - (d) His mighty hand was upon them and there should have been no way they forgot where the power came from – but; alas they had that is why now they were to set up these memorial stones.
- 4) Advance notice of just how he was going to do things combined with the miraculous result exactly as he had described it, would tend to increase and confirm their faith in the God of their fathers. 3:13-16
  - (a) These people went out to the Jordan expecting a miracle and they were not disappointed.
  - (b) We see that they were told that as soon as the soul of the feet of the priests who carried the ark **“shall rest in the waters of Jordan”** that the waters would be stopped up and they would be able to cross.
  - (c) Doubtless they had all heard their parents tell of how the Lord had dried up the Red Sea so they could cross and now this generation was going out expecting to see the same thing.

B. The same is true with us; we need to not forget nor take for granted what a miracle it was when the God of creation reached down from His might throne and cause the Holy Spirit to call us to the cross.

- 1) Pastor Smith, in his message last year at our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, gave us a warning.
  - (a) That warning was the real possibility that those of us who are 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent generation Christians might begin to take for granted the miraculous power it took to save a lost sinner.
  - (b) He said that 1<sup>st</sup> generation Christians Know God and his Power and are risk takers & their focus is on God; 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Christians Know God and know about his power, they are caretakers, their focus is on things; 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Christians know God & have heard about his power, their focus is on self and they become undertakers
  - (c) His point was that we must never forget what God delivered is with – **His Mighty power**
  - (d) We must never take for granted what it took to deliver us from our bondage; it was nothing of ourselves but His power.

C. **ILL:** . Pastor Richard Exley tells of a Puerto Rican woman called Black Evie who found Jesus when she had hit the bottom of the barrel. Evie was a drug addict. One day, Evie came down from a three-day high to find her infant daughter dead. Evie had no idea what had happened to her child. Not long afterwards, Evie suffered a mental breakdown and was sentenced to a hospital for the criminally insane. She descended into a catatonic, uncommunicative state.

A local pastor began visiting Evie in the hospital. Every day, he read Bible verses to her. She sat and stared straight ahead, not responding in any way. Seven months passed before the pastor broke through to Evie. One day, as he read to her from God's Word, a tear trickled down Evie's face. By the end of the week, Evie was out of her catatonic state. She prayed with the pastor and gave her life to Jesus. Today, Evie is the director of a rehabilitation program in Puerto Rico. --

D. One day, when they build that Memorial for those who lost their lives winning the war on terror it will be a memorial to the power of the USA that won the war...

E. When we look to the cross it is a memorial to the Power of God who caused us to win the battle over sin ***He wants us to remember What He has Delivered us From – Bondage & Sin, What He has Delivered us With – His Power, lastly He wants us to remember...***

3. ***What He has Delivered us For – A Witness*** Vv. 6-7, 20-23

A. We have memorials for a purpose and one of the most important reasons is so we can tell others about why we have them.

- 1) A couple of years ago Sally & I, Christiania and her family and Lisa and her husband all spent a week in Washington DC.
- 2) That place if nothing but memorials.
- 3) One of the things I remember most about it is hearing my daughters asking either me or their husbands what this memorial or that memorial was for
- 4) Or Tyler ask his dad; "Dad what does this mean?"

B. Let's go back in time 800 yrs before Christ.

- 1) Father and Son traveling in Israe
- 2) Son sees a pile of stones near the Jordan River
- 3) He looks up to his father and says, "What do these stones mean?"
- 4) The Father and son stop find a place to sit down and the father tells story of Israel's crossing the Jordan
- 5) Hear is a father and son now, Let us listen in on their conversation.
- 6) Tell the story – 40 years in wilderness; clothes not wearing out, manna, water from the rock etc.

C. Now come back to the present

- 1) Father and son sitting in worship
- 2) Son sees a baptism..."What does it mean?"
- 3) Then sees the Lord's Supper"...What does that mean?"
- 4) Then sees a lady get up and tell of how the Lords been with her... "What does it mean?"
- 5) Then notices that Old Red always smiles and shakes hands with people ... "What does it mean?"

D. One day a dad and his son will visit the memorial in NYC or at the Pentagon or in Washington DC for those who lost their lives fighting the war on terror and the son will say to the dad, "Dad, what does this mean?" and dad will be able to tell him all about that tragic day and the heroes who lost their lives trying to rescue men and women in the WTC or Pentagon or those who died in far away lands fighting the war on terror.

E. When we look at the cross we need to be able to tell people what it means too.

**Conclusion:** As we slow down this week to take time to remember the events of Sep 11, 2001 let us not to forget to remember what God has done in our lives; **Remember what God has delivered you from – bondage of sin; what he has delivered you with – his power, and what he has delivered you for – to be his witness.** Look at verse 24 this tells us why God even takes time to do all this..."...***that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord...***"