

On Eagles' Wings Pt 505

by Don Courville

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience, faith, and trust in God, and how these qualities are demonstrated through baptism and the symbolism of the Red Sea and the Jordan River.

Duration: 32:38

Scripture: Exodus 14:22, Joshua 3:9-10, Joshua 3:14, Joshua 4:9, Matthew 3:7-9, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Radio Show"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of remembering God's wonderful works through memorials. He uses the example of the rainbow as a memorial of God's covenant with Noah. The preacher also highlights the tendency of humans to forget, which is why God gave us signs and memorials to help us remember Him. Memorials are not only for our own remembrance but also to teach and prepare the next generation. The sermon then focuses on the story of Joshua and the crossing of the Jordan River, highlighting the significance of the 12 stones that were set up as a memorial of God's faithfulness.

Transcript

Exodus, chapter, let's see, 14, starting with verses 10 through 16. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them, and they were sore afraid. And the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord.

And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today. For the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more, forever.

The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me, Speaking to the children of Israel, that they go forward? But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. Let's pray.

Thank you, Father, for the word that you've given to us. And now we ask that you'd give us a living lesson this morning on what it means to be baptized when we follow the Lord in believer's baptism. And when we

go into the water, and we go under the water, and we come out, we ask that you'd teach us what this means.

And we ask that thy Spirit would minister to us this morning, and open up the word in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

Well, since last week we went to the river, and there were five of us that were baptized, I thought the next week after that would be a good time to just talk about that a little bit. Because that wasn't, as I said earlier, that wasn't a small decision to make. And the Lord had given us two types in the Old Testament about this.

This is one of them that we just read. And when the Lord told them to go forward, I've titled this message, Crossing Over. In order to get to the other side, they had to cross over.

And God made it so they could cross over on dry land. And of course, He put the circumstances there so that they would want to cross over as Pharaoh was there. And there's a lot of neat details in the background, how the Lord took His cloud and He put it back there between the Egyptians and themselves, speaking of His presence, and then how the Lord opened up and then He destroyed the army through that.

But that lesson was very important in pointing out the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. And we're going to stay here just a few minutes, and then we're going to go over to another one in the book of Joshua. But I just wanted to make a couple comments on this one.

And Israel had to cross through the Red Sea and the Jordan River to get to the other side. Many people do not understand that I believe this. The Scriptures tell us that it's a command of the Lord to be baptized.

And I believe there's a special blessing of God comes upon us. He gives us this when we follow Him and when we're baptized. One of those, I believe, will be a boldness to witness.

I've known many that had a fear of sharing their faith with others that also had let this fear keep them from being obedient to the Lord and being baptized. And then there's other things that it'll help you with in your life. It's just the first step of obedience.

It's hard to get to the second step until you've taken the first one. And so that's one of the things that this passage teaches us, that Israel could not have gotten out of Egypt if they had not obeyed the Lord and went through the Red Sea on the dry ground. And that was a picture of salvation.

The death to their self and burial into the sea, and then they come out on the other side into a new walk with Christ. And so when you went into the river and you stood there, and then you were placed under the water, that was saying that you had died to your old life, that you had received Christ as your Savior, that your sins were, so to say, buried in the sea, in the water, that you had been washed by the blood of the Lamb, and that you were rising up to walk a new life. Now, we don't believe that that baptism has anything to do with saving you, but it's a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and of your death to your old life, and of your burial to your old life, to your sins, and then rising to walk a new life of faith with Jesus.

And there's a lot of neat lessons in that. So there's lessons on salvation, but there's also lessons on victory. And when we get over to Joshua, Joshua takes us into the lessons of victory, a lot more.

But in both cases, a way was made for them to cross on dry land. Just like the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10, 13, about temptation, there's no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted with what? Above that you're able, but will with the temptation do what? Make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. God makes a way.

Jesus said, I am the way. Many will burn for eternity in hell because they just would not believe that God had provided the way of salvation for them by the shed blood of Christ on the cross. They thought they had to work for their salvation along with what Christ did.

But when Christ died on the cross, he said it was finished. And our baptism is just a testimony that we are trusting Christ for our Savior. Now, both the Red Sea and the Jordan speak of the death and the resurrection of Christ.

Each one has their, all their neat lessons about it. But the Jordan represented an entrance into the land that they had been out of for over 400 years. Now they were just, they'd been gone for a long time.

And now they're coming back into the land. And so when they went through the Jordan River, God stopped the waters there. And they were able to pass through and go over into the land there.

So baptism then is identification with Christ. And if you want to put in your notes, Romans chapter 6, that's a good chapter to look at. Those lessons are there.

And this one lesson, don't forget this one. Redemption is by the blood and the power of the resurrection of Christ. They would have never got out of Egypt.

They would have never experienced the resurrection life if they had not crossed. And that's something else. You cannot experience the victorious life.

You and I can't experience it. That's not saying that we don't have our failures and that we don't have our faults and that we don't slip sometimes. But you can't experience the victorious life until you learn the lessons of going across the Jordan River.

Because that was a resurrection life to them out of Egypt into the land of victory. Now we've got these 12 stones that we've put up here this morning and we moved them up so that we could see them a little bit better. But let's turn over to Joshua.

Joshua chapter 3. And there's a lot here and I think what we'll do is, I don't have a lot of notes or anything left on this, I just had a few comments. But I'd like to take the passage of Scripture that we have and I would like to just read through some of these verses. And let's just read the Word of God and let God minister to us.

And as we go through it, if you want to glance up every now and then at these stones, these 12 stones represent something. And by the way, there were not just 12 stones set up there at the crossing. There were 24 stones set up there at the crossing.

We'll go through that and you'll see that 12 were set on the other side, 12 were set in Jordan that are probably still there to this day. If you want to go back and wade the creek and try to find them, I wouldn't be surprised but what you might not just find those 12 stones still there. Now the ones that were set up on the other side, I don't know if they're still there.

I couldn't get, when I was over in Israel, I couldn't go down to the Jordan River because I had hired a cab driver one day and I said, I want you to take me down to the Jordan River. And he said, no Abbie, I won't take you down there. And I said, why? He said, they'll shoot at us from both sides down there.

This was back in 1968 and things were still pretty hot down there at the river. But I believe it would be interesting to go down and try to find those stones. Now in Joshua, in chapter 3, let's see where it would be a good spot to start.

And let's just read through here and we'll make a comment here and there. But I want you to just ask God to show you the lesson of the stones, of the stones, the lesson of the stones because they were important. They were important for several reasons.

When we're done, I'll make these four or five comments about those stones. Okay, let's see, a good spot maybe would be, we need to go through chapter 4. And so if we would start off maybe in chapter 3 in verse 14, I think that would be a good spot. I wrote that down.

Let's see if that's right. Yes, 3.14. You know the story, but let's just go over it and see if God can give us some special meaning this morning. Chapter 3 of Joshua and verse 14, And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people.

Remember, the ark represented the presence of God with them. And as they that bear the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bear the ark were dipped in the brim of the water. For Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest, that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam that is beside Zaretan.

And those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, felled and were cut off. And the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

Chapter 4 of Joshua, And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, and command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones. Now where did they get those stones? Right there where the priests were standing, right? And ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place which ye shall lodge this night. Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel. So they weren't just like these little Missouri rocks here. They were probably pretty good stones to have to carry it on their shoulder.

And so they picked up these good-sized stones, and they're carrying them across to the other side. One stone to represent each tribe. Notice how God let there be a representation amongst the people.

Even as today He's ordained that amongst the congregation in the church there is to be a representation by the elders of the people. Okay, let's keep going. Verse 6, that this may be a sign among you, that when

your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, when it passed over Jordan.

The waters of Jordan were cut off, and these stones shall be for memorial unto the children of Israel forever. I don't know if you realize it or not, but Jordan has the meaning of judgment. God had cut off the judgment.

This is why there's no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. He stopped the judgment. He has held back His judgment by the blood of Christ, and so we're able to cross over on dry land and live in victory because He has dealt with the judgment that would have been upon us for our sins.

And so He wanted them to move on, not just out of Egypt and into the wilderness for their training period. By the way, He didn't plan on them being there for 40 years. That was their idea.

He planned on them probably just being there a couple of months while He gave them the law, and then they went on up there. But when He brought them to the land the first time, they would not go in. You remember that? Because He sent in the 12 spies, and 10 of them had a bad, evil report, and two of them said, Let's go.

God's with us. This is it. And so they had to experience a judging because they would not enter the land.

And they brought that upon themselves. And if we will not enter into the victorious life that Christ has given us, then we will experience the defeat of a believer that God didn't intend us to have. And so when you were baptized, boys and girls, not only was it saying that you had died to your own life of being disobedient, and disrespectful, and rebellious, and all of that, that you had received Christ as your Savior, this was your testimony, but that also you're coming up to live victorious now.

You see, when you receive Christ as your Savior, not only did He deliver you from the power of sin and the penalty of sin, which is the power of sin, is now that you have the ability to say no to sin and to say yes to the Holy Spirit. He delivered you from the power of sin, and He delivered you from the penalty of sin, but someday it's a testimony that He's going to deliver you from the presence of sin. And so that's a testimony.

That's a testimony. And I don't know if you noticed it, but there were some unsaved people that stopped at the river to watch and see what was going on. And that was a testimony.

God could take that testimony without them being able to even hear what was being said and speak to their heart about their need for Jesus. And I've seen people get saved just watching a baptism. So that was a testimony.

Now, let's get back to where we were. In verse 7, let's go back again. "...then ye shall answer them that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord when it passed over Jordan." The ark passed over, and they were following it.

"...when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off, and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever." This is why I wonder if they're not still there inside the river, down under the water. "...and the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And

Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bear the ark of the covenant stood, and they are there unto this day." Now there's two sets of stones.

Now Joshua alone, because he represented the Lord Jesus Christ, set up the twelve stones in the middle of the river. The twelve on the other side, on the Gilgal side and the Jericho side, were set up by the twelve tribes of Israel, but because Christ was represented in Joshua, he did that alone. That was his duty, to do that alone, as the Scripture says.

Verse 10, "...for the priests which bear the ark stood in the midst of Jordan until everything was finished." Remember when the Lord said on the cross, it is finished? Everything was finished for you to be saved, and all you had to do was receive Christ, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Your believing and your receiving would be the same thing. It's believing.

Now he said this, "...set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests," verse 9 is where I'm at, "...which bear the ark of the covenant stood, and they are there unto this day," 10, "...for the priests which bear the ark stood in the midst of Jordan until everything was finished, that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people according to all that Moses commanded Joshua. And the people hastened and passed over." Have you ever noticed how the people hurried over? Do you know why they were hurrying over? I don't know how long it would take for two or three million people to cross the river, but it could have taken a little while, because the priests that were holding the ark had to stand there all of that time, and all that water was piled up. There is a sense of urgency that's put upon us when we become Christians, to move quickly out of the wilderness area into the victorious life.

There is a sense of urgency directed by the Spirit of God that you don't linger, but that you move on over. And maybe you've been lingering at something that God is wanting you to get over, get victory on. And they had a concern for the leaders there holding the priests.

They knew that they only had so much ability to stand there and hold that ark. And so they were considerate also of their leaders. That's why we're told to pray for those that have the rule over us, and to have consideration too.

Now, let's look at verse 11. It came to pass when all the people were cleaned, passed over, that the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests in the presence of the people, and the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh passed over, armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them. About 40,000 prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle to the plains of Jericho.

And that's a whole other lesson on that. But God, whenever He moves you forward and moves the churches forward, He always has His armed warriors to move ahead to prepare the way for the people and for the churches. Many churches are experiencing defeat because the prepared warriors are not allowed to do their work first.

We'll just stop there on that and move on ahead on the stones. Let's get back to the stones. Verse 14, On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they feared him as they feared Moses all the days of his life.

Verse 15, Joshua 4, verse 15, And the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony that they come up out of Jordan. Joshua therefore commanded the priests,

saying, Come ye up out of Jordan. And it came to pass, when the priests that bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks as they did before.

What's the ark represent? The presence of the Lord. So the ark of the covenant of the Lord now has come up out of the midst, and then the judgment waters come back down. There can be some lessons on the fact that one of these days Christ is going to come, and then His judgment is going to come on this earth.

When He comes to take the church out, then the judgment waters are going to come upon the earth, and there will be the seven years of tribulation. Okay, in verse 19, And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.

Now pitch doesn't mean he just chunked them down, but I believe as we did this morning, and we set the stones up, he had an order for them. That's what it means. They were put in order, and probably put in a pile that would be noticeable.

Now in verse 20, And those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then you shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until you were passed over as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up from before us until we were gone over.

Both of them are mentioned there, the Red Sea and the Jordan River together. Until we were gone over. God's intention is for you to get over.

To get into Christ, to receive your Savior, and to get over on the side of victory. Verse 24, That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you might fear the Lord your God forever. And it did.

You go to the next verse, And it came to pass, When all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was their spirit in them any more because of the children of Israel. When we do what God tells us to do, when we do what God tells us to do, there will be a trembling in the camp of the enemy. Because the enemy knows when we're obedient, there will be power in our lives.

God's wonderful works are to be remembered. If you want to jot down these four or five lessons. God's wonderful works are to be remembered.

You remember when God finished with Noah? He put a memorial for the whole earth to remember. What's that memorial? The rainbow. His wonderful works are to be remembered.

Another lesson, and I believe this one, He gave us the signs because we're so prone to forget. As often as we do this, He said, as often as you do this, remember me as we have the communion and the baptism. And Satan has his ways to take the memorials of God and try to twist them in to some kind of something else.

Something else. Memorials are to teach us and to prepare us for the next generation. We do the memorials as a memory.

And that's what they say, hey dad, suppose they're walking down the road and the kids look over there at this pile of stones, hey dad, father, what's that pile of stones over there for? Oh, kids, you don't know this? Come on over here, I want to show you this. And they probably did that year after year after year. And He'd tell them the stories.

They just told the stories over and over again. I believe that's good for the parents to tell their children the stories of how God's worked in their life. You know, we go around the country, there are memorials all over the place.

Last year, this time we were out in Washington, D.C., and there are memorials all over the place. I remember taking our family down through Vicksburg one time and we drove through mile after mile after mile of these memorials. There's memorials around here.

Memorials are so that we will, what, remember, remember, we have Memorial Day. One other thing, these stones spoke of corporate unity under God's leadership. They had unity under God's leadership.

Anytime there's not unity in a fellowship, unity in a church, then that's a testimony that the leadership is not all with the Spirit of God, because the Spirit of God gives unity in the church. They took one man from each tribe. You remember when Elijah dealt with the prophets of Baal? How many stones did he stack up? Twelve.

He was saying, I am standing in the stead and representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Even though those guys were all chickens and maybe hiding around and wherever, he was there and saying he represented the twelve tribes of Israel and he was standing there for God. And it doesn't matter if it's just you and four hundred prophets of Baal.

God is going to get the victory. Elijah had the victory because he had crossed over and he was God's man. And God wants you, boys and girls, and us moms and dads, to be his man, his woman, his boy or girl on the other side of the Jordan to stand there against the enemy.

Let me give you this one little neat thing in closing. One day Jesus was teaching down at the Jordan River and the scripture says, if I've got the right one, but when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits, meat for repentance. And then the Lord said this, And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.

For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And if you can imagine Jesus standing there and pointing over to this pile of stones and saying, God is able to raise up from this pile of stones children. What would you think if that was the very pile of stones that the children of Israel had piled up there many years before? You think, boy, that would really be neat, wouldn't it? How do you know it wasn't? Because John says that that was the house of, I don't have it marked and I'd probably mispronounce it.

But it was in John chapter, oh, I wrote that in my bio, 128, the house of Bethabara, I think it was. You know what that means? The house of passage, it was right there by the Jordan River. And I think that was the very spot where they crossed, and later on they had, somebody threw up a little village there or whatever,

and it was called the house of passage.

And right there is that pile of stones, and the Lord, He just pointed over there and He said that He was able to, God was able to raise up children out of those stones. That's sort of an interesting little thing, isn't it? That God is saying that He can take something that is considered a pile of stones and make something out of it and bring life to it. Now I want to close up with this one thing with you.

The Bible says that you are a stone. You say, really? Yes. If you have received Christ as your Savior, and you have trusted the blood of Christ for your salvation, and you have followed Him in believer's baptism, and you've been obedient to Him, which is why we're talking about that this week.

You went down to the river, five of you went down last week, and gave a testimony. And when we're through with this service, we'll give you an opportunity if you'd like to give a verbal testimony of your salvation. But you gave a testimony that you were a living stone.

Without Christ, spiritually you're dead. But when you receive Christ, you become a living stone. And Peter said, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

So what God is doing to us, He's piling us together, making us living stones, lively stones. For what? To build up a spiritual house. God wants to dwell in the midst of us, and He does.

But the more we allow Him to have the freedom to be the Lord and to lead and guide us, the more testimony of life there is among the stones, both corporately and also individually. Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. So the pile of stones was a memorial.

The baptism that we had last week was a memorial, a testimony of what God's done in our lives. Let's pray. Thank you, Father, for giving us these lessons this morning.

And Lord, we thank you for these five that gave an expression of their faith in Christ last week. And we just ask you to bless them for their taking their stand and their boldness, and for the opportunity also to look at what was done. And now we pray that you'd continue to lead us as we move on, in Jesus' name, amen.

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