

## MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

### Memorial Stones

**Overview:** When our brother Tom Allen leads the IU Football Team out onto the field, they pass by “Hep’s Rock.” Initially found buried in the practice field, it was moved to a more prominent location as a publicity stunt by Coach Hep. After he passed away, “The Rock” was renamed and along with it comes the inspirational memories. The Bible contains a story of 12 memorial stones that serve a similar purpose.

**God Working In Us:** Denny Smith

#### Segment Questions:

- Why do you think God thought that these Memorial Stones were needed by the Israelites?
- In addition to why this Memorial might be “*needed*”, if you read the scripture from Chapter 4 again, can you think of any additional benefits from this Memorial.
- God clearly intends these memorial stones to help strengthen the faith of the Israelites in the future, knowing that they will need help and encouragement.
  - When and how have you experienced situations or seasons of weakness in your faith, and needed God’s help to get through it?
  - Share some examples of things that serve as Memorial Stones for you personally. In other words, things or experiences that remind you of God’s presence and faithfulness in your life?
- To what extent, if any, does hearing the stories of the Memorial Stones in other peoples lives ever serve as Memorial Stones for you?

#### Action Questions:

- Take 2-3 minutes individually to think about other examples of personal “Memorial Stones” in your faith walk. Write down just a couple of words to label each one.
  - How many did you think of?
  - How often and how do you reflect on Memorial Stones in your own life?
  - Might it help to be intentional about reflecting on them more often?
- Are there any other “takeaways” from this lesson for you?

## Introduction

As a child and young adult I did not believe in God. I was 28 when I first understood the Gospel message, and soon after accepted Christ. Over the 44 years since I accepted Christ my faith walk has not been one of constant steady growth. There have been periods, or what I call seasons of my life, when I felt closely connected to God, and was on fire in my commitment and service to Him. I have had other calmer seasons of solid and steady growth, but I have also had seasons of doubt, self-centeredness, and laziness.

Fortunately, God understands that we will go through these many different seasons. His constant and unfailing love means that he never condemns us when our faith is weak, and we are in seasons of doubt, complacency, or even rebellion. God is with us through those times and he uses many ways to get us through them, and to restore and strengthen our faith. One of those ways is what I will refer to as “Memorial Stones.”

In the book of Joshua, Chapter 3, Moses has just died, and the Lord has called Joshua to lead the Israelite people into the land the Lord had promised them 40 years before. However, they had to cross the Jordan River to take the land from those who inhabited it. Joshua Chapter 3 verse 9 reads: “Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.”

It is then that God miraculously parts the water of the river Jordan so that the Israelites can walk across.

Then in chapter 4 we read: “When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay the night.”

Then Joshua tells the people “Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, “What do these stones mean? Tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.”

My purpose through this lesson, and our discussion questions, is to think about how and why God uses what I am choosing to describe as Memorial Stones in the lives of His people, and specifically how you see He has used them in your life.