

Joshua 4

²⁰ And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. ²¹ And he said to the people of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?' ²² then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.'²³ 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, ²⁴ 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." *ESV*

*Please read Joshua Chapter 4. **Forgetfulness is the enemy of faith.*** The new generation of Israel followed the Ark of the Covenant, the priests and Joshua faithfully on dry ground through the burgeoning Jordan River-bed and to the west-ward shore. There, the LORD commanded them to build a memorial that would serve as a marking of this moment of God's faithful deliverance for future generations. This memorial would be the first of many in the new land. It was meant to be a commitment to perpetuate the testimonies of God's delivering grace.

God knows that in the heart of man exists fear, doubt and forgetfulness which lead man quickly away from trust in Him. His special instructions were given as an act of gracious guidance for the time to come when some would become forgetful of His mighty and gracious acts. The memorial was not meant to be an idol distracting people from looking unto the LORD. **Memorials can easily become idols when there is forgetfulness of Who it is that they are meant to remind us of.**

"Glorifying the past is a good way to petrify the present and rob the church of its power."

--Warren Weirsbe

God commanded Moses to teach the people,

Deuteronomy 8

¹⁷ "Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.'¹⁸ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who

*gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. ¹⁹ And if you **forget** the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God."*

Our faith can grow anemic when we fail to rehearse the ways in which God has delivered us, beginning with our eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is at the very beginning and foundation of every true memorial of God's provision in the believers' life. In the Gospel is a proclamation of the works of God imbedded within each of the works of Jesus Christ in the redemption that He has provided. Followers of God pass on the hope of deliverance to others and future generations each time they direct hearts to the memorials of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is discipleship. And it is clearly what God was instructing Israel to do. Making much of God while engaging with others is what it means to make disciples. When we compassionately compel others to look upon the LORD in faith, believing that He alone can deliver them from the power of sin and condemnation, we are obeying the LORD's command through-out Scripture.

Memorials are not meant to be curated as treasures in the museum of religious tradition. They are meant to be testimonies of transformation. **Spiritual transformation is when the heart that has been entangled in unbelief and rebellion against God is forever changed into a heart of trust in the saving promises of eternal reward found in Jesus Christ alone.**

Memorials are helpful reminders of God's powerful works. The Psalmist commits to faithfully declaring God's wondrous works so that generations to follow will look upon God with saving faith. He understands that forgetfulness is the enemy of faith.

Psalm 78

¹Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! ²I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, ³things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. ⁴We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. ⁵He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, ⁶that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, ⁷so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; ⁸and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

This Memorial Day (see v. 19) for Israel was doubly significant. 40 years prior, to the day, Israel had first faithfully obeyed God's instruction to set aside the Passover Lamb (Ex. 12.2-3). This 10th plague, directed by the hand of the Lord against Egypt and Pharaoh, was two-fold in its affect. 1. It was judgment upon the rebellion of oppressive Egypt and 2. It was deliverance for those who would trust in God's appointed means—the offering of an unspotted lamb.

In time to come, the descendants of these immigrants would pass by the memorial. They would inquire about its nature. It would provide a rich opportunity to extol the rescuing graces of God and impress young hearts the trustworthiness of the covenant-keeping God, Jehovah.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the enemy of faith?
2. What are some other enemies of faith?
3. When can a memorial become an idol? (What is an idol?)
4. Why is it so important to continually rehearse the deliverance of God?
5. Who is at the foundation of the greatest provision of God?
6. What is spiritual transformation and why is it more important than religious tradition?

If you have any questions or want to discuss anything in these weekly lessons, please be sure to contact me! Brad.Jury@Capitol.Com.org

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