

## **The Seasons of Life- *The Power of Remembering***

Joshua 4:1-7

We have spent the month of May looking at various seasons of life, from the season of childhood, Motherhood, Graduations of various kinds, also the season of marriage. All of these areas of life demand their own series at the very minimum, but we end this series today in this Seasons series on what we call the Power of Remembering.

There comes a season, and we can be touched by it at any age, when the way things were is over, and things move from present tense to past tense. From “This is Current – to this is History” What is left are memories of a person, or of a season that touched your life. We would not necessarily think it at first, but this is by far the most powerful season of any persons life, because if handled correctly it becomes the number one motivator for helping a person move forward.

Establishing a proper way of thinking about history, whether a personal history or a national history is always the right ingredient for a solid future.

In the Library of Congress, there are 8 giant pillars that surround the great rotunda that is the main reading room in the library and there are 8 statues and pillars representing the 8 pillars that make societies great.

They are Philosophy, Poetry, Law, History, Religion, Art, Science and Commerce

Each pillar has a statue and an engraved sign above it. You know what the engraved sign above history is that our forefathers chose to write – “One God, One Law, One Element, and One Far-Off Divine Event to which the Whole Creation Moves”

This is saying that we are all connected, and even if we move from one season to another, there is something that binds us all together.

Sometimes we have to be reminded of this corporately or individually

I have seen it haven't you. A person experiences the end of a season. Perhaps they lost a loved one, maybe it was a divorce, maybe it was the loss of some sort of personal mobility through a tragedy or through the natural aging process, and suddenly a new season has been ushered into their life. The old is gone and the new has come.

Some people look at these new seasons and they refuse to move forward. On the other hand there are people who look at these new seasons and make an internal decision to let the rich history of their past seasons propel them forward to make new seasons that are just as filled with all the richness that life has to offer.

<p>Story: Many of you know that my mother passed away this past March 1, 2011. What you don't know is that in August of 1996 my father passed away and for my mother the day my father died, we lost her as well. For the next 14 and 1/2 years, we her family watched her retreat to a place that we were unable to reach her. Life kept moving</p>
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along but meaningful contact was gone.

Obviously part of the way we have handled this as her family is we have realized how deep her love was for her husband, my Dad, and that gives all of us good feelings about the 54 years they spent together as husband and wife.

But never being able to transition into a new season left us sometimes confused, most times it left us just sad

The question becomes if we have faced or are facing a season ending time in our life, what are the principles we can draw from scripture that will help us know how to face this new season without feeling as if we are abandoning or dishonoring the past.

The Israelites had for 40 years known nothing but desert living. It may not have been the greatest of lives, but they were safe and secure. One day Joshua declares to the whole nation that a new season was upon them and they had to cross the Jordan River and they would never return to life as they had known it. Thus began a very visual picture of how to transition from one season to the next without losing the richness of the past.

The first step in making a successful transition into the next season of life, is to actually just make the move. To cross the Jordan.

## 1. Crossing The Jordan (Slide)

To move from one place where everything is familiar to another place where everything is unknown. It will not be easy. In Joshua 3:15, a few verses earlier we find out that the Jordan is at **flood stage** at the time of the crossing.

You know God, you are God, you could have picked an easier time for us to cross the Jordan. Sometimes during the year the Jordan is just a little stream, but you had to pick flood stage.

All too often, the change from the old season to the new comes at flood stage.

The priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant were commanded to enter the water, and verse 15 ends by saying, as soon as their foot hit the water, the water upstream stopped flowing and it created dry ground for the whole nation to cross. Sometimes we just have to take the step. We pick up the story in Chapter 4

*(Slide) "When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, Choose 12 men...and tell them to take up 12 stones from the middle of the Jordan, right where the priests are standing..." Joshua 4:1-3a*

So here we are, the move had been made. But note a couple of things. The priests had no idea when they touched that water that it would do what it did, which was to stop flowing. So even in crossing they first of all:

### A. They Risked their Lives (Slide)

The people, including Joshua took the chance that the water would not return to flood stage and sweep them all away. They did it together. Everyone had a stake in the game. Were there a dozen other options that day, maybe. But they chose to move as one unit. They chose to follow the lead that was given them and risk their lives and in so doing they became a nation with a whole new future.

And secondly, they:

### B. They Witnessed a Miracle (Slide)

The story says, *Choose 12 men...and tell them to take up 12 stones from the middle of the*

*Jordan, right where the priests are standing... ”*

The priests were the ones carrying the Ark of the Covenant, everyone in the entire nation knew that that was the traveling Holy of Holies. It was in essence, the nation of Israel's Declaration of Independence. It was the Ten Commandments. And the priests were in the middle of the river bed and the entire nation had to pass by that Ark, being held by those priests and the entire nation also knew that the waters were being held back because of the presence of that article in the middle of that river bed. God was delivering the nation. Their entire existence was based on the presence of God in their midst, and everyone passed by these priests who were standing holding it.

The first step in successfully moving from one season that has passed to another season that has come is to understand that God is the reason for your existence. His presence among us thoroughly acknowledged is the glue that holds one season to another. The glory and joy of one time in your life can and will be the glory and joy of another. The names and places may change but God remains.

As those people passed by the Ark, they knew that the same God who was with them in the desert was going to be with them on the other side.

The same God who has been with you in the season that is gone, is the same God who will be with you in this next season.

The second step of a successful transition from one season to another. Has to do with the meaning of the stones that these men were to pick up

## 2. What Do These Stones Mean? (Slide)

*(Slide) “Each of you is to take up a stone...to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them...” Joshua 4:6*

The stones were just river rock. They had no meaning a part from the meaning God was directing Joshua to give them. They were *to serve as a sign among you*, is what the verse said.

A sign that God had called them to be a nation

A sign that God had delivered them from slavery

A sign that God had kept his promise and brought them to a land flowing with milk and honey

A sign that God would be their God and be with them through everything

So the second step in a successful transition is to have a physical reminder, something that connects the past to the future. God chose River Stones as a sign of remembrance of not just the past but also of the future. We are to take the time in meaningful ways and tell our children of the richness of our past, so that they can understand the future for the gift that it is.

As a people we cannot live only in the past. Only doing things that we have always done, neither can we live only in the future forgetting what has happened to get us where we are.

We must plan and live toward a future that God has prepared for us, being always influenced by our past that He guided us through.

Then we live successfully move to the final step that sealed the deal for the nation of Israel, which became an:

### 3. Unforgotten History (Slide)

That they have repeated to each other ever sense.

Verse 7 says:

*(Slide) "These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever." Joshua 4:7*

It was not the stones. It was the meaning behind them and it would be a memorial forever, of who they were, and what really held them together. The stones represented how God was their God forever.

Of the 8 pillars of society that surround the great reading room in Library of Congress in our Nations Capital, two of them are Religion & Science. Here are the engraving above each of those two pillars.

**Religion** – What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Micah

**Science** – The heavens declare the Glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Psalm

Last week our family had the opportunity to gather in Washington D.C. for the graduation of one of our daughters, from Law School at Georgetown Univ. While we were there (show picture) we got a chance to stop at the Lincoln Memorial, and the Korean War Memorial, as well as the WWar II Memorial and it gave me a chance to stop and think about what has gone before me and what kinds of Jordan Rivers people have had to cross in order for me to experience life in all its richness like I do.

(9am – Next hour at the end of the service we will play a short video, honoring those who have risked their lives and seen the miracle that have taken place so that we can be one nation under God)

(10:30 – Let me just show a short video, no this is not us, but it is a visual reminder of the stones of remembrance that have been erected so that we will never forget the people who have risked their lives and the miracles that have taken place so that we can be one nation under God. – **Play Video Here**)

What is important is that we play our part in this new season, we must never forget the past, so I want you to pick up a stone, one per family today, and I want you to take it home and write on a word of blessing for the future. Then I want you to place it on a shelf in your home somewhere, where you can see it. In weeks, months and years to come as we have seasons of transition from the old to the new, we will ask you to bring the stone back to church to remind us that God is always with us.