

# Memorial Stones

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Take your Bibles, go to Joshua chapter 4, Joshua, back toward the beginning of the Old Testament, Joshua chapter 4. Memorial Day, the official beginning of summer for those of us here in Maine.

A lot of people today, this weekend, are out getting their camps ready for summer. A lot of people are getting ready to have cookouts and barbecues and family gatherings and things.

You know, we never need to forget, though, what the day is actually for. The day is for remembering those who have served, those who have given their lives.

That we have the freedoms that we still have. Freedoms of being eroded, but we still have more freedoms than anybody in the world, probably.

God has blessed us with people who have given of themselves to give us those freedoms.

[ 1 : 2 0 ] Matthew is about to go off. He's joining the Air Force here in the next month. He's joining a special part of the Air Force.

I don't know how many of you know that they have another special part to the Air Force now called the Space Force. And he will be working with that area of the Air Force.

You ever played asteroids on things, you know? And that's not what he's doing. Okay? So. But he is going to be in the Space Force. And I'm looking forward to hearing from Matthew and the things that happen while he's there.

I'm looking forward to be a testimony while he's there for the Lord Jesus Christ. So. Congratulations, Matthew. And we'll be praying for you. Freedom.

Freedom. Freedom in the rights we have as a nation. We would not have them if it were not for people who are willing to go and give their lives for what we have.

[ 2 : 3 5 ] You can see behind me, the title is Memorial Stones. Title I got from somebody else. And some of this comes from other people and stuff. Some of it would be my own.

But I want you to think about Memorial Stones. We have Memorial Stones. You can see in the pictures behind me. We have Memorial Stones. Those cemeteries are full of them.

Where we remember people. We have others in different places. My dad is buried over in Heartland. And so is some of his brothers.

Mom and dad. And there are things. There will be flags on some of their graves because they were in the wars. There's a monument by the Palmyra Town Hall.

Well, what used to be the Palmyra Town Hall. It has my dad, two of my uncles' names on there because they fought in the wars and stuff. So we try to remember the people who went and especially those who died for our freedoms.

[ 3 : 4 8 ] We choose a day to look back at the past. We choose a day where we can remember. Because if we don't look back at the past, we won't be sure where we're going in the future.

That's why I'm so sad about the fact that so many of our monuments are being taken down. A philosopher from the last century by the name of George Santayana.

He said this. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. And that's a pretty true statement. If we don't remember, we might get caught up in the same things.

And I see our country heading that way. We're getting rid of things and we're starting to head the same direction on some things. Look with me in Joshua chapter 4, beginning at verse 1.

And it says, 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.

[ 5 : 01 ] And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of the Jordan, out of the place where the priest's foot stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place where ye shall lodge this night.

And 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 ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of tribes of the children of Israel.

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 the Jordan, and the waters of Jordan were cut off.

And these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever. And the children of Israel did so, as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the 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 a place where they lodged and laid them down there.

And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the 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.

[ 6 : 44 ] Let's have a word of prayer. Father, again, we ask for your help. Lord, we're preaching your word. Lord, we're giving your word out to these folks, Lord, and pray that you would just guide the words that we say.

Lord, that you would just help us to give your meaning, your sense, what you have for us, Lord, to remind us to remember.

Lord, help us to remember those who have gone before us. Help us to remember those in a Christian life who have gone before us. Lord, help us to remember Jesus Christ who went before us, made the way for us.

Lord, may we be reminded again today just how important that is. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. You know, as you think about the men and women who came before us and made all these freedoms possible for us, one thing comes to mind.

I've preached about this and I've been preaching about different prophets of God. They were all simple people. They were all people just like us.

[ 8 : 07 ] They were all people who could have been living our lives at this point in time. They're not necessarily special people.

They're ordinary people. But God used them for extraordinary things. God had his hand upon them. They were driven by a love of God, a love of family, and a love of country.

When we look at our lives, what drives us? It should be those three same things. Love of God, love of family, love of country.

I want to talk about one of those men this morning. Patrick Henry. Patrick Henry was a statesman and orator from colonial Virginia.

In 1764, he was elected to the House of Burgesses, which was the Virginia legislature, where he was a champion for the frontier people against all the aristocratic-type people who were trying to run everything.

[ 9 : 15 ] He wanted the people in the frontier to be able to have a word and have a say in what happened in their colony as well. In 1774, he was a delegate to the First Continental Congress.

In 1775, he was before the Virginia Provincial Convention, which was deeply divided between people who wanted to stay and support the King of England and those who desired freedom.

It was at that meeting that he gave his famous words, give me liberty or give me death. During the Revolutionary War, he became a commander-in-chief of Virginia's military forces, a member of the Second Continental Congress.

He helped draw up the first constitution for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and he was largely responsible for drawing up many of the amendments to the constitution that we know as the Bill of Rights.

He became Virginia's first governor. He was re-elected four times. Then he retired from public life. But despite his strong objections, the people elected him to be governor for a fifth time, he refused to take the office.

[ 10 : 27 ] He put his own term limits in place. He was offered a seat in the U.S. Senate. He was offered post as Ambassador of Spain and to France.

President George Washington asked him to join his cabinet and become Secretary of State. And later, he wanted him to join him as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

This is a man who wielded a lot of influence, had a lot of influence on others. But he refused to take all of those positions, all of those honors, all of those recognitions.

What did he do instead? He made statements and talked and orated about the condition of the country and how it should be. One of his more famous statements is one you don't hear very much around here anymore.

It would not fly well in today's age. This is what he said. You'll be behind me. It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians.

[ 11 : 42 ] Not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ. This was one of our founding fathers making a statement like that. It wasn't by the deist and all of those people.

It was by Christians, he said, that this country was founded. He believed it so much that his last will and testament, which was filed in Brookdale County in the courthouse there in Virginia, you can read it for yourself, but here's what the last paragraph of his will said.

He said, I have now given everything I own to my children. There is one thing more I wish I could give them and that is Christ.

Because if they have everything I gave them and don't have Christ, they have nothing. Whoa.

This is one of our founding fathers. And this is the way he lived his life. He lived it for Jesus Christ.

[ 12 : 52 ] He lived it for God, family, and country. It's just amazing when you look at somebody like Patrick Henry, a simple man, but foremost, he loved the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're simple people. What's the number one love of our life? It should be Jesus Christ. In our passage today, God is directing his people to remember the Israelites had just finished 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

All of the people who left Israel as slaves are now dead. It's a new generation. Except for Joshua and Caleb.

That's about it. Moses has died. Joshua is now in charge. He's leading the people. And they're about to enter the promised land, finally.

And as they get ready to go over, there's a huge obstacle. The Jordan River. And the Jordan River is not at a dry season. It's not, you know, like they could find some shallow spot they could walk through.

[ 14 : 05 ] It's a flood stage. And they have to go across. And as they get ready to go across, God tells Joshua exactly what to do.

And as soon as the feet of the priest carrying the Ark of the Covenant touch the water, it's split. just like at the Red Sea.

This is no less of a miracle than at the Red Sea. God is showing the next generation exactly what he showed the previous generation. Showing them his power.

His willingness to lead them. His willingness to guide them. His willingness to take care of them. And he divides the river and they walk across on dry ground.

Look at Joshua 4 there. Look at verse 4 and 5 again. Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel out of every tribe a man.

[ 15 : 04 ] And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the Ark of the Lord of your God into the midst of the Jordan and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel.

God commanded Joshua to gather twelve stones. He says, I want every man from every tribe a man from every tribe to take a stone and I want them to carry it across the river to the other side where you're going to encamp tonight.

And they did. They got on the west side of the river and that night they put those twelve stones down and they Joshua used them to build an altar and they named the place Gilgal which means a circle of stones.

They built a stone memorial to be reminded of what God had done there at the river. Now, do we have reminders today?

We do. We have reminders about what God has done for us. See that over there? That cross?

[ 16 : 25 ] That reminds us of what God has done for us. Jesus Christ came to this world, gave his life, he died, he was buried, he rose again, he ascended back into heaven to conquer death and sin and to provide us a home in heaven with him for all eternity.

That is a reminder. What was once considered a very cruel form of death, torturous, is now a symbol of Christianity.

It reminds us that Jesus Christ went to a cross but he did not stay there. He rose again and that is where our salvation comes from.

We're reminded of that. On a regular basis, we do the Lord's table. That table reminds us of what Jesus did for us.

do this. Nope, you can't see it at the moment because of the cloth over it but if you were to look at the front of that table, it says do this in remembrance of me.

[ 17 : 50 ] Why is that table there? It's there to be a reminder of what Jesus did for us. Behind me, you can't see it because it's covered up but there's a baptismal back there.

that baptismal is a reminder of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We died itself. We rise in remembrance of Jesus' resurrection.

resurrection. This pulpit that I have here is a reminder of the fact that God's word is the most important thing of our life.

It is the center of everything that happens in this church and it's because this is where the word of God sits and is preached. We have reminders all around us.

Do we take the time to remember what Jesus did for us? We show up to church. We come and we visit with people.

[ 18 : 57 ] We have good fellowship together. We have time together. But do we remember what he did for us and what he has given for us?

Look at verse six and seven again. 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 was passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel.

When their children asked, what do these stones mean? they were supposed to have an answer. If you were to translate that literally from the Hebrew, what are these stones to you?

It was a personal question. Dad, what are those stones? What do they mean to you? Why are they there? And the dads were supposed to be ready to give them an answer of what was going on.

[ 20 : 12 ] Look down in verse 21. Verse 21 says, 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 ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan from before you, until ye 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.

Fathers, tell your children what God has done for you. Tell your children. You notice what it doesn't say? It doesn't say, Go ask your Sunday school teacher.

It doesn't say, Go ask the preacher. It doesn't say, Go ask your teacher in school. It doesn't say, Go ask your neighbor. He says, Fathers, when they come, I could have used this as a Father's Day message.

Not going to, but I could have. Fathers, when they ask you, what are you going to tell them? You think about the breakdown of the family in this country.

[ 21 : 34 ] How devastating has that been to our country? Where fathers are not there anymore? And the fathers who are there can't tell their children because they don't know themselves.

Because their fathers never taught them what the word of God says. We need to make sure that we are teaching our children what this word says.

We have a nation that has forgotten. We have a nation that has failed to teach their children. The stuff that I just showed you back here on the screen for quotes and things, that's not taught in our schools anymore.

You would never hear that in a school. That Patrick Henry was a Christian and said the country was founded by Christians. That would never happen. There's other things out there that we could be teaching them that we have not done.

First people came, the pilgrims. when they came to Plymouth, before they even got off the ship, they formed what was called the Mayflower Compact.

[ 22 : 45 ] Mayflower Compact. List of things that they're going to abide by. As a people, we're going to do this so that we can live together peacefully. We're going to do these things.

Why did they do that? Quote, having undertaken for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith and the honor of our king and country.

Why were they here? Undertaken for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith. They were being persecuted for their beliefs.

They came here so they could worship God the way that they wanted to. Our first president, George Washington, he kept a prayer journal.

And in that prayer journal, he called it daily sacrifice. And he would write thoughts down and stuff in that prayer journal. Here's one of the thoughts he wrote down. It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible.

[ 23 : 53 ] The first president of the United States says, you can't do this job without God and the Bible. And you know how many are trying to now?

Trying to do it on their own wisdom and their own reasoning. George Washington said, it can't be done. Even our Declaration of Independence, which set up the whole idea of having a separate country to break away from England, you know how it starts.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

They were given to us not by the government. They were given to us by our creator. people. See, these things are hardly mentioned anymore.

These things are not taught anymore. We could go on and on and on. I have a whole book full of quotes from people of our past about what God has done for this country.

[ 25 : 08 ] Think about it for a second. In a personal way, have we held the line?

Have we made it so those who have died can rest easy because we're holding the values that they fought for? Kind of not happening, is it?

You think about the timeline of our country. World War II took place. We won World War II. Things were great. Very shortly thereafter, 1954, churches began to grow silent.

No war. Everything was peaceful. Everything was good. Everybody was happy. Churches weren't as important as they used to be. 1963, prayer and Bible study were removed from our public schools.

1965, sexual revolution was in full force. 1973, Supreme Court found a solution to all the unwanted pregnancies that were happening because of the sexual revolution.

[ 26 : 20 ] And the road versus Wade. 1980, Ten Commandments were removed from our schools and other public institutions. Christians. And since then, what has happened?

We keep chipping away and chipping away and chipping away at the freedoms we have. We keep chipping away by doing things like teaching evolution.

You think about, forget about all the science stuff and the Bible stuff and things of that nature. just the fact that we teach evolution. You were an accident that happened.

Humankind was an accident. Things were getting together and, wow, look at that, we've got a human being. And because of that teaching, we no longer have to answer to God.

We no longer have a purpose in life. We're no longer all that important in life. And we wonder why suicides and mass shootings are on increase.

[ 27 : 34 ] Life doesn't mean anything. Without God, who cares? What does it mean? You know, we try to mention the name of Jesus or God in public.

you'll get sued. What's the name of that group? Something freedom from religion.

Can't remember the first word. But anyway, there's a group out there. They'll take you to court because they want freedom from religion. Free practice of religion has been seriously challenged.

We need to remember what people have done for us. We need to remember what those who went before us have done. We need to remember our parents, our grandparents, and what they did to ensure the freedoms that we have.

as a church of Jesus Christ, we have to be bolder in our witness. We have to be bolder in living for Christ. What are we doing to remind the next generation?

[ 28 : 59 ] Dads, are you instilling into them the things that they need to know about Jesus and who he is? Everything in life begins and ends with Jesus Christ.

Are we teaching them that? You all know the verse, John 14, 6, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

when you ask your kids, or when your kids ask you, or when your neighbor asks you, or when your co-worker asks you, what does all this mean to you?

Do you have an answer? The Bible says be ready to give an answer to every man. Do you have an answer? I believe Jesus Christ came, and he died, and he was buried, and he rose again, and he ascended into heaven, and he is sitting at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for me right now.

He did it all so that I could be saved for all eternity. He did it all so I could have a home in heaven for all eternity. He did everything for me so that I don't have to face hell and the grave forever.

[ 30 : 25 ] Jesus Christ is the answer to everything you need. Is it going to solve all your problems? No, because we still have sinful hearts. But it will solve a very big problem where we spend eternity.

Be ready to give an answer to every man of the hope that lies within you. What does it all mean to you? you know, we could have all kinds of things.

I'd rather have Jesus than anything. Take your handbooks. Turn the page. You and Tell her enough.

You have made out