

Series: Non-Series Message
Message Title: *Leading a Legacy Life*
Date: Sunday, July 2, 2017
Scripture: Joshua 3 and 4
Speaker: David H. McKinley
Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

Introduction

Before we consider an end-of-life mindset that says, *"I'm outta here,"* we need to consider, *"Why was I ever here?"*

In order to do this, I want us to look back at ancient Israel and the crossing of the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

See Joshua 3-4.

"The LORD said to Joshua, 'Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, "When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan"' (Joshua 3:7-8 ESV).

Joshua, Moses' successor, is now to lead the people (after 40 years of wilderness

wandering) into a place of promise dating back to the days of Abraham.

“When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, “Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests’ feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.”’ Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe” (Joshua 4:1-4 ESV).

12 Stones—one for every tribe. (Explain #CurrentRock Craze illustration)

These stones were to be carried out of the Jordan River as a visible symbol and perpetual reminder of God’s work in and through the lives of His people. It was to be an enduring testimony—a legacy of their faith.

“And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal.

And he said to the people of Israel, ‘When your children ask their fathers in times to come, “What do these stones mean?”, then you shall let your children know, “Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.” 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, 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’” (Joshua 4:20-24 ESV).

Two piles of stones were given here as a marker moment in the faith journey of the people of Israel.

Riverbed Stones

“And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day” (Joshua 4:9 ESV).

“The stones were to tell all the nations around that this God is different. He really

exists; He is a living God, a God of real power who is immanent in the world... God is neither a projection of man's thinking nor a God who cannot move in history." —Francis Schaeffer

Gilgal Stones

"And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal" (Joshua 4:20 ESV).

(Two miles to Jericho). God has done something great and we have great hope for the future.

I love the insights Francis Schaeffer provided in His commentary on Joshua: *The stones were to instruct future generations.*

"O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come" (Psalm 71:17-18 ESV).

I have 07/08 written beside this verse in my Bible. This was when I received a phone call

from Mike Sizemore about the possibility of moving to Augusta to become Pastor of Warren Baptist Church.

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My goal today is not so much to leave you in the history of antiquity, but to ask you how this ancient event speaks to your current commitment to live in a way so as to build a legacy life today and tomorrow.

As I look and reflect on this today, I can’t help but ask: What will the stones you have gathered in your life say about you?

Two Observations About Your Life Legacy:

1. Legacy is about future **remembrance**. It is what you leave behind for those closest to you. It is the lingering impact of your life here and what lives on after you die. It’s what happened in the dash between the dates

on your tombstone. And, remember this, everyone leaves some kind of legacy—good or bad, lasting or fading.

2. Legacy is about present **confidence**.

It is a collection of marker moments between you and God—you and those around you that remind you of God's grace and mercy, goodness and faithfulness—while making your journey to heaven.

July provides some "stones of remembrance" for me: my birthday 7/15, Miles' birthday 7/7, and July 4, 1776, Independence Day—marker of national heritage.

Four great stones from the past in American life: A foundation of freedom, the rule of law, a right to personal property and a heritage of religious liberty—241-year testimony to this.

Before the dominance of secularists and historical revisionists, these were seen as vital to civility in American life.

Today these "stones" are being repainted and redistributed to cause us to lose clarity and continuity in the role they played and

how they shaped our early social and civic life in American.

Many of us would say that freedom is the great legacy stone of American life. Yet, the stone of freedom—our most celebrated—has become the stumbling stone of our nation in these days and times. Is it the right for everyone to do as they please or is it a responsibility to do what is best?

I believe our legacy of freedom is due to the fact that this commitment was rooted in a legacy stone of faith.

“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.” —The Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776, and denotes an authority greater than an earthly king!

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were all societal stones laid on the foundation

of faith—a belief in something that was inherent in creation—not the crown or the Constitution.

Back to your legacy and mine. What story will your history tell? What testimony can you share today? What will your legacy be? What about the dash between the dates?

Maybe my reflections are merely personal and devotional, but I want to share something of importance today for you and me, and for our todays and tomorrows—*Leading a Legacy Life.*



1. I want to leave a legacy of faith.

This is not my faith, but faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

See Numbers 13:26-28, 30-33, 14:2. Of the 12 spies, two said “Go” and ten said, “No.” (The majority is not always right). These “stones” were not markers of the faith of the people. They had failed to believe God.

As a result, a generation died in the wilderness, but a new generation came forth with faith. Caleb and Joshua remained, and they were front and center in the procession over the Jordan River.

This time, every man (12) brought a stone to remember God's faithfulness and goodness.

See Joshua 4:22-24. I want to transfer a legacy of faith to my children and grandchildren to know that God is faithful and He will never fail them. It is not so much that I want them to think I was some kind of man with exceptional faith, but that the faith I have is in an exceptional and faithful God.

I also want them to know Jude 3:

"Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3 ESV).

It is a faith worth living and dying for. This faith is the faith of the Gospel:

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand... that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve” (1 Corinthians 15:1, 3b-5 ESV).

Just as the Israelites had to risk their lives and futures on God’s promise to Abraham, I want to risk my life—all of it—on the message of Jesus Christ.

Paul’s view of knowing and following Christ:

“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings,

becoming like Him in his death” (Philippians 3:8-10 ESV).

2. I want to leave a legacy of hope.

It is often easy to let the hardships of life make us too serious and sour. I want to be sure my kids and grandkids remember me laughing, smiling and having fun—the pursuit of happiness.

The reason for this is that my hope is not in this world. Yes, I work in the heartaches and hardships of life where hope can be easily smothered, but I want to give cause of a greater hope.

This was the intent of the 12 stones at Gilgal. “You don’t ever need to look back at Egypt again; God’s best is always ahead.”

It is sometimes easy to focus on the past. Israel made Gilgal a place of worship:

“If there is iniquity in Gilead, they shall surely come to nothing: in Gilgal they sacrifice bulls; their altars also are like stone heaps on the furrows of the field” (Hosea 12:11 ESV).

I am grateful for a past that has blessed and benefited life today, but I don't ever want to live in the past—neither my children or grandchildren. Faith is rooted in the past, but hope is anchored in the future.

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

—Warren Wiersbe

God did not give them stones to simply stand and sing about the stones. He wanted them to keep advancing in their mission to occupy the land and establish His promised Kingdom.

One of the interesting and repeated icons of Peter found throughout Rome is the sculpture of Peter in St. Peter's Basilica holding the key. See Matthew 16:13-19. Stone (*petros*) vs. rock (*petra*)! More than the man, it was the mighty confession and truth concerning the person of Christ.

“For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11 ESV).

Jesus is the foundation of our hope in life.

3. I want to leave a “painted stone”— a legacy of love.

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection” (Romans 12:9-10a ESV).

I want to be remembered not so much by what I said, but how I made people around me feel and the value I added to their lives—by that, I mean love.

Love is a cause of great strength and security.

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love” (1 John 4:18 ESV).

(Chimney Tops illustration) Of all the loves that matter to me on this earth is my love for my wife (my life companion, Connie), my faithfulness to her and God’s faithfulness to us.