

ROLLING STONES - Micah 6:3-5

Raj becoming a part of our family – our “Red Sea.” God’s people are reminded in the Old Testament about the Exodus and the Red Sea again and again to stir their faith.

MICAH 6:3-5:

*“O my people, what have I done to you?
What have I done to make you tired of me? Answer me!
For I brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from slavery. I sent Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam to help you.
Don’t you remember, my people, How King Balak of Moab tried to have you
cursed, and how Balaam son of Beor blessed you instead?
And remember your journey from Acacia Grove to Gilgal,
when I, the Lord, did everything I could to teach you about my faithfulness.”*

The names *Acacia Grove* and *Gilgal* may leave you scratching your head.

Yet God’s prophet says not to forget them too.

The key reason he points to – it’s a picture of God’s **faithfulness**.

REMEMBER and/or “Don’t forget” is a command repeated again and again throughout the Bible, roughly 200 times.

Examples: Deuteronomy 4:9 // Psalm 103:2 // John 14:26

What we remember defines who we are and what we do.

Professor Stephen Rose, a leader in brain and behavior research, has said:

“I think that memory is a most extraordinary feature of being a human. It defines our individuality; it defines who we are; it makes us because it shapes our autobiography. That is why the progressive loss of memory in Alzheimer's is so terrifying. To see a person actually slipping into the non awareness of who they are is a saddening thing and it tells us the importance of memory.”

We remember all kinds of things that in the broad scheme of things are largely irrelevant. But what shapes our lives is what we determine to remember and commit to memory.

Moses tells the Israelites a dozen times in Deuteronomy, to remember what had just transpired in their deliverance from Egypt and slavery.

There’s an Egypt we are all born into. Slavery to sin.

A gap between our brokenness and his holiness too wide to cross.

God turns impediments into monuments.

(illustration: Bears eating moths on the Rockies – **PHOTO**)

“God is always doing 10,000 things in your life, and you may be aware of three of them.”

The power of prayer isn’t in making God aware of something. He knows what we’ll ask before we ask. Prayer is powerful because it opens our eyes to God’s hand at work.

William Temple: *“When I pray, coincidences happen. When I don’t; they don’t.”*
Prayer raises our awareness of God at work.

Exodus 15:5 - *the deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone.*
Pharaoh’s men were proverbial memorial stones in the middle of the Red Sea.
Moses & the Exodus- that’s the part of the Prophet Micah’s passage that we’re familiar.
But he also talks about God’s lesson in faithfulness taught from Acacia Grove to Gilgal.

We see in the book of Joshua that Acacia Grove was the last place the Israelites camped before crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

God once again parted a body of water, an impediment, and delivered his people.

JOSHUA 4:1-9 (2 slides)

God commands that twelve remembrance stones be placed outside the body of water.
This time the Israelites would have a visual memorial as a reminder of God’s faithfulness

AND Joshua personally recognizes the parallel to the Red Sea.
He also makes a memorial where the priests had been standing in the riverbed.
They would sit under the water like the pursuers at the Red Sea that sank like stones.

JOSHUA 4:21-24

JOSHUA 5:9 is so key.

“Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the shame of your slavery in Egypt.” So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.

Gilgal means “to roll.”
God had rolled away their shame.

Joshua said be ready for when people ask **“WHAT DO THESE STONES MEAN TO YOU?”** /// “These stones shall be a memorial for Israel forever” to God’s faithfulness.

Because the Israelites would- once again- forget and forsake God.

In **Judges**, it says an angel *“went up from Gilgal”* to rebuke the Israelites for their shameful behavior. After he speaks it says the people wept loudly.

Later in Israelite history **Saul** is put in as the 1st King to rule under the authority of God.
And Gilgal is where he not once, but twice ignores God’s command and rejects God as
“he set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone down to Gilgal.”

The prophets **Hosea** and **Amos** both would rebuke the Israelites for their idol worship at Gilgal.

Gilgal was a place of memorial, with the intent that the Israelites would remember God rolled away their shame. Instead it became a reminder of guilt, brokenness, and shame.

But Micah gets the last word on Gilgal in the Bible.

“remember I did everything I could to teach you about my faithfulness!”

The lesson God was teaching: **I ROLLED AWAY YOUR SHAME.**

Sometimes our problem spiritually isn't that we need to learn more.

Sometimes we need to act on what we already know.

Sometimes the core memories God wants to shape our identity get replaced or forgotten.

And at the core of our mind, our heart, and our being should be the cross, an empty tomb, and a rolled stone.

God used the ultimate tool of torture and shame – the cross - to roll away OUR guilt and shame. At the highest scale – he turned an **impediment into a monument.**

Just as the cross now has meaning. So does that large, rolled stone at the grave.

What was once an impediment. Now a monument rolled away.

Joshua renews the covenant with the Israelites at the end of his leadership in Joshua 24.

And to seal the covenant it says ***“As a reminder of their agreement, he took a huge stone and rolled it beneath the terebinth tree beside the Tabernacle of the Lord.”***

We have a rolled stone. It rolled away our sin and shame.

MEMORIZE GRACE.

Human memory is meant to discard some things.

The Holy Spirit = discard shame. Store righteousness.

The Enemy = store up shame.

Just because you don't remember it doesn't mean it didn't happen.

Just because you've forgotten doesn't mean God has.

And what GOD remembers determines what he does – extending GRACE.

Personal stone of remembrance.

The goal of a stone of remembrance was to trigger a memory of God's faithfulness in the past, to reflect on Him in the present, and trust Him in the future.

Maybe for you the stone is a verse or passage of scripture.

For others they may represent your personal Red Seas. Jordan Rivers. Prayers that were answered. Impediments that God delivered you from that need a small monument.

He's done it before. He can do it again.
