

THE WITNESS OF OUR FAITH JOSHUA 4

Is your faith anchored strong? Heb. 6:19-20

- Life will test your faith: What is calm and placid one day can be a raging waterfall the next, and unfortunately when you are at the top of the falls you cannot buy an anchor.
- Faith, just like an boat anchor, is not optional for us as Christians—it is something we need to both have and use to avoid spiritual cataclysm and disaster. Heb. 11:6

How big a witness in your life is your faith—
especially to your kids?

SERIOUSLY-PILES OF ROCKS!

One might read this chapter and say, OK, so what? Who cares? What is this all about? That's kind of strange—a whole chapter about rock piles?

- We've just examined the corporate faith of Israel; and now the focus of the book of Joshua moves to the witness of the faith of an entire nation—the public proclamation of our faith.
- God reminds them to proclaim Him to the next generation as well as the rest of the world—especially to their kids!

Finally, they take possession of the Promised Land of Abraham!

GET YOUR ROCKS RIGHT

Some confuse this rock piling event with another in 1 Sam. 4:1. These are not Ebenezer stones.

- These stones were to be a memorial of the faith of the Jewish people.
- It was witness to a faith-filled day that glorified the Lord and magnified the faith-filled leadership of His servant Joshua. v. 14

A public witness of their faith—to all who passed by!

A MEMORIAL TO FAITH THAT WORKS

What did the two piles of rocks mean—one at Gilgal and one seemingly invisible in the middle of the river Jordan?

- They were witnesses that God honors both the faith and work of those who trust Him.
- This was the final step in a journey they had begun on the same day 40 years earlier.
- Some 40 years earlier, by selecting the Passover lambs, they had made their first response of faith to the God who was leading them to salvation from Egypt.
 Exo. 12:2-3

This event was the claiming of the land promised to Abraham!

Their faith resulted in works—faith without works is dead. James 2:17

REAL FAITH WORKS AND BEARS WITNESS!

WITH BLESSING COMES RESPONSIBILITY

The Israelites now entered a new phase in their relationship with God.

- As the Israelites began to possess the land, so these responsibilities outlined in Deuteronomy became incumbent upon them.
- It was hard work to build that wonderful witness: Carrying those stones some 8 miles or so; They were stones, not pebbles or rocks—the word means building stones, in excess of 100 lbs. each; 1200 lbs. of rock and more than a trail cairn.
- This heap of twelve stones was a reminder of what God did for His people.
 - Real faith does two basic things—it works and bears witness. James 2:14

FAITH DOES NOT ALWAYS MAKE SENSE!

Sometimes our spiritual stone piles seem a bit silly.

- That t-shirt from an event, a hat, a coffee mug, a CD set from a conference, a well-worn Bible that we can't part with.
- We must remember to give Him the Glory for what He has done as a witness to our kids and our world.
- This is exactly why Christians must stand on the Word of God as the sole source of sound doctrine. We are witnesses of the power of God, not the power of a particular church.

Unless we teach the next generation the truth about the Lord, they will turn away and start following the world.

THE SAFETY OF NEW LIFE

Sometimes the monuments are under the surface of our lives, but no less real and no less important.

- The monument at Gilgal reminded the Jews that God had opened the Jordan River and brought them safely across into the Promised Land.
- They made a break with the past and were never to think of going back.
- The monument in the depths of the river reminded them that their old life was buried and they were now to "walk in newness of life." Rom. 6:1-4
- It reminds us that our old life has been buried, and we must live a new life in obedience to the Lord.

MAKE MONUMENTS THAT MATTER

God brings us out that He might bring us in. Deut. 6:23

- Do you have that kind of faith to tell the truth about who you are in Jesus?
- Will others know by the stones of your life piled up for all to see, and will those stones be true to the Lord's purposes for you?
- The Israelites were now in the land, but they were not yet ready to confront the enemy.
- There was still some spiritual preparation necessary for the people and for Joshua. Rock piles would not save them—only the Rock could do that!

Is your life a testimony of the things that God has done for you?