

Group Resource

Sermon Notes – Sunday, October 5, 2014

Series: Navigating through the ups and downs of real.life

Message: Do You Remember?

Scripture: Joshua 4:1-9

- I. When navigating through the ups and downs of life, we often experience anxiety when we are placed in unfamiliar surroundings or with unfamiliar people. However, our emotions drastically change when we find someone in these settings that we know. The familiar face doesn't negate the unfamiliar territory but it does provide comfort that we have someone familiar to walk with through the new experience.
- II. One of the great and precious promises that the Lord gives to us is that He is present with us, even while we encounter unfamiliar surroundings.
 - a. The Lord is Jehovah Shammah: "Jehovah is there." Psalms 46 affirms that "The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."
 - b. While navigating through the ups and downs of real.life, we must understand that our adversary – the devil - is a deceiver and his job is to make us think that God is not present.
 - c. To counter the enemy's schemes, we must ask God to make His presence real to us. One way that God answers this prayer is by reminding us of his faithfulness.
- III. In Joshua 4, God instructed Joshua to build a memorial of the miracle that took place at the Jordan River. **Joshua 4:6** states, "In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' 7 tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."
 - a. Throughout the Old Testament, the nations were taught to remember the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. Joshua, along with Abraham, Isaac, and other biblical heroes, understood the importance of building spiritual altars as a regular pattern of remembrance.
 - b. The core Jewish prayer, the Hebrew 'Shema' reinforced the importance of remembrance.
 - i. **Deuteronomy 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 *Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*
 - c. We often misinterpret Philippians 3:13 to suggest that we are called to forget everything that has happened in our past. However, "forgetting what is behind" is letting go of trying to change what has already happened. We cannot "press on toward the goal" if we do not understand the true goal. Ultimately, our goal is to know him and to be found in Him. Spiritual altars propel us towards what is ahead and remind us of God's steadfast character and nature.

IV. Why should we build spiritual altars in our lives and how do we do so?

V. **1. We build spiritual altars to give honor unto the Lord**

- a. An altar is a place of sacrifice. In the Old Testament, the altar was used to honor God through mandatory and voluntary sacrifices. In the NT, Jesus is the atoning sacrifice, one and for all and calls us to make ourselves **living** sacrifices back unto God.
 - i. **Romans 12:1** Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.
- b. We create spiritual altars when we remember the deeds the Lord has done.

Psalms 77:11 I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
12 I will consider all your works
and meditate on all your mighty deeds.”
13 Your ways, God, are holy.
What god is as great as our God?
14 You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the peoples.
- c. Our spiritual altars should honor the Lord with the first and best of all that we have.
 - i. **Proverbs 3:9** Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the *firstfruits* of all your crops;
10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.
 - ii. Abel’s sacrifice was accepted by God because it represented the first and best of what God provided. **Genesis 4:3** “In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor.”

VI. **2. Under the New Covenant, spiritual altars are built on the tablet of human hearts**

- a. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth and reminded them that it was the Holy Spirit that was writing on the tablets of their hearts. Each inscription is a living altar to the Lord. **2 Corinthians 3:2** You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.
- b. **1 Peter 2:4** As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

VII. 3. Spiritual altars are built through Selah moments

- a. Selah means “to pause” and is connected to the Hebrew word “calah” which means “to hang” or “to measure or weigh in the balances”
- b. In the OT, God introduced the Sabbath as a core Selah rhythm. We were not created to go without regular rhythms of pausing and reflecting. While our culture exalts busyness as a virtue – productivity can easily become an idol in our lives.
 - i. **Genesis 2:1** - Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.
 - ii. **Mark 2:27** Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”
- c. What are Selah rhythms? They are purposeful interruptions in our schedules to reflect upon the Lord’s goodness in our hearts. Some Selah rhythms include:
 - i. Sunday Worship Service – We gather together to reflect upon God’s goodness in community.
 - ii. Personal Worship Time – We set aside individual time to spend with God in prayer, worship or study of the Word.
 - iii. Fasting – We sacrifice the enjoyment of a meal(s) in order to spend time communing with God.
 - iv. Journaling – We write down what the Lord reveals to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
 - v. Prayer Walks – We spend time walking/jogging/biking and praying.
 - vi. Meditation on the word of God - We intake the Word of God as a time of reflection upon God’s goodness.
 - vii. Silence and Solitude – Connected with personal worship time, we spend time reflecting upon God’s character and nature in a personal space.
 - viii. Serving and Evangelism – We commit our time to serving and reaching out to others.

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Let's Talk Notes – Sunday, October 5, 2014

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Message: Do You Remember?

Scripture: Joshua 4:1-9

- 1) Share a part of your life story that you would like your children (present or future) to know about how God has worked in your life thus far.
- 2) As you reflect back on last weekend's sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful or difficult to grasp?
- 3) Have you ever faced an unfamiliar surrounding or a place with unfamiliar people? How did you feel in that situation and how did you adjust? What is the significance of the Lord's promise that He is Jehovah Shammah, the Lord with us? How should the knowledge of God's presence shape our day-to-day lives?
- 4) What does it mean to honor someone? What are some ways that we can honor God? Why does God ask for the first and best from us?
- 5) Read **Genesis 2:1-3**. What does this Scripture teach us about the importance of rest as a regular rhythm? (*See also:* Psalm 62:5; Matthew 11:28) How do you handle busyness in your life? Have you purposely scheduled interruptions in your life to reflect upon the Lord and remember his deeds?
- 6) Pastor Joseph shared 8 Selah rhythms that we can incorporate into our life. Share one rhythm that you would like to implement or progress in and what you hope to gain from devoting to this rhythm.
- 7) In your journal, write down something that the Lord has shared with you from tonight's real.life group meeting. Take time outside of the real.life group meeting to come back to your note and reflect upon the insight that you wrote down.