

Stones of Remembrance

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Preacher: Mark Harbour

[0 : 0 0] stones. There's some rocks, some stones, and I aligned them in an arrow indicating which way I had come from. So it directed me, this is the right path to go back where you were. Oh, all right.

And of course, by doing that, there were several times it was needed because of some of the trails I took and hiked up in the mountains and stuff, and especially in the deserts of Arizona where I grew up. Yeah, those were fun. But anyway, I'd go to the direction of the arrow, and that would bring me safely home. Well, when I'm on the road of life and I come across the fork, I sometimes choose the wrong direction. I don't know about you, but I do. Oftentimes, that path leads me to a place of being lost or confused. I've separated myself from God. He's over there, and I'm over here.

How'd that happen? Now what? What can I do? How do I get back on the trail that leads to him? Sure would be helpful to have an arrow made of stones that pointed me back to the proper path.

Well, my heavenly dad, he's given me instructions on just how to make this arrow in the story about crossing the Jordan River. We're going to make an arrow. Or anyway. So for the Israelites, the physical crossing of the Jordan was the final deliverance from Egypt over to the promised land. It is a spiritual symbol of being delivered or saved from sin, slavery, and bondage that they'd been in.

It brought them into forgiveness, freedom, and plenty, provisions. For us, we are faced with many Jordan crossings in our life. From time to time, we need to be delivered from our slavery of sin, our bondage, our struggles in life. We need to come, we need to cross over into forgiveness, freedom, and provisions. For us, again, we do this throughout our lives. This is a process.

[2 : 1 4] The course of actions in the crossing of the Jordan are practical steps that we can do to build that arrow. Okay? Scripture calls this arrow a memorial. Because this memorial will be both physical and spiritual in nature. The things we do to build it will have to be in that same vein also.

Like any building project, before you start, you have to prepare. Reading from a few passages in chapter 3 before we get to the crossing, because we're going to prepare first. Chapter 4 is the crossing, but chapter 3 is the preparing part of it. So going to chapter 3, verse 5, and I'll read it to you. I don't know if you're able to pull up chapter 3, verse 5. I don't know. Yes? No? Oh, man, he's good. Anyway, chapter 3, verse 5. Then Joshua said to the people, Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you. God calls our preparation, are preparing to build to consecrate ourselves. What does consecrate mean? It simply means to separate yourself from the common thing. Separate yourself from the common thing. What are common things? Well, they're your daily habits. It's your routines. We'll see how this looks in a second.

We do this, verse 5 tells us, in order to receive the wonders of God. In order to expect to receive and see the wonders or the miracles of God, we must first consecrate ourselves. We need to prepare our hearts and our minds. The word consecrate also means to purify. See, we get dirty walking on this road of life. We pick up dirt. Our feet get dirty from walking with other people, hearing, you know, just interacting with people. We all know what that's about. And we participate in things of life.

Our own sins make us dirty. We need to purify ourselves before we go, before we go, before we go, before we go, how's that? Let's see. We need to purify ourselves before we go, before our holy God. Okay, there we got it out. So, we do this by also confessing our sins.

Here's an example here is Sunday morning. I know this doesn't have to do with the crossing of the river, but Sunday mornings is a good example. Hopefully, you guys come to church expecting to receive a wondrous thing, a special word for you, something. Hopefully, you come like that. Not always do we, but at times, you know, we do when we're on the right, when we're doing everything right. Anyway, so hopefully, you're expecting it. But the question is, do you consecrate yourself to receive or do you just show up without any preparation at all? Guilty of it. Guilty as charged. How often do I do it? I just simply show up. So, because what happens that when I get up on Sunday mornings, I haven't consecrated myself. I haven't prepared myself to receive. I'll go to my phone, pick it up.

[5 : 58] Ah, what's the news say? Oh, how many people texted me? What's Facebook saying? What's, you know, social media, all this stuff. And so, things already are drawing me away because it's become my routine, my daily habit. Consecrate. I don't consecrate myself. I don't get away, separate myself from those common things. But I need to if I expect to receive something from the Lord.

Okay? Try preparing for Sunday by staying away from your regular habits like immediately picking up your phone, reading the news, social media, watching TV, all kinds of things. Instead, replace those habits by reading the passages concerned with the sermon and meditate on them.

That's one way that we can consecrate ourselves to get away from, to start to purify ourselves. Another way is to put on praise music and prepare your heart. In fact, why not pull up the songs that we'll be singing and start offering your praise and worship before you even arrive here? Everything's in the bulletin. Everything gets sent to us. Ann sends everything to us Wednesday, Thursday. So, it's all there for us. Do we utilize it? Do we take advantage of it? We need to consecrate ourselves so that we may see and receive the wonders of God. Prepare. All right? Again, I have to be honest. I have to be as when I was studying for this scripture, this passage, that because, you know, I knew about it for about a month or so. And so, you know, I'd watch a little TV and then I'd go into my study and I'd read some stuff and things just weren't being very clear. And the Lord says, well, you're going to live exactly, you're going to live out exactly what I'm going to have you preach about. You're not concentrating yourself. You're not sitting, you're sitting there watching TV. You're sitting there looking at the news. You're sitting there getting all involved as other stuff. And you wonder why when you go in to go study and nothing's coming to you, it's just blank. It's just, this is man. And it's like, no, I don't want man in this. Nobody does.

We want God in this. We want to hear from the Lord. And so that's why this morning he had to be rewriting because I wasn't being consecrated. But I consecrated myself. Here we are. All right.

So we've prepared. Now it's time to gather the building material. At this point in our story, we haven't been told where we're going to get that building material or how we're even going to get it.

[8 : 44] Now it's time to step out in faith, step into a rushing river, problems going by. We're overwhelmed, but God wants us to go there anyway. Look at how scary it is. But don't worry. God is with you.

If you can pull up Joshua 3.13. And let's see, let's read it here. It shall come about when the souls of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rests in the waters of the Jordan. The waters of the Jordan will be cut off and the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap. So notice that when the priests were told to put their feet in the river, which by the way is at flood stage, they, they had to do it even before the waters dried up. They had to put their feet in this raging, in this overflowing river going by. Now jump into verse three or 16 in chapter three, the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zeratham and the whatever. And those which were flowing down toward the salt sea were completely cut off. The people crossed opposite Jericho. So this shows us that God was doing the holding back of waters a little differently than what he had done at the

Red Sea with the same Israelites, albeit they were children at that time. But anyway, so this is a different way of doing it. God started to hold back the waters from a town called Adam. And this town was about 30 miles up river. And that started once the feet of the priest stepped into the river. Think with me for a minute. What happens when you dam up something way up here and you've got 30 miles of water to go by, or 30 miles still between you, that the waters are backed up and where you're going to be crossing. All this water has to go by you. It just doesn't just automatically stop. No, this water has to go by. So the priests are standing firm. They're standing still and they're waiting. They don't know that it's backed up. They don't know. God hasn't told them, oh, guess what? I'm backing up the river. No, they're just standing there. Okay. Okay. So that's, that would be a little bit of a scary thing. At least it would be for me. The priests were not told how, all right. So, uh, I bring this detail to your attention to highlight that God rarely works the same when doing wondrous things. And even though we don't know the hows, how he's going to do it, we can be confident in the who is doing it.

The priests had to wait for God's promise of crossing on dry ground. They had to have faith and step into the water first. Did they expect it to happen differently? Remember they've, the only thing they have to compare it to is the Red Sea crossing and the stories of it. Do we expect God to work differently and then become doubtful and discouraged when things don't happen the way we plan or think they should, let alone in a timely manner? They had to sit there and wait, have courage, stand in the water and have faith in the who is doing the wondrous thing. It may take a while for results to start happening, but the miracle is on its way. By taking your first step of faith, God know that God has already begun the holding back of the waters. The faith or the miracle is on its way. All right. So now we've taken the first step in getting our building material. Now we're going to go into the story.

Chapter four, verses one through three, we've already read it. But the first thing that we observe is that 12 men, one from each tribe is appointed to, to the task of getting our building material.

[13 : 07] The tribe would be our family. Okay. No matter the size. Verse four tells us Joshua appointed each man. Joshua, as we've been told many, many times, represents Jesus. Okay. And Jesus has appointed the man to be the spiritual leader of the family. So these people, these men have been appointed in our understanding of it. The men of the family are the appointed leaders. Okay. Oh, and don't forget that the wife is his helpmate. Okay. She's right there by his side. If you're a family of one, then you're it.

If you're a single mom, then unfortunately you have the role of both mom and dad, as you already know, if you're a single mom, yay, you. All right. So the man is responsible for obtaining our building material, the stones for whose sake is this gathering of the stones? Why are we gathering their stone, these stones? Verse three tells us, um, take up for yourselves. Remember this is for our sake, not God's. Okay. There's, and there's a reason why he wants us to build the memorial.

Uh, see the appointed leader was to get a stone and where was he to get it from, from the middle of the river. And we'll look into that in just a little bit here. He was to do this after his family and he had safely crossed the Jordan. So they're already across the Jordan. And now, uh, verse five tells us that Joshua tells him cross again, go back men who have been appointed cross again to the ark of the Lord in the middle of the Jordan. Go back. I want you to go back to the middle. And when you go back to the middle, I want you to pick up a stone. Okay. This will become clear. I don't know why you have it right here. But anyway, when God has miraculously saved us from a sin or some type of bondage or struggle, and we are safely on the other side of it. Okay. We need to go back while it's freshest in our mind and pick up a stone, a building material to build our material, pick it back, pick it up. And it's going to represent something that he's done or the, the, the, the South, the miracle that he's done for us. So that's what we're picking up that stone. And we will find that stone in the middle. Where's the middle is where the priest's feet are. It's where the ark of the covenant is. This is holy ground that this, these stones are being picked up from. Okay. So it's where God is.

All right. Well, my family and I, uh, we've been to the Jordan many times. Okay. And I brought some examples of the stones that we picked up, um, after our various crossings. Okay. They represent something special, unique, and supernatural, naturally that was done in my and my family's life.

The representations of sin and struggles we have been delivered from. We have taken these stones and we placed them in a shadow box as a memorial to what God has done. So we've been to the river a few times. And in here, these are examples of stones. That would be a stone. That's a stone. That's a stone. That's a stone. Stone, stone, stone, stone, stone, stones all over the place. There's even more that we could put in here. Um, but, uh, also we've been married for almost 40 years and let's see one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, nine, eight, nine, nine stones in there. In other words, these things, they're not a common occurrence. Okay. So don't be looking for thousands of things. I mean, if you, if that happens in your life, bless you, my goodness, uh, either that or you got a lot of issues.

[17 : 29] No, I'm just kidding. All right. Nevermind. Anyway. Um, so this is our, uh, memorial stones. Uh, this is, we put this on our wall. Okay. Now, um, let's see. I don't, you guys want to hear a few stories or not?

Um, I don't know. I don't want to make this about us and that's the whole thing. I want to give examples of what these stones, how they occurred, how, where did we find them? What happened?

The, the, which one? Everybody wants to hear about the M and M's. The problem with the M and M story is that it's long and let's see, I've still got so many pages of notes, but anyway, no, I'll tell the story real quick of, uh, the, the, the reader's digest version of the M and M's. Um, my daughter, uh, my middle, I don't know what middle daughter. I don't know which daughter you call her. She's number three and, uh, we got four. So she's not quite the middle and not quite the end. Anyway, my daughter, Brittany, she, um, so if you're listening, Brittany, ha ha, I'm telling on you, um, that her and I love peanut M and M's. And, uh, whenever I would, uh, come across a bag of M and M's, I'd bring it home and I'd tear it open and we'd share it. It was just, it was a bond between father daughters, just a little special, a little something. No, no big deal. And, uh, but it was special to us. And, uh, one day I was, I came home from work and, uh, uh, had my bag of M and M's, uh, happened to find one someplace, probably took it from my brother or something. But anyway,

I had a bag of M and M's and I was going to share it with my daughter. So calling her out, don't hear her or see her anywhere. And it's like, what's going on? Anyway, go looking for her.

And she's in her room, all holed up and everything as a teenager would at this time, she's a teenager. And, uh, all of a sudden, um, I'm looking at her and going, what's wrong, honey? And just her attitude, something had changed. I do not know what happened, but she was the most vile creature that I'd ever seen. I'm not knowing. I'm not exaggerating either.

[19 : 49] She was angry. She was mad. I hate you, mom and dad. You are the worst parents in the world. I mean, in dead serious about, and just blaming us for everything in the world from back. I mean, if COVID existed, we'd have been blamed for COVID and, uh, everything. I mean, we were just the most horrible parents in the world and get out of her life. She wished she could move out. She's only 15 years old. And, um, you know, I just hate you guys. And, um, you know, I just hate you guys. And just the day before the loving daughter and everything, it was like a light switch, like something turned and it was like, what is going on? And it was just disheartening as anything. So, uh, I took the bag of M&Ms; and I told Brittany, I said, uh, I don't even know who you are right now.

You are not my daughter. This, this is not you. I don't know what's going on with you, but it's crushing me. It's destroying me. To hear these words, it's horrible. And Sherry, the same thing, you know, just lashing out. And so I said, I'm going to put these M&Ms; away. And when you come back to your senses, when you come back to us, then we'll share, we'll partake in this. Well, time went by and, uh, got worse and worse so bad that we finally had to send her away, had to send her to our oldest daughter who was in Virginia. And that was hard. And, uh, um, but there was just so much hate there.

So we sent her away and she was there for over a year or for a year. And, um, we went, it was finally time to go get her. We went up there, we got her. We, um, she was still not happy with us. Uh, wasn't as vile. She at least calmed down and stuff, but still mad at us that we never taught her about drugs and that we never, because all of her school friends, they knew all about drugs and this, that, and the other thing. And I said, honey, you think that I'm going to come home and say, Hey, today, let's talk about heroin and the dangers of it and all that stuff. We told you to stay away from drugs, but no, we didn't tell you all the different types and all that, everything. So, but anyway, so she was not real pleased with us stills, but we brought her back home. It was at least calm enough. We brought her back home. And, uh, um, every time I retell this story, I remember more and more parts of it, uh, before we brought her home, um, that the Lord had instructed us, uh, Sherry and

I to anoint our home with oil. Okay. You're saying to do it. All right, we'll do it. So we went into the cabinet and got some, uh, uh, um, cooking oil, whatever. Hey, it was oil. We were just trying to be obedient. We didn't, all right. So oil for, what do you mean by anoint? All right. So we put all around the doorposts because that's how we were the entrance to the home. We put a thing of oil, you know, dip our finger in it and put it over that. We put it over her for her bedroom. We put it on the computer, uh, on the keyboards and stuff. And, uh, um, anyway, so when she came home, um, because we were, we were sealing the house against whatever spiritual enemies were out there. We didn't want any of that into our home. And so we just were okay. I don't know if I believe in this stuff, but we're going to be obedient, plain and simple. So we did it. She comes home. We bring her back. Um, and, uh, uh, life isn't real good, uh, still, but it's again, not nearly as bad. She winds up finding a boyfriend at a job that she's working at. This boyfriend comes and, uh, he's spending all of, all of his time at our house when he's not at work. Both of them are, um, cause they really couldn't go anywhere anyway. So they were always at our house. Um, man, how did this get into a long story? I can't make it short. I'm painting the, uh, I just got to let you know what went on. And, uh, so, uh, uh, we had, uh,

Bible study at our homes at that time. And, uh, um, this boy, we found out later, um, uh, that, uh, what was going on in his head when he came over because, uh, they would come home from work at night and we would be having the Bible study. And they knew that when we were having Bible study, they were invited to join us if they wanted to, or, uh, they could go into, um, Sherry's in our bedroom and where our youngest daughter was watching TV and, uh, that they could stay in there until Bible study was over and that was fine and everything. And so anyway, so find out what was in, uh, this boy's mind is that when he came in inside the house, um, and Bible study was going on, he wanted to shout at the top of his lungs, you crazy people, you fools, you believe in a God. Oh, who do you think you are?

[24 : 54] You weak minded people. And that, that, that, and he wanted to do that coming. He wanted to interrupt. That was in his mind. He wanted to interrupt the Bible study. He wanted to spiel that vile stuff in there, but he held his tongue. He went in. And, uh, so time goes by and, uh, um, uh, he is asking, um, uh, a favor of Sherry and I, because he is, um, struggling with his relationship with his father.

Um, he doesn't want to live under his roof. He's the, this boy has already signed up for the military. He's just not 18 yet to go join. So he can't leave yet. He's got to wait till he graduates and then he's able to leave. So, um, he's asking Sherry and I, can I stay at your guy's house until I go into the, until it's time to leave? And it's about three month time before that happens. And Sherry and I are going, yeah, right. He ain't staying at our house. Said, uh, his name is Justin. Said, Justin, um, let us pray about it. We'll pray about it. And, oh yeah, sure you will. You're another, yeah, we promise you, we will pray about it. Right now, I'll tell you right now, it ain't happening.

And so, all right. Uh, he leaves and Sherry and I say, well, and we'll give you an answer next Friday, a week from today, we will give you an answer. So, uh, Sherry and I are praying all week long and what we're getting from the Lord is take them in. Like what? No, no, no, no. We have a daughter here, uh, that's very, you know, in a younger daughter, very impressionable and oh, not to mention I'm an associate pastor at the church. How do you think that would look? Not so good. So I talked to the pastor. The pastor said, if that's what the Lord is telling you to do, then you do it. And all right, Sam, you will. What about the other, sorry. What about the other, uh, the, the, the other congregants and stuff. And, you know, um, it's not going to look good to them at all that the associate pastor brings in a boy, um, into their home. And, uh, and he says, if the Lord told you, you do it, we'll take care of the people that we'll worry about. Don't worry about the people. All right. So, um, we just kept getting the answer all week long. Did it, did it, did it. Also during the week, I was praying,

Lord, what is Justin's greatest need besides salvation? Okay. I'm not even anywhere near at that point to be able to pray for his salvation. And, but it's like, what's Justin's greatest need?

What needs, what, what does he need the most? And so, um, that prayer was also mingled in with, uh, should we take him in? So next Friday comes, um, sit them down, Brittany and Justin. And we said, oh, at this point we decided, all right, we're going to put Brittany in our room and she'll be sleeping on the floor in a sleeping bag. Justin will have her room. There'll be all these, you know, precautions and everything's taken. And, and so, um, all right, that's how we're going to do it.

[28 : 11] So sits down and said, all right, we got an answer from the Lord. Um, he said to go ahead and, and just as I'm ready to speak the words, let you stay here. The Lord immediately changed it up.

And he said, not stay here. And so I'm going, so Justin, uh, the Lord said, you know, we heard from the Lord and what we believe we're hearing is that the Lord said, you can not stay here.

And he's going, I knew it. And you guys said you'd pray about it and I knew you wouldn't in everything. No, Justin, let me tell you a little bit more what's going on here. I said all week long, we were told to take you in, but the other part of the prayer that nobody knows about also that was praying for what is your greatest need. And just at the same time that I'm saying that no, you cannot stay here. The same answer came for what is your greatest need? And that is go back to your father's house. Be under his authority. Restore your relationship with your father. It was huge.

And of course, Justin wasn't ready to receive that. He was angry. All right. But he heard the words. He went home that night. He told his dad, he was sorry for not living under his rules, his curfew and everything else. And the relationship was restored. Amazing. What a miracle. What's that still got to do with the M&Ms;? So because of that, my daughter started to soften in everything. Eventually, she came back around. She became our daughter again, again, through part of this process, through this thing that happened with Justin. Justin now, by the way, is our son-in-law. Yeah.

And four children. Four grandchildren from that. And he accepted the Lord before he went to the shift off or whatever, went to boot camp and stuff. Fantastic. Great, great story. So when that, when my daughter finally became my daughter again, that loving girl, I went over to the drawer, opened it up, and tore open that bag of M&Ms; that we shared. So a miracle. That represents a miracle. Nobody, nothing else could have made that come to fruition, could have made it happen. God alone gets the glory and the credit for it.

[31 : 04] We were crossing the Jordan. It seemed impossible. How do we get across this river? It's raging. It's going by. What do we do? Step into faith. Just do the things I told you to do. I'm telling you to accept this boy.

Bring him in. And all along, or when, right after the Lord told me, don't do it, or don't take him in, he just brought to my mind the whole story, not the, the whole story of Isaac and, and, um, Abraham and the thrusting of the knife into Isaac and how it didn't happen. It was like at the last second. No, don't, not that that's a comparison to that, but it's that type of thing where, how far are you going to follow me? How far are you going to go with this? All the way, Lord, all the way. You told me to do it. And until you tell me differently, I'm going with it. So anyway, uh, another, um, without, Oh man, here's a real simple one. This is a, uh, piece of cloth with a, um, tear in it, a rip in it. And this isn't actually a crossing of a Jordan because not always do you have to be crossing the Jordan and, and for a miracle to happen that, uh, um, just things that happen in your life, everyday life, just all of a sudden America can have boom. And it's like, Whoa, what was that? And so, Hey, I'm going to put this in because I'm going to take that stone because it speaks of God and God alone and what only he could do. Um, the church that we belonged to was a mobile church. We had to, uh, uh, we met in a school. We had to set up the equipment, sound equipment, uh, everything that we did. We had to bring everything in every Sunday, take it down, put it all stored at our house. Um, so we, uh, Sunday morning, um, at the school, I'm bringing everything in off the truck, boom, boom, boom. And I am carrying a, um, very expensive, uh, piano. Um, well, to me it was expensive and I didn't, obviously it's a piece of a sound equipment. You don't want to damage it. So I'm carrying it or I'm, yeah, I'm carrying it with both hands and the path I'm taking is, um, uh, it's got a big old, it's got, anyway, it's not a real safe path to be carrying expensive equipment down. So I'm walking with it with both hands and all of a sudden I trip. And all I'm thinking in my head is, oh no, this, uh, piece of equipment is going to get shattered. This is not going to survive this fall, especially when

I'm going to land on top of it, crush it, the whole works. And then what happened to me? All of a sudden I'm like, no exaggeration, I'm going, all of a sudden I trip and I've got nothing to support me, nothing to stop me. I'm going down. And so, but all of a sudden my, my, I feel something underneath my shoulders and I'm lifted right back up and I'm going, what was that?

It was the most weirdest sensation. So I'm walking, tripping and all of a sudden, and piano in hand. And it's like, oh, that was kind of cool. So I get inside, put away the, or put the piano up and set it up and everything. I keep saying piano, keyboard, whatever, stupid man.

Um, anyway, I looked down at my pants and, uh, I've got a big old rip in my knee where I had hit the, uh, cement and tore my pant leg. No blood, no nothing. Didn't feel it, nothing because I was, even though it, so just my pants got ripped. I put that in there as a testimony to what the Lord did for me. Ah, praise God. Hey, that was, that was fantastic. And then it happened again when I was working at Lowe's, something similar. And I'm, I'm, uh, putting on, putting up a display of a lawnmower and, uh, is big is the, the top of the line, heavy duty lawnmower, you know, push one, not a drive one.

[35 : 19] So anyway, but I'm putting it up on display, putting it up here and, uh, no, I'm moving it from this area to over here because I'm redoing the display. So I pick it up and I'm struggling. I'm an old man and struggling and stuff. And I'm backing up like this and there's a pallet behind me. And I didn't know there was a pallet behind me, empty, doesn't have anything on it. And I hit that pallet and I trip and I'm going down. And again, this thing is, I must've been 5,000 pounds. I swear it was, you know, I lifted it up. So I, so I've got this thing in my hands and I'm going, I'm thinking that same thing. Oh no, I'm going to break this, you know, \$900 lawnmower is the top of the line. I'm in trouble. This is not good. And wait a minute, this thing is going to crush me.

And so, cause this thing is heavy and there's no way. So I'm tripping, I'm falling backward. And then I'll tell you, all of a sudden something gets underneath me and I just, it looked like I was the most graceful person in the entire world. I wished I was on the outside looking in because I just, I skimmed down off the, I didn't hit the pallet, but I kind of went around it like this. I'm doing the limbo down here, man. I'm way down there and back up and right onto the shelf. I go, pretty good. Other people are looking. Are you okay? Are you okay? Man, I thought for sure you were, oh, what happened? How did that, how did you do that? And I said, that's only a miracle of God right there that I didn't get hurt. And they agreed with me. So it was pretty cool story. Anyway, another stone. We're getting there. So that's what it looks like.

You see, and this will be a little bit of a side note. I looked this stuff up about being saved, about being delivered. And the Greek word that's used is the word *sozo*. Big deal. But that word has a much deeper meaning than just being saved. It means salvation from everything. It is translated in other parts of scripture as deliverance, aid, victory, help, protect, heal, preserve, or in other words, made whole. You see, Jesus went to the cross, not only to save us from our sin and restore our relationship with the father, but he came also to save us from every area of our life.

We need being saved from everything. Okay. He wants to make us whole. John 10, 10 says, I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. How do you have an abundant life? By being made whole and pieces and things here and there. So things in your life that you are struggling with, that you need to be made whole. Ask for deliverance. Prepare yourself first, consecrate, try to, you know, find out where you're supposed to get the building stone, the building blocks and everything. Anyway. So each time we cross the Jordan, we should be picking up a stone as a reminder of what we have been delivered from. What stones will you guys gather to create your memorial to God? May I suggest starting with your salvation. That's what this record is about and this CD. And that represents, um, our salvation story. Um, I worked 15 hour days, uh, this, um, for many, many years, Sherry was a, uh, a widow, a working widow, um, because her husband was never home, raising the children by herself, uh, basically. And so this record right here, um, some of you recognize those are little 45s. That's the era I grew up in. And this, the, the record is from

Harry Chapman, Cats in the Cradle. And if you don't know what that song is, it's all about a dad that over, that works and works and works. And, uh, um, the son, his boy is saying, dad, when are you going to come home? Or, um, yeah, when are we going to be able to throw the ball? When are you going to, when are we going to be able to have fun? Soon. I'll be home soon. You know, we'll get together then son, you know, we'll have a good time then. And then eventually the boy grows up and, uh, he goes off to college. Uh, he graduates, he starts his own family and, oh, and the little boy also always said, he looked at his dad and said, I want to be just like you, dad. I want to be just like every little boy does. I want to be just like you, dad. And so, um, uh, the boy grows up, he goes off to college, gets a job, has a family. And, uh, um, then the father now has time and he calls his son.

[40 : 36] He said, Hey son, when can we get together? He goes soon, dad. I'm, you know, basically I'm busy, but when we, when we do get together, we're going to have a good time then. And then it realized he real, the dad realized my son did grow up just like me, just like me too busy, too busy in life for his family. That was the starting of my salvation. The Lord was working on me. I was working too many hours, too long. And Mark, I gave you a family. Why are you doing this? I didn't call you to work. You didn't marry your job. The money's not that important. Stop it.

That was the beginning of it. Dense, thick headed, takes me a long time. Then one day my brother shows up and he brings in a, um, I have a CD here only because it looks better. It was really a cassette.

He puts the cassette in and he plays, he goes, Mark, the Lord told me to come over and play this song for you. Okay, Mike, I'm not a Christian at this time. I'm not. And, uh, so he plays this song for me and it's, uh, from, um, um, um, Henny Best, Henny Hester. No, Benny Hester. There we got it. Benny Hester. And the song is When God Ran. And, uh, uh, it's a song about the prodigal son. And, um, it's, uh, says how powerful and big and everything that God is. And the only, I mean, that, that he's immovable.

He's, you know, all these things, wonderful, great part of, you know, like what we sang this morning, all those descriptions of God. And the only time, the only time I ever saw him run was when he ran to me. He took me in his hands, took, held my head in his face and said, son, I love you.

You're back again. You know, that's basically the gist of the song. And when I heard that song, it just cut right through me, Lord, you're talking to me. You're talking about me. You're inviting me back. Gave my life that day. So, um, that's what that one's about. Uh, any other stories in here, all very cool, very good things. And they only point to God. Um, please observe in our passage, uh, because they are told in, um, where is it? Verse five, that you are each to take up a stone on your shoulder. Okay. Um, taking up a stone on your shoulder would represent that the stones are heavy and they have to be, uh, in order to be carried, you know, put them on the shoulder. It makes a lot easier.

[43 : 27] What this says to me is that it takes effort to set up this memorial. It's not a simple thing. We need to break dads, fathers, men. We need to break out of our passivity in our families and we need to grow into purpose. We need to, it's not an easy thing, but we have to break out of our passivity. You know, we're so passive in our homes and, Oh, everything will be okay. And let life just go on the way it is. All right. The next thing is where are we to set up this memorial? In verse three, it says to, uh, take up the stones and then, uh, uh, lay them down in the lodging place will, where you will lodge tonight. So our, uh, thing obviously is put up in our lodging place and our dwelling place where we live. And it sits up on a wall. And, um, what's really neat is that, um, with it being up there, what does it, well, let me back up for a second. The reason for making the memorial is so that it reminds us of God and the things that he's done in our life. And for your children, future generations, when they look at these stones, Hey dad, what are those there for?

Hey mom and dad, and you will tell them what the Lord has done. So that's the reason for the memorial. It's put up in our home and it's a reminder. What's neat about that is that, um, for us is, uh, we've had several members of our family, uh, friends that have, uh, been at our house and they have asked about this memorial, um, or this thing that's sitting up on our wall. Cause it's odd. It's a weird thing to have up on your wall. Why would you have, that's just weird. Are you decoupage? What are you doing here? I don't know if that's the right word, whatever. But, uh, you know, what, why do you have that up there? Well, let me tell you. So it's, it's a, it's, it's something that triggers that. And, uh, it gets people to ask questions. We've had, let's see our, um, Dutch, what's Dutch to us? Oh, he's a nephew. He's asked about it. And he, I will tell you now he is a born again believer. Um, we've had our, another son-in-law, Casey, uh, he's asked about it. Um, born again believer in the process thereof. Um, and, uh, we've had one time we had Thanksgiving at our home and members of the family asking about it. And so I was able, we were able to share these stories with our entire family at one time, my family that, that I grew up with my brothers and sisters.

That's what I'm talking about. So it was cool to be able to do that with all of them all at one time. Boom. Here's the stories. Um, one time I had, uh, or we were, uh, doing an addition or building out our basement and the workers that were doing it, they would come up every day to have lunch up in the kitchen and that's, or in the dining room. And that's basically where this is at. And they would ask the question, what's that? And I was able to share with them, share the gospel, share the things about God. So what's come of it? I don't know, but we were able to share. So it's a cool tool.

Um, I will give a warning when recounting the stories, don't make them bigger than what they were. God doesn't need any help. We have a tendency to want, I shouldn't say we, I shouldn't lump everybody in here together because I certainly do. Uh, I have a tendency to embellish things, to make it, to make it seem, try to make it seem more grandiose than what it really is. And, uh, so, but don't do that. God doesn't need any help. Um, and it's actually more important than ever that we don't embellish or to make it bigger than it was because, uh, today's world, well, it is so full of fake news. You can't tell the truth from the lies. It's so difficult anymore. So because it's so prevalent out there, we have to stand above that as Christians and speak the truth and not embellish it. Um, we have to be careful with things that we post, uh, you know, that we repost, I should say, and that we've fact checked at first that we're just not, Oh, this is really neat. This really sounds cool. And Oh, it sounds so, uh, biblical or whatever, Christianese. And so we send it off and we find out later, and that's not the truth or that never really happened. That was just all made up. And so now we look like fools. Now we've tarnished our testimony. So we're telling them about God for real. They're going to go, why should I believe him? Look at all this silly stuff he sends me. So be careful. Um, we don't want to discredit our, the sharing of the, um, truth. Um, you guys want to hear a little bit more or not, or are we done? Because basically we, I mean, there's just a tad bit more of these, uh, stones, uh, what they're not, uh, they are not, uh, an accomplishment to yourself. They don't speak of anything that you have done. These are to point to God at God alone. They're not trophies. They're not, uh, pictures of vacations that you went on happy times, not that kind of stuff. This stuff is for, uh, God's glory and his alone. Uh, and when we're on that road of life that we, um, uh, and we are lost, it is to point us back, which would be, um, let me, uh, jump to that for a second here. Um, let me see if I can find it.

If not, then we're not going to put it in there. Um, the things about, um, cause we all get lost.

[49 : 44] We all stumble now and then, uh, in our walk on another great thing about having this up on your wall. Uh, just like when the, when Jesus is doing his triumphal entry, um, and the priest are the, the Pharisees are saying, um, all the people are, you know, laying down the palms and everything and they're all Hosanna. And you tell these followers to keep quiet and stop that noise.

And Jesus says, I tell you the truth. If they keep quiet, the very rocks will cry out. I know this is a little bit of a stretch. However, when you're struggling in your walk with the Lord, these rocks will cry out to you. You'll walk by them and they're going to shout out to you.

Don't forget. Shout out. And I whisper. Good. Uh, all right. They're going to whisper to you. Let's go. They're going to whisper. Don't forget what the Lord has done for you. Don't forget about this miracle. Don't forget about where he saved you. He is faithful. He is true. He loves you.

Look at all these things. Remember. Oh, thank you for pointing me back to the Lord. Thank you for guiding me back. All right. Are we done? We're done. I guess. Yeah. There, honey. I cut it short.

All right. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for an example of how how we can build something, how we can put something together that, and, um, that will point to you only, um, that it is a testament of what you have done in our life. This, just the ways you take care of us, you take care of us, watch over us, deliver us through, save us from ourselves, from circumstances, and we're able to build a memorial to that, to be that reminder when it's needed, to be a questioning thing for you see it, and it just stands out because, Lord, you stand out, and we want to be a testament to that, too. We want to be able to tell of the wondrous things you have done.

[52 : 04] Thank you again for your word. Thank you for your love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.