

# MEANINGFUL MEMORIALS

## “Respectful Remembering.”

### I. Intro

A. When significant events happen that affects many people or brings about change, we often will **remember** the event with a **memorial**. Something that sets a day apart for remembering.

1. This often is an extension of our respect for the **institutions** or the **people** involved in the event.
2. In this country we have memorials that give honor to:

a) The **United** States of **America**

i We celebrate the birth of this nation on **July 4<sup>th</sup>** every year.

a - We remember the sacrifice of the people who died in the many battles that freed us from England made this idea of a democratic republic possible.

b - Without their courage and sacrifice, many of the freedoms that we enjoy here, and sometimes take for granted, might never have come about.

- *It can be easy to forget sometimes that other places don't have the protected freedoms that we do here. We don't want to forget that.*

b) We remember **Military Heroes**

i On Memorial day. We celebrate those fallen heroes that served in the military while fighting for this country in various wars.

a - People who love the freedoms that we have enough to pay the price with their lives to maintain them.

c) We also remember **Innocent Lives**

i On September eleventh, since 2001 we remember those **3000** people that died in the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City.

a - *These were people who never put on a uniform. They never asked to be soldiers. But they were involved in a war of ideas and they became the ammunition for a weapon of terror used against this country.*

ii Much like we remember the **2,400** lives lost in the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

a - An unannounced surprise attack by Axis forces that resulted in America becoming involved in the Second World War. (There are others.)

3. We do **different** kinds of things for memorials.

a) Some of them are events that are celebrated like the ones I mentioned.

b) Some of them are monuments that people can visit and continue to remember the events that they commemorate.

i We have a whole “mall” of different memorials 30 minutes from here.

- B. **Memorials** (and observing them) are a useful tool to help us all remember the things that we feel are too important to forget.
1. We strive to show respect to those people and institutions.
    - a) We don't ever want them to fall out of our personal or national consciousness.
    - b) We learn important lessons from the events of the past.
      - i So that going into the future, we are more informed and better prepared.
      - ii Just because it happened in the past doesn't mean it's not useful now.
- C. Even though I used American memorials as **examples**, I realize that we aren't just Americans.
1. We're also God's people.
    - a) You could say that we have “*dual citizenship*.”
    - b) We're also members of God's kingdom through the blood of His Son.
      - i There are things that are God's things that we don't want to forget.
        - a - Things we want to continue to respect.
        - b - ***God knew that***.
- D. God also instituted memorials for His people so that they would not forget what He had done for them.
1. Some of them apply to us and some do **not**.
    - a) But we can take a look and see what God thought it was important to remember.
  2. Some of these memorials involved observation around:
    - a) **A Single Event**.
      - i In the Old Testament God was honored with memorials from Israel as a single event that remained as a permanent reminder of God's ***Power***.
        - a - This makes sense since the Jewish religion was tied to a physical nation.
        - b - Physical reminders would have been important.
    - b) **An Annual Event**.
      - i God also instituted memorials celebrated by yearly events that would serve as a respectful reminder for future generations of God's ***Providence***.
    - c) **A Weekly Event**.
      - i God instituted a weekly memorial with Israel in the Sabbath that emphasized His ***Presence*** among them and His expectations.
  3. These are the kinds of memorials we will look at this \_\_\_\_\_.
    - a) We'll see what we can gain from them in our lives.

## II. Body

### A. First: **Single** Events that **Signify** God's **Power**.

#### 1. (TURN) Joshua 4

##### a) (READ) Vss. 1-9, 20-24

i A memorial like this turns a “just so story” into an event that's carved into history.

##### b) *A perpetual reminder would be present of God's mighty power in bringing Israel to Canaan.*

i Just as we take children to visit the important memorials in this country – Israel had this place that would be a reminder to their future generations that they had been brought into the land by God's mighty hand.

ii They would be proof of the **claims** made by the parents and grandparents and later the accounts of God's people coming into the land.

a - Stones from the riverbed wouldn't look like the other stones. (Explain.)

- These were sizable stones, too.
- They were big enough to have to carry them on their shoulders.

b - How big would the stones have to be to stick up out of the river?

- *That's a little harder story to just make up.*

iii This memorial would be a respectful reminder of God's power that would affect others.

##### c) (REF) Joshua 24:22-28

i Joshua also erected a stone when the people promised to follow God's directions.

#### 2. (TURN) Genesis 28

##### a) (READ) Vss. 10-22

i Some memorials were not demanded by God but were the natural response of an individual who was in awe of God's power.

a - This man had seen something that helped him understand the majesty of the LORD.

- He was going to ever forget that himself, but he thought it was important to make an impact on others as well.

ii Jacob would continue to learn that God's power and promises could be relied upon.

a - ***God took care of him just as he said.***

##### b) *Respectful reminders of God's power offer proper perspective to His faithful followers.*

i The same God who had demonstrated so much majesty had promised to provide for him.

##### c) (REF) Genesis 35:1-7

i Jacob later returned to this place and **built an altar to God** and rededicated all of his family to following God.

a - They buried all their idols and dedicated themselves to following the LORD only.

3. (TURN) I Samuel 7

a) (NARR) Vss 1-4

- i The situation is that Israel is under Philistine rule due to their idolatry.
- ii The ark of the covenant was even taken in battle and then returned by the Philistines because of the plagues it caused.

a - ***God's power was too much for them.***

b - Here Israel is ready to serve God and fight for their freedom.

b) (READ) Vss. 5-13

- i These Israelites understood that they could not have had the success they did without God's power and assistance. Far from it, in fact.

a - They had tried in the past. *That's how they lost the ark in the first place.*

c) *The reality of God's power was honored with a permanent memorial as a respectful reminder.*

- i God's reliable help when the people were brave and obedient was worth remembering.

a - The ark was certainly a symbol of His presence, but even getting it back from the enemies was God's active work for the people.

4. We are not a physical nation like Israel. Our laws and actions are not governed by God. Creating physical memorials isn't really something we concentrate on.

a) But that doesn't mean that we don't make sure to remember God's power.

b) It doesn't mean that we don't make sure and tell others about the things that God has done for us.

- i Our children are going to **give us** the same opportunities that the Israelites had to explain that we have been brought into a relationship with God by His power, and not of our own strength. *We need to make sure that we say that out loud to them.*

- ii We know that there are successes that we have had in our lives that would **not** have happened without God's mighty hand in our lives.

a - Will we say that out loud to others?

b - Will we become the memorials so that others know?

B. Second: **Annual** Events that **Acknowledge** God's **Providence**.

1. (TURN) Exodus 12

a) (READ) Vss. 11-17

i God is giving the directions for the first Passover.

a - He expected His people to maintain the memorial over time.

b) The Passover celebration and feast of the Unleavened bread were to be perpetual reminders.

i They would remind the people that God provided a way of deliverance.

a - The feasts were to be celebrated every year.

b - They were not to forget God's providence.

c) (READ) 13:3-10

i God's providence was to be celebrated yearly in **respectful reminders**.

a - Because they would have a lot to remember.

b - Even when everything was going well for them in Canaan.

- It was to remain important.
- It was to be personal. *Look at all the personal language here.*

c - Everything that they had came from God.

- Freedom from slavery.
- A new place to live in.
- A land that took care of all their needs.

d) **The Passover wasn't the only part of the remembrance.**

i There was also the week-long feast of unleavened bread, before which they had to remove everything leavened from their houses.

ii This is such an ordeal that they developed loopholes so they could skirt the command.

e) (REF) Deuteronomy 16:3-6

i Moses reminded them that the bread was called “the bread of affliction” because they were brought out of the affliction of bondage under Pharaoh “in haste” and didn’t have time to make leavened bread.

a - That's providence. When you're rescued so fast that you didn't have time to make proper bread. It's an easy way to remember that you didn't do this yourself.

- *It would be like God telling us to make sure we ate our frozen pizza cold because He rescued us so fast that we didn't have time to throw it on the stone and cook it.*

2. (TURN) II Chronicles 30

a) (READ) Vss. 1-5 (6-12?)

i We read about the re-institution of the Passover under Hezekiah.

a - I'll give the "Reader's Digest" version here.

b) Hezekiah faithfully re-instituted the yearly celebration of the Passover in Judea.

i This was after the time of the destruction of Israel by Assyria.

a - The Northern tribes hadn't been following God for a long time and they reaped the rewards of that decision.

b - They had not held up their end of the Law and God had **warned** them of the consequences for disobedience.

c) The Passover feast provided a way for faithful Israelites to be identified with proper worship.

i Not all of them wanted to, but the ones that did could. **And they were glad to do it.**

d) (READ) Vss. 21-23, 26-27

i The Passover and feast of Unleavened Bread were a **Respectful Reminder** of God's **Providence** and an opportunity for repentance for the people.

a - They thought it was important enough to extend for **another whole week**.

3. Other returns:

a) Josiah, Hezekiah's great grandson, brought about an even bigger celebration of the Passover that was more in line with what the Law prescribed.

i (REF) II Kings 23:21-23

b) The returned exiles celebrated the Passover when the new temple was finished.

i (REF) Ezra 6:15-20

4. How often do we take time to thank God for all the providing He has done for us?

a) How much effort do we put into setting aside some time to remember that all that we have is from Him?

i Most of us celebrate Thanksgiving.

a - Growing up, that was the only holiday that my family celebrated.

b - It's not always easy to keep the focus on God.

- Some people have gotten so annoyed with the cultural and familial expectations, that they have **quit celebrating** it altogether.
- My family just decided to spend it with Saints.

C. Third: **Weekly** Events that **Witnessed** God's **Presence**.

1. (TURN) Exodus 16

a) (READ) Vss. 4-7, 22-30

i The Sabbath only worked if they believed that God would truly be with them and provide.

b) God took care of His people perpetually, and expected them to trust Him weekly in rest.

i His presence would be with them always, and they needed to trust that and rest.

c) (REF) Exodus 20:8-11

i Remembering the weekly Sabbath was part of the ten commandments that allowed the people to be a holy nation to God.

d) (REF) Hebrews 4 says our rest is at the end of this life.

2. (TURN) Luke 22

a) (READ) Vss. 15-20

i Jesus gives a new memorial to His disciples while observing the Passover with them.

b) Jesus instituted a continual memorial to remember Him and His sacrifice for us.

i The Passover was to be completed, **fulfilled in the Kingdom**.

a - There was a temporary nature to the Passover. It wasn't complete.

- God had prepared a more permanent version of the substitute lamb in His Son.
- ***This would apply to the church.***

b - (REF) Colossians 1:13 tells us the church is that kingdom.

ii When the church observes the weekly memorial of His death and resurrection, we **respectfully remember His Propitiation**.

a - (REF) Acts 20:7

- We see the church observing that memorial on the first day of the week.

b - (REF) I Corinthians 16:1-4

- We read that they gathered on the first day of **every** week.
- That's why we follow in their example.

3. (TURN) I Corinthians 11

a) (READ) Vss. 17-29

i Paul talks about the Corinthian Christians observing this weekly memorial.

b) Paul reminded the Corinthian saints of the importance of the memorial and what it reminds us.

i It reminds us of Christ's **Propitiation**. His substitution. His taking our place.

a - That great gift allows us to be in God's **Presence**.

ii If we aren't observing that memorial rightly, we aren't respecting Him.

a - We aren't demonstrating its importance to the next generation.

### III. Closer

#### A. Are you **remembering respectfully**?

1. Are you using the memorial God has provided for you to observe?

#### B. Are you remembering God's:

##### 1. **Power**?

- a) He has brought you to a place that you could not get to yourself.
  - i It is only His power that could have brought you to salvation.
  - ii Only His power can create the new person that rises from the waters of baptism.

##### 2. **Providence**?

- a) He was the one that brought the substitute Lamb. The one that could take your place.
  - i He saved Israel's firstborn, but gave His only begotten Son.

##### 3. His **Presence** through Christ's **Propitiation**?

- a) When you observe this new covenant in Jesus' blood are you remembering His sacrifice?
- b) Are you keeping in mind His body, the church?
  - i ***That's who He came to save.***
  - ii Are you one of God's people? If you aren't – you need to be.

##### 4. You can become one this \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) If you've never studied the bible, we'd love to study it with you and you can see that it tells the truth and that truth has an impact on your life.
- b) If you have studied the bible, then you know what you need to do.
  - i You can come to Him today knowing for sure that He is the King, the Chosen Savior and the Son of God. That's faith.
  - ii You can say out loud what you know to be true and confess His name before men, not just once but always.
  - iii You can turn around and change your life from the inside out in repentance.
  - iv That change begins when you have your old sinful self buried in the waters of baptism, asking God to raise you up a new creature, ready for a life as a **living memorial**.
- c) If you at one time followed Christ, but have walked away, then you know that you can pray to Him and ask for forgiveness and ask the local congregation for their prayers and encouragement.
  - i If you have any spiritual needs...