

Stones

Week #4: A Permanent Stone

Joshua 1 & 4

1. A tough question...How are **we** going to deal with _____?

- Joshua 1 (various verses) - *1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River...10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 11 "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here...'"*
- Deuteronomy 1:28 - *They say, 'The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky.'*
- Joshua 3:8,15 - *8 Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'" 15 Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest.*

2. The real question...How big do you believe **God** is?

- Joshua 1 (various verses) - *3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses...5 No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.*
- Joshua 2:24 - *24 They said to Joshua, "The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us."*
- Joshua 3 & 4 (various verses) - *Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. 10 This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. 11 See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you...as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap." 17 The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground... And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the Lord. No sooner had they set their feet*

on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before.

- Ephesians 3:20-21 - *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

3. The Lutheran question...What do these **stones** mean?

- Joshua 4 (various verses) - *4 So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, 5 and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, 6 to serve as a sign among you... These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever." ..8 So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the Lord had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. 20 And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. 21 He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' 22 tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' 23 For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. 24 He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God."*
- Philippians 4:19 - *And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*

Points to Ponder

- 1) Stones had a great deal of significance to God's people in the Old Testament. What did they mean? What was their significance? What did they allow people to discuss with future generations?
- 2) In the months ahead we might have questions that we don't have answers to...in our lives and at St. Peter. When we do what does the story of Joshua and the crossing of the Jordan river remind us of? Why is that so important?
- 3) Agree or Disagree - In the end, the stones in our series weren't the story, God was! Why?
- 4) Agree or Disagree - In the end, the bricks and this building aren't the story, Jesus is! Why?

Homework: