

Week Beginning: 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Worship Series: Stand Alone sermon



**lifegroups**  
live life abundantly

living sharing growing

### Theme Verse

(God) 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."

Joshua 4:24

### Remember This Week

God has been good to us. As we step into the future, our confidence is this: the God who has provided a way for us in the past, will make a way for us in the future. For the God we follow and serve is the same yesterday, today and forever. Step forward with courage and boldness for in Christ, we cannot lose...ever!



**My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth.**

**I will open my mouth with a parable;**

**I will utter hidden things, things from of old—**

**things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us.**

**We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.**

**Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds**

**but would keep his commands.**

**Psalms 78:1-4, 7**

Faithful God, from eternity you have known us and included us in your story in this world that we may dwell with you forever. Help us never to forget but always to remember the wonders you have done, the grace you have shown to us and your abiding presence with us, leading us in every chapter of our life. May this day be one of celebration and a joyful response of praise and thanksgiving for all you have done, for all that you are doing and for all that you will continue to do for us and all people through the power of your Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus. Amen.



1. *Share your most significant high and low of the past year.*
2. *Accountability time! How did you go with 'living purposefully' from last time?*
3. *What keepsakes do you have in your house/life that are reminders of times that God showed up and revealed himself?*
4. *What's the best celebratory moment you have experienced in your life?*

The high five, the chest bump, the goal or try dance, the ticker-tape parade, the wedding reception, graduation ceremony...all have one thing in common. They're celebration rituals. They are unique ways to celebrate special moments. So how do we celebrate in the Church? Sometimes in our desire to move forward we can fail to take the time to celebrate God's goodness, faithfulness, love. We settle for a quick "thank you, God"...a "burst" of worship and then on to bigger and better things. But today, as we come to the end of the Church year, we're Pressing Pause. It's time to temporarily stop the forward motion of life and ministry and spend some time in reflection and taking in all of God's goodness over the past twelve months... Today is a day to celebrate. For God has been good to us.



Read Joshua 3:7-4:7; 19-24

5. *Why were two memorials erected - one on the brink of the Jordan and one at Gilgal? How do they help the Israelites and Joshua know their story in slightly different ways?*
6. *What do you learn about God from these verses?*
7. *What's the significance of a specific day being mentioned in verse 19? (Think of what happened 40 years earlier to the day!)*



8. *How does remembering and celebrating events or moments in your life remind you of God's faithfulness?*

The stones functioned as an altar of celebration; an enduring sermon directed not for the ears but for the eyes. They stood as a reminder of when God showed up. Remember the Jordan is overflowing. There is no way to get millions of people through the waters safely unless God shows up, just as he had done in the past when he led them out of slavery through the Red Sea. God did show up and show his power with perfect timing.

9. *What are those moments in your life that you can point to where God showed up with perfect timing; a moment that has no other explanation than "God did it"?*

10. *How do the Creeds of the Church, baptism and Holy Communion help us not only remember who God is and what he has done for us, but give us confidence to step into the future?*

11. *Where are the moments that you have seen God turn up and lead your Church over the past twelve months.*

Joshua set up the twelve stones at a place called Gilgal. The name is significant. Read **Joshua 5:9**. Gilgal means to "roll away" to "remove the shame." Gilgal represented a new start for a new generation. Forty years of spiritual defeat and failure from wandering in the desert have been rolled away. The stones at Gilgal are a reminder to them that the dream of living in the Promised Land, a dream they thought wouldn't happen for 40 years has now been resurrected! How fitting them, that on Easter Sunday, three days after the disciples' dreams have been shattered at Calvary with the death of Jesus that we read in Mark 16:1-8 that the stone has been rolled away! The empty tomb is our Gilgal - where our shame has been rolled away, where there is a new start for every generation. For Gilgal and the empty tomb are two places where the shame has been removed; places that tells us: GOD IS FAITHFUL AND GOD IS ABLE! For the Israelites at Gilgal, it was God is able to get us across a river that is impossible to cross. For Abraham it was 'God is able to give us a child when we are long past childbearing age.' For Daniel it was 'God is able to shut the mouths of hungry lions.' What is it for you? Hearing the story of God's faithfulness in the past, seeing his power in the present, gives us confidence to trust now and into the future, for whatever Jerichos, battles, or opposition lie ahead. God is faithful and he is able.

12. *Do you find yourself living in the past, living for the moment, or living for the future?*

13. *How does this affect your ability to pause and give thanks for what God has been doing in your life?*

14. *In what ways are we not ready to face the Jericho's in our future until we have pressed pause and taken time to remember what God has done in the past?*



God is so good. As you spend some time reflecting on his goodness ask yourself the following:

15. *What is one thing for which I am thankful to God for this LifeGroup over the last 12 months?*

16. *What is one Jericho your church or you individually are facing in the future? How does God's goodness in the past give you courage to step boldly into the unknown future?*



\* Praise God for his goodness and faithfulness to you and your Church. Thank Jesus for all he has done to roll away the stones of shame and give you a new start. Ask the Holy Spirit to loosen your tongue to share the story of what God is doing and has done with the next generation.

\* Pray for each other that God would help you press pause and take time to reflect in your life so you can step forward with confidence.

\* Pray for the Christmas Carols events coming up in the next few weeks, that the gift of Jesus may be shared over and over again.

\* Pray for our children who will present the story of God's goodness in this next week as they retell the Christmas story with the community.

\* Pray for all Christian parents/grandparents to faithfully pass on the story of God's love and mercy to their children/grandchildren that they may forever know their place in God's story.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

*Name, God has been good to you. Amen.*

