

Rocks of Remembrance

2020-07-19 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on Joshua 3:7-4:9

Psalm 62

For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.

² He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.

Thanks for joining us at Long's Park in the heat of summer!

- We plan to be right here week after week, weather permitting, in light of increased COVID cases and taking our cues from Governor Kelly's recent order pertaining to public schools.
- I enjoyed last Sunday so much that part of me was wondering why churches don't just meet at parks more often whether or not we're in the middle of a global pandemic.
- We'll see how we fare today with higher temperatures.
- Always feel free to give feedback!
- I know it's more challenging to focus on lots of content here at the park so we'll keep trying to tweak and be engaging.

Thanks for joining us online either via Zoom or Facebook Live!

- Zoom is great for a number of reasons: 1) Much more engaging than Facebook Live 2) Chat function allows individual conversations and chats with everyone 3) You can see one another 4) After Parties are great!

Right Now Media—Replace Sand with Rock!

- Bathroom remodel analogy

Sprouts

- Miss Elisha's home with the kids so you're stuck with me this morning!
- Checkout my new rock. How old do you think this rock is? How heavy do you think it is? Does anyone want to try to lift it? Does anyone know where this rock came from?
- Does anyone remember Miss Elisha's lesson from last week?
- We've talked a lot about trees in the Bible the last few months. I've been getting excited to talk about rocks in the Bible recently too.
- I'm so excited to talk about rocks that I brought one for each of you so you can remember that rocks are very important in the Bible.

We're going to get into teams of 4-6 soon:

- Each person share one story about when God helped you get out of what felt like an impossible situation. When have you experienced God as Way Maker?
- Not everyone in your group will have to share a story. I'd rather have less, fuller stories with more detail than many shorter stories. This isn't how we often do group sharing. I want us to grow as storytellers, inspire one another, be able to share your God stories with others, neighbors, friends, and family members.

Let me start by sharing the original Way Maker story!

Work through Exodus 13:17-14:31

Chapter 13

¹⁷ When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was a short cut. For God said, "If the people see how scary the Philistines are they might turn around and go back to Egypt." ¹⁸ But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea, which was the long route.

²¹ And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. ²² The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people. ***How tired do you think they were traveling all that distance?***

Chapter 14

Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea.

⁵ When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" ⁶ So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, ⁷ and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. ***Imagine a huge army right over there!***

⁸ And the LORD strengthened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. ⁹ The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

¹⁰ When Pharaoh got close, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. ***Scared face***

And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

¹³ And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm... **Everyone stand up, and stand firm!**

...and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” **Be as quiet as possible. Ready, set, go!**

Pray!

¹⁵ The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ Lift up your staff... **Lift up the staff!**

and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. **Stretch out my hand.**

¹⁷ And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

¹⁹ Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night. **How do you think the Israelites slept that night? Do you think they were still afraid?**

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea... **Stretch out my hand again.**

...and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. **Do you think the Israelites were still afraid?**

²⁴ And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, ²⁵ clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.” **What do you think the clogging chariot wheels sounded like? Do you think the Israelites were still afraid? The chariots earlier struck fear in the Israelites but are now falling apart.**

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.” ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. **Who wants to experience the water splashing onto them?**

²⁹ But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians... ³¹ Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses. ***Now who do the people fear? What kind of fear is fear of the Lord?***

- We learned last week that the fear of the Lord, or the respect and honoring of God, is the beginning of wisdom.
- This historical event serves as a rock solid reminder for all people throughout history that the Creator God is the Way Maker!
- Stand on the rock when you want to share your story.

Your turn to tell stories in your groups! Take 5 minutes or so and we'll see what kind of stories we come up with.

5 minutes

Who would like to share one of your stories about how God showed up as the Way Maker in your life?

- \$1000 check when just starting to fundraise with the Navigators.
- \$1000 check the first month that Maris was pushed to part-time.

Now let's welcome up Dave and the band!

Let's hear another story from the Scriptures.

- After the men of Israel routed the Philistines.
 - 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us."
- It's important to raise Ebenezers so that every time you want to doubt God's goodness towards you, you have to get through each of those Ebenezers first before you reach that toxic place of doubt.
- And, if and when you do reach that dangerous place of doubt that will all get to at times, then you can work your way back out of it by following the Ebenezers as cairns, showing you the path ahead.
- A modern cairn shows you the right path ahead.
- An Ebenezer is a reminder of God's faithfulness in the past...which shows you path of trust ahead.

Come Thou Fount

Teaching

How are you doing living in between what has been done and what will be done?

I want to tell another Way Maker story, the parting of the Jordan River when the Israelites finally entered the Promised Land 40 years after the parting of the Red Sea.

- Everyone who was 20 years or older at the crossing of the Red Sea had died.
- God wanted to show them that He is still the Way Maker and continue to set the tone and precedence for His people for all time.

Summarize Joshua 3:7-13 The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.”

- Our spiritual lineage goes back to through so many including Joshua and Moses before him.

Joshua 3:8-13 ⁸ And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, ‘When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.’” ⁹ And Joshua said to the people of Israel, “Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God.” ¹⁰ And Joshua said, “Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. ¹¹ Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. ¹² Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. ¹³ And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.”

- They again had to step forward, this time into the water first.
- Stand in one heap is reminiscent of the parting of the Red Sea. See Exodus 15:8 and Psalm 78:13.

Joshua 3:14-17 ¹⁴ So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, ¹⁵ and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water, ¹⁶ the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away... And the people passed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

- Now here’s the important part for us this morning.

Joshua 4:4-7 ⁴ Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. ⁵ And Joshua said to them, “Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, ⁶ that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’ ⁷ then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever.”

- Stones of remembrance to retell the story of God, the Way Maker, the one who makes a way when there is no way.
- We need to tell the stories of God’s provision to our children and our friends’ children over and over again.
- We must be people who remember so that we can step forward into uncharted territory.

Joshua 4:8-9 ⁸ And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the LORD told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. ⁹ And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.

1. Remember—Immerse yourself in salvation history...so you can remember.

- a. Biblical salvation history
- b. Church salvation history
- c. Your own personal salvation history—Respond to the Gospel even this morning if you've not yet.
 - i. I brought river stones for everyone to serve as a reminder of God's specific faithfulness in your life.
 - ii. I find it much easier to trust God with other people's situations than with my own.
- d. We should be more concerned about being people who remember rather than people who are remembered.

2. Anticipate—Anticipate deliverance from present circumstances.

- a. With your eyes fixed on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of your presently paper-thin faith.
- b. Active waiting
- c. **Isaiah 26:12** O LORD, you will ordain peace for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works.
- d. I was struck afresh by these stories that there was no prayer mentioned. Just God showing up.

3. Step—Step forward into the (mostly) dry Red Sea.

- a. Face your fears and trust God's supernatural working in your life.
- b. Walk, don't run.
- c. Action steps.

4. Worship—Worship God.

- a. Greater intimacy
- b. More salvation history written
- c. Fear of God

5. Repeat—Repeat as needed (often)

- a. **2 Timothy 2:13** ...if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

Way Maker

We ourselves are living stones, trophies of God's grace!

1 Peter 2:4-5 ⁴As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house...

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

Solid Rock

Psalm 62

⁵For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.

⁶He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

⁷On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

⁸Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us. *Selah*

11:00—After Party

- Go on a prayer walk around Long's Park. Remember God's provision in your life. Ask for God's deliverance from a current circumstance. Connect with Christ. Go alone or with someone else.
- What stories of God as Way Maker can you share?
- Tell the crossing of the Jordan River to your kids.