



stones

TEACHING SUMMARY

Joshua gathered the people and received clear, deliberate instructions, as though the Lord were pressing pause on history itself to ensure they did not rush past what had just transpired. “Take stones,” He commanded. Twelve stones from the very riverbed where the priests had stood.

The men stooped, lifting wet, heavy stones from the riverbed. Each one became a physical snapshot, a tangible memory of the moment they had stepped forward without sight and discovered that God had already prepared the way. They carried those stones up the banks, across the threshold of promise, and into the camp where their families would sleep that first night in Canaan. There, in the center of the camp at Gilgal, they stacked the stones into a simple pile. Ordinary in appearance, yet utterly sacred in purpose.

The memorial was not solely for the present generation. “These stones,” Joshua explained, “are for when your children ask.” Because children always ask. One day they would pass by that pile, tilt their heads, and wonder aloud, “What is this?”

In that simple question, a door would open. A conversation would begin. Fathers and mothers who had stood at the edge of a raging river and watched God hold back the impossible would turn to their children and say, “This is where the Lord made a way for us.”

Yet something quieter, more hidden, unfolded that same day. While the people built their visible memorial on the shore, Joshua set up one of his own, not in the camp, but in the river itself. He took twelve stones and placed them precisely where the priests’ feet had stood, deep in the channel that the returning flood would soon cover again. This was a marker no one would see. No sign, no audience, no lasting monument above the waterline. Within minutes, the current would swallow it whole, hiding it forever beneath the surface. And yet, perhaps this unseen memorial mattered even more than the one on dry ground.

Before a public declaration, there must be private devotion. Joshua marked the moment for himself and for the Lord alone, not for recognition, not for others’ remembrance, but because his own heart needed to hold the truth of what God had done.

When the last person crossed, the priests remained standing in the riverbed, bearing the ark, waiting. They did not move until the Lord commanded it. The moment their feet touched the far shore, the waters rushed back into place. The path vanished. The river returned to its course. There was no way back, no visible road to the wilderness, no retreat. God had brought them in, and they were staying.

That night they camped in Gilgal, their first home in the Promised Land, their base camp. From there they would go out to battle and return, but Gilgal would remain their anchor. Once more the Lord repeated Himself, because when God repeats something, it matters deeply: "When your children ask... tell them." Not merely what happened, but what it meant. Not just history, but living testimony. "Tell them what the Lord your God did for you."

For Israel, these were not distant stories or inherited traditions. This was their gospel: "We were enslaved. The Lord delivered us. He made a way through. He brought us out. He brought us in." The same call echoes forward, not merely to remember, but to tell. To speak of the Lord's faithfulness, to recount His works, to rehearse His goodness until it becomes woven into the fabric of who we are. Scripture urges it again: "Forget not His benefits." "Remember His wonders." "Call to mind His deeds." Remembering is never passive. It is an act of devotion.

Before testimony can be shared, it must be lived. That is why the question matters so profoundly, not merely "What do these stones mean?" but "What do these stones mean to you?" Personal. Individual. Real.

Because someone is always watching, always asking, whether aloud or in silence, "Is this real to you?" When that moment arrives, the invitation is not to recite a lesson, but to tell a story. Your story. The time the Lord made a way. The moment He carried you through. The place where your feet stood on dry ground when everything said you would drown. Those are your stones, the ones no flood can wash away, no time can erase, the ones that become part of the foundation for those who come after.

There are stones you will stack in public, visible testimonies of God's faithfulness. And there are stones you will place deep in the river, moments known only between you and the Lord. Both matter. Both are sacred. Because one day someone will look at your life and ask, "What does this mean to you?" And you will have the chance to answer: "Let me tell you what the Lord has done."