



abcLinks

connecting personal and small group studies with this week's sermon

For the sermon on May 2-3, 2009

this week's coreverse

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us."

1 Samuel 7.12

usingabclinks

Personal Bible Studies (inside pages)

- Personal studies that explore Scripture passages related to this week's sermon. They are broken down into three or four days. Some days you will simply read, meditate or think about a passage of scripture. Other days you will be asked to dig into a passage through reading, studying, answering questions.

Small Group Discussion (back page)

- Small group questions that connect with the sermon and your personal Bible study. This series of questions act as a funnel to help your group discussion flow in a purposeful point.
- If you are not in a small group, contact one of our small group staff members to get more information on ABC Small Groups or go to adabile.org>small groups.

See adabile.org>message recaps & Links for ABCLinks archives.



Part One of a Three Part Sermon Series

"Part I"

Have you ever had a time in your life when something fairly ordinary, even mundane, became invaluable? This happened to me a handful of years ago. My sister, Brenda, did something with my parents that was incredibly memorable and helpful to me. With a video camera rolling, she asked them to tell their life stories. I think they humbly resisted the attention but once they forgot there was a camera in the room, the stories from their past began to roll. Later, we all gathered to watch the tape together.

I'm not sure I learned anything new that day, as I had heard the stories before. Perhaps it was how my parents told them together or maybe it was because those old stories began to deeply connect with me. But for some reason, listening to them that day moved my spirit and helped me resolve something deep in my heart. A couple of stories told that day have become very valuable to me. They have immensely helped me to understand my parents - who they are and why they lived life the way they did.

Mom told of growing up during the Great Depression. Her dad was a farmer and when the economy crashed in 1929, Grandpa lost it all. Mom was just a teenager. She was in the middle of the pack of five brothers and sisters. They had to move from their childhood home to start again on a much smaller farm. Mom told how she was never able to graduate from high school because of the family's financial struggles and transitions. She talked about these things with a mixture of resolve and regret.

Dad's childhood memories centered around the deaths of his parents. His mom died when he was in grade school. Grandpa remarried, so dad was raised by his step mom. He still refers to her today as Aunt Etta. During the depression years, Grandpa Niekerk contracted tuberculosis and the family uprooted from Iowa and moved to Denver to find treatment. Dad and his brother would peddle their bikes on the streets of downtown Denver selling candy bars to businessmen, to help the family make ends meet. His father passed away and Dad moved out shortly after high school so as not to be a financial burden on his step mom and his siblings.

These stories and many others happened decades before I arrived on the scene. Yet, they've become very important to me. They define my heritage. They identify my parents' character, both positive and negative traits. They explain so much to me about why my dad is stoic, yet extremely faithful; and why mom was frugal and grateful, yet a touch insecure about who she was in this world. These stories shed light on why they raised us the way they did and why they viewed the world around them in a unique way.

Stories like these become markers in our lives. They are points of remembrance to bring us back to our roots. The Bible is filled with these types of stories. So is Ada Bible Church. Our study today celebrates "standing stones" in both the Bible and in our church.



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personal bible studies

For the next few weeks, we'll be taking a bit of a unique path in our study. We will be taking a snapshot of Ada Bible Church; where we've been, who we are and where we're going. Today, we'll be looking at the importance of "standing stones" to the history of our church. Before most of us arrived at Ada Bible Church, important events happened to faithful people. These events were used by God to form the character and resolve of the church we enjoy today.

But first, let's explore a story from the history of Israel where a man of God marks an important event with a stone of remembrance.

Standing Stones of Remembrance

To set the stage for this story, it's important to know where Israel is in their history. Israel is being led by the prophet Samuel. He's not their king, but a spokesman for God. Israel is theocratic, meaning their king is God, himself. Samuel led them through the voice and direction of God.

Israel is facing a huge physical threat on their borders, the mighty nation of Philistia. Philistia was a coastal nation whose armies were moving inland, destroying and occupying the nations they conquered. In this story, Israel can almost smell them at their doorstep. And Israel is wanting a king... a human king. They desired a king for two reasons. First, every other nation around them had a human king. It made human sense. Secondly, a king seemed needed to rally all twelve tribes of Israel to stand as a united force against the Philistines. Tribes fighting independently could not survive the strength of Philistia.

Read 1 Samuel 7

What internal problems do you detect with the nation of Israel? What seems broken in their relationship with God?

What happens to get their attention? How does Samuel respond to impending danger?

As Israel is confessing their sin and making a sacrifice to God, they become vulnerable to their enemy. Why do you think God allows this story to play out the way it does? What does it say about God?

Samuel marks the event with a standing stone calling it Ebenezer. What does this mean? Why was this such an important thing to do for Samuel and the nation of Israel?

What standing stones of remembrance do you have around your home? What symbols mark God's goodness, protection and provision in your life? How do you use these stones to teach others such as your kids or friends?

Are there markers you need to place? Take a few minutes and think of any good deed that God has done for you that you mark with something memorable and honorable.

Standing Stones at Ada Bible Church

This weekend, Pastor Manion shared stories from our past. Why is this an important thing for our congregation to hear?

What stories impacted you the most this weekend? Is there anything in our history that you didn't know and learned this weekend?

Over the years, Ada Bible Church has been blessed with faithful families who gave of themselves diligently before ABC was a popular place to attend. In many regards, they are the "Samuels" in our story. If you know one of these individuals, drop them a card or send an e-mail thanking them for their faithfulness in serving during the more quiet days of ABC. If you don't know someone who has a long history of serving at ABC, give thanks to God for these folks who served before you.

Place yourself in Ada Bible Church's story. When did you enter the scene? What brought you to ABC? What keeps you here?



small group discussion



leanin

When did you first hear about Ada Bible Church? Why did you first attend? What or who brought you here? What keeps you here?

lookdown

Read 1 Samuel 7 out loud together. What was the setting or context of this story? Why did Israel want a king? Who were the Philistines? What was the core problem with the nation of Israel during this time?

How did Samuel respond to the Philistine threat? How did God intervene?

Why was the stone of Ebenezer important to the story? Why did Samuel set the stone?

lookout

Are standing stones or stones of remembrance important today? Why or why not, in your opinion? Where do you see them? Is God honored in the markers you see? Why or why not?

lookin

How do you mark God's goodness, protection and provision in your home?

As you listened to Pastor Manion's sermon this weekend, what stories from our history impacted you the most? What things didn't you know about our past?

Why is it important for a church to look back at its history together from time to time?

Pastor Manion used the phrase, "Even though I wasn't around, that's important to me." How have the stories of the past impacted your ABC experience today?

End your time together praying, giving thanks for days in our church's past where God and his people were faithful.