**December 30, 2018 “What do These Stones Mean?” Joshua 4:1-9**

**Joshua 4:20-24**

As we transition into the New Year, we should take the time to reflect on the past year as well. Some may ask why we would do this as the Bible tells us through the instructions written by the Apostle Paul, “this one thing I do, I forget what is behind and press on toward the mark of the high calling in Christ”.

Are not then these two in direct opposition to one another?

Let’s look first at the aspect of the rendition of the story of the Israelites crossing over Jordan and going into the Promised Land. These stone were set up in two places which we will discuss later on this morning and they were set up specifically to provide a place of remembrance. What does that remind us of? Every communion service in this church is done for one purpose and that is to follow the instruction of the Lord when He said, “this is My body which is for you, do this in remembrance of Me”. And He also went on to say, “this cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this as often as your drink it in remembrance of Me”.

In order for us to fully grasp what was happening here we need to remember the history of the Israelites that led up to this moment.

1. When did the children of Israel cross over into the Promised Land?
   1. Physically it happened after they left Egypt
   2. Spiritually and unconditionally it happened long before
      1. Genesis 15:7-21
         1. Note here that this promise is only partially fulfilled in the time of Joshua
         2. The rest of this prophecy is as sure as the stones laid up by Joshua as a signpost of remembrance
2. By Whom was the promise made in Genesis 15?
   1. Here is a stone which we all must remember
      1. It is God who makes the promises true and Amen
   2. Note the promise made to Abraham
      1. Genesis 15:13… know for certain
      2. Hebrews 6:13-20… He swore by Himself to Himself
         1. Genesis 15:19… we have an anchor for our souls
         2. The promises of God
         3. They are more real than the stones that represent them
3. Jacob… fleeing from his brother Esau
   1. Genesis 28:10-22
      1. What did Jacob contribute to the promises of God?
         1. Nothing
      2. But how did Jacob respond to the promise of God?
         1. He set up the stone as a pillar and he called it
            1. Bethel… the house of God

Do you think Jacob ever forgot Bethel?

* + - * 1. He gave a tenth of all he had

Why did he do this?

Because he remembered Bethel

* + - * 1. Ephesians 1:18-23

1. Joseph… his journey to the promised land
   1. Genesis 50:24-26
      1. Died and was laid in a coffin in Egypt
         1. Why?
         2. So those in captivity would remember the promise of God
      2. Exodus 13:19… Moses carried the bones of Joseph to the Promised Land
2. Jesus… Lazarus
   1. John 11:21-27
      1. Remove the stone
         1. John 11:39… he has been dead four days
         2. He stinks… he is too far gone
         3. I Corinthians 15:51-57
3. I Corinthians 15:58
   1. Joshua 4:9
      1. Set up in the middle of the river
      2. Some of the promises of God are known only to Him
         1. Matthew 24:36-42
         2. Daniel 12:4… seal up the vision and the prophecy
         3. Revelation 10:4… seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken

“For we walk by faith… not by sight”