

**RAISING OUR EBENEZER:
A MEMORIAL OF THANKS FOR WHAT GOD HAS DONE
DREAMS TO LEGACY SERIES: PT. 5
12/2-3/2017**

“Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the Lord has helped us.” So the Philistines were subdued and they stopped invading Israel’s territory.” (I Samuel 7:12-13 NIV)

- I. Introduction:** An important step in moving from dream to legacy is taking time to remember and praise God for His faithfulness and promises in the past, so we can reclaim His promises for our future. The journey to dreams and legacy is often hard and we need a way to reset the “GPS” of our faith and vision to get back on track. Building monuments of praise and thanksgiving are the way we do this.
- A. Throughout the Bible, God commanded His people to remember and celebrate what God had done for them and promised them in the past. Often, as was the case in the story in I Samuel 7, this included building memorials to remember how God has helped us so far.
- B. Reasons why this is so important
1. What we remember and rehearse is what we expect and anticipate. When we praise God for what He did in the past, we plant the seed to expect God to do that in the future. *What you praise you raise!* A strong memory of God’s faithfulness in our past brings a strong confidence of God’s blessing for our future. When David confronted Goliath, his boldness in expecting what God would do was based on his recollection of what God had done.
 2. If we don’t build memorials of praise to remember God’s victories and promises, Satan will build strongholds in our mind of memories of failure and disappointment. This happened with the children of Israel. If we face the challenges of life, during times of disappointment based on the story that our emotions, our circumstances, or our critics are telling us, we are likely to despair and give up. We need the bigger story before us. This is why God called them to celebrations and to writing, “books of remembrance.”
 3. In the face of our discouragements, “defiant praise” of what God has done breaks the attacks against us and anchors us in the power and promise of God, who is for us.

In Romans 4, we read about how Sarah and Abraham grew strong in faith giving glory to God based on His promises in spite of Sarah’s barrenness. Paul and Silas offered defiant praise at midnight in prison.

I heard the story of a Kansas tornado. A farmer lost everything. He was so discouraged. As he surveyed the ruins, he saw his rooster had climbed on top of the decimated chicken coup and start to cock-a-doodle. He sensed God showing him that he was to exercise that kind of faith in God's ability to restore. This is how you "raise you Ebenezer."

- Don't just look at how far you have to go; look at how far God has brought you, financially, relationally...
- Don't look at the odds against you, but the God who is for you, who said in Phil. 1:6, He would finish the work He has begun.

4. As a congregation, when we do this (look back on 20 years), it is a way of inviting people who have joined our family more recently to realize the legacy that is theirs, because of battles already fought and won. We have a wonderful inheritance given by God's promises, His mighty works, and through the prayers and faithfulness of those who've laid a wonderful foundation. The trophies of yesterday are promises for all of our tomorrows. The ceiling of their accomplishments is the floor of our future. We aren't starting from the starting line; we are starting ahead of the game.

Some examples of the legacy you will see at HFTW

- God's presence can be expected to come in extraordinary ways as we worship.
- The most ordinary people (misfits) will be chosen to be used by God in the most extraordinary ways.
- Simple acts of compassion will be supernaturally used by God to accomplish impossible breakthroughs.
- God will more than make the way to give us the ability to operate in extraordinary generosity that provides amazing things for the poor.
- There will be healings and visitations of the Holy Spirit in any place we go to minister.
- God will give extraordinary favor on any effort to give our best to the least, especially any attempt to treat kids like VIP's.

II. How do you build memorials of praise, raise the Ebenezer?

- A. Extravagant praise to God- recall His marvelous deeds, making them big in your heart and before people.
- B. Honor and thank people whose sacrifices paved the way for you.
- C. Boldly claim your inheritance that was made possible for you, through other's faith. (daughters of Zelophehad). There is no greater way to honor those, who've sacrificed than to claim and accomplish what their faith paved the way for

- D. Tell the next generation and help them celebrate the victories that God has shown you.

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

1. Share in your own words how taking time to remember what God has done for you has helped you. For example, how has God used communion time in your life?
2. What is an area of your life that you have a special testimony of God's miracles and faithfulness, that you can recall in times of difficulty and testing? What is an area you can confidently declare that God moved on your behalf? (finances, health, family healing, ministry...)
3. Where is an area that you think God might want you to activate "defiant praise?" Where, in spite of a hardship you are going through, does God want you to boldly praise Him and declare Him faithful?
4. Can you think of an area that by remembering and praising God, you developed an expectation of blessing? What is an area that because you failed to thank God, the enemy was able to start to build a stronghold of discouragement?
5. What is part of the legacy of HFTW, that you have seen the benefit from in your life? What is part of the legacy of HFTW, you believe you should claim the benefits from more boldly?