**Importance of Memorials GGC 12/30/12**

## Communion Service

Get around most true Texans, and ask them about the old black and white version of “The Alamo.” They’ll stick their chest out, stand up tall, and proudly tell you about Jim Bowie, Davie Crocket and the many other brave men who fought Santa Anna’s army. They may even hum a line from the closing song… It goes something like this, “*Remember the Alamo, Remember the Alamo*.”

Today, down in San Antonio the memorial still stands so that people won’t forget. That is not the only memorial we are familiar with. In OK City there is a memorial for those who died in the bombing years back. In Washington DC you can see the Vietnam Memorial, and the Pentegon Memorial from 9-11. All of these memorials are set up so that we will remember – remember the battles, the sacrifices, the blood and loss of life, the cost of freedom.

This morning we are going to fellowship around a memorial. **Communion is a memorial, because it is a time when we REMEMBER Christ’s death.** It’s a time when we remember the sacrifice, the blood, the loss of life, the cost of spiritual freedom. Two times in Paul’s letter to the Corinthian church, he refers to the purpose of this ordinance. Listen as I read. (1 Corinthians 11:23-25) “…the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, ‘This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”

Let’s take a moment and remember Christ’s death. Let’s bring it to the forefront of our minds and memorialize it together.

## Sermon Introduction:

I love celebrating communion because it brings us back to the root of our salvation. It helps us remember Christ. That’s what a memorial is. It’s a tool to help us remember.

As we near the end of the year, I want to encourage you as a believer to set up memorials in your life. Set up things that help you remember God and his work. I’d like to take a few moments to look into the book of Joshua because it is a book that is strewn with references to memorials. Would you turn there with me this morning?

 I don’t know if you have set up memorials along your spiritual journey, but this morning if you haven’t I’d like to encourage you to start. **Memorials are important for a number of reasons**, and I’d like to highlight a few this morning.

1. **Memorials are important because they help you remember God’s faithfulness (Josh. 4:20-23)**
	1. **Here the people of Israel cross over Jordan** and Joshua is told to get 12 stones from the river bottom to set up as a memorial.
		1. It is a memorial of the Lord’s faithfulness He brought them across the Red Sea and didn’t leave them. He brought them also across the Jordan.
		2. Israel came up against difficulty, but God was faithful. He carried them through.
	2. **I wonder what kind of difficulties God has carried you through** – have you forgotten them, or do you have a memorial to remember God’s faithfulness.
		1. For Christmas, I bought Liesl a small **coin** to remember this phase of our lives. My job as a Chaplain now is different from any time in our marriage. I’m working a full-time job outside of the church. We believe this is God’s will for us this year, and we want to remember it. So I bought her this coin – it says “AF Spouse.”
		2. I went to Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama for 5 weeks and was away from family, away from my church, and worked for 18-20 hours a day. It was a trying ordeal, but God was faithful. I bought an extra **chaplains patch** to keep as a memorial of God bringing me to this point and carrying me through.
		3. We went through the trial of a miscarriage in January of 2009, and it was very difficult on us. We had already heard the heartbeat, we had already had a sonogram and seen the picture, we were thinking of names and looking for the baby clothes bin. It was hard to go through that loss. But God was faithful. A friend of ours asked if we would accept something to remember that baby by. We did, and so we have a **figurine** that serves as a memorial – not just to remember that life, but to remember God’s faithfulness of carrying us through.
		4. This first half of the year in 2009 was hard – crashed car, separation for 5 weeks, the miscarriage, imprisonment and discipline of a former deacon, and moving… God gave us a song “**As long as you are Glorified**” in preparation to these trials. It has become a memorial to God’s faithfulness.
		5. It could be a song, a patch, a coin, or a stone, but memorials are important because they **help us remember God’s faithfulness**. Not only that,
2. **Memorials are important because they help you remember God’s power (Josh. 4:24; 10:24-27)**
	1. **God wants his people, and those around to know that He is mighty**. In the Josh. 10 passage, **five kings of the Amorites came against Gibeon**. Joshua and the Israel went up against them – God sent hailstones and killed many. This was the battle in which the “sun stood still”
		1. (v. 22-27) the kings are captured, the captains put their feet on the necks of the kings and Joshua declares the might of the Lord.
		2. They are killed, thrown in a cave, and stones erected in front as a memorial to the power of God over His enemies.
	2. **How has God shown his power in your life?** What enemies has he defeated for you? Have you forgotten, or have you set up a memorial to God’s might?
		1. Some people have days that signify certain things in their lives – The **drunk** might say “*June 26, 1996 was the last time I drank. By God’s grace, I’ve been sober ever sense*.”
		2. I have a friend who **chews gum** all the time. I can depend on him for fresh breath. I commented about his gum at one point and he said, this is what I did to quit smoking. I wonder if that pack of gum in his pocket is a memorial to God’s might in breaking that habit.
		3. I have a **passage of scripture** that has become a memorial – there was a time in my life where I was really going through a personal spiritual battle. My flesh would rage and the Spirit would convict and I was a loser for a long time. I needed God’s help. So I took a month or so and just memorized Psalm 139. I memorized about God’s presence, his knowledge, his creator rights over me, his searching eyes, and his longing to lead me. Every time I look at that Psalm it stands as a memorial because God used that mightily in my life to overcome an enemy.
		4. **Memorials are important. They remind us of God’s faithfulness, his power**, and third…
3. **Memorials are important because they help you remember God’s discipline** **(Josh. 7:22-26)**
	1. **Achan took from the accursed spoils of Jericho** – Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold and thought he could hide his sin from God.
		1. Israel when up against Ai and lost. 36 men of Israel were killed (7:5).
		2. God’s anger was kindled (7:1), and he judged them (7:11-12)
		3. There was trouble for Israel because of their sin. A memorial was made over Achen to remember God’s judgment.
	2. **Are there any memorials in your life? Are there some things that remind you of past failure and spur you to take the right path**.
		1. I can remember 9th grade **History class with Mr. Dyer**. My first quiz I got a 60%, an F. I flopped and it drove me nuts. Instead of throwing it away, I kept it and put it in the front of my history folder. It reminded me of a past failure and pushed me to do better – I ended up getting history student of the semester that year.
		2. I have a **scar on my left eyebrow** – I was running as kid when I shouldn’t have been, rounded a corner and smacked into a coffee table. That scar reminds me of God’s discipline.
		3. **Memorials are important because they remind us of God’s faithfulness, power, discipline**, and finally…
4. **Memorials are important because they help you remember God’s forgiveness (Josh. 8:28-29)**
	1. **They defeated Ai and then heaped stones over the king’s carcass** for a memorial. It symbolized God’s forgiveness and their restoration to fellowship. Joshua goes on to build an altar, sacrificed peace offerings and read the Law to the children of Israel.
		1. That became a memorial to God’s forgiveness and their restoration.
	2. **Is there anything in your life that serves as a memorial to God’s work of forgiveness and restoration**?
		1. **Justin and Heather Helen have 2 anniversaries**. Many of you don’t know them, but they were members when I first came to Messiah. Justin was the treasurer before Steve. Well, like I said they had two anniversaries because they had gotten divorced and then reconciled and remarried. Their second anniversary was a memorial – a memorial to God’s work of restoration and forgiveness.
		2. You know how Christmas is now, you get Shutter-fly family pictures on the front of cards, or postcard photos, or e-photos . Friends and families sent their latest **family pic** to update you on life. Amidst all the photo’s there’s one with some friends who have all their kids around them, but one is not like the others. He has different color skin. You may think he was adopted, but you’d be wrong. When the couple was engaged many years ago, one was at a Christian college, while the other sat out a semester to work. During that time, the girl had a one-night stand with some guy and got pregnant. It was a difficult trial, as you can imagine. The girl repented, and the guy forgave her. He wanted to still get married and accept the child as his own. So there in the family photo, there is one child who’s different, but he is a reminder of forgiveness and restoration found in God.
		3. **Sam & Sarah Choi’s** story of sin and restoration – Josiah is a testimony of forgiveness and restoration.

## Conclusion:

 As 2012 comes to a close, let me challenge you to set up some memorials in your life. Maybe a journal with written testimonies, maybe an object that triggers your memory. Fill your home and your office with memorials of God’s faithfulness, power, discipline, and forgiveness.

## Invitation:

I’d like to ask you this morning, how many of you have been placing memorials throughout your life so that you remember. Maybe you’d just raise your hand and indicate, “Yes Pastor Lukus, that has been a part of my life and I desire to continue it.”

Maybe you’re here this morning and you can’t really think of many or any memorials that you have in your life to remind you about those characteristics of God. But this morning you’d like to start somehow. Perhaps you would just raise your hand and say “Pastor Lukus, I want to start setting up memorials, because I want to remember God’s involvement in my spiritual journey.”

Perhaps you need to start a journal, or just decide to purchase, save, or make something that will remind you of major crossroads in your spiritual life. Let me pray for you this morning.