

The Stones Would Shout Carved into Stone

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Throughout Lent we've been focusing on different "stones" that are found in Scripture...."listening" to them, so to speak, about what they have to say to us in our lives...and especially in this holy season. Today (tonight) we're going to focus on TWO stones.... 2 very special stones.

(Watch VIDEO CLIP Track 15 from Disc 2 of "The Ten Commandments" where God actually "carves" the stone tablets with (His) fiery finger.)

Interesting contrast, don't you think? Here we have GOD HIMSELF, who had just miraculously delivered His people from 400 years of slavery in Egypt, literally "carving" His relationship with them into stone....and at the very same time His people were melting their jewelry into a new "god" which was incapable of leading them even around the next corner!

Do you think God meant His words to be important? To be permanent? With His people out in the desert, couldn't God have simply written them on the sand the way we write little messages on the beach? He could have painted them onto the side of the mountain, the way some miscreants draw graffiti! I suppose God could have written His Commandments on papyrus (paper) or scratched them into clay tablets.

Why do you think God "carved them into stone?" **It was His way of saying that what I have to say is IMPORTANT! I want this message to be PERMANENT!**

If you have read Exodus, you know that God goes on for 11 straight chapters giving Moses a full picture of His will for the people, and there's a lot more to follow later, especially in Leviticus. Much of this Moses does write onto Papyrus and it has been preserved.....but the CORE of GOD'S MESSAGE, the very fundamental, relational and integral statements of God's Will were carved into stone, quite literally!

Add to that the Mountain, the Smoke, the Earthquake, the Fire, the Pillar of Smoke, and God's VOICE speaking through the thunder and I think God's people were, shall we say, impressed.....especially when we consider God's timing. At the very moment God was carving HIS WORDS into stone, God's people were melting their jewelry into a new "god" they could worship....a golden calf.

The STONE TABLETS that Moses carried off the mountain literally SCREAMED at the people: ***"You make your choice....you can stand with the calf of gold and see where it gets you OR you stand on this ROCK with GOD!"***

All of a sudden their jewelry frenzy didn't seem to be such a good idea, did it?

Suddenly those who had bowed down to the golden calf found they had nothing to stand on in the presence of God.

What God literally carved into stone we call the "Ten Commandments," and most of us know them by heart. (do you?) Jesus

summarized them like this: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.”*

It sounds SO simple, and yet not ONE of us who has ever done it. No one. Not Moses. Not me. Not you. Not one of the disciples. Not one of the stained glass saints of the church. We’ve all failed to keep what God Carved Into Stone.

We’re all guilty, we’re all sinners.....and you can carve that into stone as well.....and if you can imagine this, it ends up being carved as a line between us and God.

There’s an expression we use fairly often when we want to make a point or take a stand. Can you guess what it is? It’s this: *“I’m going to draw a line in the sand!”*

What a stupid thing to say! A line in the sand can get blown away, washed away, or drifted away! A “line in the sand” is no more permanent than anything else we as human beings can make with our own hands. And we know what happens to anything that’s BUILT on a foundation of sand!

But there’s one more Stone to discuss today. This one has nothing written on it. It’s lying on the floor of Pilate’s courtyard.....a place called “Gabbatha.” It means “the place of judgment.”

It’s where Jesus stood after He was taken from the Garden of Gethsemane. It’s where Pontius Pilate himself, the Roman “judge” pronounced

Jesus “not guilty” and yet sentenced Him to death....it’s where Jesus took His stand for US.

Imagine this... picture this in your mind.....Jesus, in the courtyard of Pontius Pilate, not standing on some smooth, well-worn paving stone, but with one foot on the first tablet of the TEN Commandments, the “*love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul and your mind*” tablet and His other foot on the second tablet...the *love your neighbor as yourself* tablet.

It’s where Jesus took His stand on the LAW of God, fulfilling them by dying in our place because WE couldn’t keep God’s Law....carved into stone.

And then those stones shout out to you and to me: WHERE DO YOU STAND? Are you building your life on the “sand of the world” or on the “solid rock of Christ?”