

Confessions of the Pastor's Wife: Stone Rolling: God's Sport

Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Joshua 5:9

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For those of you who know me, you know I'm not really a sports fan. I love the Olympics, and because I married my husband, I really like Cardinal baseball. Baseball makes sense to me in a way other sports don't. One of my favorite things about baseball is that it is, at its core, a fundamentally team sport. You can have great players, but great players don't carry a team. Everyone has to contribute in order for a team to be successful.

In 2011, the Cardinals played the Texas Rangers in the World Series. The Rangers had never won a World Series, and the odds were in their favor. Game 6 was not good. Both teams committed several errors and the players just seemed tired...worn out by the long fight it had taken to get to this moment. The Cardinals were down to their last out. My husband had his finger on the remote, waiting to punch the power button so he didn't have to see the Rangers celebrate their first-ever World Series win. But then, David Freese came to the plate. The Rangers had already taken care of the top of the Cardinal line-up. The power hitters were out, and this youngling at the bottom of the team roster shouldn't be a problem. He was a stepping stone to the Rangers' victory. The win was in the bag...until it wasn't. Freese hit a ball into the outfield that should have been caught, but for some inexplicable reason what should have been a routine play became a fielding error and the Cardinals tied the ballgame. The game went into extra innings, and the Cardinals were once again down to their last out. The power-hitters were taken care of, and Freese came to the plate again. Could lightning strike twice? Yep! Freese hit a walk-off home run and the stadium erupted. The Cardinals had forced a game 7.

In sports, there are no foregone conclusions. Any team can have a great moment, or a really terrible one. There's a reason why games are played and awards held under lock and key until the end of the season. You never know what's going to happen.

This is, of course, completely counter to the message God gives us about how he moves and works in our lives.

WITH GOD, THERE IS NO QUESTION ABOUT THE OUTCOME—HE HAS THE VICTORY—EVERY TIME.

In Joshua 5, the Israelites are at the beginning of a long journey to conquer the Promised Land. They've just witnessed a mighty display of God's power as the Jordan River dried up before them and they were able to cross on dry ground. Behind them is the wilderness, ahead is the prize. In this moment, God assures His people that he has "rolled away" the shame and disgrace of their slavery in Egypt. No more are they bound by the chains of oppression, injustice, persecution, and fear. The Israelites have been freed and a new life awaits....a life of peace, prosperity, and faithful communion with God.

God has told the Israelites how the story ends...they will be victorious. But, as the Israelites are human, there are lots of bumps along the way as they learn to trust in God's word. Looking out over a land that is occupied by people and defended by armies, the Israelites wonder if this is truly the best course of action. They are completely unprepared, on their own, to take this land.

THE SPORT OF STONE-ROLLING

I think if God has a sport, it has to be stone rolling. He's an expert at moving those huge boulders out of our way so that we can continue on our path to grace. There is no stone too heavy for God to move, and I think it delights Him to do so. Where we see a roadblock, God sees an opportunity.

Joshua 5:9 is an echo of God's ultimate victory. In this verse, God is rolling away the shame of slavery. In Luke 24, God is rolling away the finality of death.

I love this sentence. These 9 simple words encompass the entirety of the Gospel message...the entirety of God's message throughout all of Scripture really...They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. It's a mic-drop moment. You see, God showed once again that the victory is already won. The stone is rolled away.

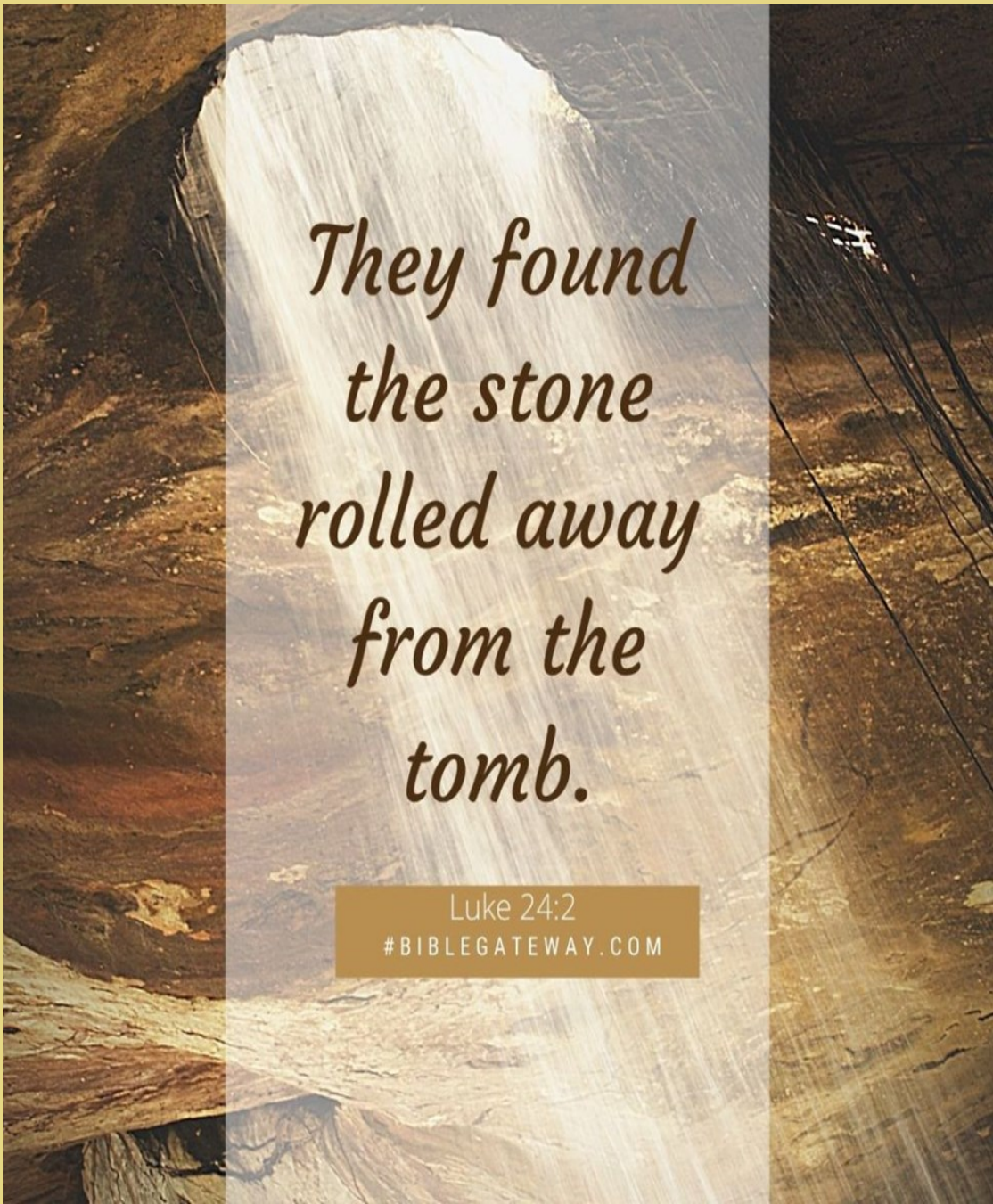
THE TOMB IS EMPTY. GOD WINS. AGAIN. ALWAYS. FOREVER.

Honestly, this verse just makes me want to cheer. I can't read it and not feel the kind of joy Cardinals fans felt when David Freese hit that walk-off home run nearly a decade ago. I want to jump up and down and shred someone's jersey! That's how strong the power of God's sport is! We can't help but be ridiculously and blissfully joyful when we play on God's stone rolling team because we KNOW we ALREADY HAVE the victory!

I don't know about you, but I NEED this reminder right now. The world seems impossible. Life as we knew it has gone (at least for awhile). There are challenges we're facing that we never thought we'd have to face. Our plans have not just been detoured, some have been completely demolished. Roads are closed. Stones are all around. But know this...we serve a stone rolling champion! Our God rolls away stones. So, whatever circumstance you face...whatever stones have rolled across your path...understand that God has already moved them. You have the victory. So, keep walking. Keep looking forward. Keep celebrating the fact that God has already rolled the stone away.

Blessings and Peace,

Sara



*They found
the stone
rolled away
from the
tomb.*

Luke 24:2
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PRAYER

A PASSION FOR THE PRESENCE OF GOD



Les Case	Michael Hatfield
Donald Cohan	Leticia and son Ethan
Wade Davis	Derek Petty
Chad Elmer	Steve Raymond
Janet Ford	Nancy Rowe
Richard Fuerst	Larry Sparks
Winnie Fuerst	Elaine West
Harvey Geary	Pastor Tom & Jennifer Statler

Congregation de Mellier
Heart and Soul Children's
Learning Center
All Ministries
of the Church

Sunday Scripture Message

Acts: 2: 42-47

The Fellowship of the Believers

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.



Latest update

Pastor Chris and the Trustees met last week to discuss returning to in-person worship and other re-opening procedures. **We are currently targeting June 7 for a return to in-person worship.** We will NOT have Sunday school or any other activities on Sunday morning initially. **We will confirm the restart date and share more details of what procedures and policies will be in place in next week's newsletter.**

June 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31 Services 10:00 Online	1	2 Church Council Meeting 7:00	3	4	5	6
7 Services 8:00 & 10:00	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Services 8:00 & 10:00	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Services 8:00 & 10:00	22	23	24	25	26	27