

42-24-05b-Stones That God Rolls Away (shortened)
Easter, death, memorials, deliverance, hope, living water
Luke 24:2

God can turn life's hard things into memorials of His saving grace.

INTRODUCTION: (Scripture reading: Luke 24:1-9)

–Though Jesus was properly buried, the women went to add their own burial spices. But there was an *obstacle*– Mark 16:3, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” Luke 24:2, says “They found the stone rolled away from the tomb.” It was more than empty: God turned their *hard stone obstacle* into a lasting *Easter memorial* of Christ's resurrection. But there's a lasting principle: **HOM.idea!** Hard things in life, *like the stone sealing Christ's tomb*, can seem like *end points*, but God makes them into *turning points*. This is illustrated in 2 stories about *stones* in Jacob's life, and both point to this principle's ultimate fulfilment in the *rolled-away stone* of the Easter story. *First...*

- I. During His Flight to Haran– Gen 28:10-22 [synopsis:** Jacob, fleeing the wrath of Esau, stopped for the night, took a stone, and used it as pillow. While asleep, he dreamed of angels going up and down a stairway from earth to heaven. From above it, God spoke, *promising to be with him, guide him and protect him*. Jacob woke in the morning, *set the stone up as a pillar*, anointed it with oil and called the place *Bethel*, vowing to serve God and asking God to bless him.]
- A. *What a pillow!*–cold & hard, just like his *lonely* flight from Esau!
- B. But his *stony pillow* became a *sacred pillar*: *Bethel* [“*God's house*”].
1. A stone used for rest in a *flight from danger* became a *memorial*, a *reminder* of God's promised deliverance.
 2. On Easter, God turned *the stone behind which Jesus rested*, after *His apparent defeat* on the Cross, into a *memorial of victory!*

TRANS: The women approached the tomb expecting *trouble with a stone*. Instead, *that troublesome stone* is now an everlasting reminder of *death's defeat* by the *power of Christ's resurrection!*

- II. Then Jacob Met Rachel– Gen 29:1-11 [synopsis:** Reaching Haran, Jacob found a well with a stone rolled over it and some shepherds waiting to water their flocks. He asked if they knew Laban, his uncle, and they pointed out his daughter Rachel approaching to water her flocks. SO, “*When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of Laban... he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and*

- watered his uncle's sheep. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud.”]*
- A. These *kissing cousins* would soon become *bride and bridegroom*:
1. Rachel needed help, and God sent the *help* of a future husband.
 2. They met at a stone obstacle, which blocked access to water.
 3. Rachel, *unable to roll away the stone* herself, would now depend on her husband Jacob to *manage the stone* and *water the flocks*.
- B. A striking parallel: for 3 days, behind the stone at Jesus' tomb lay the promise of *living water*– John 4:13-14, [Jesus had told another thirsty woman at another well,] “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”
1. To this *group of women* [who were *representative* of the corporate Bride of Christ] that *stone looked like* the *end point* of what Jesus had promised in John 7:38, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”
 2. Yet, that *rolled-away barrier* is now a testimony to *Christ's resurrection power* and to the *living water* freely flowing from it.
 3. At that *rolled-away stone*, we, the Church, the *Bride of Christ* meet *our resurrected Bridegroom*, our *Husband-King!*

CONCLUSION:

–There are *stony pathways* in life. *Stony circumstances* often beset our journey: relational hard places, financial hardships, *hard-to-bear pains* in the body, and soul-crushing griefs, all along our earthly way. Ultimately, all the *stony hard things of this life* will be rolled away by our resurrected Savior and Lord. But in the meantime, His *rolled-away stone* of Easter forever reminds us that **God can turn life's hard things into memorials of His saving grace.**

Luke 24:1-9

- 1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.
- 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,
- 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.
- 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.
- 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?”
- 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:
- 7 ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’”
- 8 Then they remembered his words.
- 9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.