

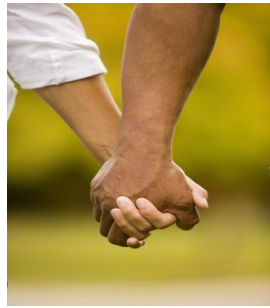
Fulness of Joy

Scriptures:

1 Samuel 7:12

Psalm 16:11

Hebrews 12:2



Annie

“Thus far the Lord has helped us”

Do you have an “Ebenezer stone” moment? When Samuel was the Lord’s Prophet over Israel, we read that the Israelites were terrified of the Philistines, so Samuel told them to repent of worshipping idols, to remove all the ashtoreth from their land and turn back to serving the One True God. Thankfully they heeded his words and did as he had told them, and God defeated the Philistines. Samuel then erected a stone between Mizpah and Shen, and called it Ebenezer, saying “Thus far the Lord has helped us”. That stone was a constant reminder of how God had responded and helped Israel when the nation turned back to Him. So, do you have an Ebenezer stone moment?

I know that there are several times in my life where I am certain that the Lord has helped me, beyond any human comprehension, these are my Ebenezer stone moments. Times when I knew so clearly and assuredly that God was beside me, holding my hand and turning what the enemy meant for evil into something wonderfully good. And I have a physical Ebenezer stone. It’s not a monument, it’s one I can hold in my hand, white and speckled with shiny bits of ochre, and holding it brings memories flooding back. It’s one I came across on our little farm and is more precious to me than diamonds.

Erecting monuments or stone cairns gave the people of the day a constant reminder of what God had done for them, and as they walked past they told their children of these amazing times. But the most significant monument of all was not made from stone that stands the test of time, but rough sawn slabs of wood, fashioned into a cruel weapon of torture and suffering, culminating in an excruciating death. A cross made of wood, with rusty iron spikes that held the dying prisoner against its splintered surface. And where is it now, this most important Ebenezer stone of all? Physically it has gone, rotted away into the ground, yet it stands as the symbol of the greatest moment in history in the hearts of all who follow Jesus, and in the heart of God Himself.

As Jesus endured all the weight of the sin of the world, as He became sin for us, taking every disease, both physical and mental, upon Himself, He looked forward to millions of Ebenezer stone moments that He would share with us. “For the joy that was set before Him”, that is why He relinquished all His power, all His will and submitted to the will of His Father, for all those moments when He would reveal the Father to another broken sinner who was repenting. He had set before Him the whole of time, like an incessant movie rolling on, full of indescribable joy as soul after soul was saved. He saw each joyful salvation as He chose to be our Sacrificial Lamb of God.

In Psalm 16:11, the Psalmist describes a scene that is astounding, wonderful and exhilarating. He sees the Path of Life, a path that he knows he will not walk alone, a path that leads into the glorious Presence of God where there is complete fulness of joy. This is the same joy that was set before Jesus as He suffered on the cross, the whole of God's family, million upon millions of joy filled saved souls all in His Presence forever. And there, at His Right Hand, at our Saviour's side, are pleasures beyond anything we could imagine that go on forever and ever and ever and ever.

Our Ebenezer stone moments are so important because they remind us that we are never alone, that we are at the side of our wonderful God, who goes before us, but never ahead of us. He walks with us, at our pace, on our path to Life, gently encouraging, carrying and loving us all of the way, until we see Him one day in Glory.

Prayer: Abba Father, You have brought us this far, helped us on our way, may we never forget that most momentous day when You paid the price that we could never pay. The most memorable time in history when You saved the world, if we repent and turn to You. Thank You in Jesus Name, Amen.