

Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide
Joshua 4:1-9 | November 29, 2026
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I. Introduction to this Study

This week, we begin Advent and our new series, exploring how familiar Christmas traditions can become opportunities to remember, worship, and point others toward Jesus. We begin with decorating.

In Joshua 4, the Israelites have just crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. God instructs them to gather twelve stones as a memorial of His faithfulness. These stones would remind future generations of what God had done and invite them to hear His story.

Similarly, our Christmas decorations can remind us of something greater than the holiday itself. They can point us to God's promises, His faithfulness, and ultimately the gift of Jesus Christ. This Advent, how might decorating become an intentional act of remembering and sharing God's story?

II. Connecting with One Another

What is your favorite Christmas decoration or tradition? Is there a particular ornament, decoration, or item that holds a special memory for you?

III. Study the Text

Begin by reading **Joshua 4:1–9** in its entirety. As you read, pay attention to what God asks the Israelites to do, why He asks them to do it, and how these stones will serve future generations.

Re-read Joshua 4:1–3.

- What does God instruct the Israelites to do after crossing the Jordan River?
- Why do you think God asks them to gather stones from the place where they crossed?
- Why is remembering God's faithfulness an important part of our relationship with Him?

Re-read Joshua 4:4–7.

- What purpose would these stones serve for future generations?

- Joshua anticipates children asking, "What do these stones mean?" Why is it significant that these reminders would lead to conversations about God's faithfulness?
- How might our Christmas decorations become opportunities to tell the story of God's faithfulness?

Re-read Joshua 4:8–9.

- How do the Israelites respond to God's instructions?
- The stones were ordinary, but what they represented was extraordinary. How can ordinary objects or traditions point us toward God's work?

IV. Reflect and Respond

Why do you think we are sometimes quick to forget God's faithfulness, even after experiencing His goodness in our lives?

As we enter the Christmas season, what are some things that tend to distract us from remembering and celebrating the birth of Jesus?

How could we be more intentional about using our Christmas decorations and traditions to point ourselves and others toward Christ?

V. Digging Deeper

- **Deuteronomy 6:4–9:** What does this passage teach us about incorporating reminders of God into our everyday lives?
- **Psalm 78:1–7:** Why is it important to tell the next generation about God's faithfulness?
- **Luke 2:8–20:** What can we learn from Mary and the shepherds about remembering and sharing God's work?

VI. Prayer

- Thank God for His faithfulness throughout generations and for the ways He has been present in your own life.
- Confess the times when the busyness, expectations, and distractions of Christmas have caused you to lose sight of its true meaning.
- Ask God to help you recognize His faithfulness and remember the ways He has worked in your life.
- Pray that your Christmas traditions and decorations would become opportunities to share the story of Jesus with family, friends, and neighbors.
- Ask God to prepare your heart during Advent, that this season would be marked not simply by activity, but by worship, gratitude, and anticipation of Christ.