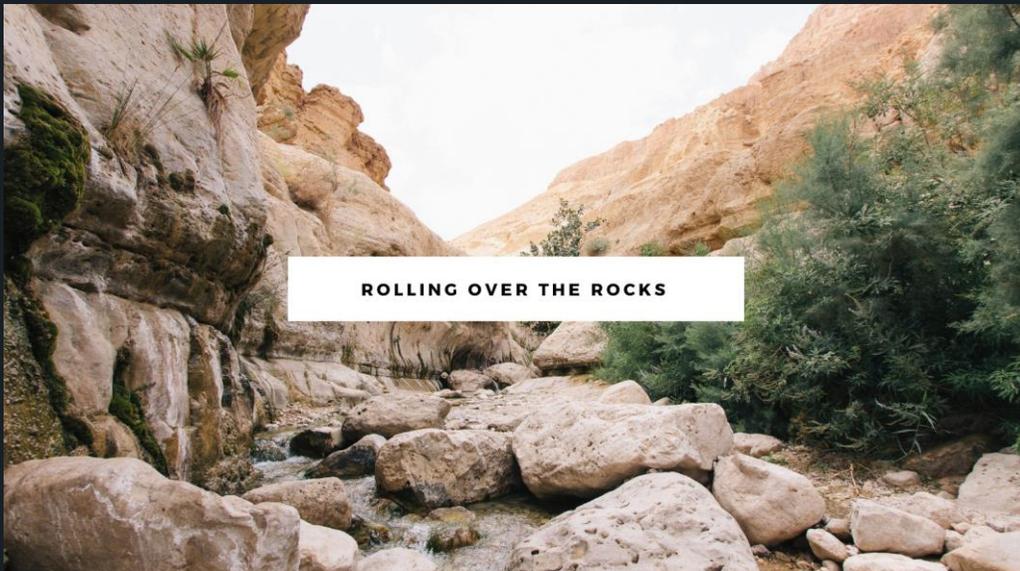


SUN CITY SERMON NOTES

07.07.19



Rocks are hard. They stand for hardness and difficulty. Those same rocks also stand for a firm foundation, Jesus and breakthrough. There are three types of rocks that we face, three types of problems that we face. We can turn those stumbling blocks into steppingstones. Let's take time to look at these three types of challenges and how we can turn each one of them into opportunities:

1. **Rocks that you can roll over by yourself**

The Lord said to Moses, "take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink." So, Moses took the staff from the Lord's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank (Numbers 20: 8-11).

God said to Moses speak to the rock, but Moses decided to hit the rock twice with his staff. There are some rocks that you only need to speak to. All you have to do is talk to the rock, discuss the issue, or just do something about it. James says, 'You do not have because you do not ask' (James 4:2). Sometimes all you have to do is ask. All you need to do is play your part, God will play His part. The promises of God are made for all who believe and appropriate them.

There was a time when Israel did not even have to fight the battle. All they had to do was to take their position in the Lord. "You will not have to fight this battle.

Stimulating
Wholesome Thinking

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1. Turn stumbling blocks into steppingstones and opportunities
2. If you don't know where to turn, but you know you want the stone removed, turn to God.
3. The promises of God are made for all who believe, play your part and God will play His.

Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you” (2 Chronicle 20:17).

2. Rocks that require others to roll over

“There he saw a well in the open country, with three flocks of sheep lying near it because the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well” (Gen 29:2-3).

Jacob comes upon a well, by which lay three flocks. On its mouth was a large stone, indicating that water was precious, and that the well was the common property of the surrounding natives. The custom was to gather the flocks, roll away the stone.

When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.

The sheep were lying beside the well but not drinking from it (rock was too large). The narrator further offers that the stone covering the well was large. The stone was a stumbling block. Sometimes we stand at the well, we want the living water, but we cannot get it because the stone has not been rolled over. We need someone to help. We need someone to roll over the stone so that we can access the living water.

Stones were used as coverings to keep wells clean and to restrict their use.

Here is the paradox:

- The rock signified that Jacob had come to a hard place
- The rock covering the well poses as an obstacle that makes the water inaccessible
- But the same rock is also protecting the well from silt and dirt
- The stone signifies difficulty, yet the well is a symbol of fruitfulness
- The rock is hard, but it is also an opportunity. There are rocks that are too large for us. We need to call the shepherd to come and roll over the rock for us.

3. Rocks that can only God can roll over

“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb? But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.” (Mark 16:1-4).

The stone represented a barrier to their goal: to anoint the body of their beloved Master with spices. I’m sure their hearts were still downcast as grief flooded their spirits. “Who will roll away the stone?” they asked one another.

These women were obviously not strong enough to remove it themselves. Some sources say the stone, which rolled along a carved-out “track” in front of the tomb could have weighed more than a tonne.

How could the women anoint Jesus’ body if the stone blocked the entrance?

To the women there were three difficulties:

- a. the stone of itself was huge;

- b. the stone was stamped with the seal of the law; and
- c. the stone was guarded by the representatives of power

In man's path of happiness lies a huge rock, which completely blocks up the road.

Have you tried to roll away your own stones, only to realize it's too hard? The obstacles are too big. Do they loom so large that you surrender at the thought of even trying to remove them? Whatever those stones or circumstances are, your "enemy" has been closing the entrance of your heart and mind, until there is no light remaining. You cannot see a way out—or in. You speculate, "Who will roll this stone away?" You don't know where to turn, but you know you want the stone removed.

My prayer is that obstacles will be miraculously removed from your path. Give it to God. He will roll away the stone for you. Remember, it is God who specializes in stone removal. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). It is Jesus who removes the stones that are too large for you. If a problem seems insurmountable, give it to God.

The "stones" that imprison us or block our path have no power to destroy us. Stones blocking the entrance of your heart—stones of fear, rebellion, despair, or discouragement? These should not define who you are. If you don't know where to turn, but you know you want the stone removed, turn to God. "Look up to Jesus" in faith. God says: "I have already rolled the stone away."