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“Turn these Stones into Bread.”

Familiar words – the first temptation of Christ in the wilderness. When you are hungry even stones can look like bread but there is more to the story than just the temptation of physical food. It has a lot to do with the stones. Satan picked the stones because the history of bread and stones have a unique relationship – not physically but spiritually.

A number of Biblical stories involve stones. Jacob used a stone for a pillow (talk about hard!) He then has a fantastic vision from God. When he wakes up he “turns” the stone into a pillar – a type of altar of remembrance. “Here it is that I met God.” The stone becomes a type of spiritual food to nourish and sustain the spiritual man on his journey.

When the children of Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground they picked up twelve stones to set up an altar to honor, commemorate and remember the mighty deliverance of God. Spiritual food. Often after unique deliverances stones were set up as altars with the admonition that in future days when the children asked, “What do these stones mean?” they would be given the spiritual nurture, the spiritual sustaining that comes from the stones – turned into spiritual bread.

When David goes out to meet Goliath, you might think that he would have considered putting a few stones in his pouch – just to be ready. But on the way to the battle he stoops down to pick up five smooth stones. (I’ve often wondered why he picked up five – some say it was because Goliath had four brothers.) Why is he stooping down, stopping on the way to the battle to pick up stones? It is not like stones need to be “fresh”, like we like our bread. Could it be about the story yet to come how God will meet the need when the need is needed? Again, stones become spiritual bread. Ironically, these stones (well, one at least) became the “stepping-stone” for David to go from shepherd boy to warrior – on his way to King.

Stones, they are everywhere. We get them in our shoes. We trip over them. They break our windshields. Mostly, they give us problems. They are problems! God knows! But He calls us – not like Satan in the temptation – but as our heavenly Lord to turn our stones into bread – spiritual bread. When our difficulties – our stones – become past tense, it is then that we can look back and see how God has used many of our struggles to change us, transform us, conform us, redeem us and use us. It is then that we turn our stones into bread – spiritual bread.

Who and what are your stones? Difficult students, recalcitrant teachers, impossible parents, rules and regulations, finances, emotions, guilt or health. When we begin to thank Him for His confidence in us (yes, He does have tremendous confidence in us) that He is sure we (Him and us) can make it through whatever is in front of us – then the stones become bread – spiritual bread. Bon Appetit!