“Thus Far: The Power of Remembering”, the third and final sermon in *The Goodness and Kindness of God* series, preached on 1 Samuel 7:2–12.What we remember about God’s past faithfulness shapes how we face the future. “Thus far the Lord has helped us” is a comma, not a full stop.

1. Opening. It recaps the series: God gives us Himself (Eduan), and His goodness chases us down (Christine). Then a relatable story about kids forgetting cricket shoes and uncharged phones leads to the point that we forget God’s faithfulness fastest of all. It ties back to January’s prayer walk and the year’s word, *divine connection*: tearing down old “altars” or mindsets and building new ones. God keeps reminding His people to remember:

2 Peter 3:1–2 Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

2. Twenty years. Israel used the ark like a lucky charm, lost it, and spent twenty years learning that God is a Father to walk with, not a tool to carry into battle. They wanted His provision; He wanted their hearts.

3. Tearing down, building again. Samuel calls Israel back:

1 Samuel 7:3 “Commit yourselves to the LORD and serve Him only”

The rhythms of Word, prayer, giving and fellowship aren’t transactions to earn blessing. They are how we keep turning toward the Christ already in us. The potter’s wheel image describes the uncomfortable space where the old shape is gone and the new one isn’t clear yet.

4. Mizpah. Israel repents with “We have sinned against the Lord,” and the Philistines attack anyway. A battle isn’t evidence that God is absent. Samuel offers a lamb, God routs the enemy, and Israel didn’t win; God did. Applied to Oakhill: “We’re standing here because God is kind.”

Deuteronomy 8:2 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years.

The sermon honestly acknowledges the year’s losses. Scripture doesn’t ask us to pretend painful things are good, but to remember that God is good:

Titus 3:4–5 But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

5. Thus far.

1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the LORD has helped us.”

Ebenezer means “stone of help,” with God’s name on it, set up where Israel had been most afraid. Key repeated line: *“Victory speaks into the future through the pain of the past.”* The pain wasn’t good, but it doesn’t get the final word. Nobody says “thus far” at the finish line:

Philippians 1:6 He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

6. The stone and the Spirit. Stones remind us from the roadside; the Holy Spirit reminds us from the inside.

John 14:26 “will remind you of everything I have said to you”

Galatians 5:25 “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit”

7. The Lamb before the stone. Help came through sacrifice, pointing to Jesus, the Lamb who offered Himself and the living Stone and Cornerstone who doesn’t move. It includes a salvation invitation.

8. Response. Each person gets a river stone. On one side they write what God carried them through, and on the other what they’re trusting Him with next. Then communion and laying the stones at the front to “lean on the Cornerstone.”

Matthew 26:26–28
26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”
27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.
28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

9. Declaration. Everyone says together “Thus far the Lord has helped us,” followed by a closing prayer.