

Digging Deeper Joshua Week 3

Our portion of Joshua this week brings to a culmination years and years of waiting to have the fulfilment of entering into the Promised Land. It was promised to Abram and would now be fulfilled in the life of Joshua. I can't even begin to image the anticipation that that Israelites must have had as they approached the crossing of the Jordan River. Lord, I pray we can approach Your Word today with great anticipation as You reveal new things to us.

Joshua 3:1 Then Joshua rose early in the morning...

I love that Joshua rose early in the morning. As a morning person, that is when I am at my best, it is when I like to spend time with the Lord. It is the time when no one else is up and my time with the Lord is usually not interrupted. I know there are some of you who are NOT morning people and the thought of waking up early seems awful. I'm not saying you have to be a morning person, but I am suggesting that instead of hitting snooze on your alarm, you could get up and it's not as likely that your time will be interrupted. We can't add more time to our days but we can make the most of the time we have. Are you a morning person or a night owl?

Jesus was one who got up early. Look at how his time away with the Lord is described:

Mark 1:35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he (Jesus) departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

'Very early in the morning, while it was...' – Jesus rose so early that it was still dark outside. Do you know what time of day that would have been? We may not be able to pinpoint the exact time but we know that it was still dark outside. What time would you have to get up in the morning in order for it to still be dark outside? Did you realize Jesus woke up that early for you? IF the Lord called you to wake up early to spend time with Him, would you be willing to do it?

The Israelites were getting ready to head out and cross over the Jordan River. What did Joshua say would lead the way?

Why do you think the ark of the covenant was supposed to lead the way? What did it represent? (Joshua 3:3)

What had the Lord used previously to guide the Israelites? (Exodus 13:21)

What leads and guides us today? How does it differ from the previous things the Lord used to lead and guide His people?

What do you learn about the Holy Spirit in this passage?

John 14: 16-17 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit? (Galatians 5:22-23)

God has always lead and guided His people. He has always been present in their lives, always been in control and always seen what was going on in their lives. He is not some distant God who is disconnected to His creation, He is intimately involved. He sent His Holy Spirit not only to lead and guide us but to encourage us, to teach us, to convict us and to draw us back to Himself. How does this encourage you today?

God's presence with His people was reinforced in the words the Lord had for the Israelites before they headed out to the Jordan River.

Joshua 3:9-10 ⁹ And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God." ¹⁰ And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

What descriptive word is used of God in verse 10?

The land they were entering, the land of the Canaanites was full of other gods. Read how Isaiah describes these gods and then share how God's description as a living God is different. How does God being a living God encourage you?

Isaiah 44:10-17 Who fashions a god or casts an idol that is profitable for nothing? ¹¹ Behold, all his companions shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are only human. Let them all assemble, let them stand forth. They shall be terrified; they shall be put to shame together. ¹² The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. ¹³ The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. ¹⁴ He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. ¹⁵ Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. ¹⁶ Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" ¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"

Who was to carry the ark of the covenant and how was it to be transported?

What was required of the priests who were carrying the ark of the covenant? (Joshua 3:15)

Because the Jordan river was at flood stages and the requirements of how the ark of the covenant was to be transported – I can only imagine how worried the priests must have been. BUT, they were willing to step out in faith – to step into the raging waters – to be obedient. How have you had to step out in faith?

Once the feet of the priests touched the water, the water piled up on each side. Once they stepped out in faith, God stepped in. How have you seen God step in after you stepped out in obedience?

Is there something the Lord is calling you to do today – to step out in obedience? What is holding you back? Seek the Lord and ask Him to give you the courage and the willingness to be obedient and then write a prayer of commitment to the Lord.

Not only did the Lord’s presence go BEFORE the Israelites into the Jordan, but it REMAINED in the midst of the riverbed and it followed BEHIND them. When have you experienced the Lord going before you, remaining with you and/or coming up behind you?

What does it mean to you to know that the Lord is ALWAYS right there with you – that there is no situation that you face alone?

Here’s a bit of a history review – who did Joshua call to take a stone out of the Jordan River?

Where did these 12 people come from?

What was the purpose of taking the stones from the Jordan River? (Joshua 4:6-7)

The Israelites were to not only remember what the Lord had done for them at the crossing of the Jordan River, they were to share it with the next generation. Sharing what the Lord had done for His people with the next generation was not a new concept.

Deuteronomy 6:6-8 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

When were the Israelites to be talking to their children about the commands and statutes of the Lord?

It seems like it is something that they are supposed to be doing all the time. It is something that is supposed to be something that is naturally part of their everyday life. He wants the same from us – He wants us to teach the younger generation about who He is. Unfortunately, many people rely on the church to do the teaching. They leave the teaching of the Bible, teaching Who God is and teaching about what is important to God and how He wants us to live our lives up to the Sunday school teacher, children’s minister or even VBS leader. While taking our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews or any other children who are in your life to church, Sunday school and even VBS is a wonderful thing, it is not enough. The call of the Lord is greater than that.

How well do you share what the Lord has done for you with others? In particular, how do you share it with the younger generation? These are not to be guilt inducing questions but rather challenging questions to help us all be more intentional about sharing what the Lord has done and is doing with our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and neighbors. Spend some time and ask the Lord to show you how you can share more with others and specifically who He wants you to be more intentional with and then make the commitment to do it.

Here are some practical ways we can start to do that today:

- Pray with your children or grandchildren before they go to school or before they go to bed. If you see them regularly or Facetime with them, include prayer as part of your regular interaction.
- Share Bible stories with them – you can even read Bible stories over the phone or via Facetime. Instead of reading other books, chose a Bible story.
- Share with them when the Lord answers a prayer or when you see Him moving in your life. Even more important share when you see God moving in their life. This will help them to have spiritual eyes to see how God is working in the world around them.
- Remind them of who God says they are – holy, dearly loved, royal priesthood, the apple of His eye, His child, etc.
- Write encouraging notes to them or text messages and include a Bible verse.
- Encourage them to share prayer requests with you and pray with them on a regular basis.

- If you journal, share that with them and encourage them to journal.
- If you use a Bible reading plan or are reading a particular part of Scripture share it with them – if they are older perhaps you could read a book of the Bible together.

Joshua 4:9 And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.

There are differing opinions on whether this is the same set of 12 stones that Joshua had the men take across to the other side of the Jordan or if this is a second set of 12 stones. I want to look at the possibility of this as a second set of 12 stones. If Joshua set up his own set of 12 stones in the middle of the riverbed then when the water returned to flowing, they would have been completely covered up.

Warren Wiersbe in his “Be Strong” study on Joshua says that, “The monument in the depths of the river reminded them that their old life was buried and they were now to ‘walk in newness of life.’” He references Romans 6:1-4.

Romans 6:1-4 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

This reminds us of our own baptism and the fact that we die to ourselves, to our old ways of life in order to walk in the path the Lord has for us. Are you walking in newness of life or are holding onto old ways, old patterns? What part of your ‘newness of life’ are you struggling with? What sins are holding you back? Where do you need to let go of the past and walk in the newness of life with Christ? What from your past is holding you back? What is the Lord calling you to let go of today in order to walk forward?

Joshua 4:24 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.

The Lord wants all the peoples of the earth to realize how mighty He is. It is something that I think we need to be reminded of today especially with everything that is going on in our world – we are dealing with a pandemic, wildfires, hurricanes, racial and political tensions. Do you

realize how mighty He is? Who do you know that might need to be reminded of the mighty power of our God today?
