

GOD WILL MAKE A WAY

Joshua 3

Please turn in your Bibles to Joshua 3:1-13. In his excellent commentary on the book of Joshua, author John Huffman says that God has called His people to be “crossover” people. He derives this phrase from the fact that in Joshua ch. 3 and 4 the word “crossover” is used 20 times concerning Israel’s entrance into Canaan. Over and over that passage says that Israel crossed over the Jordan River from the wilderness to the Promised Land. Now, crossover people are those who dare to walk in paths that others will not walk. They dare to rise up in faith and take on a challenge when the devil would have them to cower down in fear. And they do it because they know that on the other side of the challenge God has great glory for Himself and also great blessings for them.

We are going to take a close look at Israel’s crossover experience into Canaan this morning, but before we do I want to remind all of us of the consequences of their not crossing over. As you know, prior to this time Israel had been wandering around in circles in the wilderness for forty years, and furthermore, the time of wilderness wandering was period of great misery for Israel, and it is little wonder why.

One of our Apollo astronauts who walked on the moon and who had also visited the Sinai Peninsula declared that it was the closed thing to the surface of the moon that he knew anything about a barren wasteland. And whether it was summer, winter, spring or fall, there was no picnicking in the wilderness for the children of Israel. On at least three occasions the people complained and asked Moses why he brought them out into the wilderness to die (Ex. 17, Numbers 20, 21). And Acts 7:39 tells us

that in their hearts they turned back to Egypt. They wished they had never left. And the price for their rebellion was high. All the men who were 20 years and older died without seeing the Promised Land, plus many older women as well. And everyone else was delayed seeing it for forty years. And none of this was God's will. But the take away for God's people today is, don't dare refuse God's call to enter the abundant, victorious, Heaven shaking, Hell shellacking life that God has for you. Don't dare refuse to enter the Promised Land of God's blessings! Because missing out on the joy of God's best is to get in on guaranteed misery.

But there is another lesson that we must learn about entering the Promised Land. And that is, when you decide this is the kind of life you want to live, there will always, always be great obstacles that Satan will put in your path to stop you. For Israel, it was the mighty Jordan River. The Jordan is not all that wide, but it is very swift, and it is all the more swift in flood season, which is when the children of Israel crossed over. And just as crossing the Red Sea when fleeing Egypt was impossible without a miracle, it was just as impossible for them to cross the Jordan without a miracle.

Now, there are many believers who would love to enter the Promised Land that God has for them but who secretly think to themselves, "I just can't cut it. I just can't lay hold of this Promise Land miracle that I must have to enter in". And you may be one of them. Life circumstances continually drag you down. Sin in your life has a hammerlock hold on you that you just can't break. And you think that the victorious, abundant life is just not for you. But nothing could be further from the truth! Just as surely as God poured out a salvation miracle upon you it is His will to pour out a Promised Land miracle upon you. Listen to what Moses said to Israel in Deut. 6: 22-23, "...the Lord showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all

his household. Then He brought us out from there that He might bring us in...” Bring into where? Into the Promised Land! God saved Israel out of great bondage in order to bring them into great blessings. And the very purpose for which He saved you and me was to do the same, that we might be a blessing to others.

So this morning I want to examine how God enabled His people to cross over into the place of blessing that He prepared for them and to see how He will do the same for us. And He did it with Israel by allowing them to obey three commands. And the first one was, “**Be ready**”. Vs. 1 & 2 tell us that the children of Israel arrived on the East bank of the Jordan River from Acacia Grove and then camped for three days before they crossed over into Canaan. Now look back at ch. 1: 10-11 and see what they did during that time (read). The officers said, “Prepare yourselves”. They spent those three days getting ready to cross the Jordan.

Friends, there is a truism that applies in every area of life, whether spiritual or secular. And that truism is, if you wish to prosper you must prepare. Students prepare to take tests. The ones who prepare well do well and the ones who prepare poorly or don’t prepare at all do not do well. Companies prepare for visits from the corporate brass. Salesmen prepare for presentations. Football teams prepare for gridiron battles, and armies prepare for real battles. Preparation is truly the name of the game. And beloved, we need to know that God will bring some great crossover opportunities into our lives if we are prepared to receive them.

The shepherd boy David is a great example. God used him to slay a giant for the glory of His name and for a great victory in Israel. But David didn’t walk out onto the battlefield with Goliath after weeks and months of doing nothing but playing the video games of his day, whatever they were. No, he was out in the fields keeping his father’s sheep, doing battle with a lion and a

bear. And when God called him to fight a greater battle he was ready. Paul wrote to young Timothy that God put him in the ministry because He counted Paul faithful (1 Tim. 1:12). Even though Paul was unconverted he still had the character quality of preparing himself for excellence. Jesus said in Luke 16:10 that he who is faithful in what is least will be faithful in what is much. And those who cross over into the realm of the blessing and power of God in their lives are the ones who've prepared and are ready. Beloved, it's not rocket science why many Christians and many churches make very little impact for the Kingdom of God. They live in a state of unpreparedness. And would to God that all of His children would live by the Boy Scout's motto – Be prepared.

But we need to understand something else about crossover opportunities. And that is, some of them come automatically. And young people, most of these are with you, crossover times that will set the course of your entire lives. I'm talking when you set your standards for dating, not marriage, for you will marry someone you date. I'm talking about when you set your convictions on the moral choices you must make, like saying "no" to smoking, alcohol, drugs, and pre-marital sex. I'm talking about entertainment choices you must make, such as movies and music. Young people, if you don't get ready for these choices you that you have to make, you can mark it down in bold letters, you'll make the wrong choices. And you can look at the landscape of destroyed lives all around you and see the end result. And there's a good chance you'll wind up being one of the statistics.

But beyond those early crossover opportunities, there are crossover opportunities that come later, such as a possible career change, a commitment to plug into a ministry in your church with all of your heart, or to go on a mission trip, or to start tithing. Choices that will force you to make a real change in your lifestyle. Friends, that's what we're talking about here. **Real, noticeable**

changes in the way we live. Changes that cost you something. That's what Israel was facing as she camped just across the Jordan from the Promised Land. And she had to get ready. And if you are to make those changes you must get ready, too.

So then, just how do you get ready to cross over into the Promised Land? Well, beloved, you must first understand that **it all starts in the mind**. Let me repeat. It all starts in the mind. Paul writes to the Roman Christians, "Be not conformed to this world..... (Rom. 2:12). He writes to the Colossians, "Set your mind on things above..." (Col. 3:2). He writes to the Ephesians, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:23). He writes to the Philippians, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of a good report.....think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). You see, beloved, it's just like Solomon said in Proverbs 23:7, "As he (a man) thinks in his heart, so is he". Our thoughts determine who we are. Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a destiny. But it all starts in our minds.

Back in the late eighties Meryl Streep starred in a movie called Ironweed. She played a ragged derelict that died in a cheap motel room. For more than half an hour before the scene she hugged a bag of ice cubes in an agonizing attempt to discover what it was like to be a corpse. When the cameras came on she just laid there as Jack Nicholson cried and shook her limp body. She just laid there for take after take and in between takes, too. One of the crew members got scared and went the director and said, "What's going on? She's not breathing!" When the director looked at her he also saw no signs of life, but he let the camera keep rolling. But after the scene was done and cameras were off she still didn't move. It took ten minutes for her to come out of the comatose-type state she had sunk herself into. The director was amazed and said, "Now that's acting!! That is an actress!" Now, what had

Meryl Streep done that made that scene so effective? Physically and mentally, she had focused so completely on what it was like to be a corpse that she actually took on the characteristics of one. (Sermon Central)

Beloved, what would this world be like if you and I so focused our minds on our precious God and Savior, Jesus Christ, that we would take on His character in such a way? But how does that come about? Well again, it is not rocket science. We become like the Son of God when we focus on Him in the Word of God, the Bible. And in the same way, we lay hold of the power of God when we claim the promises of God that He has given us in His Word, the Bible. But it all hinges on the focus of our minds.

I'll be honest, beloved. One of the most difficult things that a pastor has to do is to get God's sheep to focus their minds on God's Word, to feed on proper spiritual food every day. All of us know that eating right is important for good physical health. We know that we need lots of fruit and veggies and grains. And don't forget the right amount of dairy products and proteins. But whatever you eat, stay away from too much sugar. And I'll tell you, it takes a lot of fun out of being a granddad when you can't give your grandkids a cookie because their mother won't let them have one until after supper. But you need to remember, you joy killers, that there are some poor grandchildren who don't get to eat cookies, period. Because their moms are so paranoid about their little darlings eating right.

But beloved, that's certainly not how it is in most families when it comes to our spiritual diet. There is only one food that will ever nourish our souls, and it is the perfect, inspired Word of God. Listen to the value to us that God places upon His Word. He says to His people in Deut. 32:46, "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe – all the words of this law. For it

is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life....” Tell me, what could be more important in your life than this? And Psalm 1 gives this promise to all who meditate on God’s Word day and night: “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and **whatever he does shall prosper**”. Do you want your child to succeed in life? Tell me, then, what better formula for success could there be?

But most parents couldn’t care less if their children get any soul food or not. And that’s because most adults are starved for the Word themselves, and so naturally their teenagers and children are starving, too. A recent survey of American revealed that only 1 in 4 Americans read the Bible as many as four times a week and 57% read it only four times a year or less.

So is it any wonder that so many believers ignore the laws of God in their daily lives and live every day as spiritual shrimps? Other than warming a pew on Sunday mornings, many of them live no differently than their heathen neighbors. And by the way, their heathen neighbors know it, and that’s the reason they reject Jesus Christ in their own lives. But is it any wonder that these believers remain in the spiritual wilderness all of their lives? For when a crossover opportunity comes and they have an opportunity to do something great for the glory of God, they are not ready. Oh, beloved, may God help us to be ready when the crossover times come, by becoming devout students of His Word!

But there is another command that God enabled His children to obey as they crossed the Jordan. He told them to be ready, but He also said, **be resolved**. Be resolved to follow your leader when He moves. Look at v. 3 again (read). Friends, it’s one thing for an army to train, to get in shape in mind and in body. It is another thing to move out when the trumpet sounds. May I just say that many Christians have been training for years. They know their

Bibles like the back of their hands, at least the part about serving Christ by serving others. And the trumpet has sounded, calling them to go out to battle, but they are still sitting in camp, still training, still saying they are not quite ready just yet.

Well, bless God, we don't have to be Rambo number 2 to go out to battle in the army of the living God! Look at v. 11. So, beloved, we must not only be ready, we must be resolved! And remember this. It is critical that you remember this. **Your must be resolved to march out into the unknown.** Look at v. 4. Sooner or later, God will always lead His people into uncharted waters, into crossover experiences that demand courage and faith. The children of Israel had never crossed Jordan before. And if you and I follow Jesus it will be the same with us.

But there is one more command that God gave His people that they had to address if they were to invade and conquer the Promised Land. He said, "Be ready", and "Be resolved", and then He said, "**Be right**". Look at v. 5