



Risk-Takers: The Adventure of Walking by Faith

Sermon Title: Joshua: Leading by Faith in God's Word

To be used with Session 2: Joshua: A Faith Rooted in God's Word

Date of First Use: June 8, 2025

Text: Joshua 3:1-17

Connection with the Study: Many people have sincere faith in false beliefs. Session 2 demonstrates the importance of having faith rooted in God's Word. Joshua learned the importance of proper faith from Moses. During their forty years of pilgrimage through the desert, Joshua watched as Moses listened to the Lord and then acted by faith on what God said. Just as Moses provided an example for Joshua, even so Joshua impacted others' faith.

Having the right kind of faith is not an end in itself. This sermon describes how Joshua put faith in God's Word into practice through leadership. It not only supports the importance of internalizing God's Word by faith, but it goes on to life application.

Introduction

After the shortest eulogy ever ("Moses My servant is dead"), God commissioned Joshua to finish the job. Following giant footprints must have challenged Joshua. Several times, God told him to be strong and have courage (Josh. 1:1-9). God promised Joshua he would be successful if he meditated on and obeyed the Scripture Moses had written. God also promised to be with Joshua as He was with Moses (1:5) and to go with him wherever he went (1:9). The test came when Joshua had to lead a nation of two million Israelites by faith.

This story is not mere history; it is vitally practical for believers today. Like Joshua, we encounter all kinds of challenges. Alone, we are insufficient for the task. Thankfully, God has given us His Word to guide us, His presence to assure us, and His power to enable us, if only we have faith and act accordingly.

1. Prepare the people. (Josh. 3:1-6)

- a. **Create anticipation** (v. 1). Joshua led the people to move within sight of the Jordan River. They spent three days looking over the water to the place they had been anticipating for so long. Anticipation produces enthusiasm. The more time we spend listening to God in His Word, the more we anticipate what He has in store for us.
- b. **Command attention** (vv. 2-3). At just the right time, officers told the people to get ready to break camp. They were to watch and follow God's presence represented by the ark of

the covenant. Sometimes, God has to get our attention so we'll go to the Word, hear the Word, and obey the Word. Bill was like that. He came to the end of the road with his wife and, he thought, with his life. In that moment of crisis, Bill called on Jesus to save him. And He did. Jesus wanted to save Bill and his family. He just had to get his attention before Bill was ready to let go and trust Him.

- c. **Concentrate attention** (v. 4). Joshua instructed the people to maintain a distance from the ark so they could see it. They had to focus attention on the ark so they could follow God's leadership. They had not gone that way before. God often does new things in our lives. We may be unprepared for what comes next, so we need to keep our eyes on Him.
- d. **Consecrate yourself** (v. 5). To consecrate means to set something aside for God's purposes. If we're going into the presence and plan of a holy God, we need to set ourselves apart for Him. Consecration includes purifying our hearts to hear from God's holy Word.
- e. **Carry out your orders** (v. 6). Joshua ordered the priests to obey the Word of the Lord by leading the way. They were to carry the ark into the water. Until they stepped into the river by faith, the way would not open to them. We must not only read God's Word, we must obey it by faith.

2. Proclaim the promise. (Josh. 3:7-13)

- a. **Listen to God's Word** (vv. 7-8). Joshua knew what to do, but he needed God to accomplish the task. He listened as God made three promises:

- **I will exalt you.** Leadership was not a matter of Joshua's ego. God raised Joshua to lead His people and to accomplish His purposes. He also works in our lives to raise us up for the tasks to which He calls us.

One of the most humble men I know became a major leader in a large ministry organization. God did not elevate him to inflate his ego. I believe God raised this man up because He could trust him to remain humble and faithful.

- **I will be with you as I was with Moses.** Have you ever wondered why God led the people through the desert, around the southern side of the Dead Sea, to the eastern side of the Jordan River? How would God show the people that He was with Joshua just as He had been with Moses? When the waters parted and they went through the river on dry ground, everyone knew God was present with Joshua.
- **I will lead you.** Only as the ark entered the water would the water part. Only as Joshua, the priests, and the people acted by faith on God's Word would they be able to follow. Scripture promises if we are committed to following the Lord, He will lead us and He will lead us in the right way (Ps. 23:3).

- b. **Learn from God's Word** (vv. 9-14).

- **The person of God** (vv. 9-10a). Joshua relayed the Word of the Lord to the people. They needed to hear from God through His messenger. They learned again what they should have already known. Their God was the living God, unlike the idols of Egypt or the people who lived on the east side of the Jordan River. We need to recognize that our God is the One true God and live accordingly.
- **The power of God** (v. 10b). Just as Israel had witnessed God's deliverance from the forces of Pharaoh, they would see God's victory over the people who lived in the land He had promised to Israel. We will see God's power as we obey His Word daily.

Sarah had a test of her faith in God's power. When her employer wanted her to falsify information, she refused on the basis of being a Christian. Although she lost her job, she trusted God had the power to provide for her and use her sacrifice for His glory.

- **The presence of God** (v. 11-14). As the people went forward, they would not go alone. Just as God was with Joshua, He would go with the people. The ark of the covenant represented God's presence. As the priests entered the water, Joshua declared the waters would rise and give them passage in the presence of God. That took faith on their part. It took greater faith on Joshua's part. If the priests stepped into the river and nothing happened, Joshua's leadership would be short-lived. We can have confidence in the presence of God. He will never leave us or forsake us, but He will always be with us (Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20).

3. Pursue the promise. (Josh. 3:14-17)

- Obey God's word** (v. 14). The people packed up their tents. The priests picked up the ark. "Let's go!" There comes a time when we must put the Word into action. Good students don't take notes in class just to pass exams, but to prepare for their vocations. Bible studies aren't meant just to fill up notebooks, but to put the Word into practice.
- Observe God's wonders** (vv. 15-17). Imagine the awe the Israelites felt as they walked on dry land between two walls of water! When we obey God, we get to watch what He does. He fulfills His promises and keeps His Word. Often, He surprises us. He "is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). As we put God's Word into practice, our hearts will experience the awe-inspiring wonders of God. What have you seen God do recently in your life? Tell someone about it today.

Conclusion: What's our attitude toward God's Word? Do we believe it? Do we apply it? Without knowing the Word, our faith lacks substance. Scripture says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God – the message of Christ (Rom. 10:17). As we read, memorize, and meditate on God's Word, we hear God speak. Then, as we apply the Word it comes alive for us and through us for others. Like Joshua, we need to express faith in God through obedience to His Word.

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