

**Joshua 3-4 part 3**  
**The Promised Land, Take 2**

8/13/18

In thinking through **Joshua 3-4** there are a number of things that caught my attention. The first is that God tends to take us back to where we went awry in our thinking or following. We really don't get to "skip" lessons. The new generation of the nation of Israel had to return to the place where they decided that God wasn't powerful enough or good enough for them to follow. God calls us to follow Him in faith which we believe that He is good and powerful enough to trust with even the most difficult circumstances in our lives.

The second thing that I notice is the centrality of the covenant that God had made with His people. The ark is consistently called the ark of the covenant. This ark and its contents represented the unique relationship between Jehovah God and His people. He was their God and they were to be His people. However, the covenant had obviously been ignored for 40 years. The nation of Israel had not circumcised their sons, nor had they observed the Passover. In the midst of God's continued provision, they had chosen to ignore their relationship with Jehovah.

I'm also struck with the very clear picture of dying to our old lives and resurrecting to a new life. The picture of the nation leaving their old life behind, going down into the Jordan, and rising out again on the other side is very much a picture of New Testament baptism. Baptism symbolizes our new identity in Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. (**Romans 6:1-14**) The older generation's only destiny in the desert was death. They were destined to die, never experiencing the promise of God's rest. Joshua (the one who brings salvation) led them through the waters of the Jordan, and as the waters again covered the ground their old lives in the desert ended. In fact, in the next chapter we will see that even God's provision for their former lives ended as they consecrated themselves anew and celebrated the Passover.

I wonder how much we miss of what God wants to do in us and through us because we want to hang on to parts of our old lives. For sure that is true of our sinful former lives before Christ, but what about the things that "aren't sinful" that we still want to hang on to. Is it possible that they actually become anchors to what God wants to do next in our lives? (**Hebrews 12:1-3**)

Another thing that is so obvious in these verses is the need for memorials to constantly remind ourselves, our children, our brothers and sisters, and those who don't know God about His greatness. How could anyone forget the crossing of the Jordan, or the crossing of the Red Sea for that matter? Yet, so quickly what is fresh and amazing about God can become old news in the business of life. We can so easily get distracted and worried and harried about life on our terms, that we forget what life is like on His terms.

Take some time this week and rehearse God's goodness in your life so that two things will happen. When life gets hard or scary or confusing, you can get your bearings again. The second thing is that you never forget that it is not us who accomplish anything. It is God in us

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Why does God often make us return to the place of our failure in order to move forward?

