

“Crossing Over”

Joshua 3:1 – 17

In our Christian experience, are we wandering around as the children of Israel did for forty years until the disobedient generation died off or are we as the new generation, willing to cross over the river and be used by God to conquer the communities that have been promised to us? It does not take much effort to just “wander around”, but in crossing over there is a need for great faith and courageous effort. During World War II, the See-bee’s had a slogan, “The difficult we will do immediately; the impossible may take us a while longer.” Life can be like that. Sometimes when our hopes are the highest, problems will suddenly appear which are to us as great as the Jordan River was to the Israelites. With this in mind I am reminded of reading something a pastor stated, “The trouble is that we are facing problems that we cannot solve and we think we must do this or that”. It has been said the only different between a live wire and a dead wire is the connection. We need to understand there is a supernatural source of strength available to every generation that can enable God’s children to cross the rivers of impossibility that we may face. Our scripture lesson tells us how God provided for his people in their crossing over experience.

1. Preparation for the Crossing. (Joshua 3: 1- 4).

In chapter two of Joshua we learn that the two spies had brought back a favorable report concerning Jericho so now it was time for action. The people had arrived at the Jordan River and there they camped for three days. Joshua gave instructions as to how they would proceed. During this time the people need to develop a profound spirit of respect and reverence for God because he is not “the man upstairs”, but the sovereign and holy Lord of all the earth. The priests would carry the Ark of the Covenant (which is the symbol of the presence of God), before the people to lead the way into new territory. God would show where and how to go and as he did then, it is reassuring for us to know that God is with us when we face unfamiliar places and times and that he will intervene for his people.

2. Consecration for the Crossing. (Joshua 3: 5 -13).

The preparation the Israelites went through was a spiritual rather than military preparation. They were preparing for a manifestation of the God of all the earth who would provide in every way for their victory. Therefore, the people had to be willing, to separate themselves from sin and be set apart for God’s will and purpose. As they consecrated themselves they put themselves in a position to expect a miracle. There is truth in the words of a writer who said, “It is because we lose sight of a God who can do the incredible and the impossible that we meet frustration and futility”. God revealed his plan to Joshua and then Joshua explained to the people and as they would trust God there would be no reason for fear.

3. Completion of the Crossing. (Joshua 3: 14-17).

The day came for crossing, tents were folded and the people followed the priests who were carrying the ark and they came to the edge of the river which

was at flood stage. This whole endeavor now had to be based on faith in God's promises. When the priests stepped into the water, dramatic things happened. Some sixteen miles upstream the water stood up in a heap and the riverbed became dry. How do we explain such an event? Certainly there was nothing natural about it. Considering all the factors involved, it is best to view this as a special act of God. In crossing over the Jordan River at flood stage by this vast multitude of people, God was glorified, Joshua was exalted, Israel was encouraged and the Canaanites were terrorized. The crossing of the Jordan meant Israel was irrevocably committed to a struggle against armies, chariots and fortified cities. It also meant they were committed to walking by faith with the living God.

For believers today, a symbolic crossing over the Jordan, represents moving forward, regardless of the obstacle before us. It is a picture of entering into spiritual warfare to claim what God has promised. In crossing over we are indicating we are moving forward in faith and obedience in the God who has called us unto himself. The Jordan River was the obstacle that kept Israel from the promised land; it was the river of impossibility. We also may face obstacles that keep us from enjoying a life of faith, obedience and victory, but no matter how great the obstacles, we must not lose sight of the God who is able to lead us through; we just need to follow him.

Pastor Garry Culler
