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Faith Alone, Can Cross The Jordan
Josh. 3:1-13

The book of Joshua is a beautiful picture of victorious Christian living by faith, despite of the obstacles and situations the believer would find himself in.

One of the greatest misconceptions about being a Christian is to think that that once a person comes to Christ they never have any problems or trials, or at least that you are not supposed to, if you are spiritual.

While in reality you come into a level of awareness, regarding the spiritual warfare that you never had before.

And consequently you are the object of attack many times.

God was bringing the Israelites into a higher level of walk, that of faith, comparable to our walk in the Spirit, as New Testament saints.

For forty years they had walked in their own flesh, their God was grieved and had been limited by their unbelief, because they did not mix with faith the word they heard.

Remember that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb. 11:1

And without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Heb. 11:6

Now, there is a legitimacy to crossing the wilderness as we come out of the world, Egypt being a type.

* But it was only to be an eleven day journey. Deut. 1:2

The time that some Christians spend in the wilderness is far longer than what God would have.

There must be the crossing of Jordan by every Christian to enter the life of faith.

The walk of faith at the crossing of the Jordan was characterized by:

- I. Diligent patience. Vs. 1-5
- II. Devoted leaders. Vs. 6-8
- III. Dedicated obedience. Vs. 9-13

I. Diligent patience. Vs. 1-5

A. Joshua led the people from Acacia Grove.

Vs. 1

1. This took place early the next morning after the two spies had returned to Joshua.

Vs. 1a

- a. That night must have been one of the longest night for Joshua and the people in anticipation.
 - 1) God had told Joshua already that He had given the land for their inheritance and that he would divide it up. Josh. 1:6
 - 2) God also had told Joshua that in three days they would cross the Jordan. Josh. 1:11
- b. The departure from Acacia Grove was very significant.
 - 1) It marked the end of the wilderness life of wondering aimlessly seeing nothing but death.
 - 2) It marked the beginning of the promise life of being led by God to experience rest, abundance and life.

2. They broke camp and Joshua set out with all the people to encamp. Vs. 1b-d

- a. Notice thought Joshua was the leader, He was patiently waiting also and the people were certainly looking for his reaction.

- b. Can you imagine what was going through the minds of these Hebrews as they are camped before the Jordan at flood season.

- 1) How are we going to cross it?
- 2) We will be die!

- c. The camp of Israel had an orderly manner of breaking camp, according to their tribes. Num. 2-4

- * Patience enhances order that will always avoid confusion!

B The officers commanded the people. Vs. 2-5

1. The time was after three day. Vs. 2a

* The spies must of come back before the three days.
2. The officers went through the camp according to their chain of command. Vs. 2
 - a. Delegated leadership is very important for order and efficiency.
 - b. The task was slow but necessary
3. The officers gave the people their marching orders. Vs. 3
 - a. The signal would be when the people saw the Levites and priests bearing the ark. Vs. 3a-f

* Kohathites duty to carry. Num. 4:15
 - b. Then the people would set out and follow the ark. Vs. 3g

- 1) They would continue to follow the orderly manner of breaking camp, according to their tribes. Num. 2-4
- 2) But they would no longer see a cloud or the pillar of fire to lead them, the ark would be the only physical evidence of the presence of God, apart from the miracles.
4. The officers gave the people special detailed instructions. Vs. 4
 - a. The people would have to leave a distance of 2,000 cubits or 3,000 feet between them and the ark. Vs. 4a-c
 - 1) They were not to come near it, only the designated priest could approach the ark!
 - 2) They were to continue honoring the presence of God from a distance.
 - b. They were to do so in order to know where to go. Vs. 4d
 - 1) The distance would given them a view of the exact route.
 - 2) The visible sight of the ark would be their source of faith and encouragement.
 - c. The particular reason was that they had never passed that way before. Vs. 4e
 - 1) This was not Egypt.
 - 2) This was not the wilderness.
 - 3) This was the promise land.

- * some believe it reference to the fact of the new way God would lead was the ark?
5. The leader Joshua commanded the people to sanctify themselves. Vs. 5
 - a. The word sanctify “qadash” means to consecrate, be set apart for dedication and it was to be that very day. Vs. 5a-b

* This is personal and individual for the sake of the entire community, as we will see with Achan.
 - b. The reason given is the very next day Yahweh would do wonders among them. Vs. 5c

Illustration

There can be no greater illustration of patience than Noah who followed every little detail to build the ark and do so patiently for one-hundred-twenty years.

Application

1. How many Christians have suffered much for their lack of patience to wait on God.
 - a. Not waiting on God for direction of a job, the buying of a house, moving, etc.
 - b. Not waiting on God for one’s husband or wife?
 - c. Not waiting for God to promote you, at His perfect time.

* The end of a thing is better than its beginning; The **patient** in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Eccl. 7:8

2. Those who have become impatient with the return of the Lord, have ventured out giving dates for His coming, as if they can force the hand of God.

- a. They contradict the warnings in Scripture that no man knows the day.
- b. They convince people to sell everything and often give it to the church, unscriptural.

* Therefore be **patient**, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. Ja. 5:7

3. The main reason we are called to be patient and wait on God is that not one of us has every been passed this way before.

- a. Each of us need for God to give specific direct for our lives.

* But those who **wait** on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. Is. 40:31

- b. Each of us need for God to tell us when to stop, how long to wait, what to say or do!

* For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we

through the **patience** and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Rom. 15:4

The walk of faith is characterized by diligent patience!

II. Devoted leaders. Vs. 6-8

A. Joshua addressed the priests. Vs. 6

1. Joshua was the appointed leader by God. Vs. 6a

- a. He was chosen by God prior to the death of Moses.

- b. He was confirmed as the leader of the people after the death of Moses.

2. Joshua communicated to the priest the commands of God. Vs. 6b-d

- a. They were to take up the ark and cross over Jordan before the people. Vs. 6b-c

- 1) Devoted leaders are submissive to the God appointed leader.

- 2) Devoted leaders are not “yes men” but faithful and loyal to the work God is doing.

- 3) Devoted leaders have questions but they do not question the instruction or decision made every time.

- 4) Devoted leaders have been around long enough to know that God is in the work and have confidence in

- the leader, in view of their history together.
- 5) Dialogue is good for wisdom but once God is directing and leading, there is no place for it!
 - b. The priest took up the ark and went before the people. exactly as they were told. Vs. 6b-c
 - 1) They did so knowing that God had called, commissioned and anointed Joshua.
 - 2) They did so, knowing that God had confirmed the work through the two spies.

B. The Lord addressed Joshua. Vs. 7-8

1. Joshua being the leader had to understand that he was being led by God, “And the Lord said to Joshua”. Vs. 7a
 - a. Joshua had authority over the priest and others.
 - b. Joshua had to recognize that he also was under authority, God’s.
 - c. This is very basic to the teaching of the Scriptures, yet men placed in authority by God sometimes forget and think themselves above any authority!
2. Joshua was going to be established as the leader once and for all. Vs. 7b-e

- a. The Lord told Joshua that He would begin to exalt him in the sight of all Israel, that very day. Vs. 7b
 - b. The purpose behind it would be that they might know that, as God had been with Moses, so He would be with him. Vs. 7c-d.
3. Joshua was to command the priests to lead the people in this new life of faith. Vs. 8
 - a. He was to command the priest who bore the ark of the covenant who were the Koathites. Vs. 8a
 - 1) These men I am sure felt privileged to bear the ark..
 - 2) These men had been devoted to bear the ark for forty years.
 - b. He was to tell them to step into the Jordan when they came to the edge of the water of the Jordan and stand in the Jordan. Vs. 8b-c
 - 1) Now they may not of thought themselves so privileged.
 - 2) It is flood season, the ark is heavy, it doesn’t sound to logical or rational.
 - c. They as leaders were to be the first examples of faith.
 - 1) They would not cross until all the people crossed. Josh. 3:17, 4:10-11

- * They were mediators between God and man
- 2) The life of sight was over, the wilderness journey.
 - * God parted the Red Sea and then the people crossed!
- 3) The life of faith was now beginning.
 - * God would now part the Jordan only after they stepped into the Jordan!
- 4) One estimated that at a rate of 2,000 per minute, it would take over eight hours for one million people to cross.

Illustration

Speaking at the University of Glasgow in 1896 David Livingstone said: “Would you like me to tell you what supported me through all the years of exile among a people whose language I could not understand, and whose attitude towards me was always uncertain and often hostile? It was this: Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” On these words I staked everything, and they never failed.” #3482

Application

1. Pastor at times will expect their leaders to lead in faith and live by faith, while they themselves no longer do so.

- a. This will only cause those following to follow the bad example of the Pastor.
 - b. This can and will also frustrate the leadership of the church, bring about murmuring, complaining, dissension and division, provoking carnality.
 - * “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.” Matt. 23:14
2. Each Pastor and leader will be called to be an example of faith and devoted to it as God has called them.
 - a. God called my friend Gary Kusunoki from being a policeman at San Clamente to be a pastor in Calvary Chapel Santa Margarita and then to lead groups into the Sudan.
 - * As a devoted leader, by faith he has reached and accomplished what God has called him to.
 - b. Dan Frinfrank was called of God to the Philippines over twenty years ago and was used to establish the inductive study method throughout the Philippines.
 - c. God will call one person to step out to buy a building with a ridiculous offer and provide the means, while He will call another to trust Him throughout his life without ever having a building.

* “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of **faith**.” Rom. 12:3

3. Hopefully through the example of Pastors and leaders, each of you as Christian are helped to live by faith.

- a. The devotion to the written word by faith.
- b. The devotion to the particular areas of faith God calls you to.

* “For we dare not class ourselves or **compare** ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” 2Cor. 10:12

The walk of faith is characterized by devoted leaders!

III. Dedicated obedience. Vs. 9-13

A. Joshua called the people to hear the words of God by faith. Vs. 9

- 1. Joshua summons the people to communicate the words God, “Come and here and hear the words of the LORD” your God. Vs. 9a-c

- a. The invitation was to all, “Come and hear”.
- b. The words they would be hearing were the words of “Yahweh Elohim”, the covenant God and Creator of all.

2. Joshua called them due to their personal relationship to God, “Your God”. Vs. 9c

- a. The importance lay in the fact the God was in control not Joshua.
- b. These commands were not Joshua’s but God’s.
- c. The command is personal each person must hear the voice of God by faith, otherwise they will only hear a man and justify their disobedience.

B. Joshua called the people to trust God in faith. Vs. 10

1. The statement of Joshua to the living God was in reference to the fact that He was the living God among them. Vs. 10a-b

- a. Living in contrast to the dead idols of the pagans.
- b. They had many gods, who had eyes but could not see, hands but they could not handle and ears but they could not hear. Ps. 115
- c. They all fall into one of three types of universal god.
 - 1) The god of the intellect, Baal.

- 2) The god of power, Mammon.
 - 3) The god of pleasure, Molech and Astoreth.
2. The living God would drive out from before them all the inhabitants in the promise land. Vs. 10c
- a. They are named specifically, seven by name, “the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites.”
 - 1) These were ungodly and rebellious nations that had corrupted the ways of God.
 - 2) These were nations that had rejected the word of God and God Himself.
 - b. They were to know that without fail, the living God would drive them out.
 - 1) God had already promise this in the commission of Joshua. Josh. 1:2-3
 - 2) Joshua told the people after occupying the land, “Not a word **failed** of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.” Josh. 21:45
 - 3) The failure to possess all the land was their own, due to compromise!

- C. Joshua called the people to allow God to lead them through faith. Vs. 11
- 1. The ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. Vs. 11
 - a. The presence of God was evident by the ark.
 - 1) God chose to dwell among His people.
 - 2) God had given the instructions to build the entire tabernacle, ark, etc.
 - * “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may **dwell** among them...” “I will **dwell** among the children of Israel and will be their God.” Ex. 29:8, 45
 - b. The earth belonged to God, so the land of promise would be given to His people, Israel.
 - * The contrast is that the gods of the pagans were local god, of the valleys, mountains, etc.
 - 2. This would be the way they would know that the living God was among them.
 - a. Remember that when the people saw the ark, they identified the presence of God with the people of God, like when the sons of Eli Hophni and Phinehas took the ark into battle with the Philistines. 1Sam. 4:3-6

- b. The ark remained in Kirjath-Jearim for twenty years after the Philistines returned it. 1Sam. 7:2
- c. David later brought the ark to Jerusalem, in the right manner, after the death of Uzzah. 2Sam. 6
- 3. The ark, the presence of God was going before them into the Jordan.
 - a. God would be with them in the most dangerous times, even in the middle of the Jordan at flood season.
 - b. God told Joshua He would not leave them nor forsake them. Josh. 1:5

D. Joshua called the people to believe God by faith. Vs. 12-13

- 1. The people were to choose twelve men, one from each tribe to set up the memorial of faith and God's faithfulness as if it already happened. Vs. 12
 - a. The individuals would each take a rock from the middle of the Jordan, place it on his shoulders and place it on the west side. Josh. 4:5
 - b. The memorial would be a sign among them of God's faithfulness of bring them across the Jordan at flood season, which was to be rehearsed to their children when they asked about it, reminding them of God's faithfulness Josh. 4:6-8

- 2. The people were given a detailed prophecy of how the Jordan would part. Vs. 13
 - a. The waters would part the instant the priests bearing the ark stepped into the Jordan, a confirmation of what the priest had been told. Vs. 13a-b, 8
 - b. The waters would stand up on a heap on the north side, while the waters southwards would simply cease from the lack of supply. Vs. 13c-g, 16
 - * He is the Lord of all the earth, declaring things before they happen, so when they happen, we may know He is God!

Illustration

A missionary translator was endeavoring to find a word for "obedience" in the native language. This was a virtue seldom practiced among the people into whose language he wanted to translate the New Testament. As he returned home from the village one day, he whistled for his dog and it came running at full speed. An old native, seeing this, said admiringly in the native tongue, "Your dog is all ear," Immediately the missionary knew he had his word for obedience." #3927

Application

- 1. If I am going to be a man or woman of faith who obeys, I must know the word of God.

- a. I must have my own time of reading through the Bible, once a year is not hard.
- b. I must study God's word, on my own and at church by a teacher.

* "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in **me**, these do, and the God of peace will be with you." Phil. 4:9

2. If I am going to trust God in faith to deliver me from the sinful Old man, then I must obey.

- a. By faith we are to let God go before us, to lead us in life.
- b. These nations symbolize the types of various sins in our lives, trusting God in faith He will drive out from our lives the things that destroy us, the works of the flesh. Gal. 5:19-21

* "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

3. If I am going to let God lead me, going before me, I must follow Him.

- a. My eyes fix on Him, so as to not be distracted.

- b. My mind set on Him, so as to not be deceived.
- c. My heart purified by Him, so as to not disqualify myself.

* "Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny** himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matt. 16:24

The walk of faith is characterized by dedicated obedience!

Conclusion

The walk of faith at the crossing of the Jordan is characterized by:

- I.** Diligent patience!
- II.** Devoted leaders!
- III.** Dedicated obedience!