

Joshua Chapter 3 – Revealed



I came to know the Lord when I was about 17 years old. Of course I didn't know it at the time, but the events through my life had all pointed to a moment to where I had a decision to make. To be like everyone and everything else I had known, or to follow Christ. A little over 10 years later, God has shown me some pretty amazing things. He has proved Himself to me time and time again and He has shown that He is worthy of the highest praise and adoration. God has pulled through for me in so many ways. Even in doubt and disappointment. But, that's God. He loves to prove Himself. He loves to come through.

For the life of my Christianity up to now, I feel like I've been stepping into what God has for me. We don't always realize it, but we're constantly stepping into a promise. A promise is always slowly but surely, being revealed to us.

We all have our own stories of how God has pulled through and revealed Himself to us because He does this without fail...

Tonight I want to look at that in the life of Joshua.



What a legacy and story he had. Joshua was a follower and a leader; a servant and a commander. God pulled through for Joshua and we'll see him step into what God has next.

We'll see the 2nd time God made provision by stopping a body of water to allow His people to pass.

(Show Joshua, chapter 3. FULL CHAPTER)

It's easy to read this at first and recognize how amazing that it is, but we don't always see that it points directly to Jesus. That's what I love about the Old Testament. From the beginning in Genesis 1:1, it has always pointed to Jesus.

I want to fill you in on Joshua up to this point.

Joshua was born in Egypt and served as one of the twelve spies sent out from Moses and he was a faithful servant.

The book of Joshua opens with God calling him into leadership just after the death of Moses. And what a calling he receives. In chapter 1, God says things to Joshua like:

"Get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give you."

"No one will be able to stand against you."

And here's my favorite:

"I will give you every place you set your foot."

Can you imagine hearing a word from the Lord like that? Talk about getting charged up and ready to roll!

So Joshua tells the camp leaders that "in 3 days, we're crossing the Jordan!" He's pumped, and rightfully so.

See, all of the dreams and expectations set for the Israelites since the time of Abraham are now coming into fulfillment. It's time to begin the next chapter in receiving what was promised.

Maybe you feel like it's time for you to receive what you know has already been promised. Have you been waiting for the reward...waiting to hear something like Joshua heard? Know that God is moving. God is working even when you can't see it.

So often in our lives, we are called to wait. Wait for the job, wait for the promotion, wait for the test results, wait to meet our spouse, wait for the child. There is a power in waiting and in that waiting He is preparing you for a promise that He set for you before your creation.

Next we'll see in chapter 2 that Joshua, a former spy, a former servant now a leader, is now sending his own spies to scope out the land they're about to take; especially Jericho.

Something that I love about Joshua, is that he didn't jump the gun here. He learned things in serving Moses. He knew that he had to follow before he could lead. He knew that he had to serve before he could command. Sometimes we need to remember that it's just as important to answer the phone as it is to call the shots. We need to know that before we can be on stage, we must first be in the

crowd. He knew that holding a toilet brush was just as important as holding a microphone. It's that process of waiting. So often it's in the waiting that we're shaped and molded the most.

Jericho was about 5 miles west of the Jordan River and was a fortress with a wealth of supplies.

The 2 spies encounter the Prostitute Rahab. Rahab protects the spies and lets them know that Jericho has seen what God has done for His people and because of it; the entire land was "melting in fear".

We don't really think of it this way, but Rahab had a lot on her shoulders. She chose to go against her city to protect the spies and give them intel. The miraculous thing here is that God chose someone like Rahab. God chooses the most unlikely of people. He chose a prostitute to carry out His purpose.

He chose Peter, who was one big walking issue after the next. Peter was supposed to be a professional fisherman but, when he met Jesus, he had been fishing all day and caught nothing.

You know if you're looking your next NBA draft, you don't really pick the guy who can't shoot when he says he's a shooter. But, had Peter's boat been filled with fish, there would have been no room for Jesus. Sometimes God will clear out things in our lives to make room for Himself.

So the next time you don't feel good enough or you feel inadequate, know that God loves to pull through. He loves to use broken people to mold the pieces of His purpose.

That gets us to Joshua chapter 3.

The children of Israel are about to walk in the promise. Sure, there are lots of battles that are still to come, but the crossing of the Jordan will be the big event in receiving that long-awaited promise.

After all this time, they still trust that God is going to do what He said. It may seem complicated, but it isn't. Every day, we're faced with a decision.



"Am I going to trust God?" You see, there are situations and circumstances throughout our lives that beg that question. Sometimes we're smacked in the face with a circumstance or attacked from behind and we're presented with that question in real time.

“Am. I. Going. To. Trust. God?” Something so sudden that you don’t have time to ask your best friend. You don’t have time to #askfacebook. This is right here, right now, yes, or no. That answer will determine your next move and potentially the rest of your life.

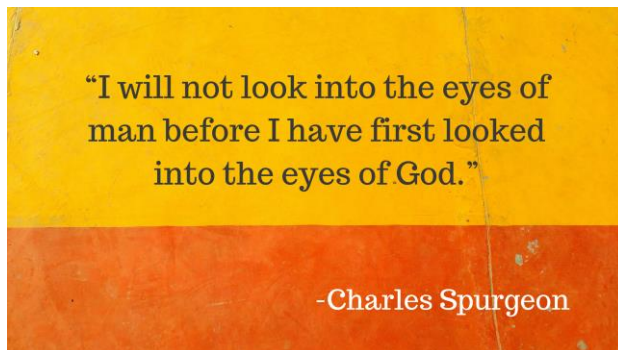
These are times that make me think of when Jesus said that we just “need the faith of a grain of a mustard seed.” There are times when we don’t need a great faith; we just need a faith in a Great God.

It is now time for them to step into what God has.

(Show Joshua 3:1-6)

Starting in Chapter 3, the Bible says that Joshua rose early in the morning and set out from Acacia Grove and went to the Jordan and camped before crossing over. After three days the officers went throughout the camp giving orders to the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of Lord your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions to follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep distance of about a thousand yards between you and the ark: do not go near it.” Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.” Then Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So they took it up and went ahead of them.

Joshua is a man of action. He was told by the 2 spies that the people of Jericho were terrified and that it was ready to be taken. Joshua said “Let’s go.” Notice that at the beginning of chapter 3, Joshua rose early in the morning. I even think that’s important. Sometimes it’s easy for me to miss God if I don’t spend time with him the morning. Charles Spurgeon once said.



“I will not look into the eyes of man before I have first looked into the eyes of God.” We put our eyes on Jesus first.

So up until now, Joshua has set out for Jericho and they’ve come up on the Jordan River where they’d camp for 3 days. Joshua commanded that once the people see the ark of the covenant and the priests, they could then follow. They were carefully instructed to keep a thousand yards behind it.

The ark of the covenant is going to become a staple over the next events.

If you've ever read through Exodus, you'll find that the ark of the covenant was a piece of furniture or a box with poles for carrying and it was completely overlaid with gold. In the ark went:



- The 2 tablets of the commandments given to Moses.
- Arons rod that budded to prove that he was God's chosen priest.
- A container with manna.



Then the ark had a covering which was called the mercy seat. On that were 2 cherubim with their wings touching and it was to be the sign of the very presence of God. Within the tabernacle in their mobile worship tent, the ark sat "behind the veil" in the Holy of Holies. Once it got stationed in Jerusalem, only the High Priest got to enter once per year with a blood offering.

The reason I say this is because everything about the ark of the covenant points to Jesus. Jesus is the visible presence of God made manifest in the midst of the people. He was the picture of the sacrifice that was made for all people.

It's interesting because look what's inside the ark:

- The 10 commandments - Jesus was the only person to ever keep and fulfill the law.

- Arron's budding rod – Jesus was the High Priest of God's chosen.
- The mana – Jesus is the bread of life.

All of that was covered up by 2 angels. John's gospel records that at the time of Jesus' death, there were 2 angels sitting next to him in the tomb. At His death that veil leading into the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom. Everything points to Jesus. Everyone can now come for something that was originally reserved for the High Priest with a blood sacrifice. Everyone can now come.

So the ark of covenant; the presence of God was to go first across the Jordan. Why?

If Jesus truly is the Lord of your life, you want Him leading. You want His presence to go before you. You don't want to lead your own life. Jesus has paved the way in your life because He already knows where He is taking you. The road is set. He knows the destination. He knows the destiny. It's our job to follow that; never to get ahead or to rush.

I love that Joshua camped before crossing. He was willing to wait to hear from God before rushing across into the unknown. Joshua knew the importance of waiting. Yes he knew when to move, but he also knew when to wait.

I have a tendency to get ahead of myself. I want to get things done and I want to do it quickly. "Just let me respond to this text to get it off my phone". "Let me answer this e-mail and do the thing so it's done." God's purpose isn't always like that. Sometimes it's best to camp out while we wait for our next move. So we say "until the ark of the covenant goes; until the presence of God moves, I'm staying put."

Joshua knew that the greatest leaders were those who were willing to be led by the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. You know what? I get out ahead of Jesus all the time. Jesus has to tell me most days that I'm 27 years old. I feel like this word is often used by Jesus in His dealings with me.



Joshua is told to stay behind the ark because it's leading the way since this is a way he hasn't been before.

While this path is new to Joshua, it's familiar to Jesus.

God may be leading you into what feels like the unknown. He may be leading you into what feels like the dark, but there's light about to crest on the other side. You're saying "I'm scared" when

He's saying "I'm already there." Make sure you don't miss where God is taking you. I'm not saying there isn't going to be something to cross, because Jericho was still ahead for Joshua, but you're following someone who has been there before and that has this path laid out. It may be a path untraveled by you, but it isn't untraveled by God because don't forget, the path was MADE by God.

It's interesting because they're instructed to keep a certain distance from the ark. They walked with a great deal of respect for the ark and its holiness. They knew what they were following and how important it was. What's wonderful is that Jesus calls us not only to be His servants and followers, but He calls us to be His friends. We are able to enjoy a deep friendship with Jesus, but we also know who He is and that demons freeze at the sound of His name.

Then Joshua speaks to the people – "Consecrate yourselves because tomorrow we cross the Jordan".

Joshua is telling the people to set themselves apart. We know that because of who Jesus is, we have been set apart. Uncommon. (Paper plates vs Fine China analogy)

It's kind of like paper plates vs. fine china.

Most of us use our really nice dishes only on special occasions while paper plates are for quick, everyday use.

The problem is that we don't see ourselves as fine China. We so often see ourselves as something that gets used once and thrown away because it's now worthless, dirty and can't be cleaned. Instead Jesus has transformed us into the fine china. We can be used to serve the best things and carefully placed back in its spot until it's ready to serve something amazing again. We are set apart for specific and special reasons. That's why we as followers of Jesus live differently because we realize we are not common any longer.

How many times do we miss what God is going to do because we aren't set apart? Do we rob ourselves of wondrous things because we've made ourselves look like everyone else? Sometimes we're just another Instagram pre-fab filter post. We just get lost in the news feed because everyone else is doing the same thing. We waste our time and energy striving to please and impress people that we don't even like!

And how about instead of posting pictures of yourself at the gym all the time posing in a mirror, how about you get in there and do some work not worrying about everyone else, because if you're committed to it like you're supposed to be, everyone will eventually see what you're doing without you having to say a word. Same goes for being a great mom or dad, or being a great employee or a great leader. Set yourself apart. Refuse to be like everyone else and refuse to do things like everyone else. Jesus has a purpose and plan for your life so stop robbing yourself of it. Be different.

(Read Joshua 3:7-8)

Then, Joshua passes the instructions on to the people.

Now, we see this is building in a certain direction. We see God tell Joshua yet again that He's going to be with him.

How many times do we have to be told that? I have to be reminded all the time that God is with me. Stepping into the unknown can be scary stuff.

Now that we're into the summer, I'm working with Elijah on taking the training wheels off of his bike. He's doing a great job and he's able to ride a short distance without the wheels. He'll fall and get back up. Before he starts again he gets scared and tells me to hang onto the bike, even though I held onto it the last time, and the time before that and the time before that. We sometimes need reminding that we are in God's favor.

So, God assures Joshua that just as He worked and moved in the life of Moses, he will work and move in Joshua. The Israelites will be assured that they're following the same God even though there's a different shepherd. They will know their new leader is anointed too.

So Joshua tells them that when they get to the Jordan, they are to just walk on in.

Now one thing I notice is how many names of God is used in this passage of scripture. See, the bible isn't just a book of things that happened to people, it's a book about who God is. I appreciate the fact that Joshua used all these names of God when addressing the people. (show examples in those verses)

(the Lord your God, the Lord of all the Earth, the living God)

Joshua was a good leader because he told the people who God is.

God wanted to make His presence known among the people and He does the same for us. No matter how old you are or what you've come from, you can look back in your life and see how God was working. We couldn't see it then, but we see the evidence now. We become thankful for the prayers that were answered in our favor and we also become thankful for the prayers that weren't granted because now we see the better things that He had for us.

So, we're confident that He's doing the same thing, right now in this moment. We see God's fingerprints on our lives and we know Him as the Living God. This is how we know that God will do what He said He would do even though it's still being worked out. This is faith – knowing that without fail that God will do what He said. We live as though His promises for our lives have already come to pass.

So we are now about to cross the Jordan.

The Jordan wasn't like a little stream you hop over when you're hiking, the Jordan was a big deal.

Something to understand about the Jordan at this time was that it was at its peak. It's easy to think of it as if it's this calm stream slowly flowing, but it wasn't.



It was a huge, raging stream of water; water that would likely sweep you away. Think of it like a river right after hurricane. Raging. Nasty.

So for them to cross over now was the least strategic time for them to go. It was the most dangerous and made the least sense.

How many times has God asked you to make a move forward when it made the least sense? It didn't make sense for God to use Rehab. It didn't make sense for God to use Peter and sometimes we think that it doesn't make sense for God to want to use us, but God's ways are not ours. His ways are higher than our own.

God has them to put their feet into the waters as He stops it upstream.

God wanted them to move in faith just like He wants us to move and live in faith.

Do you wonder what would happen if they had never listened to God and not moved? They would have just stayed of the other side, waiting to watch the waters stop. Instead, God asks them to add something. God wants us to move. God wants us to act.

They couldn't see the provision before they made a move, they saw the provision as they moved. God asked them to step into the overflow and now we live in overflow. They got a chance to walk where they had never walked before and each day God is making a new way for us.

Talking again about the presence of God; look what it did to the situation at hand. The presence of God caused the waters to stop. When Jesus steps into a situation, something has to change. That's why when Jesus said if you don't praise me, the rocks will cry out. When Jesus comes, something has to praise Him. If you don't, something else will. So if something must praise Him, it may as well be something with breath in its lungs. It may as well be us.

Is God asking you to take a step into something you've never experienced before? Something that sounds like it probably won't work. Will you put your feet in the water? Will you trust Him?

Whether you're just trusting Jesus for the first time or whether you've walked with Him for decades, there's something new to step into. He's always revealing something to us. He's paving the way each moment of your life.