

“Crossing the Jordan”

Summary

As we explore the story of Joshua and the Israelites crossing the Jordan River, we're reminded of our own spiritual journey. Just as they stood at the edge of the Promised Land, we too are on the cusp of a new era in our faith journey. The message emphasizes that while the law, represented by Moses, couldn't enter the Promised Land, grace and truth through Jesus Christ can lead us there. This powerful insight challenges us to rely not on our own strength, but on God's grace to overcome obstacles. The symbolism of the Ark of the Covenant leading the way, beautifully illustrates how we're called to follow Jesus' presence in our lives, even when He seems distant. As we contemplate this, we're encouraged to remember that in our moments of uncertainty, God is still guiding us, preparing us for the battles ahead in our spiritual lives.

Main Points – Crossing the Jordan

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the biblical narrative of the Israelites crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land, drawing parallels to the church's spiritual journey. Pastor Eric emphasizes the importance of following God's presence, the need for spiritual circumcision (putting away the flesh), and the battles that await believers as they enter into God's promises. The sermon also touches on the concept of Joel's Army, the power of God manifesting in His people, and the current state of the world and church in relation to biblical prophecy.

Key Points:

- The journey into the Promised Land requires following God's
- Spiritual circumcision is necessary to enter God's promises
- God's army (the church) is being prepared for spiritual battles
- Greater spiritual power comes with greater responsibility and consequences
- The church is undergoing a refining process to become the bride of Christ

Scripture References:

- Joshua 3-6 (Crossing the Jordan and conquering Jericho)
- Joel 2:1-3 (Joel's Army)
- Malachi 3:1-4 (The refiner's fire)
- Daniel 2 (Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue)

Stories:

- The Israelites crossing the Jordan River and the walls of Jericho falling
- Achan's sin and its consequences at Ai
- Joshua commanding the sun to stand still during battle
- Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue and its interpretation by Daniel

Small Group Study Guide – Crossing the Jordan

Opening Prayer

Key Takeaways:

1. We are at a pivotal moment in spiritual history, similar to Israel crossing the Jordan.
2. God is restoring truths and power to His church that were lost over time.
3. The Lord is building a powerful army of believers to conquer spiritual darkness.
4. Greater spiritual power requires greater responsibility and obedience.
5. God is refining His church to prepare for His coming.

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon mentions that we're "crossing the Jordan". What does this mean to you personally? How do you see this playing out in your life or in the church?
2. Discuss the concept of "grace and truth" coming together through Jesus. How does this impact our ability to live out God's laws and promises?
3. Pastor Eric talks about building memorials to remember God's miracles. What "memorials" have you built in your life? How do they help you in times of difficulty?
4. How do you interpret the idea of God building His church as an "army"? What battles do you think we're facing today?
5. The sermon mentions that with greater power comes greater consequences if mishandled. How can we ensure we're using God's power appropriately in our lives?
6. Reflect on the image of God as a "refiner's fire" (Malachi 3). What areas of your life do you feel God is currently refining?
7. How do you understand the concept of the "stone cut without hands" destroying the kingdoms of the world? What might this look like in our current context?

Practical Applications:

1. Create a personal "memorial" this week to remember a specific way God has worked in your life.
2. Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal areas where He wants to refine you.
3. Identify one "mountain of influence" (media, government, finance, education, etc.) and commit to praying for God's kingdom to advance in that area.

4. Practice listening for God's voice this week. Keep a journal of any impressions or Scriptures you feel He's highlighting.

5. Examine your life for any "hidden sin" that might be hindering God's power working through you, like Achan's story.

Closing Prayer

Encourage group members to continue reflecting on these themes throughout the week and to come prepared to share any insights at the next meeting.

Discussion Questions – Crossing the Jordan

How does the concept of 'crossing the Jordan' apply to our spiritual lives today, and what might our personal 'Promised Land' represent?

In what ways do we still struggle with 'giants' in our lives, and how can we cultivate the faith of Joshua and Caleb to overcome them?

How do grace and truth work together in our spiritual journey, and why are both necessary for living out God's law?

What does it mean for us to be part of 'Joel's Army' in the modern world, and how can we prepare ourselves for spiritual battles?

How can we create 'memorials' in our lives to remember God's faithfulness, and why is this practice important?

In what ways might God be calling us to 'circumcise our hearts' and cut away the flesh, and what could this process look like practically?

How do we balance the desire for greater spiritual power with the need for careful obedience and humility?

What might the 'refiner's fire' look like in our lives, and how can we embrace God's purifying work even when it's uncomfortable?

How does the image of the stone destroying the statue in Daniel's prophecy relate to our role as Christians in the world today?

In what ways might God be 'pressing us out of measure' in our lives, and how can we respond with faith rather than despair?

Scriptures – Crossing the Jordan

Here are the scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

1. Deuteronomy 3:23-27
2. John 1:17
3. Philippians 4:13 (alluded to)
4. John 15:5 (alluded to)
5. Joshua 3:1-3
6. Joshua 5:1
7. Joshua 5:7-9
8. Philippians 3:3
9. Joshua 5:13-15
10. Joel 2:1-3
11. Joshua 6:1-5
12. Malachi 3:1-4
13. Daniel 2 (various verses, especially 31-35 and 44-45)
14. 2 Corinthians 1:8-10
15. Romans 8:19 (alluded to)
16. Philippians 2:12-13

Devotional – Crossing the Jordan

Here's a 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:

Day 1: Crossing Our Jordan

Reading: Joshua 3:1-17

Devotional: Just as the Israelites stood at the Jordan River, ready to enter the Promised Land, we too often find ourselves at the edge of God's promises. The priests had to step into the water before it parted, demonstrating that faith requires action. What "Jordan" are you facing today? God is calling you to step out in faith, trusting that He will make a way where there seems to be no way. Reflect on areas in your life where you need to take that first step of faith. Remember, God's presence (the Ark) goes before you. Trust in His guidance and take courage to move forward into the promises He has for you.

Day 2: The Power of Grace and Truth

Reading: John 1:14-18

Devotional: Jesus brings grace and truth that allows us to enter God's promises. Reflect on how you might be trying to earn God's favor through your own efforts rather than relying on His grace. Grace and truth are married - we need both to walk in God's ways. Consider areas where you need to embrace God's truth more fully, allowing His grace to empower you to live it out. Remember, in Christ, you can do all things, not through your own strength, but through His power working in you.

Day 3: Removing the Reproach

Reading: Joshua 5:2-9, Philippians 3:3

Devotional: The Israelites' circumcision at Gilgal symbolized the cutting away of the flesh - our self-reliance and worldly ways. What areas of your life need to be "circumcised" - surrendered to God's control? Reflect on Paul's words about having no confidence in the flesh. How can you shift your confidence from your own abilities to Christ's power working through you? Ask God to reveal any "reproach of Egypt" that need to be rolled away from your life.

Day 4: God's Refining Fire

Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

Devotional: God's refining process in our lives can be uncomfortable, but it's necessary for our growth and purification. Like a refiner's fire, God works to burn away impurities in us. What areas of your life is God currently "refining"? How can you cooperate with His work instead of resisting it? Remember, His goal is not to destroy you, but to purify you so that your life can be a pleasing offering to Him. Embrace the refining process, trusting that God is shaping you into the image of His Son.

Day 5: From Pressure to Power

Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:8-10

Devotional: Paul's experience of being "pressed out of measure" reminds us that God often uses pressure in our lives to push us beyond our limits and into His limitless power. Are you feeling overwhelmed or "pressed" in any area of your life? Instead of despairing, view this as an opportunity to trust God more fully. He allows these pressures so that we learn not to rely on ourselves but on Him. Reflect on how your current challenges might be God's way of expanding your faith and capacity. Surrender your limited resources to Him and ask for His immeasurable presence and power to work through you.