

Joshua ch 3-

Ch 2 you recall dealt with general Joshua preparing to go into the land of Canaan and begin to possess that which the Lord had promised to the children of Israel. And before they went in he sent in 2 spies to check out the land to see what way seemed best to go about conquering it and he was especially interested in the city of Jericho. Because Jericho was a well-fortified key city of the land of Canaan and upon conquering Jericho it would pretty much split the land in ½ thereby allowing them to focus on one portion at a time. And it was while the spies were in the city of Jericho that they were sovereignly directed to the home of a harlot named Rahab. And Rahab gave the men the report that they had been looking for, she said that they had heard how the Lord had dried up the water of the Red Sea and delivered them out of Egypt. She told them that they had heard of all the victories of war that the Lord had given them and how they had utterly destroyed any group of people who had dared to stand in their way. And she said that when we heard these things our hearts melted with in us and neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you and she acknowledged that the reason these things were happening for Israel and against them was because the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and on earth beneath. Rahab had acknowledged who God is, she had made a confession of faith and she said listen, I've taken you in and sheltered you from the kings men therefore make a covenant with me. When you come to take this city, spare my family, and so the men answered her and said our lives for yours. If you keep your mouth shut concerning this business of ours and don't tell anyone, and you hang this scarlet rope out your window for identification purposes, then it will be that anyone who's found in this house will live. But if you tell anyone or anyone takes a chance in wandering outside the safety of this shelter, then their blood be on their own head. And so she said well then according to your words let it be, and she lowered them down out of her window with that rope, and you remember the beautiful picture that we have there of Jesus Christ That house typifies our place in Christ, the safety and security that we have abiding in Him, Those that are in Christ are safe, no matter what comes, abiding in Christ I have safety but outside of Him I have nothing, I'm open prey, it's open season on me, but in Christ, no weapon formed against me shall prosper, nothing can happen to me unless it be divinely orchestrated or allowed by God Himself. And in that I have great peace, because my eternal well being is secure in Christ, no matter what befalls me even the taking of my own physical life, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain, to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord, so we have security in Christ.

Well, the spies went back and reported how everyone in the land was shaking in their shoe's but remember that all that the spies did in going in and surveying the city did nothing for them as far as their battle plan went.

Or as far as their strategy laid out, in reality God sent those 2 guys in there because there was a woman in there who had placed her faith in the God of Israel and God will not allow the righteous to perish along with the wicked. God will go to great extremes for even the one who will turn to Him, and Rahab went down in the book of Hebrews hall of faith there in ch 11, she was grafted into the lineage of Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus identified with common man, in His lineage was the blood of kings and prostitutes and practically everything in between, God will meet you where you're at; well having heard the report we read in ch 3 vs1.

Vs1-4

So upon hearing the report of the spies, Joshua immediately set out to advance the nation toward the land, however there was one small problem, how were they going to get over to the land? There was a river that separated the children of Israel from Canaan, and don't be deceived it wasn't a creek or a little bubbling brook, we're talking about a raging river, vs 15 of this chapter lets us know that it was in it's flood season. I mean it's one thing to get 2 spies across but we're talking about 2-3million people, but Joshua knew that the Lord was going to get them to the other side and so even again in what would seem to be an impossible situation Joshua moved forward trusting the Lord. Because at this point God hadn't divulged to Joshua how it was that He planned on getting the nation across, but apparently somewhere in this 3day period of time Joshua received his marching orders. And that was that when the Lord tells you to move, send the priests before the people bearing the ark of the covenant and send them out about 3,000 feet in advance so that everyone can see. Remember that up until this time they had been being guided by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, but this is where all that was coming to an end, now they would be being led by the ark of the covenant. And the ark was what represented the very presence of God and so in essence what we're seeing here is that we're not to move until God moves out before us, and we're to follow His lead. Why because we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, the battle we fight is one of a spiritual nature, and what we see here is that we're not to get out in front of God, but rather we're to allow God to go before us and prepare our path's ahead of us. Because Joshua was able to see that even though there was physical action's taking place, it was a spiritual mission that they were on, notice they didn't send out 40-50,000 troops ahead of the ark to defend or preserve the sacred relic, but rather the ark went out 1st with plenty of space all around it and then the people followed after. Why, because God doesn't need mans defense and mans protection, but rather man needs God's defense and protection and direction in our lives, and we need to give God the space to work in our lives, to lead us and to guide us and to have His perfect way in us, so the Lord was to lead His people and they were to give Him the space to do it. And the same is true for us today, God desires to lead our lives, to go before us and direct us and prepare our path's ahead of us, but we have to allow Him the space to do it, He's not going to violate our free will, so we need to be careful not to get out in front of Him but rather we need to be following after Him, staying in the path that He's prepared for us that we should walk in it.

Vs5

Again notice the emphasis on the fact that this is a spiritual battle and so the preparations for what's about to take place are spiritual as well, Joshua didn't say, "sharpen your swords and double check your shields." He said sanctify yourselves, that is "set yourselves apart", "consecrate yourselves" or "dedicate yourselves" fresh to the Lord. You recall that God had all the children of Israel sanctify themselves back in Ex ch 19 when the Lord was going to come down upon Mt Sinai in the sight of all the people. And they were to wash themselves and make themselves clean and abstain from anything that might defile them because God was getting ready to do a miracle in their presence, they were about to see the very presence of God upon the Mt.

And now Joshua calls the nation to once again be sanctified because God's going to do a mighty work in your presence, and man what a lesson is hidden in here for the people of God today. Because it's not that God's hand is short that He cannot save, it's not that God's ear is heavy that it cannot hear, but it's that our sins separate us from God. We need to be washed in the water of the word, cleansed in the blood of Christ, now we know that our initial sin is forgiven, sin that inhibits us from obtaining eternal life. But we still need that daily cleansing of worldly influence and the dirt and grime of the world that kind of clings to us through out the day. And the closer we draw to the Lord, the more single we are toward Him, the more Christ sighted we become, the more God is going to glorify Himself through our lives. One commentator said "for sure it is that the more we shun that which defiles and devote ourselves unto God's service and glory, the more will He work mightily in us, for us, and through us." and I don't know about you, but I desire to see God do wonders among us. And it's my desire not to give God any excuse not to (forgive me if that sounded crude), because if what God is doing here is all that God wants to do here, hey, I praise Him for it and will be content in it. But I have this sneaking suspicion that God wants to do much more through this body of believers if we would only sanctify ourselves wholly and completely over to Him.

Vs6-7

That is through the miraculous, God was going to exalt Joshua in the midst of the people by working the miraculous on his behalf thereby showing the people that Joshua was indeed the man that God had ordained to lead His people.

Vs8-11

Notice here that Joshua encourages the people and reminds them even as Paul the apostle reminded the Eph believers who it was that they were praying to, Joshua reminds the nation of Israel who it was that was going before them to fight their battles for them. "*The Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you.*" and Even as when you pray, you're praying to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, so to; the One that goes before you, to fight your battles in your stead and to prepare your ways before you is the "Lord of all the earth."

Vs12-13

There's something interesting about all of this to me, (well really a couple of things but here's one that's not mentioned), it's just an observation, concerning Joshua's humility and another quality concerning his leadership. Because we take note of the fact back in vs 7 that God told Joshua that He was going to work this miracle on the behalf of Joshua, so that he would be exalted before all of Israel, why, in order to silence all question concerning him being God's choice. But in vs 9-10 Joshua didn't tell the people that that was the reason that God was doing this, he kept that between him and the Lord. But rather he told the people that God was doing this so that they would all know that the one true living God was in their midst, and in light of that they had nothing to fear of the heathen and the pagan false gods and idols. So take note of the fact that Joshua didn't seek to touch God's glory, or to be magnified before the people, but rather he pointed all the glory and honor to God, that He might be magnified and glorified before the people. He could've said, God is going to wall up the mighty Jordan and you're going to pass through it on dry ground, and let that be a testimony to you that God is with me and you are to fear God and be obedient to what I say seeing as how I'm the one that God has raised up.

And in that he really wouldn't have erred seeing as how God told him that that was why He was going to do that, so that everyone's mouth would be silenced concerning His choice. But he didn't, God exalted Joshua but Joshua pointed all the glory and honor and praise to God, and in there lies a lesson for us, God will do what He will do in our lives, but we would do well to not seek to touch God's glory, just give it all to Him, and point the people to do likewise. So that they might fear Him and honor Him and trust in Him, not in you and not in me, I can't fight nobodies battles for them, but the God I serve can, so I'm to point people to Him.

Vs14-15

You see there it is, the Jordan was overflowing all its banks, because the land there had 2 primary season's of rain, the spring and the fall, and from what I gather the spring rains were the heaviest which is the season that they find themselves in here. And so the Jordan was at a radical flood stage, and so it's entirely possible that the Canaanites on the west side of the Jordan felt that they had several days or maybe even several weeks to prepare for the onslaught of Israel, because it would've been impossible (humanly speaking) for them to get across the river in any that would've posed as a threat. So many of them probably felt no immediate threat, unless there were those who were in fear of another Red Sea experience in which case their worst fears came true.

Vs16-17

So even as God parted the Red Sea so that they could cross over, even so now God stopped the Jordan River in the midst of the flood season so that the people could cross over to the other side.

And what's interesting about all of this is the fact that when God parted the Red Sea, Moses just stretched out his rod over the sea and God parted the whole thing right there before the whole nation. But with the Jordan, now God is testing their faith and beginning to develop their faith, and teaching them that this is the life that they are to lead from here on out, a life that doesn't need to see it to believe it, but rather a life that if it will believe it, it will see it. A life led by faith, because here the priest had to literally step into the water, here they were carrying the ark, an object that if it was even touched you would die immediately, and they're beginning to step out into the swift moving waters of the Jordan. And there's no way I can no it but I would almost lay money on the fact that Joshua and those bearing the ark were a little short of breath, and their hearts were probably beating right along. But in this is another important lesson for us, because there are times when the waters part before us, we know that this is the will of God, it's an open door that is undeniable. But then there are those other times where we believe that this is what God would have us to do and we try and lay our fleece out, but God doesn't respond to that. He's allowing us opportunity to exercise our faith, and sometimes we just have to step out there and get our feet wet before we see what God will do, not seeing any evidence or signs of God's working before us, not seeing the end result from the beginning and God honors that. Now sometimes the water parts and we go on through, but other times we just keep getting ourselves in deeper and deeper and so we have to come to that point where we say hey, guess I'd better get back to shore and pray this through a little more thoroughly because apparently I missed this one. And that's Ok, because God knows our hearts and the more we are open to God directing our lives in that fashion the more we will be able to hone in on the voice of God for our lives.

But there will never come a time when you never miss, so don't be beaten down or discouraged if you've given something a go and it didn't pan out, keep pressing forward and seizing opportunity to "get your feet wet" and just see what God will do.

And I like a comment that J. Vernon McGee said in light of this text, he said, "The Israelites crossed over the river at Jericho, but the waters were dammed up way back to the city of Adam. (And he asks what is the meaning of this city and he said), it's the city that we all came from in the sense that Adam is the father of humanity and by Adam came death. What was taking place at the Jordan River represented the death and resurrection of Christ and His work on the cross. It not only reached forward over 1900 years to where you and I are, but it also reached back to Adam and the beginning of the human family. That is the picture we have here." Now, you don't have to agree with that typology, but I thought that it was an interesting perspective on his behalf.

So in this event Joshua was exalted, Israel was encouraged, the Canaanites were terrified and God was glorified. And something else it meant for the nation of Israel, at this point there was no turning back, Jesus said when you grab a hold of the plow, you're not to look back.

We're to count the cost in advance and we're not to turn back, Israel had just fully committed to this life of warfare and victory, struggles, and hardships but obtaining the promises of God, walking by faith, and laying claim to all that God had for them, they couldn't turn back, the Jordan had closed in behind them as we'll see in the next chapter. For us it speaks of the end of a life lived by human effort, death to the flesh, and new life of warfare and victory, laying hold of all that God has given to us in Christ as we walk by faith allowing the Spirit of God to lead us and equip us for the work that He has for us.

Chapter 4

Vs1-7

What's the emphasis here; that we're to share our testimonies with our children; that we are to teach our children of the mighty workings of God. And the great things that God has done for you, there are very few revivals that ever continue on through the 2nd generation.

Why, because of the failure of the parents to communicate the truth of God to their children. These stones weren't to commemorate Joshua, they weren't a memorial to any man, they were a testimony of the power of God. So that when some child would say hey dad, what's the deal those 12 rocks all piled up there? The dad would have an open window to say those stones came from the bottom of the Jordan during its peak flood season. And when we walked through the river on dry ground we picked those stones up to be a testimony of the power of God, because God stopped the river so that we could come through, that's the kind of a God we serve. It was to remind them of the work of God, and any work that goes on we are to remember isn't to the credit of man nor to the glory of man but it's to the glory of God and we are to share with our children the mighty works of God. Have you ever wondered why the mind of a child is so inquisitive? Have you ever said, why do you ask so many questions, that's because God created them that way because He knew that if it were left up to us we wouldn't take the time to share these things with our kids. And so the Spirit of God has placed within the child a certain curiosity and inquisitiveness so that the child might learn and it's your responsibility to teach him, or her. Paul reminded Timothy that *"from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* 2 Tim 3:15

Why? Because he had those people in his life that were willing to take the time, and were faithful to invest in him and share with him the word of God. Teach your kids, and allow your memorials to be those memorials that will allow you to share the work of God and the power of God.

Vs8-18

Real quick what I would have you take note of here is the fact that the ark went before them in the crossing over, was with them in the midst of the crossing over, and came up behind them after they had all crossed safely over. And I'm sure you know where I'm headed with this God's presence goes before us, is with us in the midst of our circumstances and then guards us from the rear as well ensuring our safety and protection. That nothing will come into our lives but that God isn't fully aware of it and allowing it according to His sovereign purpose. God goes before us, is with us, and follows after us leaving nothing to chance, God is in control.

Vs 19-24

So again God emphasizes twice in this chapter the need to communicate the word of God to our children, notice it wasn't the priest's job to do it, it was the parent's job, it was to be the Father's job specifically. So parents be faithful to teach your kids the gospel of Jesus Christ