

CROSSING THE UNCROSSABLE RIVER

Joshua 3

How do you handle the storms of life, when you face the deep waters of the flood, when you come face to face with the uncrossable river, how do you deal with it?

We all face problems that are too big to solve; things that are broken that we can't fix!

How do we deal with the storms of life when they come our way?

... when our struggle seems to come on like a Tsunami?

... when the pile of bills is too big to pay—we run out of money before we run out of month?

... when we lose our job?

Or, a family member is facing a health crisis?

Or our marriage is coming apart?

How do we face the flood?

Israel just completed 40 years of wandering in the wilderness as God disciplined them for unbelief and disobedience.

They have been camped on the plains of Moab, preparing to enter Canaan and possess the land God promised them.

Just before their entrance to the land, God called Moses up to Mt. Nebo to die. The great leader is no longer present.

Previous to Moses' death, God appointed a new leader whom Moses prepared to lead them.

Now the time has arrived to move on. Joshua is to rise up and lead the people across the Jordan and into the land.

Critical question: Will it work for him too?

INVASION OF THE LAND 1-5

God is about to demonstrate that His relationship with His covenant people isn't dependent on *Moses*.

God establishes a new leader and assures him of His presence with him.

Under Joshua's leadership, God gives His people the land He promised

PREPARING FOR BATTLE 1-2

Joshua commissioned 1:1-9

Promise of God's presence 1:5

Call to courage 1:6-9

God is the source of his power and abilities.

Joshua must continually recognize his dependence on God and obey Him.

People prepared 1:10-18

Joshua immediately assumes command and prepares to enter Canaan.

Land surveyed 2

Spies sent to Jericho 2:1-3

Spies hidden by Rahab 2:4-21

Though a prostitute, she is convinced that Yahweh is going to give Israel victory over her own people, helps the spies escape.

Spies encouraged by results 2:22-24

They return with encouraging report that God has planted fear in the hearts of the people.

They're enthusiastic about trusting God and taking the land!

With this positive confirmation, the people are encouraged to go.

Even though it looked like they'd never even GET TO the land!

The river is flooding! This would be impossible!

CROSSING THE JORDAN 3-5:1

God's power over the flooding Jordan is demonstrated as God stops the water's flow and causes the people to cross over on dry land.

By observing Israel's experience when they face the flooding Jordan, we learn numerous lessons about following God's leading today!

We want to try to put ourselves in Israel's shoes

–try to feel what they must have felt—and then try to relate their response to our own.

FOLLOWING THE ARK 3:1-6

To experience God's blessing,

God's people must follow God's direction

and follow the leaders God has placed before them. 3-4a

God didn't provide them with a Corps of Engineers to build bridges to get across.

He asked them to trust HIM to make a way where there seemed to be NO WAY!

The ark had no ability to stop the river.

A piece of furniture would have been swept away by the current/

But the ark was a continual reminder of **God's presence with them!**

It never gets easier to trust God when we face flooding rivers and raging storms of life!

They had heard about what God did for Moses,

but none of them had seen it (except Joshua and Caleb)!

They still had to trust God to get across the river.

It NEVER gets any easier!

How do we know God will do it for us?

It's been a LONG time!

**Even when we're on a path we have never gone down before,
we can trust God to show us the way.**

You'd think we'd learn,

But EVERY TIME we face a new flood, we face a new crisis of faith!

–will we trust God, or will we complain against our leaders for getting us into this mess?!!

This time Israel gets it right!

They trust God and follow their leaders into the flooding river.

**Even when we're following God's leading,
we must continue to submit to His instruction. 4b => God's Word**

They must keep their distance from the ark.

If they don't do things God's way, they will be consumed!

To experience God's blessing,

God's people must prepare themselves personally. 5

"Consecrate/purify yourselves, in preparation for what God is going to do among you tomorrow."

The most important preparation was their *spiritual* preparation!

A holy God requires a holy people (Lev., 1 Pet., 1 John)

He wants them to be ready for God's great work.

Godly leadership must lead the people, for God's people to follow. 6

And we must be willing to follow the leader!

CUTTING OFF THE WATER 3:7-13

**God's work among them, under Joshua's leadership will make clear to
God's people that God is with him, as He was with Moses. 7**

God promises to do it again!

He will do it for Joshua, just like He did it for Moses!

**The priests must demonstrate faith in what God is about to do by
stepping into the raging river. 8**

This wasn't just a dried up creek bed.

At flood time the river is more than a football field length across.

The river drops 1,000 feet from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea.

At flood time it flows at nearly 10 mph!

There's no way they could get across it!

**Joshua demonstrates his personal faith in what God is about to do by
telling God's people what to expect. 9-13**

He has to take the risk.

What if it doesn't happen?! What will happen to his IMAGE?!

He could wait until he actually SEES it happening—just in case he got the message wrong!

He believes God is going to do what He said He would do. He trusts God.

When they see what God is going to do, they will believe that God is with him.

His faith is contagious—the people trust God too!

CROSSING ON DRY GROUND 3:14-17

God's people follow their leaders by faith—they demonstrate that they trust God. 14

The rest of the people didn't hear God's voice.

How did they know what God wants them to do?

They had to trust the leaders God placed over them!

That was no easier for them than it is for US!

They usually failed this test!

This time they follow the leader!

God blesses their faith in following!

Natural conditions are all against them—the river is flooding! 15a

Opportunity to murmur again.

They trust God. They follow their leaders. God blesses them!

When the priests trust God and step into the (raging) river,

***God stops the flood!* 15b-16**

The town of Adam may have been 16-30 mi. upstream.

This was a HUGE work—a demonstration of God's power.

The people of Canaan were certainly aware of what God had just done!

The priests *stand firm* while the people cross on dry ground! 17

They could have begun to question and doubt, and decide they had better get out of there!

—but they *stand firm*!

Twice the passage mentions that the ground is dry.

God didn't just stop the flooding, uncrossable river.

God dried up the mud that would have bogged them down along the way.

Remembering the event 4:1-9

They build a memorial of twelve stones taken from the river.

So they won't forget what God has done for them!

RESTORING THE FLOOD 4:10-18

The people cross the Jordan just as God promised 10-13

The people acknowledge that God is blessing them through their leader 14

Once God completes His work, the flood returns to its raging—still flooded! 15-18

Teaching their descendants 4:19-24

The memorial is to be used for the education of their children.

The children need to learn how God has dealt with His covenant people.

LESSONS FOR US

1. God hasn't changed! He's still able to do mighty works among His people today, as He was in Joshua's day!
2. God is as concerned about the flooding river we have to cross this week, as He was about the flooding Jordan river in Joshua's day.
3. God's people must take our eyes off the flooding river and focus on God's ability to get us across the river—however impossible it may appear.
4. We can trust God to take us through any flood we may face.

Joshua acknowledges from the beginning that GOD will have to do this!

We can't trust our natural abilities to pull off God's work.

Only God can get us through the floods of life.

He wants us to trust HIM to do it!