

Joshua- Courage for Battle

The Key to Crossings- Session #3

Small Group Notes

Introduction:

What is the greatest obstacle that you have faced in your life in the last 5-10 years? Last year? Today?

How have the struggles and obstacles that you have faced impacted your faith in a positive way? Are there struggles in your faith that still exist today?

How is your perspective impacted when you can see the obstacles before you? Do you respond differently when obstacles are unexpectedly?

Today we are going to see how the obstacles that we face in our life are all a part of how God moves us from where we are to where He desires for us to be.

Discuss:

1. Crossings are for those who flee from the foolish.

- Read Joshua 3:1
- You will never cross as long as you are surrounded by unbelief!
- Read Proverbs 13:20 and Numbers 13:30
- If you don't change your associations, you will never leave the shore

Explain: Shittim (Acacia Grove) is the place where Israel had been since Balaam's failed attempt to curse them (Num 22:1; 25:1). This was some miles from the actual place where they crossed the Jordan River. In the south opposite Jericho, this meandering river was at that time surrounded by thickets, so it was not a place suitable for a stay of any length (Jer 12:5). The key word crossing again occurs here (see note at 1:2).

Ask:

If we expect God to move in our lives in a mighty way, how do we prepare for the journey following God's leading?

How had God been faithful to them in the past? How has God been faithful to you personally? How should God's faithfulness encourage us to move beyond doubt?

2. Crossings are for those who follow but don't tailgate

- Read Joshua 3:1-4
- Crossings are never on our terms, in our time, or by our power
- Being ahead of God is far worse than waiting on God.
- How do we follow what we don't see:
 - o Call off the corps- Ephesians 6:12
 - o Put your yes on the table
 - o Get familiar with His ways through His Word!
 - o Quit tailgating, Numbers 25:1-9

Explain: God had called Joshua to lead the people into the promised land, and this was not something Joshua could do alone or on his own terms. All the directions in this passage are given within the context of the community of the people of Israel. Therefore, it took everyone to be committed. Also, God's word involved doing things His way instead of Joshua's. When we commit to God's work in the church, we commit to prepare for what He has called us to do and trust in His plan.

Ask:

Share about an experience you had where you tried to do things your own way instead of God's. What was the result?

What are ways that having a mentality of trying to go ahead of God or on our own way can impact relationships around us? What does that say about how we trust others? How does God view our trust when we don't obey His plan?

3. Crossings are for those who separate themselves from the common to see the uncommon!

- Read Joshua 3:5
- Crossings require confession, repentance, and renewal, Read 1 John 1:9
- Purity paves the way for the presence of God

Explain: The ark of the covenant was the symbol of the presence of God among His people. The considerable distance of 1,000 yards may suggest the need to remain away from the presence of God, especially as a miracle was happening. This separation of a holy God from His people occurred at Mount Sinai (Ex 19:10-25). The command to consecrate yourselves recalls Ex 19:10-15 where consecration was defined as the washing of clothes and as abstinence from sexual relations. This would allow God to work through the people to accomplish His wonders—a term that describes the plagues of Egypt in Ex 3:20 and more general acts in Ex 34:10.

Ask:

God's people were to follow the Ark of the Covenant. What does this say about what God desires to do in our lives?

Why did God emphasize purity in this moment? What does that say to us about how God wants to work in our lives?

4. Crossings are for the courageous “test takers”

- Read Joshua 3:6-17
- God doesn't often save us **from** the river but **through** it!
- Crossing your Jordan will strengthen your faith and reveal His glory!

Explain: The command of God to stand in the Jordan was no small task. Further context in verse 15 tells us the Jordan would have been at its most chaotic during this time. God was asking the priests to trust Him with their very lives. However, God was not calling the people to move forward recklessly, but to trust Him and remember His faithfulness from the past. Even in their failures, God had shown himself to be faithful throughout generations. Though the priests were called to step into the Jordan, God was calling them to stand on His promises.

Ask:

God asks all of us to follow Him in obedience. For Joshua and the Israelites, that meant crossing the Jordan. What does obedience look like for you personally at this time in your life?

Who do you know that needs the gospel but seems impossible to reach? How does this passage from Joshua encourage you in God's work in seemingly impossible circumstances?

