

Message #1030
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"DON'T BE AFRAID TO GET YOUR FEET WET"
{Joshua 3:1-4:18}

Trinity Presbyterian Church
October 19, 2003

INTRODUCTION

You will find the words to the chorus of an old gospel song below the date in today's order of worship-- "Got any rivers you think are uncrossable? Got any mountains you can't tunnel through? God specializes in things thought impossible; He does the things others cannot do."

What obstacles do you face this morning?

Mountains that stand between you and God's blessings?

Be encouraged this morning with the words that God gave to Joshua when calling him to lead the people of Israel into the land He had promised them... "Moses, my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give them.

I WILL GIVE YOU EVERY PLACE WHERE YOU SET YOUR FOOT...no one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you or forsake you {so} be strong and courageous...do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go!" {From Joshua 1:2-9}

SETTING YOUR SITES

God wants to bless you beyond anything you can anticipate! There's nothing that God wants more than to bless you...and to make your life a blessing. What a glorious thought this morning!

There's nothing God want's more than to bring satisfaction to your life...to fulfill the very desires of your heart...to pour out upon you all the blessings He has promised to His people...to fill you with His very being via the Holy Spirit!

Sometimes there are obstacles along the way...

...detours

...delays

For the people of Israel the promise of God was before their eyes...Canaan...the land promised to Abraham four generations before.

There's but one obstacle keeping them from taking what had been promised...the Jordan River; and, crossing that seemed "uncrossable?"

...behind was the desert

...ahead was Canaan {the promise}

...and between these...the rushing Jordan

...near flood stage this time of year

...overflowing its banks

...treacherous

...one could not wade through it

...the current was too swift to swim across it

...it appeared as an impossible barrier.

What were they to do? They needed something to occupy their thoughts and to give them hope; otherwise...

...some might fix their sight upon the past and want to remain right where they were
...others might fix their eyes upon the raging river and be afraid to cross over
...still others might look at the unknown land upon the other side and because of fear, turn back.

What would you do?

...how do you face life's "impossible" obstacles?

...how do you cross those rivers in your life that are overwhelming?

...tunnel through and/or climb the insurmountable mountain?

The writer of the Book of Hebrews challenged us... "Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

LET US FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS..." {Hebrews 12:1-2a}

...set your gaze upon Him

...keep your focus

...get rid of baggage in your life that is a barrier between you and God

In our text of the morning the people of Israel are ordered... "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God...you are to move out from your positions and follow it...then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before...!" {Joshua 3:3}

There is a certain amount of security in the past...

...we know what has happened

...we know we can cope with that

...aren't the most quoted words of the church: "we've always done it that way?"

...or "why fix it if it ain't broken?"

...face it: the past is our comfort zone.

Fear grips the heart of many people who are afraid of what might happen in the future...so, they determine to cling to the past!

But, we MUST go on...take steps of faith...trust God with the

impossible...for...blessings are ahead for us! Joshua told the people: "...tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you!" [3:5]

...God has so much more for us in the tomorrow

...the past cannot be compared with the future!

...TRUST GOD!

...HAVE FAITH IN GOD!

...EXPECT MIRACLES!

Warren Wiersbe states: "In the Christian life you're either an overcomer or you're overcome, a victor or a victim! After all, God didn't save us to make statues out of us and put us on exhibition. He saved us to make soldiers out of us and move us forward by faith to claim our rich inheritance in Jesus Christ...God hasn't changed, and the principle of faith hasn't changed. What seems to have changed is the attitude of God's people...!"

Listen to me...God wants to take you where you've never been before

spiritually...and it's growing faith that will take you there! Are you ready to go for it?

The command is: "When you see the ark...move out and follow it!"

...the ark symbolized the very presence of God

...it was a reminder of His power

...their hope

...who they were

...and whom they were to follow!

The command to believers: "FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS!" First, we are to set our sites on the goals...and second, we are told to... "CONSECRATE YOURSELVES" {3:5a}

Turn your hearts toward God in faith...

...trust Him in His promises

The word "consecrate" means "to be holy...set apart to/for God...cleansed, and purified."

Again, it was the writer to the Book of Hebrews who challenged us to... ..throw off everything that hinders us

...the sin/baggage that easily entangles and defeats us

...set our sites on the goal

...fix our eyes upon Jesus

...and run where He leads!

Daily we should pray the prayer of David found in the 139th Psalm... "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" {139:23-24}

To cry out as he prayed...

"Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, AND GRANT ME A WILLING SPIRIT TO SUSTAIN ME." {Psalm 51:9-12}

God wants us to be focused people...

...clear in our goals

...consecrated wholly to Him

...obedient to His directives

...and submissive to His will

Hearing God's word is one thing...

...obeying God's word is imperative

..blessings await the one who hears...and who obeys!

...the one who holds nothing back

...the one who yields everything

TIME TO GET YOUR FEET WET

God then gives Joshua the strategy for crossing the Jordan--a plan that is anything but orthodox and would require faith to implement... "Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river!'" {3:8}

...it is important to note that this is God's plan

...no way could the Israelites have implemented this

...this required obedience to Him

...His ways are NOT our ways!

...carry the ark to the edge of the Jordan

...step into the water and wait for God to work a miracle!

Joshua then delivers the message from God...

"Come here and listen to the words of the Lord, your God. This is how you will know that the living God is among you, and that He will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites...the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you...as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord--the Lord of all the earth--set foot in the Jordan, the water flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap." {3:9-13}

...it was a message of ENCOURAGEMENT--"You will know that the living God is among you!"

...it was a message of CONFIDENCE--God was going ahead of them...follow Him!

...it was a message of VICTORY--"He will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites..."

...it was a message of MIRACLES--"The water flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap!"

A MIRACLE TAKES PLACE

"So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during the harvest; yet, AS SOON AS THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED THE ARK REACHED THE JORDAN AND THEIR FEET TOUCHED THE WATER'S EDGE, THE WATER FROM UPSTREAM STOPPED FLOWING...it piled up a great distance away...so the people crossed over opposite Jericho. THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OF THE LORD STOOD FIRM ON DRY GROUND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JORDAN, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing ON DRY GROUND!" {3:14-17}

...the people were obedient

...the priests were obedient

...God was obedient to His word

...as the soles of their feet stepped into the water

...God stopped the flow of the water

...and the priests stood on dry ground

...and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground!

We will never walk in victory until we are willing to step out by faith and get our feet wet.

...we must be willing to take that step of faith and trust God to do the rest!

CONCLUSION

Numerous lessons surface for us from this passage--

1. What a mighty God we serve!

a. Nothing is impossible with God!

b. With God ALL things are possible!

2. Keep your focus...fix your eyes upon Him and you will emerge victorious!

3. Our dilemmas provide God opportunities for miracles.

4. When confronted with difficulty--trust God--give it to Him!

So, what is your Jordan today?

"Got any rivers you think are uncrossable? Got any mountains you can't tunnel through? God specializes in things thought impossible; He does the things others cannot do."

Are you struggling with a major issue today?

...does it seem uncrossable?

...is your mountain too difficult to tunnel through?

Are you about to turn back...give up?

What is it...

...an illness?

...uncertainty?

...fear of what's ahead?

...then...

"Consecrate yourselves...fix your eyes on Jesus..."

...acknowledge you can't do it

...give it to God...for...

..."He specializes in things thought impossible!"