

## Joshua – Crossing the River

Joshua 3 : 1 - 18

Word:Key points from Sunday's sermon



**'God has given the whole land into our hands: the people are melting in fear because of us.'** God's reputation through the Children of Israel of freeing them in miraculous ways was well known in Canaan the Promised land. As Joshua and the people stood on the shores of the River Jordan the sepia in Chapter 2 reported this to them. They knew the moment had come to receive the act upon the promises given centuries before to Abraham of a promised land. **They the next generation** are being called upon to occupy to the land, this promise is for them. So we come to chapter 3. **How is their new leader Joshua going to lead the people into the promise ?**

**By receiving word from Living God and passing it on and by obeying it :**

- (i) **Verse 3-4. follow God exactly.** The ark is God's living presence, he is going before, he will hold back the waters. Actions of Israelite could be seen as a military manoeuvre. This is God's strategy. We often employ our own skills and takeover from God when in fact he intends for us to leave it all to him. We have seen this is in the beginning of work done on intergenerational church where over 6 months we devised a matrix of what we would do to achieve aims and goals for youth ministry. And God showed us that we had to stop and to listen to him, to become followers (sheep follow) rather than producers of programmes (rather than be like cows that produce milk) We do not have the Ark to follow to day we still have God himself: the Holy Spirit who guides and leads us.
- (ii) **Verse 5 Consecrate yourself:** make your self separate, you are God's. Imagery of the bride who as she is betrothed wears a veil as a sign that **she is 'spoken for'** and then as her future husband prepares a home for at his father's estate she prepares herself for his arrival to take her there by consecrating herself. Bathing and beautifying herself. This is consecration : the washing of the face and the clothes and abstinence from sex. This is to allow for complete devotion to God. This is what the church is to be and do : **to be 'spoken for'** to be separate for God, to prepare for Jesus coming to take her this fathers house, to the home he has prepared (**John 14**) we are called to live this . Not a way of life it is THE life.

The picture of the large river we had at PCC away day flowing to a dam of twigs, each one of those twigs be named as a blockage in our life : fear, unbelief, envy , pride, was a picture that was also given 28 years ago to me and was intended for this time at St Paul's the picture continues as God's hand comes and removes each twig as it is named and so releases the power of the water to become a mighty waterfall. On PCC away day the river was seen as a huge channel of the love and family life experienced by so many at St Paul's but it is with out power. The river is meant to be a river of love and power. Isaiah 58 helps us interpret this. As sin is turned away from and confessed then; **Then your light will break forth like the dawn; Then you light will rise in the darkness: And your night will be like noon day You will be like a well watered garden like a spring whose waters never fail. Isaiah 58 :8,10,11**

SO as they obey exactly the words of Living GOD he acts and they reach the other side and are the new generation to receive the promise made centuries earlier to Abraham.



**Witness:Questions to discuss.** Consecration : Read Isaiah 58

1. **How might God be calling us to consecrate ourselves as a church ?** What does it mean for *you* to be 'spoken for'?
2. How does this inform and influence our vision of being passionate, committed and convinced (see term booklet page 5)?
3. What risks do we run in opening ourselves to God and one another in this way, and what holds us back from taking them ?

Obedience :

4. What motivated the priests to obey God and stand in the water with the Ark ? verse 15
5. How can we disciple one another to be obedient to Gods word ? How can we help one another to be the light we are called to be in the places where we spend most of our day ? What can we do to encourage one another to live a consecrated life for GOD?
6. What can you/we do to pass on your/our faith and love to the next generation, as Moses did to Joshua?

**WORSHIP**

Attached below is an image one of the small groups thought through last week to describe the vision of what they saw 'over the river' a church family who ere able to reflect and refract light in the very places they spend time. You may like to read this and use it to reflect on a the beginning of our worship time.

**THE CHANDELIER**

While thinking about how we as a church family might seen by people outside the church it seems obvious that God is the source of all power and light. But if that power is suddenly turned on the resulting light may be so bright that many people will be dazzled and may even turn away. It is not given to all to experience that blinding flash of light, although the example that springs to mind is St. Paul on the road to Damascus.

Most people will actually experience the power and light of God through others around them, whether they be in the family, at work, in their local community or just chance encounters.

Then the image of a cut gemstone occurred to me. As you turn it in your hand the facets catch the light and reflect it in different directions and at different moments.

Then Richard suggested that perhaps we should aim to function more like a chandelier. The source of light is the lamp at the centre. The arrangement of crystal pendants around it to some extent shields the viewer outside from brightest light, but they also reflect that light. Conversely without the central lamp, the crystals cannot shine. The crystals project their light into the furthest corners of the room but not all at the same time; one observer sees a red flash, another a green one and yet another a blue one but they all come from the bright light at the centre.

In a small group and even more as a church family we are all different; we come into contact with different people and we feel at our brightest at different times. But seen as a whole by outsiders a sparkling chandelier is an attractive sight to behold and draws the eye to the light at the centre.

Taking the analogy one step further, although the light comes from the centre, sometimes the crystal pendants are stirred by a draught which galvanises them into activity – an obvious parallel with the workings of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps you might like to take this image away with you today and think about it during the week. I am sure that through it God will reveal more to you about how we can be His instruments in shining His light out to the community around us.

Duncan Cumming and Mark and Rowena's small group