

Truths From Israel's History, Part 1 - Crossing the Jordan

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores how to guide others in their spiritual journey through the lessons of Israel's crossing of the Jordan River and subsequent events.

Duration: 57:51

Scripture: Matthew 6:13, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on four events from the book of Joshua: the crossing of the Jordan River, the setting up of the base camp at Gilgal, the first victory at Jericho, and the defeat at Ai followed by subsequent victory. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding these events and their lessons in order to know and appropriate God's heart. He highlights the themes of God's kingdom, God's power, and God's glory in these events. The speaker encourages the audience to be men of faith, willing to step into impossible situations and trust God to open the way.

Transcript

Well, I didn't realize there were so many here. Good evening, brothers. It's good to be with you.

I'll ask you to open your Bibles, please, to Joshua chapter 3, if you would. This is going to work. As we come to the study of God's Word, there's a principle of Bible study that's absolutely indispensable, a principle of Bible study that we can't take for granted, we can't live without.

And I never tire of sharing that principle, and I share it with myself when I'm alone at home. And I'm talking about total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit, helpless dependence. That's the indispensable principle, not only of Bible study, but of all life.

We thank the Lord for all of the helps, the aids, the assistances, and the study of His Word. Thankful for the commentaries and the Word studies and the concordances and the atlases and the books of sermons and meditations and all kinds of help. But after you've done the donkey work, and after you've looked at it academically, you've got to get alone with the Lord as a little baby, as a little child, and you've got to pour out your heart to the Lord and just ask Him to put the light on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Only God can reveal God. And He delights to do it. He longs to do it.

And I'm believing that He wants to show Himself again this weekend as we meet in His name. I'm going to ask you, brothers, to join with me, please, in prayer as we call upon the Lord and ask Him to guide us as we look at His Word, a very familiar portion of His Word, and that He would dawn Himself upon us. He has not promised to bless the Word that goes forth out of my mouth.

He has promised to bless the Word that goes forth out of His mouth. And so we need Him to speak. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we do thank Thee this evening that You have privileged us to come and to gather in Your name and to wait before Your Holy Spirit. We know that it is Your delight to put the light upon the Lord Jesus and then when He is in the light, then to enable us to walk in the light as He is in the light. You inspired this Bible and now we ask You to breathe again upon it.

We pray that our hearts would be open to Your heart, that we might see in a living way our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You in advance that You are going to meet us this weekend. We pray that all that You have planned from before the foundation of the earth would come to fruition now, this weekend, in every heart, in every life.

We pray that You would enable us by Your miracle to be completely detached from all the affairs and the cares of life, and that by Your miracle we might be focused in a living way upon the Lord Himself. We pray that this would not only be a blessing to everyone here, but it might be a blessing to Your heart, Lord, as You see us gathered in this way, in this place. Thank You in advance for over-answering our prayer.

Meet with us now. We ask in the matchless name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

In our time together, in our sessions together, I want to sort of look at a whole body, a whole divinity, a lot of ground to cover. And may God help us to do it. The foundational truths that I'd like to share with you this weekend are sort of cut out of Israel's history.

I don't expect to give you anything you haven't heard, but I pray that you'd get it in a living way and that the Lord would anoint this precious portion of His Word. It's cut out of a very strategic part of Israel's history. All of Israel's history is redemptive history.

And by that we mean that it tells the story of our redemption. But in a special way, some parts of Israel's history are more strategic than other parts. And the particular section of Scripture, this slice of Israel's history is filled with profound instructions from every point of view.

And so I just pray that the Lord will help us. Everything before this, leading up to this, in Israel's history was preparing them for this particular event. And everything that follows this particular section of Scripture is going to relate to this and depend upon what's happening here.

And I'm talking about the section that begins with the crossing of the Jordan River and goes all the way to the victory at Ai. Moses is now in heaven with the Lord. A second generation of believers, if we believe the last census that was taken in numbers, a little over 600,000 of them have gathered now and are standing on the shores of this swollen river.

In front of them, and from one point of view, a land of Itees, enemies, Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites and so on. God had promised to dispossess them in order that His people could go into the land. It's called a promised land.

A land of milk and honey and corn and wine and pomegranates and vineyards and valleys and hills. It drank the abundance of God's rain. It's called a good land, the fair land, the promised land, the fruitful land.

It's the land of your possession. It's the Lord's inheritance. Deuteronomy 6.23, He brought us out that He might bring us in.

Deuteronomy 6.23. This is the crisis of these redeemed people of God. They had been saved by power and blood out of Egypt. They had been wandering around for thirty-eight and a half years out of the will of God, still in the will of God, but you know the story, wandering around in that wilderness.

And now here they stood with a good land in front of them, a man named Jesus prepared by God to take them in, a new beginning, sort of a crisis in their history. Now, because there is so much material, I need to trust the Lord and you need to trust Him with me that as we touch on some of these facts that are so familiar that we wouldn't be overwhelmed. As I prepared my heart for this particular weekend, the Lord used my wife in a mighty way.

I asked her for prayer and we prayed together. And we got ready to pray and she said to me, exactly what would you like me to pray? Well, I was sort of hoping she would know. And so what I said was, I want you to pray that I'll give what I'm supposed to give.

But that's not how she prayed. She told me a story first about Deuteronomy 32. Let my teaching drop as the rain and my speech distill as the dew, as the droplets on the fresh grass, as showers on the herb.

And then she gave me this little story about the rain and how some rain is good and some rain is not good for the crops. And she said, from what you've been sharing with me, I think you're going to send a flood this weekend. You're going to get all these facts and just dump it on them and too much rain, she said, will hurt the crops.

I said, pray that I might say what I'm supposed to say. And when she prayed, she prayed this way, Lord, help him leave out what he's supposed to leave out. I'll tell you, that touched my heart.

And so that's what I have prayed since we prayed together. I don't want this gathering to be just a flood and a bunch of information and facts you already know and that you're going to look at again. I don't want to give everything, but I want to give something.

And I want it to be God's heart. I want to share a very particular part of this marvelous section of Scripture and pray that the Lord will make it intensely practical in your heart so that we're all on the same page. Let me sort of home in on what I'd like to look at, and then we'll begin with it.

There's really four events, and if the Lord allows what we've put in the bulletin, I'll have four opportunities. He can change that, you know. Any moment death is any moment return, or any other way He'd like to change it.

But here's what's planned. The crossing of the Jordan River. That's chapter 3. And then the setting up of the base camp at Gilgal.

That's chapters 4 and 5. And then the first victory, Jericho. That's chapter 6. And then the first defeat and the subsequent victory at Ai. That's what I'd like us to look at.

Jordan, Gilgal, Jericho, and Ai. You say, well, what are we going to talk about? How to cross the Jordan? And the lessons at Gilgal? And how to take Jericho? And how to continue after the fall at Ai? In a sense, yes, but not really. My guess is, from what I know about this particular gathering, probably for some of you, many, many years ago, you already learned what it meant to cross Jordan, and by God's grace, you've already crossed Jordan.

You already know what it means to have the reproach of Egypt rolled away at Gilgal. And you've been there. You've already tasted what it means to storm the walls of Jericho.

How to fall down and get up after Ai and continue on in faith. And so, we're not really going to look at how to cross Jordan, though we are, how to go to Gilgal, though we are, and Jericho and so on. The burden that's on my heart is this.

There were about three quarters of a million people that were standing there, ready to get into the land. Not how do I cross Jordan, but how can I help them cross Jordan? That's what I want to focus on. How can I help two and a half, so many people? We don't know how many there were, but thousands.

How can I help them, especially the second generation of believers? Not so much how can I camp at Gilgal, but how can I help three quarters of a million people get to Gilgal? Not so much how can I take Jericho, but is there some way I can help them take Jericho and learn the lessons of Ai? Let me home in a little closer. The chief point, of course, is the land. The land of milk and honey is God's picture of Christ, the life of milk and honey.

What's the point of crossing Jordan if you don't get to the land? That's the point of crossing, to get to the land. And the land is Christ. How can I help others get to Christ? That's the point.

What's the point of going to Gilgal and learning the lessons at Gilgal if I can't help others get to Christ? That's the point of Gilgal. The preparation that they learned there was to get them into the land. What good is storming Jericho if we don't possess the land and so on? And so, this weekend, what I'd like to look at, and God assisting, how can we help others get to Him and claim Him and appropriate Him and live in Him and camp in Him and feed off Him as you would live in the land and live off of the land? Let me focus one more time.

It's not only Jordan, Gilgal, Jericho, Ai. It's not only the crowd. How can we help them? But each story has a unique instrument that God used.

And I'd like to focus on that instrument. For example, how can I help others cross the Jordan? Watch the priests. The Levitical priests.

And they contain the key on how I can help others to Jordan. Glance at chapter 3. Let me read a few verses. Verse 3, when you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, you shall set out from your place and go after it.

Verse 6, Joshua spoke to the priests saying, take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people. So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people. Verse 14, when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, when those who carried the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest.

The waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan. And those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the salt sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho.

And 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 crossed on dry ground until the nation finished crossing. By looking at the priests, brothers, God can give us some instructions. How can I help others get to a full Savior? Appropriate a full Christ? Then there's that great ministry at Gilgal, and the spotlight turns from the priests.

If I'm going to learn how to take others to Gilgal, I've got to watch the elders. Very interesting portion of Scripture. Chapter 3, verse 12, Now then, take for yourself twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe.

Chapter 4, please, verse 2 and 3, Take for yourself twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe. Command them, saying, Take up for yourself twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan from the place where the priests' feet are standing firm, and carry them over with you. Lay them down in the lodging place where you will lodge tonight.

Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel one man from each tribe. It's one thing to help them across Jordan and all that that symbolizes, but then we've got to carry them to Gilgal. Watch the priests.

Watch the elders. And then, it's my passion also to help people. Take Jericho.

Watch Joshua, the military leader. God has instruction for it. If we're going to get them across the Jordan, we've got to see the priests.

If we're going to get them to Gilgal and learn what God would have us learn, we've got to watch the elders. There is no route from Jordan to Jericho. You've got to go to Gilgal.

You're not ready for Jericho. And those who go to Jericho from Jordan end up awfully bloody. They've got to go to Gilgal.

And they all get there the same way. We've got to study the elders. And then we've got to study Joshua.

And then when we do Ai, we've got to study Joshua and the elders and the body, the whole people of God. And I'm suggesting this weekend, this is the burden on my heart, that God will not only teach us what it means to cross Jordan. I think we know that.

How can I help others? I've got to get them to Jesus. How can I? How can God use me? Illustrated by the priests. How can God use me, us, to get them to Gilgal? Now, we've got to watch the elders.

How can we take Jericho? Watch Joshua. How can we learn the lessons of the defeat at Ai and the subsequent victory? Watch Joshua. Watch the elders as they fall before the Lord.

Let's watch them. Let's learn. Let's watch the body at work as it deals with its problem and so on.

So that's where we are. Because of my wife's prayer that we wouldn't rain too much on you to destroy the crops, after that the Lord gave me Psalm 72.6. This will be my prayer this weekend. May He come down like rain upon the moon grass, like the showers that water the earth.

That's my prayer. May He come down, and if He rains at all, may it be on this field, ministry, opportunity, leadership. How can we get others to a full Savior, to a full Christ, that they might see Him, know Him, appropriate Him, and feed off of Him? May God help us.

Matthew 6.13b sort of summarizes this. I was amazed, because when I finished studying the Jordan in my mind, it seemed to be summarized with the ark and the throne and the shape of a throne and God being in such control and dividing the water and so on. I just said in my heart, it's Your kingdom, Lord.

It's Your kingdom. And when I got to Gilgal and I saw in Gilgal all the lessons that he had illustrated by the stones and the flint knife and the sacrificial lamb and the man with a sword, I said it's Your arm, Lord. It's Your arm.

It's Your power. And when I saw how the Lord got all the spoils in Jericho, I said it's Your glory. And all of a sudden, that Matthew 6.13 hit me.

Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. At the Jordan, they learned that it was His kingdom. At Gilgal, they learned it was His power.

At Jericho, they learned that it was His glory. And at Ai, they learned forever and ever. Amen.

And that's how it has to be. So that's sort of a key verse also. I'm going to ask you to turn to chapter 3, please.

And let me just get this idea of the Jordan before you by meditating on the Levitical priests and their ministry. And because God has given us analytical minds, logical minds, let me share with you at least three principles that I get from looking at these priests that instruct us on how we can help others get across the Jordan and to a full Savior. The first principle can be stated in these words, if I'm going to help my brothers and sisters get across the Jordan to a full Savior, then God will have to work in me what He worked in those priests, and that is faith.

We must be leaders in faith. We must go first in faith. The priests had to go first in faith.

They were leaders in faith. I love in this connection, in verse 6, Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people. So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.

Do you realize that God didn't give them the full story? They didn't know that Jordan was going to open up at this time until the ark was on their shoulders. They didn't know. They only had a little light.

And they ran with it. Take up the ark and go ahead. And they did.

And they went ahead. And I think they walked right toward that swollen river. And then God had to speak another word.

Brothers, they're looking for men of faith. Sometimes we get shy and we just sort of wait until God sends all the information. Don't wait for all the information.

If you've got a word, go with it. And like Peter, you might have to walk right up to the iron gate before it swings open. But it will swing open if it's of the Lord.

Don't worry about that. Men of faith. We need to move with a clear word.

And then their faith is also illustrated because moving under the ark was a brand new thing to them. We sort of read this la, la, la. But remember, they were following the Shekinah glory cloud.

And for 40 years, that's how they moved. God said when it goes, you go. When it stops, you stop.

When it starts again, you start again. And now the cloud's gone. And God said, I'm going to call you men to do a new thing.

And now the ark takes over and they've got to follow the ark. But this is the first time. This is strange for them.

If we're going to help others over, we've got to be men of faith like the priests. We've got to go with whatever light we have even if it's dim. We've got to be able to trust God to do a new thing that He hasn't done before.

Sometimes we're afraid to move if our light is dim and we're called on to do a new thing. It was certainly faith when you read verse 13. It shall come about when the souls of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan.

The waters of the Jordan will be cut off. Waters flowing down from above will stand in a heap. I'll tell you in our third message why I think these priests were barefoot.

I won't tell you that now. I think they were. But whether they were barefoot or not, it says, the moment the souls of their feet touch the water.

Again, we sort of read these things, la, la, la. To the eyes of the flesh, this is a scary thing. They were not only called to face the impossible, but to step in it.

To step out into the impossible. Verse 15 tells us that the Jordan overflows all its banks at the days of harvest. This was the floody season.

Now whether you take the word Jordan from its etymology, the word Jor meaning spread and Dan judgment, or whether you take the word to mean that which descends, the descender, and it certainly was a descender. It started off 1,000 feet above the level of the sea and went over 200 miles and ended up 1,200 feet below the level of the sea. It is dangerous at all times.

That river is a descending river. But in the April thaws, when it was flooding, it was especially dangerous. I like to think of it this way, that God April fooled the Canaanites.

He would not have expected them to come over during the floody season. Let me ask you this question. When the priests obeying God were 20 feet from the flooding river, what did the river look like? It looked like a flooding river.

And when they were 10 feet away, what did it look like? And when they were 5 feet away, what did that river look like? And when they were 5 inches away, what did it look like? That is pretty frightening to the flags when it is not happening. And you are getting closer and closer and closer and it has got to happen. Brothers, if we are going to help others over, we are going to have to be men of faith.

We are going to have to run with the light that God gives us even if we do not think it is enough. We are going to have to be daring enough to trust God to do a new thing even if He has not done it before. We are going to have to be daring enough to step into an impossible situation at the Word of God, believing that God is going to open the way by the time we step into that.

Chapter 3.16 The waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in a heap. I don't know if you have ever tried to picture that. I don't know exactly how to picture it.

If it was like jello, or if it was a solid wall, or how to picture that. This is different from the parting of the Red Sea where there was a path in between two walls of water. This is a river.

This isn't a sea. Evidently what happened was when the priest's feet touched the water, then God rolled it back to the city of Adam several miles upstream. We don't know exactly to this day where that city was.

And then He dried it up all the way to the Dead Sea. That's an amazing thing. I don't know if the priest could see the wall of water or not.

Maybe they could. They saw it rolling back. They could see it rolling back.

Let's assume that they could see what the Bible calls a heap of water. Don't forget, it's piling up because it's a river. It's flowing and getting higher and higher and higher and higher and higher.

Imagine if the priest said something like this. They're holding the ark of God, you know, and the people are ready to come. And they said, Hurry up! Move it! Move it! Move it! That thing's going to crash on us.

How much encouragement do you think that would instill in the hearts of the people? These priests' brothers were barefoot and silent as they stood there. Men of faith, and if we're going to help others across, we've got to be like these priests. Not only must the priests be leaders of faith, but let me give the second principle.

If we're going to help others across like the priests, we need to know what it means to take a firm stand on ground that God has dried up. Do you see where I'm going with that? We need to take a rugged stand on ground that God has dried up. Clearly, the Jordan River is a picture.

And perhaps it would help us to nail it down a little bit if we're going to understand this great principle. If we're going to cross over that dividing line, that barrier, that hindrance. Thousands of Christians, brothers, will live out their Christian lives in the wilderness.

And perhaps thousands, like the two-and-a-half tribe, Reuben, Gad, and one-half of Manasseh, are never going to cross over. They're going to die on the borderline, right on the line, right on the threshold. If we're going to help brothers and sisters across that river, we need to identify what that river is.

I'm sure you've heard those who say the River Jordan is death and Canaan is heaven. Michael rowed the boat ashore. River Jordan is chilly and cold.

That's death. Hallelujah. Milk and honey on the other side.

The hymn writer certainly has used that idea. And in a sense, that's true. Stennett's song on Jordan's stormy banks.

I stand and cast a wistful eye to Canaan's bright and happy land where my possessions lie. Or I won't have to cross Jordan alone when I come to the river at the ending of days, and the last winds of sorrow have blown, and so on. Somebody waiting to show me the way I don't have to cross Jordan alone.

In a sense, that's true because didn't he dry up that river? Death, he certainly did. When our Lord Jesus rose again, He dried that up. Someone says, it's death, alright, but it's not physical death.

It's death to self and ego and self-will. And if we're ever going to get to enjoy a full Christ or help others enjoy a full Christ, they've got to learn to die to themselves. Well, the only problem with that is we're left to believe, as I believed for years, that you can surrender the river dry.

And you can't. And you can yield the river dry. If I surrender enough, I can get across.

If I yield enough, the river's going to go dry. And that's not how it works. What is the Jordan? What does it symbolize? I don't know if the Holy Spirit makes the plays on the words like I'm going to make a play here.

Remember, this thing rolled back to Adam. Do you just read that as a city? That that river went back to Adam? I get so impressed there's something else that takes place in the wilderness of sin. And I say, wait a minute now.

And when God met dear Hagar, it says she was on her way to shore. She was not assured of anything. She was on her way to shore when God met her.

And I keep wondering if God's playing on these words. Verse 16, the waters which were flown down from above stood and rose up in one heap a great distance away at Adam, the city beside Zarethan. And those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Araba, the salt sea, were completely cut off.

The people crossed opposite Jordan. Whether or not God intended this, it's a wonderful illustration. What is the Jordan River? What does it symbolize? Well, God rolled it all the way back to Adam and all the way to the Dead Sea.

Everything that flowed from Adam and ended in death, He dried up. He dried up. So whatever that is, you can fill it in.

The river of sin, the river of flesh, the river of judgment, the river of condemnation, the river of self. All I know is He dried it up. Ten times in this chapter we read the Ark.

The Ark. The Ark of God. Remember, the Ark was in the shape of an oriental throne.

It had a seat and it had arms and it had a canopy over the top, the wings of the cherubim and so on. It was a symbol of the invisible King, the presence of God. The psalmist caught hold of that in Psalm 114, verse 3. The sea looked back and fled.

Jordan turned back. What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? And He gives the answer in verse 7. Tremble, O earth, before the Lord, the God of Jacob. That's why the sea backed off.

Because the Lord was there. Only He can dry up the river. There's two answers to the question, when does a Christian cross the Jordan River? There's two answers to that question.

The first answer is this. Every Christian crossed the Jordan River 2,000 years ago when the Lord Jesus Christ died and rose again. That's when they crossed.

When Jesus died on the cross, He dried up that river. Everything from Adam to death, there ended in death. Every sin He took care of.

Now, that's without exception. You say, well, are you talking about every spiritual Christian? Every spiritual Christian? Every dull Christian? Every back-slidden Christian? Every Christian crossed in Christ, in Jesus their substitute, 2,000 years ago. You say, yeah, but it's the second question that I really want answered.

Not theologically. Not positionally. Not theoretically.

I know doctrinally we all crossed 2,000 years ago, but when do I cross now in my life? Here's the answer to that question. I crossed 2,000 years ago when Jesus died. I cross now when I believe I crossed 2,000 years ago when Jesus died.

You cross by faith. That's how you cross. By believing that you already crossed in the person of Jesus Christ, your substitute.

And that's why it's so important to watch these priests, because they represent those who have understood that and have taken a firm stand on ground that God has dried up. They're standing there saying, it's done. It's over.

They're never going to cross unless somebody has faith and somebody stands there and says, it's done. It's finished. People are getting frustrated trying to figure out how to get across.

And they're being told a thousand different things on how to get across and how few there are brothers who will take a firm stand on miracle ground and say, it's done. It's over. It's finished.

He has dried it up. It was a miracle that they could stand on that dry ground. A miracle that those priests could get so close to the ark without being incinerated.

It was a miracle that that heap of water didn't come crashing down on their heads. Look at verse 4, please. There shall be between you and it a distance of 2,000 cubits by measure.

Do not come near it that you may know the way by which you shall go. You've not passed this way before. Some have questioned, why does God give us this 3 quarters of a mile distance between the people and the ark? Some say, well, there has to be a reverent distance between you and God.

Others say, well, read the context. He's talking about guidance. If you've got half a million people or more trying to follow an ark, it's good if it's out in the front.

If it's too close, only the front row will know the way. And the second and third row are going to have to follow the front row. And then you've got men following men.

And they'll be saying, it turned right, it turned left, it's gone west, it's gone south. And you'll have to listen to them. But if it's out in the front, more people can see it.

They say that might be one reason that God said that. One thing I'm thankful for in this story, the people were not only 3 quarters of a mile from the ark, but they were 3 quarters of a mile from the priests that held

the ark. And why I like that is because we're talking about helping them get across.

And that knocks in the head many ideas that people have. The way to get them across, they need instruction. They need teaching.

They need somebody to follow them up. They need someone to have authority and be accountable to them. And they need to learn about gifts.

And they need to learn about missions. And they need to learn about tithing. They couldn't even talk to them.

They didn't need counseling. They didn't need follow-up. They were silent and barefoot.

We're going to help them across. We need somebody to go first by cold-blooded faith and believe God and stand on the finished work and just stand there. Then they're going to respond to that.

I think it's more than a coincidence that this 2,000 cubits, this distance, the Jews took that to be the Sabbath day's journey. That was the distance. A Sabbath day's journey.

Well, what's the point of that? That's as far as you can go without violating rest. That's what they needed to know. That was pictured by the priest.

You can only go as far as rest if you take one step beyond that. Now, let's say some Jewish person says, oh, look at the ark. Look at the Lord.

I want to get close to the Lord. And so they drew close to the ark. Every step they took beyond rest, they got further from the Lord as they drew closer to the ark.

You see the point? That standing on the finished work illustrates this principle of rest. And the only way to get across is by that rest and by that finished work. Not only must we go first by faith.

Not only must we take a firm stand on ground that God has dried up. Let me give this last principle and we'll wrap it up. We've got to trust God.

We've got to take a firm stand on a finished work. He's done it all. It's finished.

It's over. Done. Through.

And their third responsibility was to hold up the ark. That was it. To hold up Christ.

To hold up that throne of God. Christ the King. Christ upon His throne.

Verse 17 of 3, the priest who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground until the nation had finished crossing the Jordan. They're going to have to see Him. We've got to hold Him up.

Brothers, this is not a hard assignment. When you think about it, how can I help others? Believe God. Stand on the finished work.

And hold up Christ. You know, when they held up the ark of God, the throne of God, that meant they were under it. What does it mean to be under the throne of God? It means to be under the Lordship of Jesus

Christ.

That's what they're looking for. Somebody to trust God. Somebody to stand on a finished work.

Somebody to hold up the Lord Jesus Christ and stand under His Lordship. You'd be amazed how they'd follow that. They're looking for people who go forth in faith and stand on a finished work, hold up Christ.

Someone says, no, come on, that's too simple. That's too easy. Just to believe God, stand on a finished work, hold up Christ, they're going to come running over? They need lessons on obedience.

That's what they need. They need to know that God's their Provider. They need to know that He gives life and they have life in Him.

Brothers, it's all in the ark. What was in the ark? Ten Commandments were in the ark. Everything they needed to know about obedience is in the ark.

The manna was in the ark. Everything they need to know about provision is in the ark. Aaron's rod that budded.

Everything they need to know about supernatural life is in the ark. It's all in Christ. They don't need other things.

They just need Him. Where are the priests? We've got to get to Gilgal. That's a whole different story.

But first, we need men that are priests, that will believe God, that will stand firm on ground that God has dried up, that will just hold up Christ under His Lordship. What a scene! As they began to come. What were they doing? They were just standing there holding up Christ.

And the people came. Why aren't a lot of people going today to find the full Christ? It's because, brothers, we're muddying up the water. We're making it slippery for them.

We're making it hard for them. We're making it difficult for them. We're telling them they've got to do this, and they've got to learn that, and they've got to memorize this, and they've got to go here, and they've got to have this counseling, they've got to do that.

They don't need any of that. They just need to see some godly men believe in God, standing on a finished work, and holding up Christ. You say, well, didn't that get heavy after a while? How long did they have to hold it up? They were the first ones in, and the last ones out.

King James says, till everyone clean passed over. They had to wait for the slowest of the slow. And we just stand there.

That's our ministry. And that's all we do to get them across Jordan. Something else we do to get them to Gilgal.

Something else we do to get them to Jericho. But that's all we do to get them across Jordan. We just stand there, and we hold Christ.

Remember when the Ark was coming down from the house of Obed-Edom? I don't understand that verse in Chronicles, but it said the Lord helped the Levites carry the Ark. He will empower you to hold up Christ before the people. And when it's all over, they walk across on dry land.

I can see some grandchild in the future saying to his granddaddy, tell me the story. Tell me the story. How did you cross over? You must have been so brave.

It must have been so hard. Tell me again. How did it happen? You should have seen me, son.

I walked on dry ground. Now, I've got a granddaughter that's a toddler that can do that. It's not hard to do.

That's all they did. It's easy to get across Jordan. It's not hard.

It's not difficult. And that's the first step to possessing of full Christ. If we're serious about really wanting to help those who've been redeemed, but they're stuck in the wilderness, those who've been redeemed and are settling for the foretaste on the borderline, if we're serious, may God write it in our hearts.

Men of faith go first. And they take a stand on ground that God has dried up. And they hold up Christ under His Lordship.

And that's it. No instruction. No pep talks.

They just hold up Jesus. And they'll come. They'll come.

May God work that in our hearts. And may God prepare us. Because the next step carrying those rocks up to Gilgal is a little different.

Let's pray. Our Father, we thank You for the simplicity of our ministry. You've privileged us.

You didn't need those priests. You didn't need the elders. You didn't need the soldiers.

You didn't need Joshua. You could have done it with a word of Your mouth. But You were pleased to use Your instruments.

Teach us to go forward in faith, to respond to the light that You give us, to trust You, to do a new thing, to enable us to step into an impossible situation, to trust You right up to the last minute, to stand on what You've finished and completed, to hold up our Lord Jesus Christ that others might go forth to a full Christ. Will You work that for us, Lord? We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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