

**SERMON: Uncrossable Rivers****GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House**

In my last Message in the Book of Joshua, I closed with these comments:

Finally, Joshua tells the people how they will make it, succeed, be victorious to go across the Jordan River. In **(Joshua 3.11)** *Look, the Ark of the Covenant, which belongs to the Lord of the whole earth, will lead you across the Jordan River!* Although Jesus Christ is invisible to us now, we can look to Him as our Ark of the New Covenant. We look and focus on Jesus as in **(Hebrews 12.2)** *We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's.*

Jesus showed in His perfect obedience that He finished what He starts...all the way to the Cross. He is our *champion who initiates and perfects our faith.* He will bring us to cross the many Jordan Rivers that seem impossible to cross. If our faith is too small..He will make it *grow*, and even make it more *perfect....more like His.* God specializes in taking the uncertainties in our Lives, to bring glory to His Son Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

This week we follow the Israelite people under Joshua's leadership as they experience another miracle of deliverance. Not from Pharaoh's Army, but through an impassable object, the *uncrossable* Jordan River in Spring flood stage! We all face challenges from time to time that feel like an *Uncrossable River*, like the Jordan River at flood stage. The God of Joshua is also our God. He has power to cause the circumstances, both natural and spiritual, to dry up like the Jordan River so we can go across...move forward with Jesus.

**(Joshua 3.8)** **8** *Give this command to the priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant: 'When you reach the banks of the Jordan River, take a few steps into the river and stop there.'* At that point the people were trusting Joshua and the Lord through him. Yet, they must have wondered why the priests were commanded *take a few steps into the river and stop there.'* Joshua would not test their faith for long as we read in **(Joshua 3.9-12)** **9** *So Joshua told the Israelites, "Come and*

*listen to what the LORD your God says. 10 Today you will know that the living God is among you. He will surely drive out the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites ahead of you. 11 Look, the Ark of the Covenant, which belongs to the Lord of the whole earth, will lead you across the Jordan River! 12 Now choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. 13 The priests will carry the Ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth. As soon as their feet touch the water, the flow of water will be cut off upstream, and the river will stand up like a wall.”*

We will later see what role the twelve men had after the crossing. But first, Joshua predicts or foretells the miracle ahead for all the people: *As soon as their {the priests'} feet touch the water, the flow of water will be cut off upstream, and the river will stand up like a wall.”*

Now we might say that piling up the waters on the Jordan River seems a small thing compared to their **”Escape through the mighty Red Sea.** As we read in (Exodus 14.14-16) **14 The LORD himself will fight for you. *Just stay calm.* 15 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving! 16 Pick up your staff and raise your hand over the sea. Divide the water so the Israelites can walk through the middle of the sea on dry ground.**

Note in (v.14) how God instructed Moses in his trial to ***Just stay calm.*** Moses walked closely to the Lord. Yet his human weakness was being tested to lead the people in *faith not fear.* Then God really says “stop crying in prayer...Get moving.” Then God promises the Miracle to divide the Red Sea.

## **CRISIS TRAINING**

There are a few points that the Lord gave to His leaders, Moses and Joshua, and the Apostle Peter that apply to all of us Christians in a crisis, both leaders and followers, today. Moses had Pharaoh's murderous Army at his heels as he escaped from Egypt. Joshua had his first mission needing miraculous events as he was Moses' replacement. Peter had his ability as a professional fisherman challenged against the instructions of new religious Teacher in Judea, Jesus:

1. It is important, when in crisis, that we stay calm before our Lord Jesus, even as Moses was instructed by God at the Red Sea. There are many Bible verses for this such as **(Philippians 4.6) *Fret not about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.*** Many Bible translations start this verse with *Be anxious for nothing* as the **(NASB1995) 6 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer***

*and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* Many Christians take this instruction to only mean they must do this by their own determination. The willingness to obey must be in us, but not the power without prayer. Then the whole verse must be seen in light of our God, the God of Mercy and Encouragement. In many trials in our lives, we Believers may need much prayer to not give in to *anxiety*. Praying for Victory over “being anxious” is more important than the prayer for the definite answer. The reason I say this is because *anxiety is our enemy*. Anxiety can keep us from hearing the “still quiet voice of Holy Spirit.” In the New Testament the Apostle Paul used four different Greek words for such prayers in times of “anxiety and worry.” 1) “Prayer”(proseuche) general prayer; 2) “Entreaty, Supplication”(deesis.) special times of need or “**help Lord.**” **This is the prayer as you face an *uncrossable rier in your life.***; 3) “Thanksgiving” (eucharista) looks back to previous answers to prayer in similar situations; 4) “Requests” (altemata) refers to specific requests for specific needs, not necessarily urgent or crisis in nature.

When our fretting and worrying seems to overpower us, we can have God's peace as we trust God's omnipotent Rule. **(Romans 8.28/AMP)** says: *And we know [with great confidence] that God [who is deeply concerned about us] causes all things to work together [as a plan] for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan and purpose.*

## **2. Our great confidence is in God's Promises, not in ourselves but in God's Promises :**

- **to Moses in (Exodus 14.14)** *The LORD himself will fight for you.*
- **To Joshua (Joshua 3.10)** *He will surely drive out the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites ahead of you.*
- **To Peter - Remember Peter the professional fisherman in his boat with Jesus.** Reading in **(Luke 5.4-5)** *When he {Jesus} had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish.”* 5 *“Master,” Simon replied, “we worked hard all last night and didn’t catch a thing. But if you say so, I’ll let the nets down again.”* Peter was confident in his ability as a fisherman. But, he also sensed something “special” about this new Teacher or Master in town.
- **To Christians in (Romans 8.31)** *What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?*

## **NEXT STEPS**

After having prayed to our Lord Jesus in the crisis, He often moves us to take steps forward before the Big Answer has been shown to us.

- To Moses: **(Exodus 14.15-16)** *Tell the people to get moving! 16 Pick up your staff and raise your hand over the sea.*
- To Joshua: **(Joshua 3.8)** *8 Give this command to the priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant: 'When you reach the banks of the Jordan River, take a few steps into the river and stop there.*
- To Peter: So Peter submitted to Jesus! The miracle of fish was next in **(Luke 5.6-7)** *6 And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! 7 A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.*
- To Christians: **(Hebrews 12.1)** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.*

But Pastor Bruce, I have gone forward and my “feet are in the water of the *uncrossable* river in my life!” What do I do next? God's instructions for Moses . Joshua, and Peter led to the Miracle needed in the Crisis at hand, the Red Sea blocking Moses, and the Jordan River in flood stage blocking Joshua, Peter's *unbelief* toward Jesus. If you don't hear the Spirit of Jesus saying WAIT!”...take another step into the Deeper Water! YES! ...take another step! The miracle will happen! The miracle may be a natural, rather than a supernatural event.

For us Christians the Promises in Crisis:

- **God's omnipotent arm to bring His results through the crisis.** As in (Romans 8.28/AMP) *And we know [with great confidence] that God [who is deeply concerned about us] causes all things to work together [as a plan] for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan and purpose.*
- **Jesus' promise to be with you through the crisis.** in **(Matthew 28.20)** Jesus' Promise: *And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*
- **If all seems to fail in the crisis, you will be soon safe in Heaven with Jesus.** Jesus is preparing us a place or home in Heaven, in **(John 14.3)** , *3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.*
- 

So we can see how all these Promises merge together to make Christians “more than conquerors through Him who loves them”. Holy Spirit will give you the courage to take that next step in your life. As He did for Moses, Joshua and Peter.

Next (**Joshua 3.14-16**) *14 So the people left their camp to cross the Jordan, and the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant went ahead of them. 15 It was the harvest season, and the Jordan was overflowing its banks. But as soon as the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark touched the water at the river's edge, 16 the water above that point began backing up a great distance away at a town called Adam, which is near Zarethan. And the water below that point flowed on to the Dead Sea until the riverbed was dry.*

Thus God did the promised miracle with nature for His people Israel by His appointed leader, Joshua. All Christians have the most important miracle in all of history in their lives. That is that God raised Jesus Christ from the grave. This overturned all the plans of Hell against mankind...for anyone who would believe in Jesus.

A born-again Christian starts new life as they walk across the dry riverbed in their life. Their river of sin has been taken away. Their sins were nailed to the Cross with Jesus. Before them they have as the prophet Jeremiah said in (**Jeremiah 29.11**) *For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.* But each Christian must begin his journey to Heaven, step by step. Being Born-again is just the beginning! So too, Israel had to take step by step across the Jordan River bed.

**(Joshua 3.16b-17)** *Then all the people crossed over near the town of Jericho. 17 Meanwhile, the priests who were carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed as the people passed by. They waited there until the whole nation of Israel had crossed the Jordan on dry ground.*

As I shared in a recent Message *You Have Never Traveled This Way Before* on March 16<sup>th</sup> - "Many Christian songs and hymns use the Jordan River as a symbol of Death. Thus "Crossing the Jordan" is sung as passing through death to go to Heaven. This is Biblically acceptable, but, I agree with C.H. Spurgeon who said: *"Death holds no terror for Christians. The painful trials we have before death are much greater than death will be."*

**Therefore, the Jordan Rivers before we face death need Jesus' power to lead us across.**

**All our Jordan Rivers that seem uncrossable have been mastered by our Champion, Jesus, on His Cross. We have no trial or hardship through life on Earth that is not under His power. Every temptation, especially to give up on our weary pilgrim walk to Glory, has been**

**weakened by the Blood of Jesus' Cross. Vain are the sharp swords of infernal malice from the Evil One. His arrows have been snapped as Jesus triumphed over him on the Cross. Death itself is just the last step to be with Jesus.**

**Jesus, our High Priest, stands in the middle of our Jordan Rivers as in (Joshua 3.16b-17)** *Then all the people crossed over near the town of Jericho. 17 Meanwhile, the priests who were carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed as the people passed by. Jesus does not lose one of His Sheep even as all the people crossed over {the dry Jordan River bed}. For the Bible says in (Hebrews 7.25): Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.*

**Memorials to the Jordan Crossing:** Now the Bible tells us what purpose God had for those twelve men in **(Joshua 3.12):** *Now choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. Reading (Joshua 4.1-3) 1 When all the people had crossed the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, 2 "Now choose twelve men, one from each tribe. 3 Tell them, 'Take twelve stones from the very place where the priests are standing in the middle of the Jordan. Carry them out and pile them up at the place where you will camp tonight.'"*

In our lives we often have this challenge, to go from one Victory to our next **Uncrossable River**. This makes it easy for us to forget to keep thanking God for the past Victories he gave. This needs one of the special types of prayer I already mentioned. "Thanksgiving prayer" (eucharista, Greek) looks back to previous answers to prayer in similar situations.

This type of prayer is seen as a memorial, like when the Lord gave Israel one stone for each Tribe as a memorial that He brought them safely across the *uncrossable Jordan River*. We need to train our minds to keep such memorials in our heads and hearts. To help to do this I instruct all new Christians to start a daily journal of their devotional times and Christian experiences of faith. These are often powerful for the next *Uncrossable River Challenge*.

**We easily think that the Heroes of the Faith in the Bible are superior to Christians today. This is a slight against the source of their heroics..the Lord Himself! I always say that "There are no great men of God, only men who have grasped more of how Great God is." Every Child of God has the same Holy Spirit who created faith and courage in these Heroes to overcome fear and defeat.**

## **A MIRACLE FOR NASA USA IN 1971**

Now I am repeating from my Message titled **Life Expands with Courage** on February 9<sup>th</sup>. This is my Comparison of Osaka International Church's apparent financial and church growth disaster with the NASA Apollo 13th spacecraft crisis and disaster:

In 1971 three American astronauts were about to die in a spacecraft that had been headed for a landing on the moon. A technical disaster had occurred. A routine stir of an oxygen tank ignited damaged wire insulation inside it, causing an explosion that vented the contents of both of the service module's oxygen tanks to space. This forced the crew into the smaller reentry module with smaller oxygen tanks. The astronauts' death seemed certain for not only insufficient air to breathe but also the loss of the air filtering system of the air. Gene Kranz, the Apollo 13 Mission Flight Director, was hearing many people predicting the failure of this mission, Apollo 13, and of NASA itself. He made this public statement. "I believe this will be our finest hour. We will prevail and these men will not die. NOT ON MY WATCH!"

Amazing ingenuity of the engineers on the ground invented an air cleaner - scrubber system from duct tape and various things in the spacecraft. This was God's mercy. For the whole world began to pray. The story unfolded on international television. God intervened and the *impossible became reality* as the three astronauts were home safely in six days.

**I agree with Gene Kranz's attitude in crisis and surrounding criticism predicting defeat. I believe this will be OIC's FINEST HOUR. I see God's love flowing down from Heaven upon us at OIC until it bursts out our doors to reach a dying city, Osaka."**

**As His power of love flows He will bring us across OIC's *uncrossable river*. Let us begin.....no. Continue in the Word and the Spirit...Like Gene Kranz, we Believers at OIC can pray earnestly that God cause our "mission" to not fail, but become *OIC's Finest Hour*. Every great move of God in Church History began with prayer. I will be calling us all to special prayer meetings for this including joining in on computers through GOOGLE Meet. This must happen before we implement human plans for programs. I agree that those programs are important..but only after as a church we cry out to God as Moses did as he faced the uncrossable Red Sea.**

**We all face challenges from time to time that feel like an *Uncrossable River*, like the Jordan River at flood stage. Joshua's God is also our God. He has power to cause the circumstances, both natural and spiritual, to dry up like the Jordan River so we can go**

**across...move forward with Jesus. So each of us has our own personal *uncrossable Jordan Rivers*. We must never forget the power of prayer. Don't look at your little faith, and human weakness; but at the Faithfulness of our Lord Jesus. As Jesus' half brother James showed the human weakness of God's prophet of power, *Elijah*, in (James 5.16-17/AMP) . *The heartfelt and persistent prayer of a righteous man (believer) can accomplish much [when put into action and made effective by God—it is dynamic and can have tremendous power]. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours [with the same physical, mental, and spiritual limitations and shortcomings], and he prayed intensely for it not to rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.***

**Let us pray with intensity and persistence, and belief in God's power.**

*Let us Pray,*

#### **REFERENCES**

AMP- Amplified Bible, Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, CA 90631.

NASB1995 - New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved.

NLT – *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.