



INTRO

Read Joshua 3 & 4

HOW WE EXPERIENCE GOD IN OUR CHALLENGES...

1. ...We Surrender Ourselves to God's Purposes

Stephen Furtick said, “Many Christians treat God like an Uber — they want Him to take them where they want to go, but they don’t want Him to talk to them on the way.” They use God for themselves & their own wishes, but never surrender to Him & His purposes

Read **Joshua 3:5**.

- What does it mean to “consecrate yourself”? How do you do this?
- Can you describe a time when you “consecrated yourself” to God & His purposes?
- How thoroughly have you set yourself apart *from self/sin to God*?

2. ...Focus Our Attention on God's Presence

Read **Joshua 3:2-4**. In order for Israel to “see the ark of the covenant being carried” and follow it, they had to be looking, seeking, keeping watch for it.

- What was so special about the ark of the covenant that it demanded such focus?
- How do you *seek* God’s presence to lead you?

Hebrews 12:1-2a NIV “...*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, fixing our eyes on Jesus...*” Gerry spoke the many things that distract our attention from God (the “everything that hinders” category, not necessarily “sin that entangles”).

- What hindrance do you need to throw off, that you might increase your attention to God’s presence? or, what distracts your attention from pursuing God’s presence?

3. ...Take the First Step, Trusting in God's Ability.

With increased water taken from Galilee for cities, canals hiving off for irrigation, etc., the Jordan River in Joshua’s day was more significant in its flow into the Dead Sea than it is today (only 2%, or 20-30 million metric tonnes, vs. 1.3 billion back then). This means that “flood stage” in our story was much more daunting to cross than today.

Read **Joshua 3:13,15**. If you were one of the priests carrying the ark, what might you think/feel walking towards that flooded river?

“Taking a step first” before there is a change in circumstances, is our responsibility in many arenas of Christian life and obedience.

- Describe a time when you took a step of faith in obedience to God, before any changes or confirmations occurred in a situation before you? how did you feel before you acted? what happened after you did so?

One of the most tangible applications of this principle is in giving generously to God

- Describe the process you went through to finally consecrate your finances to God and began to tithe, or began going beyond 10% into growing, joyful generosity?
- What have you experienced with God since that decision spiritually? financially?

4. ...Follow Thru, as We Experience God’s Faithfulness

Read **Joshua 4:10-11**. The priests stayed in the middle with the ark “until everything was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua” and “all the people passed over”.

- when have you been tempted to quit on God or on something He asked you to do?
- In the process of fulfilling a vision, when are people most susceptible to giving up — beginning, mid course or near the end? Why?
- Where was the ark while Israel crossed over? In light of the answer to the question above, why is its location significant? How might this encourage us at Summit?

5. ...We Remember by Memorializing God’s Activity

Read **Joshua 4:5-8a**.

Joshua was to build a memorial to recall God’s activity and recount the story for the next generation. Gerry showed us the stick memorializing his call into pastoral ministry (plus broken pottery, and some notes and dates written in his Bible where God spoke clearly).

- Do you have any “memorials” to God’s activity in your life that you can share?
- What stirs in you as you recall the circumstance, and as you share it with others?

What are the two most significant “memorials” that Jesus gave to His followers/Church?

- this Sunday, we will participate in one such memorial activity — communion. What does your participation in communion do within your mind and soul?
- The other “memorial” is your water baptism after trusting Jesus. What did your baptism experience do for your mind and soul? others’ baptisms?

CONCLUSION

Read **Joshua 4:23-24**. Joshua tells the people the intended results of re-telling of the story behind memorial. What are the two purposes he mentions in vs. 24?

- how do your “memorials” and experiences of God result in these two purposes?
- in what ways could you have them increase both your witness and your worship?