*Grace Group Guide*

*Joshua Week 5*

*Crossing the Jordan*

Years ago visitors at one of the national mints were told by a guide that if they first dipped their hands in water, a ladle of molten metal could be poured over their outstretched palms without burning them. A husband and wife were part of this group. "Perhaps you would like to try it," the guide said to the husband. The husband drew back sharply, "No thanks," he said. "I'll take your word for it."

The mint employee turned to the wife. "Would you like to try it?" She replied, "Certainly." She pulled up the sleeve of her blouse and thrust her hand into a bucket of water. Calmly she held her hand out while the metal was poured over it. It's obvious that the husband believed at one level, but he wasn't willing to put his belief to the test. The wife believed on a completely different level. She was willing to take a risk.

**What was the biggest difference from the Israelite’s 40 years previous and the group that stood at the flooded Jordan in Joshua 3?**

*“It is a never-to-be-forgotten experience when we hear a promise of God and step out on it in faith and then see God doing things on our behalf. The priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant into the Jordan River saw God work.*

*It would not have been enough for them to have stood close to the edge of the water and to have believed in the great ability of God to stop the flow several miles upstream and pile up the waters as though there was a great dam there.*

*If we were asked, "Is God able to do such a thing?" we undoubtedly would answer yes. But if each of us had to answer the question "Will God do this for me?" what would our answer be?*

*Every Christian is as precious in God's sight as the people of Israel were precious in His sight. What He promised them He did for them, and what He has promised you and me He will do for us. If we step out in faith, God will work on our behalf.*

*The Israelites did not make the mistake at the edge of Jordan of merely reckoning on God's ability to do what He promised. They did not stand to see what God would do.*

*When they received their marching orders to go into the river and the priests led with the Ark, then the waters parted. Those priests got their feet wet. That is the only way faith operates.*

*"Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (*[*1 Cor. 2:5*](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor.%202.5)*).”* – Theodore Epp

When I compare the differences of the two groups I think this verse from 1 Cor. 2:5 sums it up pretty well. The first group put their trust in 10 spies who lacked faith that the God who delivered them from Egypt would deliver them into the Promised Land. The second group, 40 years later, had been prepared and well-equipped to trust God for their every need. It made their conquest into the land much smoother.

At the same time I have to wonder how many of us identify much more with the generation of Israelites who didn’t make it in because of their faith in men. We refer to their issue (as was the case with the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh) as having lived by sight rather than by faith. They saw fortified cities, they saw giants, they saw obstacles and they simple couldn’t reason that they would be able to overcome them. And in a sense, they were correct in their thinking. *They* couldn’t get through them or over them, but *God* could and *had already prepared the way*.

Review Joshua 2- **What verses are evidence of how God had prepared the way before the Israelites**

**after they came out of Egypt? How long had the people of Jericho been “melting in fear” of God’s**

**people?**

You heard mentioned on Sunday morning that the river rushed right up until the point that the soles of the priests were dipped into the water**. How many of us have been in a position where we faced impossibility and right up to the point of being inches away from disaster, we turn away because it doesn’t look like God has done anything yet?** It’s a difficult position; but it’s the difference between being saved from and being saved unto.

I’ve said it before but as much as we don’t like to admit it, we really do thrive with rules and structure. So many people desire the Christian life to be that way. They want to know what is expected of them, what they can do, what they can’t do and what will they get out of it. We like that because we have a means of grading ourselves. We can step back and see how we stack up. I hope you saw Sunday morning that is NOT the means for living the Christian life and it is certainly not the pathway to the victorious Christian life.

You cross Jordan practically, when you start believing you’ve already crossed Jordan potentially. That might sound backwards, but it’s true. The land of Canaan represents the resurrection life; the life we live in Christ Jesus. What does anyone have to do to live on the resurrection side? In this connection, the Jordan river is a picture of death. Death to self. I think we have a great summation of this idea in Galatians 2:20 – **“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”**

Folks, we can live by faith because we are living in Christ Jesus and He is the one who has gone before us and made a way for us to move from death to life. As we saw in Deuteronomy 6:23 on Sunday, He didn’t bring us out so that we could wander around this life like a bunch of lost sheep. He brought us out, so that He could bring us in. In to life. In to victory.

**Where are you living? What rivers or giants or walls are keeping you from entering in to victory? How can your group pray for you that you might be encouraged to enter in?**