

THERE'S A RIVER BLOCKING THE WAY

Joshua 3:1-17

Introduction: Remember how the hymn "On Jordan's Stormy Banks" starts with "On Jordan's stormy banks I stand and cast a wishful eye....." It is describing someone separated from something greatly desired which all of us can identify with for all of us have at one time or other wanted something very much but something stood in the way preventing us from having at that moment what we wanted. Our text reminds us of the time Israel was ready to enter the promised land but the Jordan river was at flood stage and they couldn't cross over until God stepped in and stopped the river so they could cross over to that long awaited for land. There is a "River Jordan" in all of our lives.

I. THE RIVER JORDAN IN PEOPLE'S LIVES IS OFTEN THE RIVER OF IMPOSSIBILITY

1. There are Christians who are dissatisfied with the quality of Christian they are living.
 - They have thought about living a better life.
 - They have tried many times to live that better life.
 - They have tried and tried but found it just impossible.
 - The Lord has something to say which can bring an end to defeat, the end of impossibility, that can mark the beginning of a new, successful Christian life.

2. There are those who are not Christians but have thought about it seriously.
 - Are you one of those who have wondered about the Christian life?
 - Have you tried in your own way to become a Christian?
 - Perhaps you are afraid to really commit your total self to Jesus.
 - If this is YOU, then the Lord has something to say to you that can bring you into God's Kingdom as one of His Children, a Christian.

3. God had been with Israel all through the wilderness and He was there with them at the river.
 - They could not cross the Jordan river on their own as it was swollen by rains and raging.

4. We, too, have something that blocks our way and on our own we cannot cross over
 - Our difficulties lie not in armies, pestilence, plagues, floods of water.
 - Our difficulty is with Satan on one hand and God on the other with both wanting to possess our lives.
 - One seeks to destroy us, even our souls and the other seeks to cleanse us and save our souls.

II. GOD HAD A PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL

1. From God's covenant with Abraham to the time of Joshua and the flooded Jordan River, God had a purpose in mind.
 - His purpose was the Babe in Bethlehem.
 - His purpose was Jesus Christ, God's own Son to die on the Cross.
 - His purpose was the Day of Pentecost when He sent His Holy Spirit.
 - His purpose was the judgment of all the sin of mankind.

- It was God's plan of Salvation for fallen mankind.
 - Nothing whatsoever was going to stand in the way of the plan of God.
2. God also has a plan and purpose for YOUR life.
 - It is Bethlehem. It is Judgment of your sins.
 - It is the Cross. It is your Salvation.
 - It is Pentecost It is bringing YOU into His Family as a Christian
 - Nothing is going to stand between YOU and God's offer of Salvation.

III. BETWEEN GOD'S PLAN AND VICTORY FOR MANKIND FLOWS A RIVER

1. Between Israel and their promised land stood the raging Jordan River.
2. What stands between YOU and God's plan for you?
 - Is it some habit?
 - Have you never been saved?
 - Have you never had God's peace in your heart?
 - Is there some secret which only you and God know about, yet it is large enough to keep you from enjoying all God has for you?
 - Is it because you want to live by your rules and not God's?
 - Perhaps you judge others too often or too harshly.
 - Can it be you have an unloving spirit?
 - Maybe it is jealousy.
3. There are countless things which become impassable rivers that prevent people from being and doing what God has planned for them to be and do.

IV. THE ARK OF THE COVENANT WAS THE CENTER OF THE CAMP

1. The Ark of the Covenant always led the way for Israel.
 - Every person, had to have a clear, personal view of the Ark.
 - 12 Priests carried the Ark toward the overflowing river.
 - Many wanted to wait till the river went back down.
 - Some wanted to look for a better place to cross.
 - The Priests carried the Ark to the very edge of the raging river.
 - They waded in and as they did the water rolled back as if a great hand pushed it back.
 - Everyone crossed the once raging river on dry land.
2. There is an Ark today and it is Jesus Christ.
 - We cannot get to the other side until we have a clear, personal view of Jesus Christ.
 - The Ark was carried into the river FIRST for there was no other way to cross.
 - Everyone was to focus upon the Ark of the Covenant (presence of God) and as the Ark went before them, the waters rolled back. The impossible became possible.
3. Our Ark today is Jesus Christ. We are to do to/with Him as Israel did with/to the Ark.

V. WE MUST GET A CLEAR, PERSONAL VIEW OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Ours is not a physical river as Israel had, but ours is a river of principalities and powers.
2. Jesus said, "*..I will be with thee, and the river shall not overflow thee...*"
3. Our "river" stops us in our lifetime as the floods of principalities and powers make our crossing impossible, however Jesus Christ can stop all our floods, no matter what they are.
4. If we are to cross the "rivers" in our lives, we must keep a clear view of Jesus Christ.
 - When we come to a river, we must turn out eyes upon Jesus Christ.
 - We must keep our eyes on Jesus and step into that river trusting Jesus to clear the way.

VI. HOW DO WE GET JESUS TO HELP US CROSS THE RIVERS IN OUR LIVES?

1. How do we get the power to take that first step into that raging river?
 - Jesus Christ is the only power that will work.
 - Jesus can and will hold back all that is blocking our way to Him and His ways for us.
 - Jesus makes the impossible - possible.
2. Israel saw the other side and they wanted to go to the other side, it was God's plan that they be on the other side but the raging Jordan River made it impossible.
3. Do you have a similar situation in your life?
 - Do you see something God wants of you?
 - Do you want to do what God wants but you can't?
 - Between you and what God wants of you is a "river" of impossibility.
4. You must step up to that "river" of impossibility and look at Jesus and step into it with Faith.
 - Only when the feet of the Priests stepped into the raging river did God do anything.
 - Israel kept their eyes on the Ark and followed it.

CONCLUSION:

1. God has a plan for your life but there is a raging "river" between you and God's plan.
2. If you want to follow God's plan for you life, then you are going to have to look at Jesus and take that step into whatever it is that is your river of impossibility.
3. Stand up, Look up, Step out in faith.