

Crossing the Jordan

September 25-October 1, 2011

PRAYER: Begin with a few moments of sharing thanks and praises in prayer.

Leaders, it's your call; you may choose to incorporate more information/scriptures as time allows for your small group lesson. Reflecting: Joshua was an early riser (v. 1; 6:12; 7:16; 8:10). He probably devoted that quiet time to praying and meditating on God's Word (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 63:1). This is a good example for us to follow today. We face an unknown future (v. 4) and need the Lord's presence as we step out each day. God goes before us and we must follow as He directs. God knows the way, leads the way and opens the way. He is "Lord of all the earth" (v. 11) and there is nothing for us to fear. The priests had to get their feet wet before the nation could cross over, and that took faith. Your faith can encourage others in their walk with God. It takes great faith to walk through the water, but it takes even greater faith to walk on the water (Matt. 14:23-33). Are you still lingering on the banks or in the boat? The future is your friend when you follow the Lord and trust His promises!

OPENER: When canoeing, camping or fishing, what's your most memorable mishap? What is your most treasured souvenir from a trip you have taken?

Over forty years after the Israelites had left Egypt the day to enter the Promised Land finally came. There was only one problem: they had to cross the Jordan River – during flood season no less. The Lord provides a miracle for His people and teaches them the importance of remembering all He has done for them.

Read: Joshua 3:1-17

DISCUSS:

While waiting to cross the Jordan, what do you suppose the people were doing? Feeling? Praying? Anticipating?

What does the ark signify (vv. 3-5, 11; see Exodus 25:12-22; Numbers 4:5; 10:35-36)

Why must they wait to see the Ark and then keep their distance from it? (To keep separate from a holy God? To better see how wonderfully God will lead them? To receive guidance on the way to go? All of the above? Why do you think so?)

What does Joshua's call to "consecrate yourselves" imply: Prayers? Cleansing? Give the victory to God, not man? Or what?

Why did God inaugurate Joshua's career with a miracle similar to the one that he gave Moses (vv7-8)?

In verses 9-13, what is the relation between word and miracle?

Why did God have the people cross the Jordan at the flood stage? (vv. 14-17)?

PLAN for ACTION:

Perhaps the most striking lesson to come out of this Old Testament story is the way in which Joshua gave glory to God. It would have been so easy for him to honor himself when God told Joshua directly that He was going to honor him that day. This was one of Joshua's secrets to success as an Old Testament believer. And it is one of the secrets to successful Christian living. We must develop a proper balance and perspective on God's sovereign use of human beings. God does use our talents and our abilities. He actually wants us to have confidence in ourselves. He wants us to honor one another. But above all this, He wants the glory. He alone is God! He has made us. Without Him we can do nothing! Our very life and breath are in His hands.

In applying this lesson to your life personally, decide today what you can do to be more effective as a Christian in that area of your life:

- To what extent do I trust God based on a thorough knowledge of His Word and how it applies to me today? (Never? A little? Some? Much?)
- To what extent am I giving glory and honor to God for what He has given me? (Never? A little? Some? Much?)
- To what extent am I contributing to the effectiveness of Christ's body, the church, in order to provide a corporate image of love, unity and righteousness to the unsaved world? (Never? A little? Some? Much?)

How can this group pray for you this week?