F.H. – 4/14/02 BLESSINGS SAM

Topical – Blessings

**“GOING PLACES WITH GOD WHERE YOU’VE NEVER BEEN” or**

***“STEP INTO THE WATER!”***

**TEXT: Joshua 3:1-17**

**THESIS:** To show the boldness needed by God’s people in trusting the Lord for great miracles.

**INTRO.:** A. For 40 years Israel had followed Moses the man of God. They had seen an entire generation of unbelievers pass away in the wilderness in what had become the “longest funeral procession in history.” But Moses is dead and God had buried him.

Now the Lord would have to establish Joshua as the new leader of His people.

 B. Moses’ reputation was firmly established at the parting of the Red Sea. Now God was going to do something great for Joshua to establish his reputation and his leadership position. Joshua would take them places with God where they had never been with Moses, starting with crossing the Jordan River.

**ILLUS.:** The Christian life should be exciting. It should be an adventure. We should always be looking to be **“GOING PLACES WITH GOD WHERE WE HAVE NEVER BEEN!”** In order to experience this there are certain prerequisites…

**I. …SET YOUR SIGHTS ON THE POWER OF GOD: V.3, 4**

**NOTE:** With Moses it was the Rod of God and the Pillar of Fire that were the visible evidences of His power. With Joshua it would be the Ark of God uncovered. Perhaps the people had never before seen the Ark uncovered. What a glorious sight it must have been with the solid gold cover (the Mercy Seat) & the two cherubim on top, glistening in the sunlight and the glory of God hovering over it, brighter than the sun!

 A. Follow God: “…and go after it” v.3b

 1. They were to know that the power wasn’t in Joshua, but in Joshua’s God.

 2. They were to know that as God was with Moses, He would be w/Joshua.

 v.7 (the man of God is not God, but is the man God uses)

 B. Don’t Crowd God: “…2000 cubits” v.4

**ILLUS.:** God wanted all Israel to be able to see the great miracle He was about to perform. If they crowded in on the Ark, they would have been too close to see the magnitude of what He was doing. When God is moving, we need to get out of His way. We need to have His perspective on His power. We often see only the little picture, when He wants us to see the big picture.

1. Don’t get in the Lord’s way when He wants to lead you in a new experience. “…for ye have not passed this way heretofore”

2. Yesterdays experience is gone, He wants to take you somewhere new today; be ready.

**II. …SANCTIFY YOURSELF: v.5**

A. Clean Up! V.5a

**ILLUS.:** Every time God is about to do something special for His people or take them where they have never been, He commands them to “sanctify (clean) themselves!” Literally this meant for them to wash their bodies, put on clean garments, etc. It was a symbolic act of inward cleansing. Before God manifests Himself to His people, He wants them clean. Before He will do great miracles for them, He wants them clean. Before He would provide for them, He wants them clean. Before He would give them victory, He wants them clean.

Before he would send revival, He wants them clean. The command is always “sanctify yourselves!”

**Exodus 19:10-11 (Reveal Himself)**

**And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.**

**Numbers 11:18 (Provide)**

**And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.**

**Joshua 3:5 (Do wonders)**

**And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.**

**Joshua 7:13 (Give victory)**

**Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.**

**2 Chronicles 29:5 (Send revival under Hezekiah)**

**5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.**

 1. Not because the preacher says so or because others do it, but because we

 serve a holy God!

 2. If you want to go places with God where you have never been, you must first

 sanctify yourselves!

 B. Wake Up! V.5b

 1. Don’t miss out on some new experience with God because you are not alert

 to the opportunity or to what He is doing in your life.

 2. Suppose someone in the camp didn’t “get the word” or didn’t obey the

 command to clean up, or slept through the order to line up….?

**ILLUS.:** Suppose the Lord has something special for you in the evening service and you don’t show up?!

Suppose the Lord wants to lead you someplace where you have never been, but you are unprepared…with unconfessed sin in your life…?! Suppose you are where you shouldn’t be and God can’t speak to you…?! V.9-11

**III. …BE WILLING TO GET YOUR FEET WET: V.12-17**

**ILLUS.:** God is doing something different this day. The Levites are not going to carry the Ark, the priests would do that. They had to be willing to trust the Lord and actually step into the waters with the Ark before the miracle would happen. They didn’t have an Ark at the Red Sea when Moses was their leader. There they simply stood back & watched the water roll back before they went down into the water. Now the priests and a representative from each tribe must actually step into the waters before God would move them out of the way! ***They had to go where they had never been before… v.12***

 A. The “Preachers” Had To Go First:

 1. God sends His priests into the waters before the people cross over.

 2. They must demonstrate their trust in the Lord first. “Where there is no vision

 the people perish…”

 B. The People Must Follow:

 1. If they were to go places with God they had never been, they too had to

 exercise faith.

**ILLUS.:** Imagine this conversation: “Look, it’s one thing for the preachers to trust God that the waters will roll away, but what about us?!” Or “Unless I see the waters roll back, I am standing on dry ground.” Or

“If those ‘religious fanatics’ want to step into that river bed, they can do it without me!” None of those people will ever go places with God they had never been to – neither will you if you have their attitude. Faith in God’s power & in God’s promises are always prerequisites to going to new places with God.

 2. Not only had none of these people (except Joshua & Caleb) ever saw God do

 anything this spectacular (the Red Sea generation had died out), but they

 had no idea that God was with this new leader, Joshua!

**IV. …MOVE BY FAITH INTO THE DEEP PLACE: V.17**

A. Trust The Lord For The Impossible:

 1. If you are ever to go places with God where you have never been, you are

 going to have to trust Him to do what you cannot do.

 2. If you can do it, it is not supernatural.

 3. If you can’t do it, you will have to trust Him to take you there.

B. Go With God To A New Place:

**ILLUS.:** Just imagine how awesome it was to go down into the river bed that had moments before been at flood stage. (v.15b) How exciting it must have been to be among those who actually went to this new and miraculous place. What stories they would have for their children. Similar to those they had only heard from their parents about the Red Sea.

 Never be content to just hear about what miracles others have experienced. Have some fresh stories of your own so you can testify of what God had done and where He has taken you.

**CONCL.:** Do you want to **“GO PLACES WITH GOD WHERE YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN?”** Then you must be willing to ***set your sights on God’s power – sanctify yourself - be willing to get your feet wet - and move by faith into the deep place!*** Are YOU willing?!

 Are you tired of the same ole – same ole?! The hum-drum, mediocre Christian life? The life that is no different from the unsaved, the cultist, the catholic, the charismatic?! **“STEP INTO THE WATER!”**