

LESSON 5

PREPARING FOR VICTORY

Central Truth: Spiritual victories come by faith in God and obedience to His word.

Memory Verse: It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans - **Psalm 118:8**

LESSON TEXT

Joshua 3:1 – 6; 4:22 – 24; 5: 10 – 15

Joshua 3:

1. Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over.
2. After three days the officers went throughout the camp,
3. giving orders to the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it.
4. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits^[a] between you and the ark; do not go near it.”
5. Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.”
6. Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the Ark of the Covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So they took it up and went ahead of them.

Joshua 4:

22. Tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’
23. For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea^[a] when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over.
24. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.”

Joshua 5:

10. On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover.
11. The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain.
12. The manna stopped the day after^[a] they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.
13. Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?”

14. “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord^[G] have for his servant?”

15. The commander of the LORD’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

INTRODUCTION

God commanded the Israelites to cross the Jordan River after the two spies who Joshua sent to scout had returned. They brought a report that all their enemies were afraid of Israel and this no doubt inspired the children of God to have faith in God. It was now time to fully obey God’s word to give them the victory.

LESSON

After the spies had returned from scouting Jericho the Israelites moved to the banks of the Jordan River. After the end of the third day at the bank of the river, God gave instructions through the leaders to the Israelites regarding how to move. The ark of God was to lead by a distance of about 1000 yards (915 meters).

The ark was a symbol of God’s presence. Joshua reminded the Israelites that they needed divine guidance and as they followed the ark they were acknowledging God’s leadership. As children of God, for victory to come our way, we need to put our trust in God. He knows the future and the direction we should take. He knows what is best for us. We must follow His leadership.

Again, God required the Israelites to sanctify themselves in preparation for crossing the Jordan. God is holy and commands his people to be holy. God expects each believer to be separate from evil and dedicated to righteousness. For believers to be vessels of honour for God, they must separate themselves from all that is sinful and desire to serve Him wholeheartedly.

Whilst crossing the river God instructed the river God instructed that a member each of the 12 tribes of Israel should pick u a large stone and carry it to the Promised Land as a memorial to the mighty power of God. When we look back to past spiritual victories they can acts as encouragement in a present difficult situation. Just as the stones were to keep the reality of God’s great power fresh in the minds of the Israelites and their generations, so our faith is strengthened when we remember how God helped us in the past. This will also help us to realize that God will be faithful again in our time of need.

Finally, after crossing the Jordan and setting up the memorial, an angelic messenger appeared to Joshua and introduced himself as “commander of the army of the Lord”. This made Joshua realize that God was ready to lead in the battles ahead and this gave him the confidence that God was in control.

This visitation from God motivated and equipped Joshua to trust God who brought victory to the Israelites. Although we may not have a heavenly visitor like in the case of Joshua, we still have the promise of God’s presence and help in our difficult times. This assurance as recorded in Hebrew 4:14-16 can give us strength in the midst of challenges.

LIFE APPLICATION

In life sometimes we have victories and at other times defeats. Although God had promised the land to the Israelites, victory was assured only as they followed God's plan completely.

Similarly, victory and success in life will come only as we follow God's word diligently. This does not mean that we will never face challenges. But rather if we trust God instead of our self – will, God will work in our lives the way He wants and total victory will be ours.

DAILY BIBLE READING

- Monday – Divine Purposes (Exodus 19:3-6)
- Tuesday – Blessing of Obedience (Deut. 30:15-20).
- Wednesday – Guidance through the word (Psalm 119:105-112)
- Thursday – Following the Lord (Acts 13: 1-4)
- Friday – Mighty Power (Romans 11:33-36)
- Saturday – Holy Living (1 Peter 1:13-17).