



# HOW TO ARRIVE AT OUR DESTINATION WITHOUT A MAP

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# How to Arrive at Our Destination Without a Map

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Joshua 3:3-4

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2329

In Joshua 3, the children of Israel were approaching the Promised Land of opportunity and mystery. To get there, they faced a raging river of difficulty. However, they had with them the Ark of the Covenant, a reminder of God's presence with His people.

"And Joshua said to the people, 'Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you'" (Joshua 3:5).

Joshua instructed his people to keep their eyes on the ark, to move only when it moves, to follow its lead. This instruction reveals lessons about how to arrive at our destination without a map.

## **When we keep our eyes on Jesus, He will guide us with His presence.**

We don't have to know the future to walk victoriously, so long as God's presence leads us. We must be sure not to run out in front of God's plans; timing is more important than time. We don't have to know when, where, or why; when the ark moves, we move.

## **Second, as we keep our eyes on Jesus, He will gladden us with His promises.**

Jesus is our Ark of the Covenant; He is proof that God keeps His promises to us. Those promises are good for all saints, all seasons, and all situations. His Word is settled in Heaven, unfading, even today.

## **Finally, when He guides us, Jesus will also guard us with His power.**

The children of Israel passed through the Jordan River on dry ground because they were guarded by the God of power. If we believe in God's unfailing ability as the Israelites did, there's no telling what blessings we'll experience.

Adrian Rogers says, "If God commands you to cross Jordan, He will command Jordan to get out of the way."

The Israelites' crossing the Jordan River is a picture of the Gospel, in which Jesus went into the river of death and stopped it from flowing so that we may pass through.

As the Lord God, He is sovereign; as the living God, He is alive in us. And as liberating God, He is making a way for us to pass through into the Promised Land.

## **Life Application**

Are you facing a new season of life or uncharted territory? Don't get ahead of your Guide; follow God through the great unknown today.



# How to Arrive at Our Destination Without a Map

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Joshua 3:3-4

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The Lord Jesus may come at any moment.
- b) Today's message will give us from the Word of God a formula to reach our destination without a map.
- c) God was leading the children of Israel.
  - i) They had come out of the land of Egypt, and they were going into their Promised Land.
  - ii) Not only was their Promised Land a land of opportunity, but it was also a land of mystery.
    - (1) They had never been that way before.
    - (2) They were launching out into both opportunity and mystery.
- d) The Bible says, concerning those wilderness wanderings of God's ancient people, that all of these things happened to them for examples to us.
  - i) 1 Corinthians 10:11
  - ii) There are incredible lessons in these Old Testament stories.
  - iii) Israel was going into the great unknown.
  - iv) Between them and the Promised Land was a river of difficulty.
    - (1) We are going into a land of opportunity, we are going into a land of mystery, and there are rivers of difficulty.
- e) Joshua 3:3-4
  - i) 2000 cubits would be about half a mile.
  - ii) The key is found in verse four.
    - (1) It was all new.
      - (a) There was a brand-new day.
      - (b) There was a brand-new way.
      - (c) It was a land of mystery.
  - iii) They were to keep their eyes on the Ark and were not to move until the Ark moved.
    - (1) The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord was a piece of furniture that, later on, had a central place in the Holy of Holies in the temple.
      - (a) Inside it were the commandments of God, Aaron's rod that budded, and a little bit of manna.
      - (b) On top of it was a slab of solid gold.
      - (c) On each side was the figurine of a cherub with the wings spread out over a particular place called the mercy seat.
      - (d) The high priest would sprinkle blood upon the slab of gold to make atonement for the sins of the people.
      - (e) The Shekinah glory of God hovered there.
- f) The Ark of the Covenant, in the Old Testament, is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - i) It symbolizes:
    - (1) The life of God
    - (2) The holiness of God
    - (3) The righteousness of God



- (4) The presence of God
- (5) The atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ
- ii) It pictures Jesus; Jesus is the Ark of the Covenant.
- iii) The Ark is a prophecy, a type, and an illustration of Jesus in the Old Testament.
- g) Joshua 3:3-4
  - i) When the Ark moved, the children of Israel were to move.
  - ii) Up until this time, the Ark had been in the midst of the camp.
    - (1) When they moved, the Ark moved.
  - iii) Now, there was a new day, and the children of Israel were going into a new land.
    - (1) They were coming out of the wilderness.
    - (2) No longer was the Ark going to go with them; they were going to go with the Ark.
      - (a) Now the Ark was out in front.
        - (i) That was going to be the way of victory.
        - (ii) That was going to be the way they were going to be guided.
      - (3) When they were in the wilderness, they were not living in victory.
        - (a) The Ark was about to lead them into victory.
- h) Are you ready to come out of the wilderness and into your promised land?
- i) Are you ready to cross over a river of difficulty and into your promised land?
  - i) You are going to have to move with the Ark (Jesus).
- j) How do some Christians live in victory, and other Christians do not?
  - i) All Christians have the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - (1) If you don't have Jesus, then you are not a Christian.
  - ii) The Holy Spirit is in all Christians, but not all Christians are totally following the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - (1) They have Him in their midst, but He is not out in front leading.
  - iii) What makes the difference is when Jesus is Lord and leader, when He's out in front, and we follow Him.
    - (1) The difference is not in possession; it is in position.
      - (a) Are you following Him?
      - (b) Is Jesus leading you?
- k) God has a destination (an individual plan) for every person.
  - i) He makes no two snowflakes alike.
    - (1) He has a plan directly and distinctly for you.
- l) In today's message, we will look at three principles for arriving at our destination without a map.

## 2) LET JESUS GUIDE YOU WITH HIS PRESENCE

- a) Joshua 3:3-4
  - i) They had never been there.
  - ii) They were going into unexplored territory.
- b) God's will for us is not a roadmap but a relationship.
  - i) The important thing for us is not to know what the future holds but to keep our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - (1) When the Ark (Jesus) moves, go after it and let Him guide you with His presence.
- c) We don't have to know when.
  - i) Joshua 3:3



- (1) Don't move until the Ark moves.
- ii) With God, timing is far more important than time.
- iii) We can do the right thing in the wrong time.
  - (1) Acts 7:22-30
    - (a) Moses was to deliver the children of Israel, but he couldn't wait on God.
      - (i) He got ahead of time, tried to be a missionary, and ended up being a murderer.
        - 1. He killed an Egyptian.
      - (ii) He spent forty years in the desert going around in circles because he could not wait on God.
      - (iii) He moved before God moved.
    - (2) Genesis 15-16
      - (a) Abraham was promised a son, but he couldn't wait on God.
        - (i) He had sexual relations with his wife's maid, Hagar, and brought forth a son, Ishmael.
        - (ii) Today, the whole world is still in turmoil because Abraham could not wait on God.
          - 1. The sons of Ishmael and the sons of Isaac are at war today.
  - iv) Jesus was never in a hurry, and Jesus was never late.
    - (1) John 17:4
    - (2) A lot of people were impatient with Jesus.
      - (a) They wanted to know why He wasn't in a bigger rush.
        - (i) After all, He spent thirty years in a carpenter's shop.
      - (b) John 7:6
        - (i) He was waiting on God.
    - (3) When Lazarus was sick, Jesus waited until Lazarus was dead; then, He came and raised him.
      - (a) At first they were pouting; then they were praising.
        - (i) Bringing Lazarus back to life was greater than had Jesus come and touched him and healed him.
      - (b) John 11:1-45
- d) We don't have to know where.
  - i) Joshua 3:4
  - ii) We don't have to know what God has planned for us.
  - iii) The only thing we have to do is to keep our eyes on the Ark; the Lord Jesus.
  - iv) If God told us the future, then that would take the mystery and joy out of it.
    - (1) We could not be surprised by God's serendipities.
    - (2) It could also put a lot of dread into the future.
    - (3) Isn't God merciful that we don't know the future?
- e) We don't have to know why.
  - i) "Why?" is God's question.
    - (1) "How?" is our answer.
  - ii) We don't have to understand.
    - (1) Joshua 3:5
      - (a) A wonder is something we don't understand.
  - iii) We don't live by explanations; we live by promises.
    - (1) We couldn't understand if He told us why.
      - (a) Isaiah 55:8



- (2) If He did tell us, then we would try to tell Him a better way.
  - (a) We would try to bend God's will to fit our will.
- f) Manley Beasley: "Success is just finding out where God is moving and join Him."
  - i) Just get in on what God is doing; that is success.

### 3) LET JESUS GLADDEN YOU WITH HIS PROMISES

- a) Joshua 3:3
- b) A covenant is a sacred contract, a binding agreement, and an unfailing promise.
- c) God had made a covenant with His ancient people, and God has made a covenant with us.
- d) The promises of God:
  - i) They are for all saints.
    - (1) Joshua 3:7
      - (a) God had made some promises to Moses, but they were just as good for Joshua.
        - (i) The promise did not die with Moses.
    - (2) The promises in the Bible did not die with the Bible saints.
      - (a) We may think that these saints were different than us, but the Bible says that Elijah was a man of like passions as we are.
        - (i) James 5:17
    - (3) Some may underline a lot of passages in the Bible, but they don't put them into practice.
      - (a) They use them more as slogans than as promises.
  - ii) They are for all seasons.
    - (1) Joshua 3:7
    - (2) 2,000 years have not eroded the promises away.
  - iii) They are for all situations.
    - (1) Joshua 3:7
    - (2) Moses had failed, but Joshua did not have to fail.
    - (3) If there are others who do not believe the promises of God, then that is no reason that we should not.
- e) God has made a promise, a covenant, to us.
  - i) God has given us a new covenant in His blood.
  - ii) The book of Hebrews says that it is a better covenant.
    - (1) Hebrews 12:2
      - (a) Just as they were looking to the Ark, we are to be looking to the Lord Jesus Christ.
      - (b) Notice that this verse doesn't say looking "at" Jesus but looking "unto" Jesus.
        - (i) When the Bible says "looking unto Jesus," it doesn't mean looking "at" Jesus.
          - 1. It means depending upon the Lord Jesus Christ.
          - 2. It is a word that means to look away from everything else, or turning away from one thing to look at another.
            - a. This is the way we are to live with our covenant-keeping God.
- f) The devil will try to keep us from looking to the promises of God.
  - i) Some look at Satan.
    - (1) They are trying to find a demon under every bush, and they are all terrified.
    - (2) Satan will come to either terrify or entice.
    - (3) Don't get devil-conscious; be Jesus-conscious.
  - ii) Some look at circumstances.



- (1) When we look at circumstances, we are going to go down.
- (2) Matthew 14:25-31
  - (a) Simon Peter got out of a boat to walk on water, and he was doing fine as long as he was looking at Jesus.
  - (b) When he looked at the mountainous waves, he took his eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - (i) He put his eyes on circumstances, and he began to sink.
- iii) Some look at other saints.
  - (1) The best of people will disappoint you.
  - (2) Psalm 118:8
    - (a) Don't put your confidence in any man.
  - (3) 1 Corinthians 11:1
    - (a) Paul wasn't saying, "Follow me;" he said, "As I follow Christ, you follow Christ."
      - (i) We are to follow the Lord Jesus.
    - (4) Don't look at other people.
  - iv) Some look at their look.
    - (1) The devil will try to tell us that our faith is weak.
    - (2) We are not to put faith in faith; we are to put faith in Jesus.
- g) Hebrews 13:5
- h) Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.
  - i) Hebrews 12:2

#### 4) LET JESUS GUARD YOU WITH HIS POWER

- a) Joshua 3:7-11
  - i) The Jordan River separated the children of Israel from the land of promise.
- b) We don't obey the Lord sometimes because we don't trust.
  - i) We don't trust because we don't know how great our God is.
    - (1) Knowledge of God equals trust.
    - (2) Trust equals obedience.
    - (3) Obedience equals blessing.
- c) He is the Lord God.
  - i) Joshua 3:9
  - ii) Is He your Lord?
  - iii) If He commands us to cross Jordan, then it is His business to take Jordan out of the way.
    - (1) He is the one who created Jordan.
    - (2) He is the one who created us.
    - (3) Don't parade the commands of God past the judgment bar of your understanding as to whether or not it is possible.
      - (a) "With God all things are possible."
        - (i) Matthew 19:26
- d) He is the living God.
  - i) Joshua 3:10
  - ii) He is totally sufficient.
  - iii) He is not dead.
  - iv) He is not sick.
  - v) Every demand upon you is a demand upon the God who lives in you.
  - vi) God is alive and well, and living in you if you are saved.





- vii) There is enormous pressure from this world; but if you are saved, then you have the Lord Jesus on the inside.
  - (1) He is the living God, and He lives in us.
- e) He is the liberating God.
  - i) Joshua 3:11-13
    - (1) As soon as the feet of the priests touched the river Jordan, something happened.
      - (a) The waters began to back up all the way to the city of Adam.
      - (b) The waters didn't stop until the priests obeyed.
    - (2) The word "Jordan" means "descent."
      - (a) The word "dan" means "judgment."
        - (i) It is descent into judgment.
          - 1. The river Jordan is the river of death flowing down to the Dead Sea.
    - (3) The Ark of the Covenant came into the river of death and stopped.
      - (a) The waters stopped all the way back to Adam, and the children of Israel came through the waters.
      - (b) Jesus entered the chilly waters of the river of death and is our victory.
        - (i) He stopped death all the way back to Adam.
          - 1. In Adam, all die; but in Christ, all will be made alive.
            - a. 1 Corinthians 15:22

## 5) CONCLUSION

- a) Let the Lord Jesus Christ guide you with His presence, gladden you with His promises, and guard you with His power because He is a mighty God.
  - i) You don't have to know when.
  - ii) You don't have to know where.
  - iii) You don't have to know why, if you know Jesus.
- b) 2 Peter 3:9
- c) The Bible says that whosoever will may come.
  - i) Revelation 22:17
  - ii) There is no one so bad he can't be saved, and there is no one so good that he need not be saved.
- d) Romans 10:13
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Acts 16:31
  - iv) John 3:16



# How to Arrive at Our Destination Without a Map

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Joshua 3:3-4

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2329

Find in God's Word Joshua chapter 3. There's a story of an old boat that was in the sea, in a dark and stormy night. It's always a dark and stormy night with these stories. And, the boat was chugging along and the waves were very rough, and a passenger on board was somewhat worried, and he knew it was an old boat. And he went to the captain. He said, "Captain, are we safe?" The captain said, "Well, let's put it this way." Said, "This is a leaky, creaky old boat, and we're in very stormy weather, so we may sink." And he said, "I'll tell you something else. The boilers on this old boat are very weak and may explode at any moment," and so he said, "We may go down or we may go up, but at any rate, we're going on."

Now, what about this new year? Well, friend, we may go down. Some of us may die this coming year, is that not true? I mean, those of you who are very healthy, a sudden accident, we may go down. Or we may go up. Jesus may come in this coming year. We may go up. But whether we go down or whether we go up, friend, we're going on, aren't we? I mean, we're going on, and what I want to give to you this morning from the Word of God is a formula to reach your destination without a map. How to reach your destination without a map.

Now the story that we're going to study today comes from the Old Testament, and God is leading the children of Israel, they've come out of the land of Egypt, and they're going into their Promised Land. Now their Promised Land was a land of opportunity, but it was also a land of mystery. As we're going to see, Joshua says to them, "You've not come this way before. This is a brand new day, you've never been here before, you are launching out, both into opportunity and to mystery."

Well, you say, "What does that have to do with me?" Well the Bible says in First Corinthians 10 verse 11 concerning those wilderness wanderings of God's ancient people so long ago, "All of these things happened to them for examples to us." So we can take this Old Testament history and just shout our way all through it, because there are incredible lessons in these Old Testament stories.

Now Israel was going into the great unknown. Again, they were going into their Promised Land, a land of opportunity, but as we're going to see also, a land of mystery. And besides all of that, between them and that land there was a river of difficulty. Now, you're going into a land of opportunity, you are going into a land of mystery, and there are rivers of difficulty, you got all that? Now, let's see if we can learn some lessons as to how to arrive at our destination without a map.

Joshua 3, beginning in verse 3 through verse 4, "And they commanded the people saying, 'When you see,'" underscore this phrase now, "'the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God and the priests and the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it and there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure,'" and by the way, that'd be about a half a mile. "Come not near unto it," that is, to the ark, now watch this, here's the key, "That ye may know the way by which ye must go, for ye have not passed this way heretofore." That is, it's all new! There's a brand new day! There's a brand new way! And it's a land of mystery. Now keep your eye on the ark, and don't move till the ark moves.

Now, what is this ark? I said underscore that phrase, "The ark of the covenant of your Lord." It was a piece of furniture that later on had a central place in the Holy of Holies in the temple. The ark was just



about the size of a pulpit. It was about two feet high by two feet wide by about four feet long, a little piece of furniture. Inside were the commandments of God, Aaron's rod that budded, a little bit of manna. On top was a slab of solid gold. On one side was the figurine of an angel, a cherub. On the other side of this was the figurine of a cherub with the wings spread out over a particular place. And that was called the mercy seat. And the high priest would come and sprinkle blood upon that slab of gold to make atonement for the sins of the people. And the Shekinah glory of God just hovered right there.

Now what is that all about? What does that speak to Adrian about, what does that tell you? Well, that ark in the Old Testament was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. It symbolized the life of God, the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, the presence of God, the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of that pictures Jesus, Jesus is the ark of the covenant, understand that? If you don't understand that, you'll miss it all. That is a picture, a prophecy, a type, an illustration of Jesus in the Old Testament.

Now, keep all of that in mind and we're going to talk to you about how to arrive at your destination without a map. Now, this is going to be a new day, but there's something that has changed, and what has changed? Go back to Joshua 3 verses 3 and 4, "And they commanded the people saying, 'When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God and the priests and the Levites bearing it, then you shall remove from your place and go after it.'" That is, when the ark moves, you move. "And there shall be space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go, for ye have not passed this way before."

Now what's all of this about? Well, what had changed was this: up until this time, the ark had been in the midst, it had been in the camp, and when they moved, the ark moved. But now here's a new day, they're going into a new land; they're coming out of the wilderness. No longer is the ark going to go with them, they're going to go with the ark. There's a difference. Now the ark is out in front. He says, "Take the ark from your midst. Put it out here in the front. Keep your eye on it and don't move until it moves." That's going to be the way of victory. That's going to be the way you're going to be guided.

Now, when they were in the wilderness they were not living in victory, but as we're going to see, the ark is about to lead them into victory. Are you ready to come out of the wilderness and into your promised land? Are you ready to cross over a river of difficulty into your promised land? Well, you're going to have to move with the ark.

What is the difference in some Christians? How do some Christians live in victory and other Christians not? Do you think that God plays favorites? Do you think God says, "Eenie, meenie, miney, mo, I'm going to give you victory and none for you?" No. What is the difference? I'll tell you the difference. All Christians have the Lord Jesus Christ. If you don't have Jesus, you're not a Christian. The Holy Spirit is in all of us, but not all Christians are totally following the Lord Jesus Christ. They have Him in the midst, but He's not out in front leading. When Jesus is Lord and leader, when He's out in front and you follow Him, that is what makes the difference. The difference, friend, is not in possession, it is in position.

Now, you have the Lord. The question is, are you following Him? Is He leading you? Is He out front of you? Is He guiding you into this land of opportunity, this land of mystery, through rivers of difficulty, the Jordan that separates the wilderness from the promised land.

Now, I'm just setting the stage. I want to give you three things to do. Now folks, if you want to arrive at the destination God has for you, and believe me, He has one for you, for every mother's child of you, God has a plan for as many people as there are, individual plans. He makes no two snowflakes alike; He has a plan directly, distinctly for you.



Now with all of this in mind, the ark representing the Lord Jesus Christ, a treasure chest of blessing, and God saying, “Set it out there in the midst, and when it moves, move with it.” May I give you three principles? Say “yes.” Yes, okay, thank you. Here’s three things that you can do to arrive at your destination without a map.

Number one, **let Jesus guide you with His presence.** Now notice what He says in Joshua 3 verses 3 and 4, “And they commanded the people saying, ‘When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God and the priests and the Levites bearing it,’ that is, they carried it on their shoulders, “then ye shall remove from your place and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Come not near unto it that ye may know the way by which ye must go, for ye have not passed this way heretofore.” What an adventure, what an adventure! They’d never been there, there’s a promised land, they’ve not seen it and He says, “You are going into unexplored territory.” Now, why don’t you need a map? Well, God’s will for you is not a roadmap, but a relationship. The important thing for you is not to know what the future holds; the important thing for you is to keep your eye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

One Christmas we got our family together to go look at the Christmas lights and a good neighbor across the street and I, we were talking about Christmas decorations. Their house was so beautifully decorated, and they were telling us about a particular house and he said, “Now you need to go here,” and he begins to explain it to me. And it got kind of convoluted. He said, “Wait a minute, Pastor, just let me get in my car and I’ll take you there.” I said, “Sounds like a good deal to me.” So he got in his car and took me there. Only thing I had to worry about, I didn’t have to worry about a street name, a direction, north, south, east, or west, the only thing concerning me was his tail lights, just his tail lights. Oh, when he moved, I moved, and he said, “Just keep your eye on me,” and he took me right to where I needed to go. Now this is what he’s talking about right now. When the ark moves, you go after it, let Him guide you with His presence.

Now let me say three things about that. Number one, **you don’t have to know when.** Listen, he says, “When the ark moves, then go after it.” Joshua 3 verse 3, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God and the priests and the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it.” In plain English, don’t move till the ark moves. With God, timing is far more important than time.

Have you ever gotten impatient with the Lord, wondering why God doesn’t move sooner? You know you can do the right thing in the wrong time? Read Act 7 verses 22 through 30, Moses was to deliver the children of Israel, and he couldn’t wait on God, and he got out there ahead of time, tried to be a missionary, ended up being a murderer, he killed an Egyptian, spent forty years on the back side of the desert, going around in circles, because he could not wait on God. He moved before God moved.

Abraham, the same thing. In Genesis chapters 15 and 16, Abraham was promised a son. Moses was promised he was going to deliver the children of Israel, couldn’t wait on God. Abraham, promised a son, couldn’t wait on God, so he had sexual relations with his wife’s maid, Hagar, and brought forth a son Ishmael. And today the whole world is still in turmoil because Abraham could not wait on God, and the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Isaac are at war today, and Abraham just thought he would hurry God up a little bit, made a mess out of it.

Let me tell you about Jesus. Jesus was never in a hurry and Jesus was never late, and in John 17 verse 4, at the end of His ministry, He said, “I’ve finished the work Thou gavest Me to do.” Now, a lot of people I’m sure were impatient with Jesus; they wanted to know, “Jesus, why aren’t you in a bigger rush than you’re in?” I mean, after all, Jesus spent thirty years in a carpenter’s shop. “Hey, if you’re the Messiah, why are you



wasting thirty years?" You know what He said? They didn't ask Him that direct question, but it's implied. He said in John 17:6, "My hour is not yet come. My hour is not yet come." He's waiting on God.

John chapter 11, when Lazarus was in the tomb, Mary and Martha said, "Jesus, come, help Lazarus is sick." Before he was in the tomb, "Lazarus is sick." Jesus just delayed and waited until Lazarus was dead, and then He came and raised him. At first they were pouting, secondly they were praising, because bringing Lazarus back to life was greater than had Jesus come and touched him and healed him.

What I'm trying to say is, listen to me, folks, let the Lord Jesus guide you with His presence. You don't have to know when. Number two, **you don't have to know where**. He says, look in Joshua 3 verse 4, "For you've not passed this way heretofore." Friend, you don't have to know what God has planned for you this coming year. You don't have to know where you're going to end up. The only thing you have to do is to keep your eyes on the ark. As a matter of fact, I'm so glad God doesn't tell me the future. That would take the mystery out of it, it would take the romance out of it, it would take the mystique out of it, it would take the joy out of it, I would live every day dreading, waiting for it to come. Isn't God merciful that we don't know the future?

You see, look, we don't have to know when. Just when the ark moves, you move. We don't have to know where. "You've not come this way before." "Just keep your eye on Me because you've never been this way before." And **you don't have to know why**. You don't have to know why. "Why" is God's question; "how" is your answer. You don't have to understand. Listen, the Bible says in Joshua 3 verse 5, "Tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." What is a wonder? Wonder is something you don't understand. You see, we don't live by explanations, we live by promises.

Have you ever wanted God to explain things to you? Have you ever argued with God, said, "Lord, tell me why?" Well number one, you couldn't understand if He told you, because He said in Isaiah chapter 55 verse 8, "My ways are not your ways, My thoughts are not your thoughts." Number two, if He did tell you, you'd say, "Now Lord, here's a better way You could do that." You would try to explain it to God and try to bend God's will to fit your will. In my life, the only way I've known the plan of God is not to look into the future, but to look over my shoulder and just say, "Hitherto hath the Lord led me."

When I was a teen, God called me to preach. How did God call me to preach? Well, that's the last thing I thought I would ever do; be a preacher. I had no notion that God would want me to preach the Gospel, but when I got saved, I had a dear pastor who said God has a plan for everybody's life. I'll tell you, I wasn't the smartest thing that moved, but I did have enough sense to say this to the Lord, "Lord, whatever You want me to do, I want to do it. Whatever You want me to do, I want to do it." Somehow the germ got in my mind, my heart, that He might want me to preach, and then that conviction got stronger and stronger. And I was at Ridgecrest, North Carolina, our Baptist Assembly, a teen in high school, and a man preached about God's will for your life. And he said, "God's probably calling some of you to preach." I don't remember much about the sermon, but I do remember the invitation hymn, "Wherever He Leads, I'll Go, Wherever He Leads, I'll Go." And I said, "Lord, I know You want me to do this," and I stepped out, and I've never looked back on it, from that time as a high school boy. God wanted me to preach.

I had a girl that I wanted to marry. That girl was there at that retreat with me. She's my grade school sweetheart, and Joyce and I got married, and we didn't know, we had no idea about Bellevue Baptist Church or Memphis Tennessee or anything like that or Love Worth Finding, but we knew the Lord. And at our wedding, we knelt together and prayed and had a soloist to sing, "Oh, Jesus, we promise to serve Thee to the end. Be Thou forever near us, our Master and our Friend. We will not fear the battle if Thou art by our side, nor wander from the pathway, if Thou wilt be our guide."



And Joyce and I have seen God guide us. God brought us here to Bellevue Baptist Church. We were at Merritt Island, Florida, one of the greatest churches in America, a loving people, a dear fellowship. They loved us and we loved them. But the Ark of the Covenant just seemed to be moving over here, and Jesus pointed to Memphis, and we wanted to argue with the Lord, but we said, “Lord, whatever You want.” But when we left Merritt Island there on the coast of Florida, we drove over the bridge and looked back, and Joyce and I cried like babies leaving our church, our people that we loved. But all of my life I’ve been able, by God’s grace, and I don’t say it self-servingly or braggingly, but thankfully and gratefully, that you don’t have to know when, you don’t have to know where, you don’t have to know why. Just keep your eye on the ark, and whenever it moves, just move. Manley Beasley says, “Success is just finding out where God is moving, and just join Him.” That’s all. Just get in on what God is doing. That is success.

Now, what I’m trying to say is, first of all, let Jesus guide you with His presence. The one thing I want you, my dear precious people, to be certain of this coming year, is that Jesus is a reality to you. Just as I did not want to lose the taillights of my neighbor, I just wanted to keep that in sight so I would arrive, you just make certain that Jesus is real to you. I’m not talking about the Jesus that Adrian preaches, the Jesus that you know is what I’m talking about. Now I want you to make certain, just make that your resolution this year, that Jesus Christ will be real to me and He will guide me, He will guide me with His presence. When the ark moves, I’ll move.

Here’s the second thing. Alright, now listen. Not only let Jesus guide you with His presence, but **let Jesus gladden you with His promises**. Now look in Joshua 3 verse 3, “And they commanded the people saying, ‘When ye see,’” now here’s the phrase, “‘the ark of the covenant,’” the covenant. What is a covenant? A covenant is a sacred contract. A covenant is a binding agreement. A covenant is an unfailing promise. God had made a covenant with His ancient people and God has made a covenant with me and with you.

Several things I want you to see about the covenant, the promises of God. First of all, **they’re for all saints**. Look in Joshua 3 verse 7. “And the Lord said unto Joshua, ‘This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel that they may know that as I was with Moses,’” listen to this, “‘so I will be with thee.’” Now, the promises are for all saints. “Now Joshua, I made some promises to Moses, but they’re just as good for you. As I was with Moses, I’ll be with you.”

Now what’s the point? The promise did not die with Moses; Moses was dead. And the promises in the Bible did not die with the Bible saints. Do you know what some of us think? We think they were different than we. But the Bible says in James 5:17, Elijah was a man of “like passions as we are.” Somehow we think they breathed different air. Somehow we think that God was more powerful or something in that day than in this day. Friend, the promises are for all saints.

One man picked up his wife’s Bible, and saw that she’d underlined a lot of passages but didn’t seem to be putting them into practice. She was using them more as slogans than as promises. Do you do that? The man said to his wife, “Why do you call it shopping? You never buy anything.” You know, women do what they call window-shopping. She said, “Why do you call it fishing? You never catch anything.” Some people just sort of window-shop through the Bible. You ever window-shop through the Bible? “Oh, isn’t that nice, ooh, what a precious promise, ooh, that’s a lovely one.”

Listen, friends, these promises are for you, they’re for all saints and **they’re for all seasons**. Joshua 3:7, “As I was with Moses, I’ll be with you.” And two thousand years has not eroded the promises away. Don’t you let them keep you from a promise.

And **they’re for all situations**. Now here’s the interesting thing. Moses had failed. Now is Joshua going to say, “Because Moses failed, and Moses died on Mount Nebo, and Moses didn’t get to lead the children of





Israel in, then I guess I'm going to have to fail too?" No! If there're others that do not believe the promises of God, that's no reason that you should not.

Friend, listen, let Him guide you with His promises, they're for all saints, they're for all seasons, they're for all situations. The main thing again, what you have to do, is to understand that He's made a promise to you, a covenant. "Well," you say, "that was the covenant to Israel." Yes, He's given us a new covenant, a new covenant in His blood, which the book of Hebrews says is a better covenant, and listen to Hebrews chapter 12 verse 2, listen to it. "We are to be looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith." Just as they were looking to the ark, we are to be looking to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now notice, not looking at Jesus, looking unto Jesus. What does it mean to "look unto someone", to "look unto" Jesus? Well, suppose Mark here is a very wealthy man and suppose: Are you? All right, and suppose I'm a beggar, and I've got some real problems, and I say, "Mark, I'm in serious difficulty," and Mark says, "Pastor, look to me, I'll take care of it, look to me." He doesn't mean, "Look at me," he means, "Depend upon me." That's what the Bible means when it says "looking unto Jesus," it doesn't mean looking at Jesus, it means depending upon the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a word that means to look away from everything else, *afareo*, looking away from these two guys, and looking to this man. It means turning away from one thing to look at another. That's the way I am to live with my covenant-keeping God.

Now the devil will try to keep you this coming year from looking to everything else but the promises of God. Some look at Satan. They're trying to find a demon under every bush, and they're all terrified. Satan will come to either terrify or entice. Don't get devil-conscious, be Jesus-conscious. Not looking at circumstances. You look at circumstances; you're going to go down. In Matthew chapter 14 verses 25 through 31, Simon Peter got out of the boat to walk on water and he was doing just fine as long as he was what? Looking to Jesus. But then he looked at those mountainous waves, and when he saw the waves, that they were boisterous, he took his eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ and put his eyes on circumstances, and he began to sink.

Don't look at other saints. Has somebody disappointed you? Not yet? Well just wait. And the best of people will disappoint you. The Bible says in Psalm 118 verse 8, I think it's about the middle verse in the Bible, "It's better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." Listen, don't put your confidence in any man. Well, didn't Paul say in First Corinthians 11 verse 1, "You follow me as I follow Christ"? He wasn't saying follow me. He said, "Like I follow Christ, you follow Christ," that's what he meant. You follow me. As I follow Christ, you follow Christ. You are to follow the Lord Jesus Christ!

Don't look at other people! And don't even look at your look. You know how dirty the devil is, the devil will say, "Yes, sure, you're justified and saved and kept by faith, but your faith is so weak, you haven't got good faith." And that'll sometimes mess you up. I've learned how to use that against the devil. The devil says to me, "Adrian, your faith is no good," I say, "Well, so what? I'm not putting faith in faith, I'm putting faith in Jesus. Who cares about my faith, isn't Jesus wonderful?" He doesn't know how to handle that. Friend, don't look at your look. Look to Jesus. He is your ark.

Listen, let Him guide you with His presence, let Him gladden you with His promise. He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Look to Jesus, the author and the finisher of your faith. What a wonderful thing that is.

Now here's a third thing I want you to do, let Jesus not only guide you with His presence, not only let Him gladden you with His promise, but **let the Lord Jesus guard you with His power**. Notice Joshua chapter 3 beginning in verse 7 through verse 11, "And the Lord said unto Joshua, 'This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.



Thou shalt command the priest that they bear the ark of the covenant saying, 'When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan,'" now Jordan is that river that separated them from the land of promise, "'Ye shall stand still in Jordan.'" And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, 'Come hither and hear the words of the Lord your God.' and Joshua said, 'Hereby shall ye know,'" now watch this, "'That the living God,'" oh, I love that phrase, "'The living God is among you and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites.'" And you expect him to say "and the termites," and, "'behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the Earth passeth over before you unto Jordan.'"

You know why we don't obey the Lord sometimes? Because we don't trust. And you know why we don't trust, dear friend, we do not know how great our God is. Knowledge of God equals trust and trust equals obedience and obedience equals blessing. Now let's just tear this verse apart a little bit and look at it and find out who the God of our great power is. Notice He's the Lord God in Joshua 3:9, he speaks, "And hear the words of the Lord your God." Is He your Lord? Is He your sovereign? Are you willing to follow Him? You see, listen, He is the Lord your God and if He commands you to cross Jordan, it's His business to take Jordan out of the way. That was a good place for an Amen, but it fell flat. Now listen, let me say it again. Get ready: if He commands you to cross some Jordan, He will command that Jordan to get out of the way. Now, He is the Lord, I mean, He's the one who created Jordan. He's the one who created you. And don't parade the commands of God past the judgment bar of your understanding as to whether or not it's possible or not. With God all things are possible.

He's the Lord God, He is the living God. Look in Joshua 3 verse 10. And Joshua said, "And hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you." He is totally sufficient, He's not dead, He is not sick, and every demand upon you is a demand upon the God who lives in you. I'm telling you that God is alive and well and living in you if you're saved.

I read somewhere there're fourteen point seven pounds of pressure on every square inch of your body. Add that up and it means that, there're tons of weight that are pressing down upon you right now. Tons! Well, why aren't you crushed? Because you have pressure on the inside that keeps you from being crushed. Now there's enormous pressure from this world, but thank God we have Jesus on the inside, don't we? We have the Lord Jesus. He is the living God and He lives in us.

And not only is He the Lord God, not only is He the living God, but He is the liberating God. Now here's the point. Watch this. Begin in Joshua 3 verse 11 now and read through verse 13, "Behold the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the Earth passeth over before you into Jordan. Now therefore, take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every man a tribe," now watch this, don't miss it, "And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the Earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above and they shall stand up in a heap."

Alright, here's Joshua. Now He says, "Look, I'm the Lord God, I'm the living God, I'm the liberating God. You keep your eye on the ark! Priests, take that ark and go into the river Jordan." As soon as the feet of those priests touched that river Jordan, something happened. The waters began to back up, and they backed up, and this chapter tells us they backed up all the way to the city of Adam. I don't think that is put there by happenstance. All the way back to the city of Adam, just piling up in a heap. And here are these priests, as soon as they begin to obey, the waters don't stop until they obey, but when they get in, the waters just back up, and they come in here with the Ark of the Covenant right in the middle of Jordan. You know what Jordan means? The word Jordan means "descent." The word "dan," "Jor-Dan" means judgment. It is descent into judgment. The river Jordan is the river of death flowing down to the Dead Sea.





Now, the Ark of the Covenant comes into the river of death and stops, and the waters stop all the way back to Adam! And the children of Israel just come on through. Friend, Jesus entered the chilly waters of the river of death and is our victory. And He stopped death all the way back to Adam. In Adam all die, but in Christ all will be made alive, to let the people of God go through. And there is our Lord, there is our cross, there's our Savior, there is the Ark of the Covenant, there is our mighty God, the Lord God, the living God, the liberating God, to let the people of God go through. What a mighty God we serve.

"All the way my Savior leads me, what have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His tender mercies, Who through life has been my guide. Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, here by faith in Him to dwell, and I know whate'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well." This coming year, you let the Lord Jesus Christ guide you with His presence. Let Him gladden you with His promises. Let Him guard you with His power because He is a mighty God. You don't have to know when. You don't have to know where. You don't have to know why, if you know Jesus. Just know Jesus. Do you know Him? Don't enter a new year without Him. Don't even leave home without Him. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you're not saved, you can get saved right now. I have wonderful news. God wants to save you. He's not willing that any should perish. The Bible says that whosoever will, may come. That has your name on it, and no one here this morning is so bad you can't be saved, I don't care what you've done. And nobody here is so good that you need not be saved, I don't care how self-righteous you are. But the Bible says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Would you pray a prayer like this? "Oh, God, I am a sinner, and I'm lost, and I need to be saved. I want to be saved. Jesus, You died to save me, You promised to save me. Come into my heart. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me, Lord Jesus. Take control of my life. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be. Save me, Lord Jesus."

Did you ask Him? Then pray this way. "Thank You for doing it. I receive it by faith and that settles it. You are now my Lord, my Savior, and my God, and I'm following You, trusting Your promise and living by Your power. Amen and Amen."



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