

Aug 2210 Worship in Park Joshua 3:5

WATCH AND SEE....AGAIN

The prophet Isaiah reminds us this morning that *“Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”*

How's your stamina today? You get tired? Are you weary? Have you been waiting for the Lord? This morning I will read to you a verse from Joshua that tells us about watching and seeing what the Lord God wants to do in our lives.

Last week we saw our wonderful God make a way where there seemed to be no way in the story of Moses and the parting of the Red Sea. This week that same theme kept going over and over in my mind. When problems arise, remember Richard, God can make a way where there seems to be no way. I needed that reminder this week. Then I thought I bet there are others who need that reminder too. Last week's sermon has an everlasting effect. Many people wonder daily how they are going to survive their problems. They wonder how God will make a way. Sometimes, like Moses we find ourselves up against our own Red Sea or between the rock and the hard place. What do you do then? Hopefully, as a Christian you remember God's word that he is with you, and he can make a way where you can't. You remember the stories that

bring hope and courage and strength. You remember these aren't just words in a story but God's Word for his people to embrace and live by.

So when you are between a rock and a hard place just remember what Yogi Berra always said about a baseball ... "It ain't over till it's over." Boy as a Cub fan this year have I seen that phrase in action. Remember Jesus said we have more power than that mean old devil. After all we have an amazing God.

So this morning I bring before you another of those stories to remind us who have short memories the power and wonderment of our God. It is one of those stories reminding us that the same God who worked wonders in the olden days is the one who works wonders today. Listen to a story about Joshua that took place after the 40 odd years of wandering in the wilderness, years after the parting of the Red Sea was a fading memory in the minds of those who were on the brink of entering the Promised Land.

God has brought the people to brink of the Promised Land but Moses is not going across with them, the mantle has been passed to Joshua. As punishment for not trusting God, they wandered for over 40 years till that old generation full of doubts and unbelief, passed on. Now with the mantle passed, the people are ready to take the next step to their final destination, crossing the Jordan River. And like the story of

their ancestors, there comes a time when they needed to exercise their faith. You see, like the Red Sea, there is no way to pass from this side to the other. There is no bridge, no path, and no shallow spot. It's like what Moses and their ancestors faced when the Egyptian army was coming to enslave them. But instead of a Moses a man named Joshua has been handed the mantle of grace to lead the people into the Promised Land.

At this point Joshua has instructed the people to follow the priests into the Jordan River. I want you to hear what Joshua said to the people that day. *“Make yourself holy.”* Then Joshua says, *“Tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.”*

Now if you are one of those people who are waiting by the edge you wonder how God can make a way where there seems no way. No path, no bridge, no barges, no boats, no canoes, no nothing. You're just like your ancestors who faced the same problem. But then perhaps some of the older ones remember a time such as this and they comforted those who had not heard the story of how God parted the sea for their ancestors to march to freedom, saved from their enemy, walking to freedom knowing the power and strength of their God. Can God do it again? Can Joshua perform what Moses did? Joshua

assures them with these words of hope, **“WATCH AND SEE WHAT THE LORD CAN DO.”**

When you are between a rock and a hard place, watch and see what the Lord can do. When the doors seem to be closed and sealed, watch and see what the Lord can do. You don't think he can do anything? Then remember that first Easter morning when the stone was removed to the world know he had risen. Isn't that a story we are reminded of a lot? Why? Because it reminds us that Jesus lives...and because he lives we face tomorrow with hope knowing Jesus is with us all the time.

God's word and the stories of faith in the Bible and the accounts of others give us hope to trust him more. That's why we need to remember what he has already done. For these people they remember the parting of the Red Sea. They can remember how God gave them manna from heaven when they were hungry. They can remember getting water from a rock. They can remember how the bitter waters of a stream were turned into pure spring water for them to drink.

Now this same God was leading Joshua. This was the God of their ancestors. So now they had to trust and watch the miracle that would remind them of his power and that he was with them.

So the next morning when the priests picked up the Ark of the Covenant and began to go into the Jordan River the waters started to part because told Joshua, who told the people this is what would happen. The River stopped flowing the minute their feet hit the water's edge. When they got to the middle, they stopped as instructed. They stopped and looked at the Jordan River being held back far up the line and like when they crossed over 40 years ago when they were children; the ground was dry and solid. And one by one, amazed by another miracle from God, the people passed to their new frontier. And so they would remember this miracle. One man from each of the 12 tribes was to stop in the middle of the river and pick a stone, not a pebble, but a giant boulder to bring to the other side to form a monument to remind the people of this very day, the day the Jordan River stopped flowing...the day that the people passed over to the Promised Land on dry ground....the day that once again, God made a way where there seemed no way.

I was going to call this sermon "Forgetfulness" because sometimes we forget what our God has done. We forget how many times he has parted the ways...we forget how many times he has made a way where there doesn't seem to be a way. We forget the answered prayers. We forget to thank him for the "little" miracles among us that happen daily. When things look bleak remember how God took care of a situation. For me I never want to forget how he opened the doors for me to go to

college and seminary. I don't want to forget how he provided for us while we were there. I don't want to forget how he opened the doors for me to minister in Illinois when the doors were closed to me in the New England Conference. I don't want to forget how he helped over and over again. When I forget, or get down, all I need to do is look back on what he has done, and trust that he will open those doors once again. He asks us to love and trust him, for he knows what is best for us.

Those priests stood in the middle of the river holding that Ark, which is God's presence among them, as each person, passes by and sees the waters being held back. As long as the priest stood with the Ark in the river they need not fear. And when that last person crossed, and the priests followed them, when they reached the shore on the other side, the wall came down, and the river flowed once again.

When I read this story again after my eyes seemed to come back to that one verse that I used this morning where Joshua said, ***"Tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you."*** And listen to the final words of Joshua as they stood on the other side looking back to where they just crossed. Joshua says, ***"The Lord did this so all people would know he has great power and so you would always respect the Lord your God."***

Isn't that great news? Isn't that wonderful news? Isn't that superb news? When you are up against it, if you turn to God, trust in him, look up and look forward, see God doing amazing things for you. Remember, God has great power. It's being reminded over and over again that God can make a way where there seems to be no way. I think that could be a constant reminder. Maybe every morning you could go out the door saying, "I can't wait to see what God has planned for me today." You might say that's silly but I think if we take Joshua's word to heart that "Tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among us.... So that can know he has great power and so all people would always respect him" what a glorious day each would be."

The other morning while getting dressed they had a commercial on the radio about the Muni having Annie this weekend. They just played a blip or two, but one of the songs was, "Tomorrow." I couldn't get that song out of my head that day. I kept thinking about it and how it fits today's message. I'm sure many of you know the words and the story. Little Annie was living in the orphanage because she had no family. Also living there were other girls. It wasn't a nice place, ran by Miss Hannigan the orphanage matron, who was disillusioned, hated children, but was fond of the world's things and looking for a fast buck to support her "habits." Annie was lost in her own little world and she was looking for a way out of her situation. She was full of hope that one day her parents would bust in that door and take her home.

She was full of hope that maybe today was a bad day, but tomorrow was another day and maybe that would be the day a miracle would happen. Listen to the words of hope she had for her Tomorrows...

*The sun'll come out Tomorrow*

*Bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow*

*There'll be sun!*

*Just thinkin' about Tomorrow*

*Clears away the cobwebs,*

*And the sorrow*

*'Til there's none!*

*When I'm stuck with a day*

*That's gray And lonely,*

*I just stick out my chin And Grin,*

*And Say, Oh!*

*The sun'll come out*

*Tomorrow So ya gotta hang on*

*'Til tomorrow Come what may.*

*Tomorrow! Tomorrow!*

*I love ya Tomorrow!*

*You're always A day A way!*

Then one day she found her miracle. She found Daddy Warbucks. We have found our God. And when troubles come remember the promises of God the sun will shine tomorrow. It might be dark today, but the sun will shine tomorrow, and the next day, and the day after that. You see Daddy Warbucks is just a movie character along with Annie. Our God is God, creator, sustainer, workers of miracles in ones lives. If you don't think so read and then re-read his word and study them over and over again. Let them get from your head to your heart. Today he is saying to someone he will do great and amazing things in your lives for he has the power to do the impossible. I don't know what that miracle will be, but God does and we don't need to wait till tomorrow because it could happen today!

So let's enjoy the rest of this day, getting ready to munch on those things people brought, ready to have great fellowship among God's people today, as we watch and see again, the wonders of our God. After all, this is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.