

God with Us

It's springtime, and the Jordan River is at flood stage. The Israelites are standing at the foot of Mount Nebo, just east of the river, listening to Moses' final farewell speech recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. Nearby, stands Moses' successor, the future leader of Israel-Joshua.

Just prior to arriving at Mount Nebo, some of the Israelites from the tribes of Gad and Reuben asked Moses if they could settle on this side of the Jordan River instead of crossing over (Num. 32:5). Moses told them they could, but they still had to cross with the rest of the Israelites to help take over the Promised Land. Not everyone was thrilled about idea of crossing over, and some undoubtedly remembered what the Israelite recon team had said years ago: "The people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large" (Num. 13:28). This was not an encouraging report to say the least.

Have you ever feared "crossing over" and dealing with the "other side" of something? Have you ever been in a situation where you felt hopeless and full of despair because of what you were facing?

I think the transition from the end of Deuteronomy to the beginning of the book of Joshua offers tremendous insight and encouragement for those of us facing arduous and challenging obstacles in life.

This week, we're going to discover that seven times God

encourages the Israelites standing at the foot of Mount Nebo with the following words:

"Be strong and courageous!"
(cf. Deut. 31:6, 7, 23; Josh. 1:6, 7, 9)

God says these words three times to Joshua right before he is about to cross the Jordan River. After the third time, God tells him, "Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9).

This is good news, friends.

Our God promises to be with us wherever he leads us, even if it's a daunting mission like crossing the Jordan and facing all that's on the other side.

When Jesus was born, he was referred to by the Gospel writers as Immanuel, which in Hebrew means "God with us" (Matt. 1:23). What becomes apparent is God longs to be with his people all the time-in every circumstance and situation that he leads them into. God desires to walk with us through the challenging and arduous things that he's called us to face.

Maybe God's led you to the edge of the Jordan River. Maybe God's led you into a new career, and the next step forward in your journey is going to require a massive leap of faith and trust. Or worse, maybe God's led you into a mess of illnesses and tests, and you're scared and unsure about how to move forward. Whatever "Jordan" God has led you to, consider standing still and being silent as the waters roar past and just listen, I wonder if He's still saying:

"Be strong my child, be courageous for I am with you."

~ Oliver Hersey

March 19th Readings

DEUTERONOMY 26:1-29:1

March 20th Readings

DEUTERONOMY 29:2-31:29

March 21st Readings

DEUTERONOMY 31:30-32:52

PSALM 90

March 22nd Readings

DEUTERONOMY 33:1-34:12

JOSHUA 1:1-2:24

March 23rd Readings

JOSHUA 3:1-6:27

March 24th Readings

JOSHUA 7:1

1 CHRONICLES 2:7

JOSHUA 7:2-9:27