SONG: Higher Ground (Higher plane than I have found);

Why Sit Ye Here?

Joshua Series: 3 of 18 – (GOOD FOR MISSIONS)

Text: Joshua 1:10-18 (Read, but don't pray yet)
Aim: Encourage people to serve the Lord whole-heartedly.

INTRODUCTION

The days were dark indeed for Great Britain in 1940. The British people were at war with Germany and were being pressed hard on every side by the Nazi military machine. Supplies and morale were low. Their national destiny hung in the balance. Then a new Prime Minister came on the scene: Winston Churchill. He was a man of intense conviction, deep resolve, and unquenchable optimism. His speeches in the first months of his term burst upon the world with sudden and magnificent power. Let me read quotes from three of them.

> **From his First Speech as Prime Minister, May 13, 1940 to the House of Commons he said,** …We are in the preliminary stage of one of the greatest battles in history, that we are in action at many other points in Norway and in Holland, that we have to be prepared in the Mediterranean, that the air battle is continuous and that many preparations… have to be made here at home… I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this government: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."
>
> We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival…[1]
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> **On June 4, 1940 to the House of Commons in his "We Shall Fight on the Beaches" speech he said:** I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our Island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone…[2]
>
> **And from his "Churchill as War Leader: Lessons for the Future" we read:** Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender…[3]

After the Exodus, the circumstances were also perilous for the Israelites. They had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because of rebellion and unbelief at Kadesh Barnea. Now they were at the banks of the Jordan, and the test was the same. Would Israel resolve to forge ahead, or would they shrink from the circumstances as their fathers had done?

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[1] Churchill Centre, "Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat," First Speech as Prime Minister, May 13, 1940 to House of Commons, http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=391
[2] Churchill Centre, "We Shall Fight on the Beaches," June 4, 1940 House of Commons http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=393
[3] Churchill Centre, "Churchill as War Leader: Lessons for the Future," http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=604

NOW, after the death of Israel's great leader, Moses, God handpicks Joshua to succeed him. The task of rallying and leading the people falls to Joshua. Would the people galvanise behind Joshua? Or would they refuse his leadership? Just as England faced a crossroads when Churchill became its leader, so also the Israelites faced a critical fork in the road.

The Lord-God spoke directly to Israel's new leader, Joshua, in chapter 1 and said, *"Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel"* (Vs. 2)

God then promises Joshua that God would **NOT** fail or forsake him. God encourages him to be strong, courageous and unswerving—not turning to the right of left—in his obedience to all that the Lord would command him.

If Joshua would completely trust God's leadership and not let fear get the better of him, he would prosper and God would give him good success. BUT this was conditional on the basis that he would meditate on God's Word and courageously *"observe to do according all"* of what God had written.

The Lord had spoken to Joshua; now, Joshua was to speak to the people.

- **Vs. 10-11– *General Challenge*** to all the tribes of nation**.** —They ALL were to PASS OVER JORDAN & POSSESS THE LAND on the East Side of Jordan.

A. SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE UNDERSTOOD:

In some hymns the Crossing the Jordan is likened to death and the entering of the Promised Land likened to heaven. But there was conflict in Canaan, whereas there is no conflict in heaven.

1. Crossing the Jordan is NOT a picture of ***death***.
2. Crossing the Jordan is NOT a picture of ***heaven***.
3. Crossing the Jordan pictures our ***spiritual inheritance.***
   a. Crossing the Jordan is a spiritual picture of ***the believer dying to self*** in the waters of the Jordan and entering into the victorious life in Christ!
   b. This is the "spiritual rest" talked about in the book of Hebrews.
   c. This "spiritual rest" is to be the possession of every believer, but it can only be possessed when we obey the Word, claim its promises and fight the good fight of faith!

- **Vs. 12-15 – *Special Challenge*** to a select few. —**This lot:** Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh were to – They were to REMEMBER THEIR PROMISE to help their brothers possess the land that had God given and cross over ahead of them.

>> PRAY NOW <<

The charge Joshua gave to the Gadites, Reubenites and the half tribe of Manasseh finds its basis in ***Numbers 32.*** **<<< PLEASE TURN THERE!**

- ***The charge given in this chapter REFERS*** to something that occurred BEFORE Moses died and then was passed on to the leadership of Joshua.
- ***It is a REFERENCE*** to the requests made of these 2 ½ tribes at that time.

Let us READ >> *Numbers 32:1-23*

Vs. 1 – *"They saw the **land** ... was place for cattle."*

Vs. 5 – *"The children of Gad and the children of Ruben spoke unto Moses …Let this **land** be given ... for a possession AND **bring us over this Jordan."***

IF THE ***LESSON*** of the book of Joshua is – ***death to self and victorious rest in Christ;***

THEN, THE ***LESSON*** of this passage in Numbers MUST BE …
– Satisfaction With Less Than God's Best.

- **Satisfaction** with less than the perfect will of God!
- **Contentment** with the mediocre
- Being content not to go all the way and possess ALL that God has for us.

B. *Three things we need to see concerning these two & half tribes:*

1. **Their *RELUCTANCE* to enter the Promised Land**
2. **Their *REBUKE* by Moses for not going into the land**
3. **Their *RESPONSE* to that Rebuke**

I. THE TRIBES RELUCTANCE – NUMBERS 32:1

A. They were Motivated by SIGHT *"When they saw the land of Jazer... land of Gilead."*

B. They were NOT prepared for A Faith Walk into the Promised Land.

1. They said: "We can see that there is grass here!"
2. They said: "We can see there this is a place for our cattle here!"
3. They said: "We can see there is prosperity here!"
4. They said: "We are **not sure** what is on the ***"yonder side of Jordan"*** so if it is ok with you all, we will settle down here. (My paraphrase of Num. 32:19)
   a. Nonetheless, God required them to cross over by FAITH.
   b. They were to depend on God that the "Promised Land" would be flowing with milk and honey.
5. **TURN >>Gen. 13:10** where we have similar experience with Lot.
   a. He wasn't looking for the spiritual consequences of his decision nor was the 2-½ tribes of Israel.
   b. Lot, like these tribes, saw prosperity with the eyes of the flesh.
   c. He ONLY looked at the material benefits – *"plain of Jordan ... well watered,"* — like Garden of Eden, —like the Goshen Delta of Egypt.
   d. Both parties followed the worlds philosophy, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

APPLICATION:

Some believers are like Lot, and the children of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.

- Satisfied with their present knowledge of Scripture.
- Satisfied with their present level of Spiritual maturity.
- Satisfied with what they are presently doing in their service for the Lord.

As believers, they express reluctance to serve God when they say:

- "I go to a fellowship or a Bible study" OR they say: "I attend church and even put some money on the plate. — "WOW!
- "I'm satisfied with my life." **But in truth,** they have no real hunger or desire to cross over Jordan and occupy new spiritual land that God has promised for them!

God has great things for ALL of us –
IF ONLY we are willing to walk by faith into the land He has promised us!

C. The 2-½ tribes' reluctance to go on for God is also evidenced by: A WEARINESS in their Walk With God.

1. They have become satisfied or content that they have done enough – they had the attitude to let someone else do it now – they have come far enough.

YOU CAN HEAR SOME OF THEM TALKING:

JOE: "Man, do you realise we have been fighting & struggling for 40 yrs.?"

PAT: "Yeah man, and it sure has been a long struggle.
Aren't you tired of eating this manna every day?"

JOE: "Who isn't?" "You know Pat, this is a real nice place; I think I'll just settle down right here."

What was needed from them and what is needed by ourselves is A Holy DISCONTENT, A Holy DISSATISFACTION with our present level of spirituality and maturity.

When I was in the Marines…
…Sergeants would say to us, "A good Marine is a discontented Marine!"
"How's that Sarge?" I asked. He replied, "If you are satisfied with doing nothing or anything other than what you were trained for you'll lose the edge needed to win in battle."

D. It seems that Reubenites, Gadites and Manassehites WANTED AN EXCUSE to put distance between them and The Ark!

1. It was the **Ark** that led across the Jordan to more and greater challenges.
2. The **Ark** visually represented God and His will.
3. The **Ark** was THE CENTRAL point of worship for Israel.
   a. If they were **out of its sight –** they'd be out from under the pressure to live right.
   b. If they were **out of its sight –** they'd free to pursue our own interests.
4. **Not going over the Jordan meant they** would be cutting themselves off from the influence of the rest of God's people.
   a. Today, many believers fail to see the necessity of believer's baptism or for church membership & keeping the Lord's Supper.
   b. MOST people believe any group is okay—any church calling themselves Christian, regardless of what they believe, is just as good as another.
   c. MOST people fail to realise the pre-eminent importance of the local New Testament Church in God's programme for today.

We saw the 2 ½ Tribes reluctance to enter the Promised Land and now…

II. THE TRIBES WERE REBUKED BY MOSES FOR NOT GOING INTO THE LAND – READ >> *NUMBERS 32:6*

A. MOSES asks: "What do you guys think you're playing at? Your brethren go to war and you are going to sit here on your duffs?"

1. **SOME Folks** want a bed of ease, while others are in the fight.

2. **SOME Folks** think <u>they are select group</u>—special people. It is the others who are to do all the manual work; all the praying; all the giving; all the witnessing; sweating; crying, etc., while they have a privileged spiritual life of ease.

B. *MOSES asks: "Shall Ye Sit Here?"*

1. **In Josh. 1:2** – Lord commanded *"<u>All</u> this people"* were to cross the Jordan and take the land; **<u>All</u>** were to go to war; **<u>All</u>** were to put the armour on; **<u>All</u>** who took the name of Jehovah as their God were to follow and obey!
2. Joshua reminds them in **Josh. 1:14,15 –**: *"Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising."*

MOSES was saying to them, "We ALL are family, AND <u>you will</u> fight with your brothers and only join your families when everyone has their possession."

3. <u>No one</u> THEN or <u>no one</u> NOW who claims to be a child of God has a right to stand back and let someone else fight all the battles.
   a. We are family – brothers and sisters in the Lord.
   b. As God's family, we are to obey the Father and do His will together.

C. *READ >> Num. 32:7 – MOSES asks: "Why are you trying to discourage others from living for the Lord?"*

1. **READ >> Vs. 8 – MOSES reminds them:** "Your Fathers did this very thing 40 years ago and it is the reason you have been wondering in the wilderness!"
2. **READ >> Vs. 9-13.**
   Vs. 11 – States that the Forefathers didn't follow God whole-heartedly.
3. Joshua and Caleb were excited about following the Lord.
   In **vs. 12** is says, *"They have wholly followed the Lord."*
4. **THE POINT IS –** While Joshua and Caleb wholeheartedly followed God, 10 other spies infected & discouraged a nation of 2 million from going into the land God had given them.
   1) The 10 wanted to turn back to Egypt.
   2) The 10 didn't want the hassle of living by faith and were disobedient.
   b. Ya know—going back to Egypt for the Christian, means salvation hasn't changed anything in their life.
      1) The Israelites finally decided to change their mind, but then it was too late **TURN >>>Num. 14:36-45**
      2) There are times when we only have the time at hand to serve God.

D. *Back in Num. 32:14 Moses asks these reluctant tribes a QUESTION – "Are You Going To Be 'Like Father, Like Son?'"*

1. A **Repetition** of their Father's sin meant to **Retrace** their footprints.
2. A **Rekindling** the Lord's anger meant **Retribution** for the nation **>> 32:15.**

E. *Did you know there are Reubenites, Gadites and Manassehites still around today? They are discouraging others from:*

1. Joining local New Testament church, even attending church.

a. Some see no need to make a distinction in church attendance in alignment to their profession. BEFORE their profession of salvation, they attend a church that didn't preach the gospel of grace by faith alone and AFTER their conversion they continue to attend such a church indicating to others that their in nothing wrong with it.

b. This is much like going to a doctor who can't diagnose your problem that is killing you and after you go to another who knows what's wrong and by whose treatment you are cured, and afterwards you decide to go right back to the old doctor who didn't have a clue.

c. Some evangelicals who attend a baby-baptising church do realise the people that church baptises are not qualified to be baptised and that the sprinkling or pouring water does not picture their salvation experience go to a Bible-practising church for Scriptural baptism by immersion. BUT they have no intention of joining that church and go back to the one they know is wrong!

2. Some of these folks discourage others from witnessing and having a distinctively Christ-like testimony. The witnessing of others makes them feel uncomfortable.

3. They discourage the giving of the tithe in free-will offerings.

4. They discourage the believer from giving of himself or herself to God as a living sacrifice.

F. All of us destroy many a believer, when we fail to cross over this Jordan *and occupy the land the Lord has given us.*

1. ***Are you Satisfied with*** just being labelled a Christian – **BUT** have no desire to live like one?

2. ***Are you Satisfied with*** attending just any ole church – **BUT** won't join and become members of a Bible-believing one?

   a. Is it because you don't want the financial responsibility, the social responsibility, or the spiritual responsibility with being identified with a local church?

   b. OR is it because you're afraid of being pointed out as being different?

3. ***Are you Satisfied with*** just being a church member – **BUT** not a worker in it, or in its programme?

4. ***Are you Satisfied with*** knowing your are saved – **BUT** don't think it is important enough to share it with others?

Unfortunately, for many a professing Christian,
There is no real hunger, longing or desire to go all the way for God.

We saw the 2 ½ Tribes RELUCTANCE to enter the Promised Land and that the Tribes were REBUKED by Moses for not going into the land. That bring us to…

III. THEIR RESPONSE TO MOSES REBUKE – *NUMBERS 32:16-18*

A. Sadly, those 2 ½ Tribes SETTLED for LESS than God's best.

1. They **Wanted** to build sheepfolds & fenced cities on this side of Jordan.

   a. Yet, their divinely given inheritance was on the *"yonder"* side in Canaan.

   b. They settled for what was "good," **but NOT** what was God's best.

2. They **Went**, to fight with their brethren, but left their hearts behind.

   a. They **ELECTED** to leave their families behind, rather then lead them.

b. They **EXCLUDED** their heirs from a place & portion in the Promised Land.

c. Their **EXAMPLE** of not following the Lord whole-heartedly didn't give hope that their families would do so either.

d. They **EXCHANGED** the Promised Land of spiritual victory and rest promised by God to Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob for the carnal pastures of self-service.

3. Their **Wealth** was left behind them.

a. They weren't prepared to make personal material sacrifices so God's work might prosper and progress.

b. **Possessions** & **Prosperity** were MORE IMPORTANT to them—than God's **Provision** & **Promises.**

c. They went, but left their money behind.

1) This is also True of Christians who come to church, BUT won't tithe or give sacrificially.

2) This is also True of Christians who believe in and pray for missions, BUT won't participate in missions by their giving, no less with their own person on a foreign field.

Jesus said in Matt 6:21, *"For where your treasure is there will your heart be also."*

How much value is there in a Christian, who says he'll serve God,
BUT won't do it with his whole heart?

How can you or I do a good job for anyone,
when the mind is on other things or other places?

Not only did these tribes settled for less than God's best, but…

B. Sadly, they Served God With Half A Heart

1. They served with their ***person***, **BUT** not with their ***prosperity***, not with their ***possessions***, nor those who were ***precious*** to them.
2. Served with ***half*** of a concern for the family – ***half*** for God.
3. Served with ***half*** of a concern for the opinions of others – ***half*** for what God thought. "What would they think if I don't go or do such & such or so & so?

CONCLUSION:

A. Several Considerations We Need To Observe

- **We need to ask ourselves could one who whole-heartedly desires to walk with God settle for less than what God's best is for them?**
- Stopping short of God's goal for our lives is a mistake.
  It means we miss out on blessings!
- Failure to strive for God's best reveals that one is governed by worldly and selfish considerations – they are living by sight – carnal motives. **Matt 6:33 –** *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*
- These tribes were men of mixed principles – men who sought after THEIR own interests and benefits, all-the-while wanting to be identified as God's children and making a pretence of wanting to serve God.

- Folks, the secret of living a holy, happy and uncomplicated life for God – is to be true-hearted; wholly consecrating yourself to walk with God and to have your conduct governed by His Word.
- Do you realise if those Israelites simply desired to serve God whole-heartedly, the problems created by settling down short of the Jordan would never have occurred!

B. LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THEIR PROBLEMS

Consequences of Half-hearted Service are SERIOUS >> TURN Joshua 22

- **Vs. 1-6 –** They were **Separated** from their brethren and the perfect will of God.
- **Vs. 10,11 –** The Separation resulted in **Spiritual Vindication**.
    1. **Vs. 10 –** They needed to build *"a great altar to see,"* lest in time their brethren might disown them. **Cp. >> Vs. 24-25.** The idea was for the others to "see" or to be observed that they were worshipping also.
    2. **Vs. 11 –** They wanted their outward show of the altar to indicate their spirituality. **Cp. >> vs. 26-28**
- Their separation resulted in **Serious Misunderstanding – vs. 12.**
    - Their Altar was viewed by the nation as rebellion and idolatry **– vs. 16-19.**
    - One Altar would preserve the unity of the nation – just as doctrine does the unity of the church. Two altars will always create misunderstanding.

C. APPLICATION:

All this misunderstanding – **All** this trouble and alarm resulted in the failure of the two and a half tribes—because they would not claim their inheritance with the rest of Israel *"on yonder side Jordan, or forward,"* but settled *"on this side Jordan eastward"* (Num. 32:19).

There would have been no need of a second altar, no demand for an explanation, no cause of alarm had they made it their business to serve the Lord whole-heartedly and claim what He had given them.

It is IMPORTANT that you and I see this point clearly and learn from it the great practical lesson it is designed to teach.

Though God allowed it – it was wrong for the two and half tribes to stop short of the Jordan and be satisfied with less than what God wanted for them. After their occupation of the land, GUESS which area first fell into enemy's hands? An area named Gilead & Jazer **– Num. 32:1.** This land was the possessions of Manasseh and Gad **– 1 Kings 4:13** but was in the possession of the King of Syria who took it from them **cp. 1Kgs. 22:3.**

BEWARE of falling short—of not desiring to possess all that God has given you.
BEWARE of being content with the things this world has to offer.

Failure to take an unequivocal stand for Christ damages the cause of Christ and Discourages and confuses the Saints.

The *"half and half Christian"* does more damage than the *"out and out"* worldling or infidel. What can be more DEPLORABLE, more DISCOURAGING or more SADDENING, than for a professed believer who talks of the glories of Christ, the benefits of being saved, who boasts of their fundamental doctrine, but whose walk gives lie to their word?

If you are a believer and find yourself on this side of Jordan, I plead with you;
PLEASE don't stay this side of the Jordan building sheepfolds, houses, cities and altars.
Don't miss out on all that God has for you!

If you are not saved, I beg you to trust Him today to save your soul and then trust Him to see you across the Jordan to a life of service.

The two and a half tribes were permitted to stay on "This Side of Jordan," BUT missed out on God's best!

D. How about you? "Why sit ye here?"

1. Have you given God your best? Are you in the battle? If so, is your heart into it?
2. Have you given your family an example to follow?
3. Does the world know you've crossed over Jordan or have you established a phoney altar on this side to justify yourself?

May the good Lord stir-up our hearts, in this day of indifference, apathy, lukewarmness and shallowness. May we surrender ourselves unto true consecration in Christ!

14 April `91 - Lifegate B.C. - Dublin
12 November 1995 – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare
21 July, 2002 – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare
1 Mar., 2009, Eve – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare
23 Feb., Eve 2014, Eve – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare