

Joshua Series #2  
“Wet & Dry Faith” — Joshua 3

I. INTRODUCTION

A. “Just Faith”

1. Out to dinner with Roger Oakland this week
2. Talked about his ministry
3. Animosity he got from some about teaching creation
4. Criticized for not having a Ph.D.
  - a. some would not even listen because he didn't have one
  - b. but said it didn't matter
  - c. because even if he had 3 PhD's, they still wouldn't listen
  - d. gave example of Drs. A.E. Wilder-Smith & Kuznetsov both hold 3 earned PhD's
    - have spoken and written extensively on origins
    - have produced the most devastating arguments against evolution ever
    - very simply; their hard scientific evidence against evolution and in support of biblical origins has never been answered
    - so effective is their work, hundreds of research scientists have been convinced and embraced a model of origins based on scripture
    - but the popular media and the science bureaucracy has ignored them
5. Roger Oakland went on to say that all too often when sharing the evidence for creation, the skeptic will respond by saying that it's all a matter of faith
6. In many people's minds, evolution is in the realm of science;  
But creation is in the realm of faith.
7. THEN, faith is reduced to some kind of a exercise of the mind in which a person tries to fix their belief in something that isn't really there
8. Some years ago, took class in philosophy
  - a. instructor, drew a bold line between faith and reason
  - b. said science was the realm of reason; religion was the realm of faith; and never the two doth meet

- c. he said that if there was any evidence for something, then faith could not be involved
  - d. he was merely repeating the view of many people today
9. For many people today, faith is a blind leap in the dark
- a. it is merely an exercise of the mind in which a person conjures up a make believe world that helps them cope with the stresses and disappointments of life
  - b. faith is considered by many to be an excuse for dealing with life, used only by the weak-minded
10. Thus, those who live by faith cannot be trusted
- a. they are patted on the head and smiled at with a patronizing smile
  - b. but they are considered intellectual misfits who can have no place in the real world

B. The Bible's View of Faith

- 1. The bible presents a very different view of faith
- 2. Faith is not a blind leap in the dark
- 3. It is a reasonable response to the very clear revelation of the God who has created all things
- 4. The Bible declares that God has spoken; and because He has spoken, there is light to live by
- 5. The leap of faith is not into darkness; it is a leap from the darkness of this fallen world into the light of His revelation

C. Joshua

- 1. The book of Joshua shows what the life of faith looks like
- 2. And what we find here isn't a dull-witted and weak minded trust in the tooth fairy
- 3. It is a faith that holds fast to God and overcomes the biggest challenges this world can throw at us.

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 1-4

- 1 Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over.**
- 2 So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp;**
- 3 and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the**

covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.  
4 "Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before."

1. Time has come to cross the Jordan
2. They move right up to the bank of the River
3. Spend 3 days there, making final preparations to enter Canaan
4. Then, the leaders give instructions about how they will proceed
5. The ark, that gold covered box which was the heart of the tabernacle, and thus the heart of the nation; would go first
  - a. it would lead the nation
  - b. where it went they were to follow
6. Up till this point, they had followed the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night
7. Now that they were entering the Promised Land, a great many things were about to change
  - a. no longer would manna be supplied for them each day
  - b. and no longer would the pillar lead them
  - c. now they would be led by the symbol of God's presence - the ark
8. So notice what the leaders said, "There shall be a space between you and the ark."
  - a. space was 2000 cubits = 3000 feet
  - b. over ½ mile
  - c. this distance was not to keep the people away from God
  - d. rather, it was so that all the people could see the ark and know where they were going
  - e. Notice what the leaders said in v. 4, "**Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before.**"
9. For 38 years they had wandered round the wilderness,
  - a. gone in circles for a good part of it
  - b. they retraced their steps, became familiar with the wilderness
  - c. they had come to know the ways of the desert

10. But now it was time for a change, for something new!
  - a. they were going to travel paths they had not traveled before
  - b. they were entering a new land and a new life
11. They needed God's guidance for this new life
12. Let's face it: Most of our day is filled with the same old thing
  - a. mundane tasks, same places, same schedule, same thing
  - b. Once saw a little plague, said, "The problem with life is that it's so DAILY!"
  - c. I don't really like running but know it is a good way to stay in shape
    - a. so like to run on the street - and vary route
    - b. hated running track in school!
    - c. go around once, and see my own footprints in the sand of the track
      - hey, I've already been here
      - seemed kind of pointless to run in circles
      - don't really get any where
  - d. most of our life is that way; a daily routine
  - e. but every once in a while, we are face with something new
    - change of job or career
    - new addition to the family
    - a change in relationships
    - whatever, it's new territory that stretches us and keeps life interesting
13. If we're really honest, we have to say that alot of our spiritual life is that way too; routine!
  - a. we may go along for a long time without any apparent spiritual growth
  - b. we keep doing the right things, but it seems almost by rote
    - we read, we pray
    - we go to church
  - c. then it seems, all of a sudden, we realize we've come to the edge of something new
  - d. it's time for a change in our walk with the Lord
  - e. the HS is calling us to a new place
14. What we need to do is follow the example of Israel here
15. We need to make sure we are following the Lord, and not getting ahead of Him

16. You see, God is less interested in the destination than the journey
  - a. we tend to think the goals the thing
  - b. we want to know what God wants us to do, where He wants us to be
  - c. we want Him to point us in a direction, and bam, we're off at a full run
  - d. I see this in my own life
    - I just want to know what God wants me to do
    - "God show me your will"
      - // but I'm thinking of accomplishing some task
      - // doing some work
      - // going some place
  - e. has been my experience, He doesn't reveal the destination all at once
    - no, He simply shows the next step and says, "Take that."
    - He knows all too well that if He shows me the goal, I'll say thanks and take off
  - f. God wants us to understand that the goal comes as a result of all the intermediate steps
  - g. what's important, is not the end, not the goal, not the destination = IT'S THE JOURNEY
  - h. it's walking each step of the way with God
  - i. it's looking to Him for daily guidance
  - j. you see, the journey prepares us for the goal
  - k. like Christian in Pilgrim's Progress, we have many lessons to learn before we will be fit to enter the Celestial City.
17. The distance between Israel and the ark was not a space of separation from God; it was so that they could follow Him each step of the way
18. You and I must follow too, and rather than being separated from the Lord, we are called to draw near.
  - a. Jesus said to the disciples, "Follow Me."
  - b. in Psalm 32:8 God says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye."
  - c. here is a picture of a relationship that is so close that just by a glance, a person knows which way to turn

- [use example of someone at the back of the room as opposed to someone in the front row]

- d. - familiar gestures of people we know well  
are you close enough to God that He can direct you with His eye?

B. Vs. 5-17

**5 And Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."**

**6 Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.**

**7 And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.**

**8 "You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.'"**

Jump on down to v. 14

**14 So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people,**

**15 and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest),**

**16 that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho.**

**17 Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.**

1. This was an unusual way of crossing the Jordan
2. No doubt the more practical minded had spent days trying to figure out how they were going to get across.
3. The Jordan wasn't simply flowing in its normal channel at this time

- a. this was flood season
  - b. the winter snows on Mt. Hermon were thawing and the river was overflowing its banks
  - c. the ford that was usually found at this point was deep under water, and the way seemed impassable
4. But God delights in taking His people through what appears to be an impossible situation, just so that He can reveal Himself as a loving God, Provider, and Protector
5. First, the people were going to have to trust Him
6. So the command was given to the priests;
- a. they were to carry the ark to the edge of the river and begin the journey across by moving forward,
  - b. even before there was any evidence of the river stopping its flow
  - c. they were to wade in
7. Can you imagine what must have been going through the priests' minds?
- a. now let me get this straight
  - b. you want us to go ahead and walk in to the water?
  - c. you want us to get these nice priestly garments wet?
  - d. you want us to take the ark down in to the river?
  - e. why don't we wait until God stops the river and the river bed is dry?
8. But the command had been given, and there was nothing for it but to obey
- a. so the priests hoisted the ark onto their shoulders
  - b. they walked down to the edge of the water
  - c. and took one very tremulous step in
  - d. suddenly, the flow of waters stopped
    - they stood up like a heap
    - upstream, the river began to spread out as it tried to find some way downstream
  - e. soon, a whole expanse of river bottom lay exposed and ready for the crossing of the people
9. Why did God tell the priests to get wet before the river would stop flowing?
- a. He could have just as easily stopped the river first
  - b. why make them take a step first?
10. Very simply; God wants us to realize that the life of faith is one of walking in trust and reliance in Him when there is no other evidence *but* His word.

11. We say, “Show me and I’ll believe.”  
But God says, “Believe, and I will show you.”
12. The priests could move forward in faith because in vs. 9-13 Joshua, under the inspiration of the Lord told them what would happen
13. He told them that they would wade in and then the water would stop
14. Armed with this promise they went forward
15. And though their feet got wet, the rest of their garments stayed dry, as did the entire nation
16. In our walk with the Lord, every step forward is a step of faith
  - a. every new lesson -
  - b. every new promise, is launching out and trusting God.
17. If we are not living by faith, we are not moving forward
18. And you know what? — Living by faith means getting wet every once in a while
19. Think of Peter: [Matthew 14]
  - a. there in the boat with the other disciples
  - b. Jesus told them to meet Him on the other side
  - c. so they sailed out to middle of the Sea of Galilee
  - d. middle of the night, straining at the oars
  - e. along comes Jesus, walking on the water
  - f. Peter sees Him and says - “Me too!”
  - g. Jesus calls him; he steps out and starts walking on the water too
  - h. but, He takes his eyes off Christ, and sinks
  - i. Calls out to Jesus, who saves him
  - j. why did Jesus do this? Why did He come out to them walking on the water?
  - k. I think it was to see who would venture to come to him on the water too.
  - l. Peter, impetuous Peter, jumps out of the boat and starts to walk
  - m. later, back in the boat with a blanket around his shivering shoulders, I’m sure a couple of the other disciples said, “So Peter, when are you going to teach us to walk on water.” [snicker-snicker]



- n. but at least Peter had taken the risk
  - he got out of the boat
  - at the word of Christ
  - and he walked on water
  - sure he was wet now
  - but still, he had known the experience of walking on water

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. A Life Of Faith

1. The Christian life is a life of faith
2. But the faith of the Christian is not a dull witted well wishing in a land of make believe
3. True faith is a tough minded decision to trust the God who cannot lie
4. It is a decision to live by the word of God no matter what the eye may see or the ear may hear
5. Paul says to the Corinthians - We walk by faith, NOT by sight

#### B. Where Is God Leading You?

1. Is Jesus beckoning you as He did to Peter
2. Like Peter, have you asked the Lord to lead you, and now that He has shown you where to go, you find yourself gripping the side of the boat
3. The water is cold and dark, the waves are high and threatening
4. If Jesus bids you, He will give you the feet to walk on top of the waves