

A New Path, Joshua 3:1-5

- I. Another Year
 - A. Another calendar year, yet everything is the same
 - 1. Kids go to the same school
 - 2. Keeping the same plans for life
 - 3. But a new year offers a starting point for a new beginning
 - B. In our text, Joshua affirms that they “have not passed this way before”
 - 1. Moses had led them for 40 years through the wilderness
 - 2. At this point, they were on the border of a new country
 - C. Like Israel, we are entering a new way – a new year, a new path
 - D. There are new experiences to face, new problems to solve, further trials to endure, new temptations to meet, new sorrows to bear, new opportunities to grasp, new tasks to perform, new blessings to enjoy
 - E. We can expect (at least) three things on this new path
- II. Test our Faith
 - A. A new path will test our faith
 - B. Israel faced some tests
 - 1. They face a swollen river Jordan to cross
 - 2. Joshua 3:14–17 (ESV) 14 So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, 15 and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), 16 the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. 17 Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.
 - 3. They faced Jericho’s intimidating walls on the other side
 - a. The residents of Jericho knew that Israel was crossing the Jordan to take the land
 - b. Israel even sent two spies over to check things out in Jericho
 - 4. There were giants in the land to fight and cities to conquer
 - C. We face obstacles in faith, too.
 - 1. God’s discipline
 - a. Hebrews 12:1–11
 - b. Remember, the author writes Hebrews to Jews who were forsaking Christ and returning to behaviors according to the Law of Moses
 - 2. Satan’s attacks
 - a. Job chapters 1 and 2
 - i. First, Satan takes Job's property and all his children
 - ii. Job 1:22 (ESV) 22 In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

- iii. Second, Satan attacks Job's health
 - iv. Job 2:10 (ESV) 10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this, Job did not sin with his lips.
 - b. I know this is an extreme illustration, but if we give in and let Satan win, the results are eternally devastating!
 - 3. And, of course, we bring problems upon ourselves all the time with our less-than-optimal decisions
 - a. We should always look to God's word to help us make decisions and not our desires
 - b. God's answer to any problem is always the correct answer
- III. God's Provision
- A. A new path will point to God's provision
 - B. Isaiah 30:19–25 (ESV) 19 For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you. 20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. 21 And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left. 22 Then you will defile your carved idols overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images. You will scatter them as unclean things. You will say to them, "Be gone!" 23 And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and bread, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous. In that day your livestock will graze in large pastures, 24 and the oxen and the donkeys that work the ground will eat seasoned fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. 25 And on every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.
 - 1. Trusting in God's provision can be challenging for us, especially when we don't think we have what we need
 - 2. God promises us that if we seek Him first, we will always have what we need (not what we think we need)
 - C. God's will for us connects with the way to accomplish it
 - 1. When God says "go," He will provide a way for us
 - 2. What God says "do," He will give us an opportunity, ability, and resources to accomplish it
 - 3. Philippians 4:19 (ESV) 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
 - 4. 2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV) 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.
 - 5. He goes before us as a Shepherd does the sheep
 - 6. John 10:2–4 (ESV) 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him, the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

D. Seek God and His Kingdom first, then trust in His promised provision

IV. Certainty

A. A new path offers certainty

B. Life is full of uncertainty!

1. Wealth is uncertain – have you been following the markets? Up, down, up, down
 - a. Proverbs 23:4–5 (ESV) 4 Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist. 5 When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven.
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:17–18 (ESV) 17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,
2. Friendships are uncertain
 - a. In today's polarizing atmosphere (cancel culture), it doesn't take much to alienate a 'friend.'
 - b. We have become a 'one mistake' society; anything we get offended by, we 'cancel'

C. Our new path is certain

1. God is certain
 - a. We have seen Him keep his promises throughout the entirety of Scripture
 - b. He has never broken a promise (remember that when thinking about God's provision)
2. Jesus is certain
 - a. He is the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation
 - b. His spilled blood washes us clean and gives us an eternal home with Him
3. The Church is certain
 - a. You may think, with the many denominations and different interpretations of Scripture, that the church will eventually die out
 - b. Matthew 16:18 (ESV) 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell (*hades*) shall not prevail against it.
 - c. Death cannot even stand against the Church that belongs to Christ
 - d. And because the saved (the church) is certain, so is heaven
4. Heaven is certain
 - a. Philippians 1:21 (ESV) 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:1 (ESV) 1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

V. Our New Path

A. As we walk into a new year, we will face trials; we will need God's provision, and we will need the certainty of Jesus and all He provides for us

B. Choose Him and His path this new year!