Next Is Now - Part Two

# Get Ready

## (Joshua 1:1-5)

As we begin part two of our message series Next Is Now, this is such an exciting moment because everything is moving, everything is in transition, that is everything but God; everything is changing but God. You see, the people of God are in transition, they’re leaving their nomadic lifestyle, and are on the threshold of a new beginning after having been homeless for 40 years. And while this is exciting and full of potential, it’s also very scary and difficult, because now they’re transitioning from living in tents, traveling around like gypsies, to being owners and possessors of land.

Now, the land that they were about to take possession of was rightfully theirs, but they have no memory of it because their ancestors left there over 400 years before. And so, they are coming home, but the scenery is all brand-new, because they’ve never been here before. They’re on the edge of the Promised Land, facing a new future without their leader, but they don’t have any point of reference because Moses is dead. The man who had led them for 40 years, the man who had stretched his staff out over the Red Sea causing it to part so that they could cross over on dry ground, the man who had met with God and brought them the 10 Commandments was gone.

And so, this wasn’t just any leader, Moses was in a class by himself, because God had said, to other prophets I reveal myself in visions, I speak to them in dreams, but not Moses…

*“This is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles…” (Numbers 12:7-8).*

And so, Moses was a man of power and authority, and God showed Moses things that he would not show anybody else.

Moses was in a category by himself. It was Moses that brought them the plans for the tabernacle. It was Moses that prayed for bread and manna fell down from heaven. It was Moses that turned the bitter waters to sweet. It was Moses that prayed for meat and God sent quail from heaven. It was Moses that prayed for God to forgive Israel of their sin. You see, whenever they had a problem, Moses was their go to guy. Whenever they needed something, it was always Moses, but the problem was that Moses went up on the mountain and never came back.

Now they’re trying to figure out what to do, because they don’t know what to do without Moses. They can’t even imagine what life is going to be like without Moses. He is all that they have ever known and now they don’t know where he is, they don’t know what happened to him, and so God had to tell them in Joshua chapter 1,

*“The Lord said to Joshua… "Moses my servant is dead” (Joshua 1:1).*

This morning I want to talk to you about getting ready for what God has next in your life. The book of Joshua is one of my favorite books in the Old Testament, because it’s a book of power and movement. There’s nothing superficial about it, nothing super religious or ritualistic, but it’s just about the people of God taking over the land. And so, it’s a book of permission as he tells Joshua in verse two,

*“Now then, you and all these people, GET READY to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them — to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates — all the Hittite country — to the Great Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Joshua 1:2-5).*

When I think about this directive to Joshua, what he was doing in a literal sense is similar to what we do in our lives spiritually. He’s talking about inheriting land, possessing land, and yet in a spiritual sense we are inheriting eternal life, we are establishing the kingdom of God, and the interesting thing is that both of them take a lot of courage. In fact, that’s why Peter encourages us in his second letter saying,

*“(God’s) divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Peter 1:3-4).*

In other words, when you put your faith in the person of Jesus Christ, you experience God’s divine power, and you are born into the family of God. And this faith in Jesus Christ unlocks God’s very great and precious promises, therefore as you take possession of them, as you walk in faith, you are literally stepping into your inheritance, because you are participating in the divine nature. This is not only a powerful truth of the gospel, but it’s a transforming truth, a liberating truth, because “this is everything we need for life and godliness.”

But, before I get ahead of myself, let’s back up and look at the literal, physical, promised inheritance to the people of God. The Israelites were almost to the Promised Land and now Moses is gone. For 40 years, their fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers were looking forward to getting to this place, now they’re this close to the promise, they’re almost there and God says,

*“Moses my servant is dead…” (Joshua 1:2).*

When they heard that, they broke down, they started crying, ripping their clothes, grieving and mourning for days. The days turned into weeks and weeks turned into a month. The Bible says that they,

*“Grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days…” (Deuteronomy 34:8).*

And so, they were heartbroken, because this was like the worst imaginable thing that could ever happen. They’re almost there and now Moses is gone. They had walked every step of the way with him in the hot blistering heat of the desert. And now suddenly Moses is dead and so they were traumatized because true leadership is a gift from God. I’m not talking about titles or positions, but true leadership.

If you’ve ever had a spiritual father or mother, you know that it is a gift from God, no matter whether it’s in the house, in the company, in the church or the business. True spiritual leadership is a blessing, it’s a gift of God, and Moses was a leader. When he pointed his staff things happened, when he raised his hands his enemies were defeated, but now he was dead.

And so, the Israelites were mourning, crying, and wondering how can we go forward without Moses? The Bible says that for 30 days God let them grieve, questioning who they were without Moses, until finally God said that was enough,

*“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Joshua 1:5).*

But now they’re standing on the threshold of the Promised Land, everything that they have known is about to change, and when everything starts changing, change is scary isn’t it? How many of you would agree that change brings tension, change brings stress, and change brings anxiety?

And so, for us to overcome, to be successful in transition, we’ve got to have faith because you don’t have facts to stand on. Everything that you knew, everything that you depended on, everything that you worked with, all of your facts are gone and so you’ve got to believe in something, because you can’t see, you don’t know, and you’re not sure. And so, we need faith when dreams die, when the vision fades, and when leaders die, so that we can move into the unseen. So that we can step with confidence into what is next.

At this point, for the Israelites, next is now, because they knew how to wander, but they didn’t know how to build. They knew how to survive in the wilderness, but they didn’t know anything about harvesting fruit in the promised land. They knew how to push out other nomadic people, but they didn’t know how to drive out the people that were dwelling in the land, and they didn’t have any point of reference for what was next.

This is the exactly the point in life when faith is the most relevant because…

*“Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).*

Because faith is complete trust in God, it is believing that God will do what he said no matter what the situation looks like. And so, we walk by faith and not by sight and it’s that precious faith that has its greatest power when things are falling apart all around us. It’s faith that gives us confidence when the future is uncertain and everything that you had depended upon is giving away. You see, when you run out of Moses, when you run out of leadership, when you run out of bread, when you run out of answers, that’s when you discover God. When everything that you are leaning on has given away and all you have is God, all you know is God, all you see is God, all you understand is God, and if God doesn’t do it, it’s not going to happen. That’s when verse five becomes so powerful.

*“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you…” (Joshua 1:5).*

That is the only thing in the Israelites life that is not changing and this text is the only thing that has the ability to be a stabilizing influence in the next days, weeks and months. And next is now, even though the geography is changing, how they see themselves is changing, their leadership is changing as they transition from Moses to Joshua. And so, everything’s destabilized, everything’s in disarray, and the only thing they could count on, the only thing they really needed was the promise: “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you…” (Joshua 1:5).

You see, God says to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14). And that’s all that we need, everything else can change, but "I AM WHO I AM”. In other words, I’m still here, I’ve still got you, and I’m still with you. I’m still here in that new job, in that new city, in that new school and in that new church and I’ve got you. Your location may have changed, your vocation may have changed, but I AM. As I was, so shall I be. And so, you may be in a new relationship, but he’s got you. You may be facing another battle, another struggle, another lap around the desert, but “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you…” (Joshua 1:5).

This isn’t for those of you who want to feel sorry for yourself, who have made up your minds that you are going to die in the wilderness, because you don’t need this message. This message is for those of you that are pressing on toward what is next. You see, next is now, not that we have already been made perfect, but we are pressing on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of us. And so, this message is for those who would say I’m scared, but I’m going. I’m uncertain of what’s next, but I’m going. And in order for you to find the courage to go ahead, you’ve got to find an absolute, something immovable, unshakable, and that absolute is God.

No matter what season of life you’re in, no matter who has hurt you, betrayed you, or lied to you. No matter who has walked away, died in the wilderness, went up on the mountain and never came back, God says in verse five,

*“I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Joshua 1:5).*

This is so important to remember and I hope you can feel the power of this text, because there isn’t anything like a promise when you’re left all alone in the wilderness. But the promise isn’t that you won’t have to cry, it’s not that you won’t have struggles, the promise is that he will never leave you nor forsake you. The promise is I will be with you, the promise is his presence, and the Lord tells Joshua in verse two,

*"Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them — to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses” (Joshua 1:2-3).*

And so, the promise is not just the land, it’s the presence of God and he says, “Get ready.” For those of you growing up, moving out, get ready. Those of you wondering what is next, trying to figure out who you are, do you have what it takes to succeed, all God says is, “I will be with you.”

You want to be a good mother, but you don’t know how, get ready. Maybe you’re getting older, you’re beginning to experience changes in your life and you’re not so sure of yourself anymore; you’re uncertain about all the things that are happening to you, things that nobody told you about, you didn’t know that was going to happen. Get ready, because God promises, “I will be with you.”

No matter who you are, where you are, or what you have done, God says, “They might leave, but I’m not leaving.” She may forsake you, but I will not forsake you. Just because he left, that doesn’t mean that I left, I’m still with you, I’m still opening doors, I’m still making ways. I’ve got you in the hospital, I’ve got you in your classroom, I’ve got you in your marriage, I’ve got you in your weaknesses.

That’s the promise of God. I won’t forsake you when you’re stumbling, when you’re falling, I won’t leave you when you’re broke and broken. I won’t run away when you’ve let me down. I will be with you. And so, as you get ready to step out into the uncertainty of what’s next, you’ve got to lean on that promise, because that’s the one thing that the devil can never take away from you; it’s the presence of God.

He says, get ready to cross over, get ready for change, get ready for transition, get ready for a shift. Get ready to cross into something like you’ve never crossed into before. And so, this is a message for those who are on the threshold of change, everything is in transition, everything in your life is getting ready to shift. And God is getting ready to bring you into a place that you’ve never been, a situation that you’ve never experienced, circumstances that you’ve never explored, so that you would become dependent on him alone. Everything is moving and changing, that which you normally would’ve depended on is gone, and now God’s got you to himself and he says get ready.

No longer is he going to do it the way he used to do it for the Israelites. No longer is bread going to fall from heaven each morning. Moses is dead; get ready, stop crying for what used to be, stop being in love with yesterday. I’m not going to do what I used to do. He said,

*“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert…” (Isaiah 43:19).*

And so, a shift is coming, God is doing a new thing, the former things have passed away and the new has come. Stop craving that which is gone, stop crying over what is over, and get ready because I’m doing something new.

He says, get ready, because in three days you’re going to cross the Jordan, in three days I’m going to make you into a new kind of people. You’re never going to wander again moving here and there. In three days I’m going to stabilize you, and so get ready to cross into the land I am about to give you, because the old is gone and the new has come. And so, now they’re going to have to take it, they’re going to have to own it, not just dreaming about it, but possessing it. In other words, God has given it to them, but they are going to have to claim it, they have to go in and take possession of it.

In order for them to be ready for what God is going to do they are going to have to change what they have time for. You’ve got to change your priorities, who you listen to, what you feed on, and what you let pour into your spirit has got to change. There’s got to be a shift, a change in thinking, because this is new, he has given them the land, and things aren’t going to be like it used to be.

And so, here they are standing on the shore of the Jordan, looking over at the promised land, wondering how they’re going to take it, but he’s already told them. He said, “I will be with you when you take it. I will be with you when you possess it, because I will never leave you nor forsake you.” And so, they’re not more than conquerors because they’re so courageous, they’re not overcomers because they’re so strong, but because God is with them.

It’s a different perspective because the battle is the Lord’s. And in verse three he said, “I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses” (Joshua 1:3).

*“I have given you the land, I have given you your future, I have given you your destiny, now take possession of it. I have given you your opportunity. I have made a way for you. No one will be able to withstand you.” And so, God is bringing them down to the bank of the river, bringing them to the edge of the Jordan, and he says get ready.*

As we close, we’re standing at the river, whatever that obstacle is for you, and the promised land is on the other side. We’re getting ready to cross over, we’ve never been this way before, but here we come. Next is now, this is our future, this is our promise, this is our destiny. Now we’ve just got to pray, we’ve got to trust God, we’ve got to move forward in faith, knowing that he is with us. And so, let’s go to God in prayer, trusting that he knows what he’s doing, even when we don’t. Let’s pray together.

Pastor John Talcott

Christ’s Community Church

303 West Lincoln Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

September 20, 2020

(301) 447-4224

[www.cccaog.org](http://www.cccaog.org)

*Graphics, notes, and commentary from LifeChurch, Ministry Pass, PC Study Bible, Preaching Library, and Sermon Central. Scripture from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.*