

Crossing the Jordan

Introduction

Before beginning a new series, there's a pause to share a specific word the eldership sensed God giving during a leaders' evening of worship and prayer—a word that became clearly meant for the whole congregation, not just the leaders. It opens with a personal question: have you ever stood at the edge of something God promised, sensing it was close and real, knowing He was asking you to get ready? That is exactly where Israel stood.

The scene is set from **Joshua 3:1** — *"Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before they crossed over."* This was a people who had come a long way: 400 years of slavery in Egypt, a dramatic rescue, and God setting their faces toward a land flowing with milk and honey. A striking detail from Deuteronomy 1 stands out — *"It takes only eleven days to travel to the promised land."* Eleven days became forty years; a whole generation lived and died in the wilderness, and their children knew nothing but sand, manna, and survival. Now that new generation reaches the last barrier—the Jordan—and God gives a single instruction before they can cross:

Joshua 3:5 — *"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."*

Not strategize, build, or fight—just set yourselves apart. The crossing isn't only corporate; God wants to do it individually in each person, and the crossing only happens for those who are ready. God won't rush you across before the inner work is done, because He loves you too much to move you geographically and leave you unchanged.

What did the desert do to Israel?

Forty years of wilderness didn't just affect where Israel lived—it rewired how they thought, getting into their assumptions, reflexes, and the way they saw God, themselves, and every obstacle. In Numbers 13 the ten spies returned saying they saw giants and felt like grasshoppers—the land was everything God promised, but they could only see it through desert eyes. That same lens may still be alive in the room. A desert mindset doesn't automatically stay behind you; it travels with you and quietly recreates the very thing you were trying to leave. That's exactly why God stops Israel at the Jordan and calls them to consecrate.

The River

Joshua 3:15 tells us the Jordan *"overflows all its banks during harvest."* This was a raging, flooded, impossible river—and Israel stood on the bank with no boats, no bridge, no plan. This is what the human mind does in front of the impossible: start problem-solving, look for a shallow point, build rafts, wait for the water to drop. How many are standing at a flooded river right now—a marriage in flood, a financial mountain, a health report, a calling bigger than their capacity? Israel had no idea what God would do, and it's precisely there, with no plan, that God says consecrate yourselves. God doesn't always show the miracle before asking for the obedience—He asks for consecration first, and then, in the space it creates, does what only He can do.

Part Two — Consecration and Why It Changes Everything

Returning to Joshua 3:5 — *"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you."* Consecration isn't a religious ceremony but a deliberate decision to set yourself apart, clear out what doesn't belong, surrender what you've been gripping, and reorient toward God before you move. There are two dynamics—one yours, one God's—and you need to know the difference.

The First Dynamic — What You Can Do. Romans 12:2 — *"Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* Paul says renew your *mind*, not your circumstances. The danger is that a long-held desert mindset stops feeling like a mindset and starts feeling like a personality: scarcity feels like wisdom, complaining feels like honesty, a slave identity feels like just the way things are. So the first work of consecration is to identify, name, and confront it specifically—the fear you've called wisdom, the offence you've called discernment, the scarcity you've called realism. What you cannot name you cannot surrender. The promised land doesn't fix desert thinking; desert thinking infects the promised land. You can cross with desert thinking still running and spend your life recreating Egypt. That is your side: name it, confront it, bring it to the altar.

The Second Dynamic — What Only God Can Do. Then you reach the line where human effort ends and Holy Spirit territory begins. You can name the fear but can't dissolve it by willpower; you can choose to forgive but can't manufacture the freedom that follows; you can surrender the offence but can't produce the healing. Israel could identify the giants and step toward the Jordan, but they could not part the river—only God could. Many believers get stuck here: they confess, surrender, show up faithfully, and wonder why the water hasn't moved. Sometimes the answer is simply that you've done your part—now trust God for His. The actual transformation is holy ground where no technique or effort can reach. Bring both dynamics: your honesty and courage to name what needs naming, and then open your hands and create space for God. Israel stood with confronted mindsets and surrendered hearts, and God parted the water. They did what they could; God did what only He could; and together they crossed.

Part Three — The Step

Joshua 3:13 — *"As soon as the priests who carry the ark set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap."* The water did not part first. The priests stepped into a flowing river, and *then* it parted—when the soles of their feet touched the water. This is one of Scripture's most important principles: obedience precedes clarity. You won't always see the full picture before God asks you to move; consecration produces the courage to step anyway, and the step unlocks the miracle. God isn't going to part the water and then invite you in—He's inviting you in so He can part the water.

Part Four — What You Are Crossing Into

The whole journey—Egypt, the desert, the Jordan, the crossing—was never primarily about the land but about the people. God wasn't trying to get Israel into the promised land; He was trying to get the promised land into Israel. He wanted a people so consecrated and free from the desert that the nations would see not a successful tribe but the living God. That is what consecration produces—not a better version of you, but a more visible version of Him.

John 7:37-38 — Jesus says, *"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me — rivers of living water will flow from within them."* Not a trickle—rivers, flowing outward into marriage, family, life group, city. You cannot give what you don't have, but when you cross you will have something real to give. What flows from a crossed-over life is

described in Isaiah 61: binding up the broken hearted, proclaiming freedom for the captives, comforting all who mourn, beauty instead of ashes. This is not a job description for a select few but the natural overflow of a consecrated life.

Ministry Moment — The Altar of Remembrance

Drawing on Joshua 4: after Israel crossed, God told Joshua to take twelve stones from the riverbed and build a marker, so that when children asked "what do these stones mean?" they could answer that Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground—God made a way, right here. Let today be your own stone of remembrance. Ways to respond: communion (to receive forgiveness and release someone), water (a symbol of leaving something behind and not carrying it forward), oil and prayer (to be anointed for what God is calling you into, not alone), or simply staying to worship. There's no rush—just space for the Holy Spirit to move—because one day, when the next desert or giant comes, you can return to this stone and say God met you there, and if He did it then, He will do it again.