

[1]
Getting Ready for the Mission
Joshua 2
February 14, 2016, Jeff Germo

Last week we saw that God's mission for Joshua was to cross the Jordan and take the land. The Hebrew word for "land" is mentioned over 2500 times in the Old Testament. Sometimes it's used for other things than the promised land, but the vast majority of the time it refers to the land that God had promised to Israel. It is a very important and major theme in Old Testament theology. Remember the **threefold promise** God gave Abraham and which was in turn given to Isaac, and reaffirmed to Jacob, and Moses and then finally to Joshua?

[2]

God said, "pack up your things and go where I will show you and I will give you; **Land**, **Descendants**, and **Blessing**. The land was first covenanted to Abraham in Genesis 12, with the promise that it would be filled with his descendants, and that they would be blessed in that land. And not only would he and his descendants be blessed, but the whole earth, that is all people until the end of time, would be blessed through him.

[3]

Genesis 12:3 (NLT)

³ I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

So, we are all benefactors of this covenant that God gave to Abram.

And so now, Joshua and the second generation of Israelites, after coming out of Egypt, are sitting on the east side of the Jordan River getting prepared to cross the river and finally take the land that God had promised their forefathers, almost seven hundred years earlier. This was a very long preparation time.

Before we read Joshua 2 let's remind ourselves of what has happened up to this point in the history of Israel.

[4]

God showed up to **Abram** in Genesis 12, as we have already mentioned, and told him that he has been chosen to become a great nation that would bless all peoples on earth. He would be given land, descendants and blessing, more than he could ever imagine. This new people would become Israel.

When this call came to Abram, he and his wife Sarai were already senior citizens and unable to have children because **Sarai was barren**. But, because he believed God, he packed up all his belongings and his family and left the land that he grew up in and headed out not knowing what lay ahead of him. The only thing he knew was that this new God who called himself Yahweh told him that all of these things would be his if he obeyed.

Years passed and they still had no child of their own so Sarai, in desperation, took things into her own hands and suggested a plan to Abram that he should sleep with her maid-servant

and have their family through her. She thought they should give a bit of a kick start to God's plan, because he obviously wasn't up to the task.

Abram subserviently agreed that this is a good idea. They consequently had a child through **Hagar** and named him **Ishmael**, but God told them that he is not the one who will carry the seed that will bless the world. **The seed would come from Sarai**. God then reconfirmed his covenant to them. At this point Abraham was nearly 100 years old and Sarai was about 90.

God was good to his promise. He superseded what nature says is impossible. They gave birth to a son and named him **Isaac**. He was their promised child who would be the seed that would make Abraham's descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky or the sand in the sea.

[5]

They hung on to this promise even when **God tested Abraham's faith** by asking him to slay his son. God miraculously rescued the promised child by providing an **alternative sacrifice**. Isaac was redeemed. The promise of descendants was secured, and now they looked forward to the promise of land as well. But, all in good time. First they **needed the people to fill up the land**. Isaac found himself a wife who gave birth to **Jacob**.

[6]

Jacob had the twelve sons which the **twelve tribes** of Israel are named after. One of his sons was named **Joseph**, who was a precocious gaffer who kept having dreams that his brothers and father would one day bow down to him.

[7]

He had a habit of telling his brothers these lofty dreams. They thought, probably rightly so, that he was an arrogant little brat and decided that life would be better without him so they sold him to some slave merchants who, in turn, **sold him to the Egyptian hierarchy**.

[8]

Through the sovereignty of God, **Joseph rose to power in Egypt** to become second in command under the pharaoh. God gave Joseph great wisdom and the ability to interpret dreams. He set up a taxation system in Egypt to prepare for a famine that he predicted would soon devastate the land.

[9]

When the **famine hit**, his family, desperate for food, came to Egypt for some relief.

After a bit of drama Joseph set them up, with the blessing of the Pharaoh, to live in a fertile part of Egypt. **Joseph died**, as did the Pharaoh who was sympathetic to his family. The **new Pharaoh** was not so compassionate towards them and instead forced them to become **slaves** for the great Egyptian Empire. They were brutally tyrannized, but **the more oppression they received, the more they reproduced**.

Over four hundred years passed and the number of Israelites grew to a couple million. They cried out to Yahweh for some relief from their brutal slave drivers. Keep in mind that all this time they likely knew their history. They knew the promise of land God had given Abraham. That **promise of descendants was now fulfilled**, at least in part. But, **what about the land? What about the blessing?**

So **God raised up a deliverer** to rescue them and take them out from under the brutal hand of Egypt. **Moses** rightly believed that he was the one called by God, but, in his pride, he decided to take matters into his own hands. God sent him out to **school in the desert for forty years** of education, where he came to the end of himself, and finally realized that he does not have what it takes to do God's work.

[10]

After some convincing by God, **Moses reluctantly agreed to lead** this very stubborn and obstinate people. Through some amazing drama God delivered all two million plus Israelites out of Egypt.

[11]

He took them to the east side of the Jordan River. And across the river was the **promised land**. It is the land that they had been looking forward to for about seven hundred years. They could see it across the Jordan. Moses then sent out **twelve spies** to go and get the lay of the land. They came back and reported that the land is everything God had promised it would be. Ten of the spies claimed, though, that there were too many obstacles for them to overcome.

"We looked like grasshoppers compared to the people there," they said, obviously exaggerating. "The cities are fortified with huge walls around them and we do not have what it takes to do this thing that God has called us to." **They wanted to stay on the east side** of the Jordan where it was safe. **Two of the spies**, though, had a different perspective. Joshua and Caleb said, "No, if God told us to do this we can do it."

And so here they are now, in chapter two of Joshua **getting ready to fulfill the mission** God gave them to take the land across the Jordan. This was about seven hundred years of preparation to get them ready for this challenge.

So, let's read Joshua 2 in its entirety and then I want to draw your attention to some things that we need to know if we are going to be successful at fulfilling the mission that God has given us.

[12]

Joshua 2 (NLT)

¹ Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove. He instructed them, "Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho." So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night. ² But someone told the king of Jericho, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land."

[13]

³ So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: "Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land." ⁴ Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, "Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from. ⁵ They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them."

[14]

⁶ (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.) ⁷ So the king's men went looking for the spies along the road leading to the shallow crossings of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king's men had left,

the gate of Jericho was shut. ⁸ Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them.

[15]

⁹ “I know the Lord has given you this land,” she told them. “We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the Lord made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed.

[16]

¹¹ No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the Lord your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below. ¹² “Now swear to me by the Lord that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that ¹³ when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families.”

[17]

¹⁴ “We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety,” the men agreed. “If you don’t betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the Lord gives us the land.” ¹⁵ Then, since Rahab’s house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window. ¹⁶ “Escape to the hill country,” she told them. “Hide there for three days from the men searching for you. Then, when they have returned, you can go on your way.”

[18]

¹⁷ Before they left, the men told her, “We will be bound by the oath we have taken only if you follow these instructions. ¹⁸ When we come into the land, you must leave this scarlet rope hanging from the window through which you let us down. And all your family members—your father, mother, brothers, and all your relatives—must be here inside the house.

[19]

¹⁹ If they go out into the street and are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on people inside this house, we will accept the responsibility for their death. ²⁰ If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in any way.” ²¹ “I accept your terms,” she replied. And she sent them on their way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window.

[20]

²² The spies went up into the hill country and stayed there three days. The men who were chasing them searched everywhere along the road, but they finally returned without success. ²³ Then the two spies came down from the hill country, crossed the Jordan River, and reported to Joshua all that had happened to them. ²⁴ “The Lord has given us the whole land,” they said, “for all the people in the land are terrified of us.”

God gave Israel a mission. He has also given us a mission. I want you to notice some things we need to know if we are going to be successful at the mission to which God has called us.

The first thing is from verse 1.

Joshua sent two men as spies to scope out the land and see what lay ahead of them and he told them;

[21]

“Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho.”

[22]

1. Get to know your city and neighbourhood

Count the cost. This is just smart, common sense strategic planning. Find out the lay of the land. God has placed us here in Campbell River for a reason. Who lives here? What are the demographics? Do our church demographics reflect the demographics of the city? What are the interests of the residents of Campbell River? What do they know about us? What is their perception of us? What is their perception of God and the church?

Get to know your neighbours. If we are going to make a difference in our city it is going to be one person at a time. God has each of us here in our neighbourhoods to love and serve those nearby so they can see Jesus in us.

[23]

2. Know our mission

Joshua knew what his call was. The people he was leading also knew their mission very clearly. They knew why they were to cross the Jordan and take the land. They kept this mission front and centre. God told Joshua what his mission was in chapter 1, and said he was to meditate on God’s Word day and night. Don’t turn to the left or to the right. Keep the mission as your guide post.

[24]

Proverbs 29:18 (NLT)

18 When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is joyful.

What does this mean? It means if we don’t know where we are going everyone will just do what seems right in their own eyes. If we don’t keep the mission of God front and centre at all times we will be heading in the wrong direction. We’ll argue about things aren’t important. We’ll get distracted by a whole bunch of peripheral things instead of being about the business of the Jesus.

Everyone to close your eyes. On the count of three, I’d like all of you with your eyes closed to point north, and then keep your hands pointing that way when you open your eyes. What’s the point of that illustration? If we don’t know what direction we are heading some of us are going to end up going in the wrong way. Some of us may head in the right direction accidentally. But, we need to be purposeful about it. We need to know our mission and keep it front and centre at all times.

What’s our mission?

[25]

Matthew 28:19–20 (NLT)

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

What's our mission? To make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey everything that Jesus commanded us. What did he command us to do? Love God and people. As a church and as individuals we need to keep this mission in front of us at all times or we will be busying ourselves with things that are not important.

What's our mission? To bring people from pre-spiritual birth to spiritual maturity. This needs to be the standard by which we gauge whether or not we are doing the right things. Knowing what our mission is will keep us from whining and complaining about the church not meeting our needs. I've got news for you. The church is not here to make you comfortable. It's exactly the opposite. The church is here to help you get out of your comfort zone and get in the game. The church is here to reach out to those outside the church. You think I'm wrong? Read your Bible from front to back and then come and talk to me.

Everything we do in the church has to be about mission Jesus gave us. The mission is not just something for us as **a church** to use as a gauge, it is for us as individuals as well. We need to keep this in mind at all times. It is the reason we exist.

The next thing that we need to know if we are going to be successful at fulfilling the mission that God has given us is;

[26]

3. The mission comes from God

The mission of Joshua came directly from God. The mission is not some kind of airy fairy vision that that is cooked up by people. The mission comes directly from God. Now this has a number of implications.

[27]

First, if the mission is from God, you can bet that it will bigger than something we can do on our own. God's ways are higher than our ways. He is calling us to something we cannot do on our own. He is calling us to something that will take a supernatural dependence on his Spirit.

God called the Israelites, who were not a military people, to go and take a land that had fortified cities. Looming in their path to success was the walled city of Jericho, which was **the** citadel of the Jordan Valley. They did not have the military might or the weapons of war to defeat such a city. The mission that God gave them was bigger than what their resources could handle.

That seems to be how God works with his people. Why does he do that? So that he will get the glory. If Israel was going to go across the Jordan and take this land they would have to know that the mission was from God. It would be foolhardy to even think about doing it unless this was from God.

It's the same with us. We don't have the resources necessary to do the job that God has called us to. If you took a look at all the obstacles in front of us it would be easy to get discouraged and say, "We can't do it. The giants are too big. The walls are too high. The river is too deep. We are small in number. We don't have enough money, time, or people. We've never done it like that before.

Let's go back to Egypt. This is too hard." Yes it is too hard for us. That's the point. This mission is from God. He has called us to reach out to our community and bless them so they can meet Jesus, the Saviour of the world. This is not a game. The church is not a social club. This is not our idea. It is God's.

[28]

And if it is his idea he will provide everything that we need to do the job he has called us to.

Where is the money going to come from? Where are the people going to come from? Where is the energy going to come from? Well, it's going to start from right here. I believe that God has given us everything that we need to do what He has called us to.

Take a look at **Exodus**.

Things weren't going too well for Moses as he was attempting to convince the Pharaoh to let God's people go, and so he complains to God.

[29]

Exodus 5:22–6:8 (NLT)

22 Then Moses went back to the Lord and protested, "Why have you brought all this trouble on your own people, Lord? Why did you send me? 23 Ever since I came to Pharaoh as your spokesman, he has been even more brutal to your people. And you have done nothing to rescue them!"

Exodus 6

1 Then the Lord told Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. When he feels the force of my strong hand, he will let the people go. In fact, he will force them to leave his land!" 2 And God said to Moses, "I am Yahweh—the Lord."

[30]

What does Yahweh mean? First of all, it is the name of God. In its boiled down form it signifies his divine presence. He is who he is. He is self-existent. He had no beginning. He will have no end. He is Yahweh, the Divine Presence.

[31]

3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai—"God Almighty"—but I did not reveal my name, Yahweh, to them. 4 And I reaffirmed my covenant with them. Under its terms, I promised to give them the land of Canaan, where they were living as foreigners. 5 You can be sure that I have heard the groans of the people of Israel, who are now slaves to the Egyptians. And I am well aware of my covenant with them.

[32]

⁶ “Therefore, say to the people of Israel: ‘I am the Lord. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. ⁷ I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt. ⁸ I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the Lord!’ ”

“This is my mission,” God says, “and I will give you everything you need to do the job. I will be with you. I am Yahweh.”

The next thing that we need to know if we are going to be successful at the mission God has called us to is that he has gone ahead of us and will set up divine appointments.

[33]

4. God will set up divine appointments

Joshua sent the two spies into Jericho to stake it out and God set up a divine appointment with Rahab the prostitute. We don't know how they happened across her. Perhaps they saw her walking in the street and felt that she didn't pose a threat to them so they followed her home. They didn't know who she was. They took a chance. But, God, in his divine sovereignty set this up before hand.

How many believe that God can do the same today? He does and he will. He is working around us right now. He has a mission for us and he will set up divine opportunities for us to minister into the lives of people around us. I have heard stories from several of you how God has been doing this. He is at work all around us. Practice opening your eyes to what he is doing. Practice being aware of and obeying the nudgings of the Holy Spirit. Life gets exciting when you do this.

This leads me to my final point.

If we are going to be successful in the mission that God has called us to we need to know that,

[34]

5. God will use people and means that we wouldn't necessarily use

If you were God, would you have chosen a prostitute to use for his glory? Not likely. We are much more dignified than that. Now some people believe that Rahab was not really a prostitute, but an innkeeper, but there is really no reasonable explanation to substantiate this.

The Hebrew word that is used here always means prostitute or, at the very least, fornicator. And in both Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 in the New Testament Rahab is called a prostitute. She was a prostitute and God used her as an instrument to fulfill his mission for Israel.

The fact is, friends, that God will use people that we would write off as unusable. If God can use a prostitute to fulfill his mission don't you think that he can use you? We tend to write

people off way too quickly. We see them as damaged goods. It's terrible. God is so much more gracious than we are. There is nobody who is beyond the reach of God – nobody. You may be here this morning thinking that God can't use you because you aren't talented enough, or you don't have the right personality, or you are too fearful, or you aren't as gifted as other people, or you have a history that is less than perfect. You feel like you are damaged goods. There are only two kinds of people God won't use; those who won't let him and those who think they are good enough to do it on their own.

God has a mission for us at Campbell River Baptist Church. He has given us everything we need to do the job he has called us to. God wants to use each and every person in this room, and some others we don't even know about yet, to fulfill the mission he has called us to. It's not going to be easy. We will have opposition. We are going to have to step out and take some risks, but God will get the glory because his mission for us is bigger than anything that we can do without Him.



Crossing Jordan II
Getting Ready for the Mission
Joshua 2
Week of February 14th, 2016

Objective of this study: To understand more clearly what God's call is for us.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us]

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read **Isaiah 61:1-3** meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you.

Welcome/Word/Work (60 - 90 minutes)

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. Recap together the history of Israel from Genesis 12 up to Joshua 1. (Everyone who wants to contribute, add some pieces to the story. In other words, make sure one person does not tell the whole story.)
3. Read Joshua 2.
 - A. Get to know your city and neighbourhood.**
 - What do you know about the demographics of Campbell River?
 - What do you know about your neighbours? What is their perception of God and the church? What are their needs and interests?

B. Know our mission.

Sermon Quote: **"If we don't keep the mission of God front and centre at all times we will be heading in the wrong direction. We'll argue about things aren't important. We'll get distracted by a whole bunch of peripheral things instead of being about the business of the Jesus."**

-What is our mission as Christ-followers? (Check out Matthew 28:19-20 and John 15:9-17)

C. The mission comes from God.

Sermon Quote: **"If the mission is from God, you can bet that it will bigger than something we can do on our own. He is calling us to something that will take a supernatural dependence on his Spirit.... He has called us to reach out to our community and bless them so they can meet Jesus, the Saviour of the world. This is not a game. The church is not a social club. This is not our idea. It is God's."**

-Why is this something that is important to understand? What difference does it make?

D. God will set up divine appointments.

Sermon Quote: **“Practice being aware of and obeying the nudgings of the Holy Spirit. Life gets exciting when you do this.”**

-Do you have any stories of divine appointments you can share with the group?

E. God will use people and means that we wouldn't necessarily use.

Sermon Quote: **“You may be here this morning thinking that God can't use you because you aren't talented enough, or you don't have the right personality, or you are too fearful, or you aren't as gifted as other people, or you have a history that is less than perfect. You feel like you are damaged goods. There are only two kinds of people God won't use; those who won't let him and those who think they are good enough to do it on their own.”**

-Which of these fears can you relate to? Are there other fears you have about being used by God?

4. Spend the rest of the time praying that God would set up divine appointments and that you would learn to be sensitive to his nudgings.