

The Land Between (6)

Intro: When Darlene and I were dating: Her house...Young man in navy: "I know God wants me to reenlist" BUT
Terrified: In terrible Storm on Carrier "Rosie" Thought we were going to sink!
Made a deal with God: If you will take away fear, guarantee me I don't have to go out...I will reup!
I spoke w/o thinking...God doesn't work that way! First OBEY...THEN you see His hand at work!

Even as a very young man, still in bible college I had come to understand something of the nature and work of God
There was a LOT I didn't know about God...but I knew enough to Understand His Character and work in someone life
Even that early in my walk I was beginning to discern those small movements of the hand of God...understand how He works

That ability, the capacity to UNDERSTAND the Character of God and KNOW how He works is what made Joshua, the leader of Israel that we look at this morning, successful at navigating the Land Between.

Today I want to take a little different tact in our study of the Land Between. We have been looking at the *Don't's Today Do's*
There were only 2 of 600,000 men of age that entered the Promised Land. Even Moses didn't make it...Yet J and C did
Here is the Question: Why? What was it about them that made them successful...why did they succeed when all else didn't?

Truth: Knowing the Character of God and Understanding How He works helps you successfully navigate the Land Between!
Knowing: Not just ABOUT...but Clearly distinguishing His hand...His Voice...His movements, See it...Understand

Question: How did Joshua learn those things about God and His work?
3 Formative Experiences that Shed some light on what happened in his life...which will help us in ours!
Fancy term for it: Spiritual Formation: Those truths, experiences, realities that shape us spiritually.
When you look at Joshua's PRE-Wilderness life you see 3 critical experiences that shaped him.

1. Joshua Understood the Importance and Power of Prayer. (He really "got" it!) Ex 17:8-15 pg 52

- Vs 11: As long as...
- Vs 12: When Moses hands grew tired "Aaron and Hur"
- Vs 13: So JOSHUA overcame the Amalekite's with the sword"
- Vs 14: "And make sure that JOSHUA rehearses it" Tell it over and over and over and over!
- Vs 16: "For a hand touched the throne of Jehovah!"

Joshua's FIRST battle was won through prayer! Imagine what it must have been like to be down in the valley...when the realization solidified in his mind...my life is literally in the hands of Moses...It doesn't matter what I do...His prayer wins or loses the day.

Illus: We all agree that Prayer is absolutely...Yet...Many of us spend less than 5 minutes a day in prayer!
We KNOW we should...but we quickly and easily allow everything else to take first place.
Just this past summer, as we begin our Mission work in Woodland Beach we TALKED a lot about prayer...didn't DO it
And as a result while we had some successes in our work we didn't accomplish all that we wanted...LACK OF PRAYER

Zechariah 4:6 "This is the word of the LORD: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD"

2. Joshua Knew How to Patiently Wait Upon God. Ex 24:12-18 pg 58

- Joshua knew the struggle of waiting on God to move...He had waited before!
Alone...for 33 days...over a month he sat and waited for God and Moses
- Joshua ALREADY knew the consequences of failure in the Land Between!
Moses/w God in the cloud...Aaron and Hur w/People; Joshua...Between
- He had seen firsthand what it was like to give up on God, and take matters in your own hands.
Ex 32:1ff "So long in coming down" they decided to move themselves (Golden Calf) (Death/Judgment)
Vs 8: "They have been QUICK to turn away from me!"

Joshua knew first hand what happens when we give up on God! He had seen the sin and the consequences of not waiting.
So, Joshua understood that God works in His time, not in ours. That is one of the most difficult lessons of the spiritual life.
Listen. The RIGHT Action taken at the WRONG time...is still WRONG!

Imagine what would have happened if the Israelites marched into the sea a day earlier...or later!

WE have to learn to listen to God...to pay attention to the undercurrents...to be sensitive to His Spirit.

Joshua did that....He spent a month waiting...while everyone else down in the valley was abandoning their faith...He strong

Isa 40:31 "but those who wait on the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

3. Joshua Knew How to Abide In the Presence of God. Ex 33:7-11 pg 64

- Joshua did not leave the tent!
~Guard
~Watch and notify Moses that the cloud descended?

Whatever you have him doing, know this. Joshua hung out with God! He STAYED there...He parked himself in the presence of God and He wouldn't leave! No indication that Moses told him to stay there. You would EXPECT that Joshua would have gone back to the camp to be with Moses while he fulfilled his duties...but he stayed with the tent of meeting.

Imagine with me for a moment what it must have been like: To be alone at the tent...with the presence of God so real...so close that you could sense when He was about to move.

Think about what must have happened in his heart...what he must have witnessed.

- ~Always the FIRST to see that God was moving
- ~Always able to watch...and support...and encourage Moses
- ~Got the word of God Firsthand! He didn't have to have it filtered
- ~Learned from both the successes and failures of Moses (Do this...DON'T do that)
(One of the first Pastors I served with: 3 yrs. First two what to do...last one...What NOT to do!)

That's what happens when you spend time with God. You don't have to have someone else interpret everything for you. You don't have to have someone explain. You don't have to have someone guide you. God is doing that firsthand

*Ps 91:1 ¶ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*

John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

CONCL:

Truth: Knowing the Character of God and Understanding How He works helps you successfully navigate the Land Between! Joshua had those things because of the way his spiritual life had developed.

- Prayer: Amalekites: He knew how to depend upon God
- Waiting: He knew how to wait for God...and not faint, or grow weary...or get worn out
- He knew how to Abide: To simply be present with God

Imagine with me for a moment how different YOUR life would be this week if you had those things!

- Prayer was not something that you talked about...did at dinner...but a time when you touched the throne of God
- Waiting was not a burden...but a breathless anticipation, confident assurance that God WILL move!
Heb 11:1 Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen!
- You could Abide with God...Everyone else can be gone...but you are WITH Him
And when He begins to move...you see it first...When He speaks...you Hear it...Presence Descends...already there

Now...multiply that image by 500...and you have a church that will change its community

This week:

- Commit to Prayer...Real Prayer
- Wait for God to move
- Abide in His presence...Find a spot...15 mins a day...quietly invite Him to come to you...Just Hang out