

How to See Walls Come Down

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Joshua 3-6
Preached On: Sunday, September 15, 2019

Crossroads Ministries
301 S. 8th Street
Opelika, Alabama 36801

Website: www.fbcopelika.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

Tonight we're going to be in the book of Joshua, chapters 3 and 4. Now I announced that we were going to talk about the walls of Jericho coming down tonight, we're not actually going to go marching around Jericho tonight. I'm sorry. I know many of you wanted to get up, use a visual illustration, all walk around, shout together. What we're gonna talk about tonight is what led to the walls coming down.

Now I'm one of those individuals and I know this doesn't surprise any of you, I'm a little bit different than most and that's okay. When I get on an airplane and I'm going on a cross-country or international flight where they give you movie choices, my immediate first response is to go to documentaries. Okay, I'm the only nerd in the room. I know that, that's okay. Let me tell you why I love documentaries, we know the end result, we know the story, we know what happened, we know what is reported, I love to know what went on behind the scenes, what were the decisions that were made, what were the conversations that were had, what were the circumstances that led to people doing what they did that led to the story that is so famous.

Well, in Joshua 6 we have the very famous story of the walls of Jericho coming down. By the way, it is the story of Jericho that is much like many stories in Scripture that humanity spends hundreds if not thousands of years trying to come up with every conceivable reason why it couldn't happen the way the Bible said it did, and then eventually a team of archaeologists discover that it happened just like the Bible said that it did. One of the unique things about Jericho is that when those walls came down, remember the biblical account says that they fell in on themselves. The walls, we would use the word imploded. They came in on themselves. And yet today you can go to that historical site and you can see that even though they've rebuilt the walls for tourist purposes, that they're all leaning inward. Why? Because they fell inward. That's the way that it took place, just like the Bible said.

Those stories that oftentimes we dispute for whatever rationale, it always come to light over time. They also serve as an example about walls in life and other scenarios that may not be physical but actually more vital to our lives, but tonight we go back to chapters 3 and 4 and I want to see what led to the falling down of the walls.

Now this morning if you're with us, we talked about that God had a promise, that God desired to do more with the Israelites in the days ahead than he'd ever done in days past. He had a process that was laid out very clearly, just do what he says. It is in chapter 3 and 4 that we see the Israelites doing exactly what he said and I want to take these chapters, we're not gonna read the totality tonight, we're gonna go in and read specific sections, and I want to see two things that happened in the Israelites' life that need to happen in our life if we want to see the walls come down. 1. We need to see God's plan. Now not just marching around Jericho. There was a plan before the plan. He put everybody together in a certain means before they actually started marching, and after we discover God's plan, we need to look at what's his perspective, how does he see what's happening differently than how we see it?

So let's begin with understanding God's plan. I want you to turn to verse 1 of chapter 3. It says,

1 And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

Now you've heard me say this once, you've heard me say it 100 times, but I'm gonna do it again: what does the word "all" mean? All means without exception, and so when we look at God's plan not just for going over the Jordan but for going around what we know as Jericho, it included everyone. There wasn't a certain special segment of people where the Lord said, "Well, if it's gonna happen and work, we've gotta use these folks." It says that all of them were gathered, all of Israel. These were those who did not die out in the wilderness. These were those who were so young of age that they had not disbelieved the promises of God, and by the way, I realize that tonight the majority of those who are listening are of a more mature age, most of our children are in other endeavors on campus, so allow me to go ahead and go there, if you did the Bible reading this week, did it not just make you shudder that they took all of Israel and they circumcised them all before they went into the Promised Land? You know, some of those folks were 38 years old. Wow is right. Okay, so, I mean, you were serious when you went over Jordan's stormy banks.

But why is it important that it included everyone? Because I think sometimes we fall into the trap of the Nicolaitans. You say what's the trap of the Nicolaitans? When you get to Revelation 2 to the church at Ephesus, it says there's a group of people that have risen up and they believed that because they are what we might call clergy members or ministers or pastors or theological teachers, that they somehow believe as the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the scribes, that they're more important to the Lord than everybody else. In fact, you take that word "Nicolaitans," it literally means "the victory over the laity," and I think oftentimes we can gravitate toward that and I think we misunderstand what Ephesians 4:11 and 12 was saying, it says the Lord called some to be apostles, he called some to be prophets, he called some to be evangelists, some to be pastors, some to be teachers. That's verse 11, do you know what verse 12 says, "For the equipping of the church for the work of the ministry."

I had a conversation with my boys the other night, we were discussing this concept and I cannot imagine because I never had to worry about it, I cannot imagine growing up as a child who is a son, or in some other people's cases a daughter of a pastor. Now I do teach people, I'm a PK, you know that, right? I'm a pharmacist's kid. I'm not a pastor's kid but I am a PK, a little bit differently, and I cannot imagine what that is like, the conversations that are on the ball teams and at school, because there's a certain level of pressure and expectations and what we call the fishbowl effect and such, but let me tell you what I told my three sons the other night that all of us need to hear, that those who are not pastors and ministers may, in fact, have the capacity to do a greater work of the ministry than those who are pastors, teachers and ministers. I want you to know in my own personal life, I've seen more ministry done on the back of a tailgate than I have in my office. When we get into real life with real people and real situations and real scenarios, that's when the real ministry is done and I think sometimes we say, "Well, I'm not a pastor. I'm not a teacher. I'm not a this, I'm not a that." Then, great, because when Israel went across the Jordan and when Israel went around Jericho, it wasn't just a certain set of them, though they may have been at the front of the line, it included all of them.

So when we talk about walls coming down, whatever those walls may be, they don't just come down for the pastors, they don't come just down for the prophet, it's for all of those who are called of God in covenant with the Lord, doing as he has commanded. The second thing I want you to notice, if you'll fast-forward to verse 12 of chapter 3 it says,

12 Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

When the Lord desires for walls to come down, the epicenter, the mechanism that he always starts with is what you and I know as the structure or the infrastructure known as the family. That is why the enemy, that is why Satan is so against what we know as the family. You realize that our culture right now, our dark world is doing everything it can to redefine and to destroy the family as we know it. I mean, it's gotten to the point where legally if you wanted to, you could probably marry your pet rock if you wanted to, you don't even have to claim affection or blood relationship to, because what we've done by redefining and reappropriating and redesignating things, what we've done is we've taken the structures that the Lord has put into place, we have taken the epicenter by which he began all things, and we've twisted it and turned it which, by the way, that is the definition of perversion, we've twisted and turned it so that it means that which we want it to mean in the flesh but contrary what it means in Scripture. The enemy, the devil has always attacked the family. Why? Because the family came before the church, the family came before Israel, the family came before any of those structures and he tells,

"Alright, I need you to bring men out of the 12 tribes." Well, that was their families. Now granted those 12 tribes were the extended family of the Israelites but the Lord's means, his way of doing things was to operate within the family structure. You see that in the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, you see it later on with Abraham and Sarah, you see the mistakes that could happen when David goes outside the family structure. How about

Solomon when he decides to redefine the family in his life, things went contrary to God's will and purpose, and the same thing happens for us. You know, one of the things that is so vital not just to me but hopefully many to you, is that our faith is enhanced by the church family but initiated and started and is at its core our own families.

For those of you here that were not able to participate, this afternoon was a true blessing on our campus as we took first graders, 50+ of them, and shall I say many of their wanting to take a nap younger siblings, and we allowed them to have an opportunity where we presented them a Bible, okay? It was a Bible on behalf of the church, but let me share with you, if you were not there, what I challenged them with is to take that Bible home as a family and mom and dad show their children what their favorite verses are. Walk them through the Scriptures and why it is so important to them.

In the book of Deuteronomy, there is that famous passage, "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one God," but you notice that in the context of that Scripture, it's in a family context. It says, "Talk about this when you get up in the morning, when you go to bed at night. Put it on the doorposts of your house." The Lord has always started his work in our lives among what you and I call the family. Now we've tried to redefine it, we've tried to destroy it, we've tried to do everything, however, allow me to remind those of you who may say, "Well, I grew up in a mess," Psalm 26:10 says when my mother and father forsake me, the Lord will lift me up. The Lord can provide those who may not be in blood relation to us that may actually be more family with us over time.

So when I speak of family, if you're here tonight or you're listening or watching and say, "Well, you don't understand. My family as far as my biological relations, it is a mess." Well, that is why we have the family of God. We are a surrogate family, is what we are, and we're able to come alongside and there are many in this midst who can be mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters but the world's trying to redefine the family because the enemy does not want the message of God to be propagated by way of the means that the Lord says so, which leads to the next thing: there are some very strategic individuals of which the Lord has called. And I'm just gonna go ahead and give you a political incorrect warning as I reread verse 12. "Now therefore take you 12 genderless people out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe someone who is genderless." Please note the humor and sarcasm. You know, it's interesting we live in a world today where we want to so redefine that we won't even declare that which is biologically obvious in our world.

What did the Lord say? He said, "When you get ready to go where I've told you to go, when you get ready to not only cross over but to march around Jericho, I need everybody involved. I need you grouped as families of faith, and then I need you to do something that the 21st century Western world cannot handle. Guys, I need you to step up first. That's what I need you to do." Now I want you to know, I'm not trying to nor would I desire it ever at any point to be disparaging toward the female gender, for after all, when Jesus Christ went to the cross, there were five people there of faith and four of them were women, 80% of those who believed were the women, and last time I checked it was the women who were there at the empty tomb first. Shame on the guys who didn't show up. But nonetheless, I don't know if you've noticed this but I have, and by the way, you know

I watch a lot of sports, have you ever noticed, let's just take football because we're in football season, that when somebody scores an incredible touchdown or makes an incredible interception or does something great on the football field, when the television cameras come over, the interviewers come over, I don't see it often, maybe you do, have you ever seen one of these great athletes say, "Man, I just want to thank my dad." You laugh, don't you, because who do they thank? Mom. Mom always gets the credit and rightfully so, but you have to ask yourself a question and, by the way, I would probably hurt my children if it was them and they thanked me and not mom because that would make my life a mess, but you do have to ask yourself a very important question: yes, mom was critical but you also have to ask the question, why no recognition of dad? I don't have to go through all the studies, I don't have to cite all the statistics but in our culture today, we not only have an absence of, we have been told very clearly that as a man, as a dad, as a husband, we are those who are ignorant, out-of-date, clueless, and we don't know what we're doing. That's what the world says, but what did the Lord say? He said, "Now therefore take 12 men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe of man."

You know, every now and then I get to have one of those experiences in ministry that just blesses me, and what I mean by that is you get to see something before your eyes, you get to hear with your ears the way that you hope it would be in all cases. In recent days, I had a scenario where a couple of our young children who had come to faith in Jesus Christ and they wanted to talk with me about the opportunity in days ahead of being baptized, something we do on a regular basis here and it's always exciting to walk through that process, but can I tell you why this one was special? Because as I'm sitting there talking with these young children and I'm asking them strategic questions, kind of walking through their testimony, I always flip the script to say, "Okay, you know all the answers, you know what sin is, you know what Jesus did, you know how to put all those pieces together," I asked this question, "Have you ever had a time in your life where you've prayed to Jesus and asked him to save you?" Well, typically I get a yes but this time, I don't know why but I asked this question, "Where were you and what did it sound like or look like?" And without batting an eye both of these young people said, "Oh, it was at night and I was with dad." Can I just tell you it blessed me? I looked at the dad and I said, "Dad, can I go ahead and conjecture here?" I said, "I'm gonna be willing to say it was a probably late night, very inconvenient and you were tired, right?" He said, "Yes, sir, all the above." And then I thanked him. I said, "Thank you." You see, we don't hear that a lot, we don't hear that it's dad that walked me through the plan of salvation, we don't hear that it was dad that encouraged me to go to church. I believe that every child in America needs to have a drug problem, their daddy needs to drag them to church. A lot of times it's momma dragging and, God bless, mom will bring them home, but I do think it's interesting here not just because it's Old Testament but the Lord said, "Okay, guys, when we step in the river Jordan, when we march around Jericho, I need you guys to take the lead."

I know it is politically incorrect, I know we live supposedly in a contemporary 21st century culture, and I know that people are probably gonna get upset about that, but here's news for you: don't get upset with me, get upset with God. I didn't say it, he did.

That being said, when God has a plan, it includes everyone, it always has as its central focus the family unit, and guys, whether we want to take the responsibility or not, he has called us to initiate spiritual activity in our families lives. That's what he has called us to.

So what is his perspective in this? I want you to back up to verse 4 of chapter 3, it says,

4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go:

What the Lord is telling them is, "You're about to go across the river Jordan and I need, the priests are gonna go in first and they're going to have the ark of the covenant and you need to have a space between you and it," I want you to notice the last statement of verse 4,

4 ... for ye have not passed this way heretofore.

You see, God's perspective actually creates kind of a predicament for us. He called the Israelites to go somewhere they had never gone before to experience that which they had never experienced before, and I teased with you this morning but I'm being very serious, there are words that are very dangerous to the Christian life and it's called "we've never done it that way before." If we only did that which we had done before, we would be stuck outside the Eastern gate of the garden of Eden because the Lord called Abraham to a place he had never been before. He called David to expand the kingdom to a place he had never been before. He called the apostles to go share the Gospel to places they had never been before. And what does he say here? "I need you to go where you've never been before."

It's interesting, I want you to turn a few pages to the right to the book of Judges, and the reason I said that there is a predicament here is that you and I, whether we realize it or not, we live in an age today where we have never been before. The book of Judges is famous for what we call the sin-cycle: the people of God cry out to God, he delivers them, they are very faithful to their relationship with the Lord, they begin to fall by the wayside, or as Jeremiah says, they begin to backslide, they reap the consequences of their sin, they're in the slop and the mud of life, they call out to God to help them, he helps them and then the process just keeps going. In Judges 2:10, I want you to read what it says, it says, "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." And the reason I say there's a predicament here, in verse 4 of chapter 3 of Joshua it says, "I need you to go where you've never gone before." Their fathers, their grandfathers, grandmothers, etc. had died out in the wilderness and were on the other side of the Red Sea in the land of what we know as Egypt. It had been almost 500 years since anybody in their lineage had set foot on the property outside of the two spies where they were about to go. They didn't have the reference point of sitting down around the campfire, sitting around in a meal and saying, "Tell me what it's gonna be like. What can I expect? Give me some wisdom. Give me some advice," because no one had

ever been there before. The problem with this is what we find in the book of Judges 2. The Israelites go into the Promised Land, we see the walls come down, we see victory after victory after victory and it says that all of those people who walked across the Jordan, all of those individuals who bore the ark, all those individuals who put up the stones, they all died out and it says that there was a generation who had never seen the works of the Lord.

Whether you realize it or not, in our context today, in our culture today, there have been times and there have been periods where there are brief movements of God in specific locations among specific people, but as far as a nation-wide, coast-to-coast revival or awakening, there is nobody here who knows anybody who knows anybody who is still alive who saw it with their own eyes. You know, we're actually kind of at the same place that the Israelites were before. If we seek a move of God, if we desire him to operate in our lives, we're actually saying, "God, I need you to take me somewhere where nobody knows what it looks like." We don't have access to pull aside the older generation and say, "Tell us what it was like at a D. L. Moody crusade. Tell us what it was like when revival swept through the land." Now there are pockets here and pockets there and little groups here, but I'm talking coast-to-coast, it takes an entire culture and turns it upside down for the Gospel. You and I are in the exact same predicament so when we look at God's perspective here, I want you to understand as we cry out and say, "God, it's bad, it's never been like this before," the Lord is able to say, "Oh, don't worry. I've seen it like this before. It happened in the book of Judges that was unfortunate result of the book of Joshua."

So what's the process? Verse 5 of chapter 3,

5 ... Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

I want to take two words, and for those guys that were part of our men's Bible study last week, this is your three minute nap time right here, okay, because we discussed it together last Tuesday, but I want to take two words that I think are very strategic for understanding this. When it says "sanctify yourselves," the book of 1 Corinthians 6:11 says that we have been washed, we have been sanctified, we have been justified. Titus 3:5 says we've been washed by the regeneration of the blood of Jesus Christ through the Spirit of God. Two words I want to share with you tonight, they're big words but they're important words: regeneration and sanctification. Regeneration means to be born again. It's exactly what Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 when he said, "You must be born again." Regeneration is a time and a place, an event in your life whereas we read in Colossians 1 last week, you went from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. When you are born, you are born one time. That's exactly what the Lord told Nicodemus. Regeneration is when you go from death to life as Ephesians 2 talks about. Regeneration is where you go from being seated in hell to be seated in the heavens. It is a one time experience and event in your and my and anybody's life. Sanctification is a process and at times it can get rough. Sanctification is the process by which you start looking more like the Lord and less like the world. Sanctification is the process of holiness.

You know, I think sometimes that we think we can just put it in neutral and see where the car leads us. That's not the case, you've got to engage the gear, you've got to be purposeful with holiness. Holiness does not come natural. So what does he tell the Israelites? "Okay, before you go across the river, before you eventually march around Jericho, you need to sanctify yourself." Basically what he's telling them is make sure there's no filth, there's no dirt, and there's no junk in your life.

If you don't believe me, go to chapter 7. Do you know what happens when they get around Jericho? In chapter 7, they take the spoils and what did the Lord say? They say eliminate everything except the treasures. Put them into the house of God, right? What did Achan do? He kept some of the treasure for himself and the Lord said, "Ah, there's filth in the camp, there's sin in the camp," and it affected everybody. Sanctification is the process like we see in Joshua 7 where we take the filth in our life and we eradicate it from our life so hopefully we look more like the Lord tomorrow than we did yesterday. This group of people were not disbelievers, they were the ones who had believed, they were the ones that in a mature age allowed themselves to be circumcised, these were the individuals, they were serious about the things of the Lord and yet he said, "Sanctify yourself."

You know, it has been said many times about us collectively that as the people, we're great in the birthing room it's just the rest of life that we struggle. We love to see people get saved. We love to see believer's baptism. But sanctification, it's a process and it's difficult and it's rough, and as we walk alongside people and we see the Lord begin to twist and to turn and to massage and to mold them, that's why the Bible says in Romans 9 and in Jeremiah 18, he is the potter and we are the clay. I don't know if you've ever been on a potter's wheel before but that clay wants to resist the pressure of the potter just as we do. Why? Because we want to go our way and do what we want to do, and yet he says you need to sanctify yourself.

So here's God's perspective not only of the Jordan River but also of Jericho. They're in a place they've never been before much like we are today, they need to sanctify themselves, they need to eliminate the filth and the dirt of life, but last but not least, they go across the river, they make that famous journey that we're so familiar with, and I want to close in chapter 4, verses 6 and 7. I want you to see what the Lord does and I know what some of you are thinking here, "I thought we were gonna talk about the walls coming down?" You do realize the walls would have never come down if they had never gone across Jordan, and the same process is that the Lord uses to go around Jericho is the same processes of going across Jordan. In verses 6 and 7 of chapter 4 it says, by the way, before he's told them to take the stones out of the river, he says,

6 That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? 7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of

Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

Allow me to connect some very important dots. They did everything the Lord asked them to do: they went across Jordan; they went around Jericho. It looks great, right? But by the time we got to Judges, what happened? There's a group of people who had no clue what God had done in the past. What did he tell them to do? Keep taking people back to the stones. You need to take a journey, you need to go back, you need to tell your kids, you need to tell your grandkids what happened there and the significance thereof lest we forget the story. Can I just take an aside for a moment? That's why church is so important. You realize that most of the time when we gather in an environment like this, you realize that we're hearing a story we've already heard before, right? It's because we need to hear it over and over and over again lest we forget it.

So he said, "Go back. Tell them the stones. Tell them the story. Go back to Jordan's stormy banks and show them what the Lord did for your parents and your grandparents, and as it should have gone for multiple generations." Allow me to illustrate in a very sad commentary of contemporary events. You and I in recent days have remembered the events of September 11, 2001. It's one of those days where we don't forget where we were, do we? You know, there are certain events in life whether you remember Pearl Harbor or the assassination of Kennedy, the Space Shuttle and its demise, 9/11. Now maybe there are some other significant events but those are just those events that stand out. I believe every one of you here remembers where you were on that fateful day. I had a very interesting 9/11 experience back in 2001. I'm one of the very few people that you will ever meet who on that day actually preached that night. It wasn't a Sunday and it wasn't a Wednesday but I was in a revival meeting at a local church and I had gathered together that morning at the offices to meet the pastor to talk about this and that, and we saw the events unfold. None of us knew what the next hours and days were to be. Those of you, and I've tried to explain this to my own children, it was eerie living in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and not hearing or seeing an airplane for days, because when you grow up in Dallas and you live in Dallas, you just hear airplanes all the time. It's just part of it. They circle around, you think you're seeing stars, you're not seeing stars, that Delta and American Airlines. I mean, they're everywhere. And yet there was nothing.

We didn't know what to expect on a lot of different fronts but can I share with you what we really didn't expect? That church that I was preaching in that night probably held about 300-350 people, I bet we had 600 that night. There were people sitting in the windowsill. Why? Because we were desperate, weren't we? We didn't know all that was happening, we just knew it wasn't good and what did we do? We ran to God. But it didn't stop that night. You see, one of the advantages that I had with that tragic experience years ago is that because I was in church after church and in meeting after meeting, I got to be in church like four nights a week for months after that, and every church that I would go to, the pastor would tell me and say, "We're having record attendance. We've never had this many people before. Our offerings have never been this good before. We've never had as many kids." It was incredible, almost every "church" in America doubled

overnight. It was phenomenal. We had a problem that we hadn't had before and that's where are we going to put everybody? I couldn't believe it. The next four to five months after what we know as 9/11 were some of the most fruitful days of my ministry life. I saw more people weeping at the altar, saw more people giving their life to Jesus, saw more people not caring about the things of this world.

Here's the problem with 9/11, 2002 came and we forgot about it, and now the politically correct society that we live in says that we should be ashamed of ourselves to even remember that it occurred. You know, it's funny, in the days after that tragic event, we ran to God, now we're condemned if we pray to God regarding the events. Why? Because we're just as guilty as they were, folks, we haven't gone back to the stones, have we? You see, the problem with the whole 9/11, shall we say, spiritual response is we allowed it to wane, we allowed it to go by. We had – hear me clearly – we had a golden by God opportunity for our entire culture was ravaged by the events of the day, and what did we do? We returned back to our normal lives. I never want to see another event like that ever take place again, none of us do, but I've got a funny feeling if it were to take place in the near future, we wouldn't even have the same response we did then. We've become callous. We've become cold. We've become politically correct. And all of a sudden we can't run to God because that's just not right.

You know, one of the things I love about the Old Testament is it's really not the story of Israel, it's our story, and we can take our lives and we can put it into the story and say it's just like us. The people of God crossed over Jordan, the people of God saw the walls come down, because in the midst of what the culture may say, they responded the way God told them to respond, in the midst of what their critics might have said, even those who may have been friends, so to speak, they did exactly what God said, the way he said to do it. The problem is when they either, A., ignored the Lord, or B., began to allow it to wane over time.

You know, I've been to the Jordan River. I've been pretty close to where this story took place, though because of many reasons, they don't allow you to do so. You know, I've got a funny feeling kind of like those walls of Jericho, if we were to drain the Jordan dry, do you know what we'd find in the middle? Twelve stones that they should have been remembering every year, and it's probably been thousands since they've ever been to the banks. May we revisit the story every time we gather. May we revisit what God has done every time we gather.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. Tonight as we look back at the Israelites as we even look back at our own culture, before our time of decision, I want to ask a very strategic question: is there an area, are there areas in your life that much like the stones have waned in importance? Maybe you look at a different aspect of your relationship with the Lord or leading others in the relationship with the Lord, and as Mark 4 says, the cares of this world have just crept in. You're not alone. It happened to the Israelites, it easily happens to us as well. But one of the beautiful things about gathering at a place such as this, at a time such as this, and having a time that we're about to have of response is this is a time where we can recommit ourselves to the things of the Lord.

Maybe you're that individual tonight who needs to make that initial decision for Jesus Christ. Maybe you're like those young people I spoke of earlier who talked about staying up at night with their dad, admitting the fact that they were a sinner and believing that Jesus Christ was the only answer to their sin problem. Maybe you're that person tonight, we'd love to have a conversation with you. Or maybe tonight you're one of those individuals that says, "You know, I've believed in Jesus a long time, I've just never shown others through the ordinance of baptism." Or maybe you're one of those individuals, maybe your a family that says, "You know, we've been a part of things for a while but we just need to make it official, this is our home, this is our faith base and we want to make it official." Or maybe tonight you just need somebody to pray with you or pray for you. Maybe there's some walls of Jericho, maybe there's some waters of Jordan that just seem too much right now and you're struggling, you're struggling with trust in the Lord, you're struggling with how you're gonna walk across or how you're gonna walk around. The Bible makes it very clear in multiple places about bringing people around you to pray for you in times such as this.

In just a moment as we have a time or response, maybe it's your night to step out and to step forward. We'd love to celebrate with you. Or maybe tonight is one of those nights where you realize, "I've gotta go back home and I've gotta get some stuff straightened out."

Lord Jesus, tonight as we come to this time in our service, thank you, thank you that whatever we came into this place with, thank you whatever baggage that we carried in with us, that Lord, you are the healer, you are the Deliverer, you are the Redeemer, and you are the one who reconciles us unto you. Help us, O God, tonight to no longer trust in our own devices but to completely lean upon you. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I'm gonna ask you to stand with me as John leads us, and all decisions, I'll be right here at the front.