

SERIES: THE CALLING
SERMON: THE CALL TO TAKE NEW GROUND
9-13-20

BIG IDEA: There is a call going out to God's people to go to a new place - to take new ground. We must move on and move forward.

OPENER:

Listen to the words of *Genesis 1:29* where the Lord blesses Adam and Eve and gives them a command to take New Ground.....

Genesis 1:27-28 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground

(Explain: subdue = conquer, overcome, take control of - God created us to subdue and rule and reign over this earth)

We see this not only in Genesis chapter 1 but later on listen to what the Lord tells Abraham.....

Genesis 3:17 "Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you."

And still much later in the book of Joshua chapter one we read a passage where God tells Joshua.....

Joshua 1:11 "In 3 days you will cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land the LORD you God is giving you."

**WE SERVE AN ACTIVE, FORWARD MOVING GOD.
A GOD OF MOMENTUM.
HE HAS CALLED US TO MOVE ON AND MOVE FORWARD.
HE HAS CALLED US TO TAKE NEW GROUND.**

ILLUSTRATION:
Lee land...

The Christian Life is a life of movement - of forward motion. Of subduing and conquering - of taking possession of new ground - of going to new places in God - of ruling and reigning.

It is tempting in this life to try to coast. To say.....

- > You know, I am comfortable right where I am. I like this season of my life. I have worked hard to get here and I feel good. I don't want another challenge.
- > I have enough on my plate. Please tell someone else about

taking New Ground.

- > I like the ground I have already taken so let me just check out.
- > Others can take New Ground but for me where I am - I am comfortable.

**WHEN YOU STOP MOVING FORWARD IS WHEN YOU
STOP FOLLOWING GOD.**

The LORD is calling his people to higher places. He wants to take us to places that we have never gone before with Him. He wants us to grow in our walk with Him and to take new ground.

Still there may be those who this morning may want to say – I am already saved and have God’s power pouring in and through my life. What more do I really need?

Even if we have been serving the Lord for years, the truth is the Lord commands us to move forward. He calls all of us to follow Him - and in following Him we find ourselves on the mission of taking new ground for him.

In the book of *1 Chronicles* there is a man who became famous for a prayer that asked that very thing – his name was Jabez – his prayer is only a few words and they go like this.....

Chronicles 4:10. Oh, that you would bless me and expand my territory.”

We need to pray.....”Oh, God , expand my territory....that you would help me to take new ground for you. Oh, God that you would lead me to a deeper encounter with you so that my witness for you would be greater than ever. God take me to a new place in you. ”

This morning, I want to talk to about a few things that can help you take New Ground – Physically, mentally, socially and spiritually.....

TEXT:

Joshua 3:1-5. Early the next morning Joshua and all the Israelites left Acacia Grove and arrived at the banks of the Jordan River, where they camped before crossing. ² Three days later the Israelite officers went through the camp, ³ giving these instructions to the people: “When you see the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, move out from your positions and follow them. ⁴ Since you have never traveled this way before, they will guide you. Stay about a half mile behind them, keeping a clear distance between you and the Ark. Make sure you don’t come any closer.”

⁵ Then Joshua told the people, “Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do great wonders among you.”

(Explain)

Joshua was about to lead Israel into the promised land. The crossing of the Jordan was the last step into the promised land. The crossing of the Jordan is a symbolic step into a new journey for the Lord.

FIRST THING I HAVE TO SAY!!!!

I. DO NOT FEAR THE UNKNOWN

vs. 4 "for you have not traveled this way before"

In other words you are about to walk on new ground. You are about to go in to a new territory. You are about to go to a place that you have never been before.

**I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE DIRECTION THAT GOD
IS LEADING THE CHURCH.
WE ARE GOING TO WALK WHERE WE HAVE
NEVER WALKED BEFORE.
WE ARE GOING TO SEE THINGS THAT WE HAVE
NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
WE ARE GOING TO DO MINISTRY AS WE HAVE
NEVER DONE BEFORE.
WE ARE GOING TO FACE ENEMIES THAT WE HAVE
NEVER FACED BEFORE.**

**WE ARE GOING TO NEW GROUND.
WE CANNOT FEAR THE UNKNOWN.**

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind.

It is not God's will that you live in fear right now. It is not a time for the church to stay put, but to stand up and move forward.

**FEAR PARALYZES YOU.
FAITH MOVES YOU.**

**II. IF YOU ARE GOING TO TAKE NEW GROUND FOUR THINGS THAT GOD
INSTRUCTS YOU TO DO:**

1. FOLLOW HIS PRESENCE

v. 3 When you see the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, move out from your positions and follow them.

The ark represents the presence of the Lord. And the presence of God is moving. In order to have God's presence you must follow God's presence.

The Spirit of God is what leads us.

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.

WHY DO YOU NEED A GUIDE UNLESS YOU ARE GOING SOMEWHERE?

ILLUSTRATION:

I love a guide. A guide knows where you are going before you do. Israel guide. Moshe

Just as God's presence was moving forward into new land. God's presence is moving forward into new ground for His people to possess. We must follow and move forward. We cannot stay where we are. We have to move forward. To stay where you are means you lose the presence of God.

- > Even if it is uncomfortable**
- > Even if you are afraid**
- > Even if you feel weak and tired**
- > Even if it is challenging**

GET UP AND MOVE!

GOD MAY BE ASKING YOU TO FOLLOW HIM INTO.....

- > A new job**
- > A new business venture**
- > A closer relationship with him.**
- > To step into a new ministry and serve**
- > To obey Him in an area you never have before**

2. DON'T LET THE UNCOMMON BECOME COMMON

Vs.4keep a clear distance between you and the Ark. Make sure you don't come any closer.

DON'T BECOME TOO FAMILIAR WITH THE LORD AND HIS GLORY AND TAKE HIS GLORY FOR GRANTED.

ILLUSTRATION:

This was an issue with the Israelites. They had seen the cloud of glory in the day, the fire by night leading, protecting them and it was always there. Constant. They had seen fire and smoke come from the mountain. They had become too familiar with the manna and began to complain. They had seen countless miracles and wonders in the desert, yet they took them for granted. They were ungrateful and complaining.

**WE CAN TAKE FOR GRANTED THE PRESENCE OF GOD
IN OUR LIVES.**

**JUST LIKE WE CAN TAKE FOR GRANTED OUR HUSBAND, OUR WIFE, OUR PARENTS, OUR FRIENDS.
WHEN WE DO WE LOSE OUR APPRECIATION AND OUR GRATEFULNESS.**

When we become too familiar with God we take for granted God's presence and think that we have this "line" to God and he is our puppet. It's then we start doing crazy things.

ILLUSTRATION:

Like Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus, the sons of Aaron the high priest. God had chosen them to keep the fire going in the tabernacle. Yet they had become too familiar with the Lord and the sacrifice. It had become common to them. They had lost their fear and respect and honor of the Lord. And they became lax and lazy and apathetic about their ministry to the Lord.

To fear God = is absolute reverence and awe for an Almighty God, the Creator of all things. In the Bible we get a few glimpses into heaven, and we see the heavenly creatures worship Him around His throne continually, crying out "Holy, holy, holy!" and covering their faces.

**A FEAR AND REVERENCE FOR GOD KEEPS YOU FROM TAKING GOD'S PRESENCE IN YOUR LIFE FOR GRANTED.
WHEN YOU TAKE GOD'S PRESENCE FOR GRANTED YOU BECOME LAZY IN YOUR COMMITMENT TO HIM.**

NOTE:

Someone has made preparation for God's glory. God's glory doesn't just fall. Someone has repented and got on their knees. God's glory requires a sacrifice.

3. PREPARE YOURSELF FOR TOMORROW

v. 5 Then Joshua told the people, "Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do great wonders among you."

**TO STEP INTO TOMORROW YOU MUST REPENT TODAY.
THERE IS NO FUTURE WITHOUT SPIRITUAL PREPARATION.**

There is always a tomorrow in God. There is always a future that God has planned for us. Are you preparing for the future or are you stuck in the past?

Purify = set yourself apart, make yourself holy, consecrate

**TO MOVE FORWARD YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO LET GO OF OLD BAGGAGE
- TO SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM OLD THINGS.**

Learning new things is not the difficult part, but rather letting go of the old things, those old stories of who we were, how we use to do things, and what we are use to doing.

WE CANNOT MOVE ON AND MOVE FORWARD UNTIL WE GET EMOTIONALLY UNSTUCK FROM YESTERDAY'S THINKING AND LIVING.

ILLUSTRATION:

Exodus 14:13-15 ¹³ But Moses told the people, "Don't be afraid. Just stand still and watch the Lord rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. ¹⁴ The Lord himself will fight for you. Just stay calm."

¹⁵ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving!"

(Eplain scripture)

What Moses learned, and we can as well, is that the only way to get emotionally unstuck is to move on and move forward.

3 FEARS THAT KEEP US EMOTIONALLY STUCK:

1.)Our emotional attachment to the past blinds us to God's purpose for our future.

2.)Our anxiety over the uncertainty of life makes us believe more in our control than God's will.

3.)Our insecurity over what people think make us live to prove ourselves instead of focusing on being ourselves.

**WE HAVE TO CHANGE OUR MIND AND CHANGE OUR PLANS.
LET GO OF THE FAMILIAR AND OPEN OUR MINDS
TO NEW POSSIBILITIES.**

4. STEP INTO THE WATER

Joshua 3:14-17 So the people left their camp to cross the Jordan, and the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant went ahead of them. ¹⁵ It was the harvest season, and the Jordan was overflowing its banks. But as soon as the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark touched the water at the river's edge, ¹⁶ the water above that point began backing up a great distance away at a town called Adam, which is near Zarethan. And the water below that point flowed on to the Dead Sea until the riverbed was dry. Then all the people crossed over near the town of Jericho.

¹⁷ Meanwhile, the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Lord's Covenant stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed as the people passed by. They waited there until the whole nation of Israel had crossed the Jordan on dry ground.

(Explain)

The Jordan was at flood stage. The most inconvenient season to cross.

ILLUSTRATION:

This seems like the most inconvenient time that God would ask more of us! The enemy has come like a flood with covid 19, economic crisis, political and government wickedness, violence and rioting.....

**BUT GOD IS ASKING US TO STEP INTO THE WATER -
STEP INTO THE FLOOD. FOLLOW HIM AND HE WILL PART THE WATERS
WHERE EVER WE SET OUR FOOT!**

Isaiah 59:19.When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

Standard = Banner, colors, a sign to say I will fight you!

ILLUSTRATION:

Just as the people of God had wandered for years. Many had died, they had waited and endured hardship for the promise. After all of this they came to the Jordan to cross to fight. It just didn't seem the right time.

Some of us say, I just want to take cover. But this is not the time to hide. It is the time to fight. To step out of your comfort zone.

CLOSING:

There is no better time to start than today. Move on, move forward! God is calling us to take new ground!