

## 2. STOP BUT DON'T STAY



Read: Joshua 3:15 - 5:1

Read: Joshua 4:19-24

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Let's recap two important principles from the book of Joshua:

#### a. **Nothing happened until they put their feet into the river (3:15) (Faith starts it all!)**

- Leadership is not a title, it's a characteristic, a lifestyle, and leadership always goes first, not by constraint, i.e. because they are forced, but because that's God call and will. This is the foundation principle for this or any other church.

#### b. **They'd never been that way before (3:4) (neither have we)**

- The children of Israel crossed the Jordan in full view of the enemy stronghold of Jericho (3:16). After they had crossed and were camped at Gilgal, Israel did six things before taking possession of the Promised Land:

✓ 1. Their faith put fear in the hearts of the Enemy (2:2-11; 5:1)

2. They stopped but they didn't stay (4:19-24)

3. They renewed their commitment to the covenant with God (5:2-9)

4. They remembered their roots (5:10)

5. They destroyed the manna mentality (5:12)

6. They worshipped the Lord

They did all these **six things**, before they fought one battle, before they attacked one city stronghold. All these things were done in full view of the enemy (3:16). These are principles that we need to follow prophetically, in order to let the Lord build His church. And what's the hallmark of such a group of people? It's submission to His authority.

Remember, we said that the reason why the devil's stronghold on your life seems to be getting tighter is because it's only a matter of time before it falls. **The strongholds in your life (read 2 Cor 10:4, note God has given this power to us): finances, personal life, emotions, mind, family, unsaved friends etc.**

That stronghold that's been getting tighter and tighter as you move in more and more faith is

good news, because the day is coming very, very soon when the walls of your Jericho are going to fall, and your stronghold is going to be pulled down, in the mighty name of Jesus.

## 2. THEY STOPPED BUT THEY DIDN'T STAY

Three things are important for us to consider: (i) re-appraise the meaning of 'the crossing'; (ii) consider 'stopping' against 'staying'; (iii) the setting up of a memorial.

### a. The crossing

The crossing was exciting; the miracle was absolutely astounding. Israel could have crossed over and been content with being just in the Promised Land.

After any success, you're tempted to say "That's it, we've done so well; God has done all He can." But, **the good stops you from reaching the best!**

There is always a need to pause, to reflect on:

- What the Lord God has done
- Our growth in faith and ministry - not out of pride, but so we can learn and help each other from our experiences.

We can stop, but we are never to stay. We will never 'arrive' as Christians. Our life is a constant direction forwards, moving ever nearer to the Lord Jesus:

*Heb 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us **run** with perseverance the race **marked out** [by the Lord Jesus] for us.*

### b. Stopping versus staying

Before we move onto the memorial itself, let's take time to see why it is **right to stop, but wrong to stay**.

*(At this point, review the account of Terah, in the Appendix)*

#### 1) The effect of staying

Please understand that **staying**:

1. keeps you in the same place, spiritually
2. creates the conditions for a religious spirit, then 'activity' ends up becoming the **wrong measure** of 'spirituality'
3. stops revival dead ... look at the great revivals in Wales in 1904, England in 1896; the Pentecostal movements as they entered the mid 1900s; none of these lasted even a single decade.

All these revivals **turned religious**, and made format more important than content and

Gifted. For example, look at how the Pentecostal churches selected their leadership. During the great revivals, men lead through their Holy Ghost giftings (e.g. Smith Wigglesworth - uneducated ... c.f. John and the other Apostles in Acts 4:13).

Now, our young, inexperienced (in life) men and women go straight to Bible College with little experience of life and then, usually, go as pastors to other churches. What happened to local churches birthing local leadership with a local vision.

Colleges should serve the local church, helping and training these church-recognised leaders according to the needs of the local church, thus enabling them to function more effectively in their local church environment.

**Please note:** In the early church it was always the local fellowship (local church) that defined its leaders, not a certificate from a college or university.

## 2) The church that stays

A '**church that stays**', runs on *auto-pilot*, through its administration, format etc. It is self-sustaining, not necessarily Holy Spirit inspired, in fact, God's not really needed in such a church. When God's in charge, there is never any time to get comfortable, He is in the business of moving His church to respond to the ever-changing society outside; "*Constant change is here to stay!*" is the watch word of the local church of Jesus Christ.

The '**church that doesn't stay**' responds effectively to the Lord's call. Prioritised time, especially time spent in petitioning prayer by the whole body, will result in faith-inspired actions, based on knowing God's will. This will then reap an eternal reward of souls saved and a revival that will sweep Luxembourg into the centre of revival for Europe.

Please pray for your Elders and the other leaders, and communicate whatever you feel the Lord Jesus is saying to you. We need the feedback from the Body of Christ, and we rely on you to speak to us. Our aim is to see this local church follow the Lord's leading into our place in His wonderful vineyard, here in Luxembourg. As we do this, we will be a part of the great revival that Jesus Christ is desiring to pour out on this nation.

### c. Making a memorial

*Josh 4:4-7 So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, 5 and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, 6 to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' 7 tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."*

*Josh 4:20-24 And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. 21 He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their fathers, 'What do these stones mean?' 22 tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' 23 For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. 24 He did this so that all the peoples of the earth*

*might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God."*

Israel were to learn a very important lesson, when the Lord told Joshua to take up stones from the Jordan's river bed, during the miraculous crossing:

These stones provide us with an important lesson, both as individuals, and as a church. The stones were taken and put up for three reasons.

The stones were to be:

1. a remembrance
2. a statement to the next generation
3. a statement of unity

## 1) The stones were a remembrance

This is why they stopped. This memorial was to be a remembrance and a statement to God ... *"It's because of You that we are here"*. They were recognising that all the events were of God.

We need to say this to the Lord, and tell Him often. Why? Because we exalt **Him** and not ourselves! Look at His promise to the Moses generation, and see **all that He was going to do**:

*Deu 8:7-14 For the **LORD your God is bringing you into a good land--a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; 8 a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; 9 a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. 10 When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. 11 Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. 12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.***

The continuity of the blessings of this passage depends on **not** ending up in **v14**. Their memorial reminded them of the truth of God's might and authority. It was not **their** success, but **His** - so that they would not fall into boasting and pride, and so could continue to claim the '**whens**' that are:

- eat and be satisfied
- build fine houses and settle down in their promised land
- herds and flocks **will** grow large (... '*when*' not '*if*')
- silver and gold **will** increase

- **all** is multiplied

Let us confess, let us pray, to the Lord, our only source; let us put up a memorial to God in this place. Yet what is this memorial?

- One example is this house of God; by it being here and by the people knowing it is here, it speaks of the presence of God made known through His body.
- It's also us, as we give ourselves fully and freely to be used by the Lord Jesus. Every time we share something about Jesus to those around us, we establish a memorial.

Let us now stand and confess to the Lord our Maker:

- "Lord it's all because of You that we are here in this part of the town, in this building"
- "Lord it's because of Your favour that this church's name is known in the area around, without advertising"
- "Lord it's because of Your mercy that the Gospel is being shared in this part of the town – through personal contacts ... which includes 'through me!'"

## 2) Statement to the next generation

The stones made a statement to the next generation. This generation of Israel had had passed onto it many negatives from the Moses generation that perished in the desert:

- fear
- unbelief
- strife
- grumbling
- doubt
- division
- rebellion

By the Lord God's grace and power we are not going to hand on to the next generation negative rubbish.

We are going to pass onto them a statement, which is that God found, in us here, a bunch of people who believe Him, and are faithfully believing to see the Lord's glory in our fellowship and in the whole Body of Christ in Luxembourg. This is what we want to pass on!

What we do now is not only for ourselves, but for the next generation that God is raising up. Wait until you see what this generation will do. At the moment, they are looking for heroes who will stretch their faith. Being a hero of the faith is not wrong; it's being a role model for new Christians

- if **we're not prepared** to do it, the **World will** quickly take our place!

### 3) Statement of Unity

*Josh 4:1-5 When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, **the LORD said to Joshua, 2 "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, 3 and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight." 4 So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, 5 and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites,***

Unity was **commanded from the Lord God**. He ordered Joshua to choose 12 men, one from each tribe. Each one was to take a stone; every tribe was involved, no-one was left out.

Why is unity so critical to 'Church'? A house divided against itself will fall!

*Luke 11:17 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall.*

We won't take any land, or pull down any strongholds, if we don't come together with:

- one heart
- one mind
- one vision
- one purpose

All this in total unity! But, what is unity, and why is it so critical? Let's look at Psalm 133, the 'Psalm of unity'.

*Ps 133:1-3 How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! 2 It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. 3 It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.*

Unity is like a spiritual greenhouse, which causes anointing to flow freely - inside the local church and between local churches. When the anointing flows, the Gifts of the Spirit become manifest. The Saviour of the World fulfils His promise to us:

*Mark 16:15-20 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs **will accompany** those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at*

*all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." 19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken **up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God**. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and **confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it**.*

The prayer of agreement is the most powerful prayer that Christians can pray. We're not at that point yet, where we are able to pray it as the Body of Christ in Luxembourg. However, that unity is coming - slowly - but it **is** coming. We need to pray for the Evangelical Alliance, for more meaningful contact between Pastors and individual church members in this nation.

When the anointing flows, praise and worship flows; the Gifts arise; the Gospel is preached with miracles and wonders; the Word of God goes out and returns full to overflowing with blood-washed souls. In short, revival breaks out, unrestrained by the Enemy, and reaches out into this Nation, turning Luxembourg from a godless, materialistic state, into the centre of God's mighty re-conquest of Europe.

#### 4) Unity Starts With My Actions ('Faith Without Actions Is Dead')

What about us? Let's make it personal – "I must start here, in my own fellowship."

*Mat 18:15-18 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. 18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be [lit. 'has already been'] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be [lit. 'has already been'] loosed in heaven.*

*Psa 133 How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! 2 It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. 3 It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.*

Unity starts inside the local body, so we have a obligation from the Lord to raise up the greatest memorial possible, that of a unified, spirit-filled body of Believers, which will pass on to succeeding generations the fire of revival.

## APPENDIX

One example of 'not staying' is Terah, in Genesis 11. Who is this person? You may well ask, but he was an important man in God's plan for man, but he **stopped and stayed**.

*Gen 11:27 This is **the genealogy of Terah**: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot.*

The use of 'genealogy of ... a name' only occurs 13 times in the Old and New Testaments, and includes [one time] the genealogy of Jesus.

*Gen 11:31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran [who had died earlier], and*

*his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. **But** when they came to Haran, they **settled** = 'dwelt' there.*

The word for 'dwelt' is 'yashab' = '**remain**'. Terah did not carry on his relationship with God, because he moved from Ur, but stopped in Haran and stayed. So, Abram (Abraham) moved and entered into the promise of God ... descendants as numerous as the stars, and a land flowing with milk and honey.

*Gen 12:1-4 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." 4 So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.*

Terah gave up his blessing; Abraham seized it. Whom do you remember? Terah or Abraham?

### Questions / Challenges

- Are you stuck in your Christian life?
- Do you have a living walk with the Lord?
- Do you know His call on your life and know the power and Gifts of His Holy Spirit at work in your life?
- Has the Enemy of our souls put doubt or fear in your life in any of these areas?
- Do you have, or are you a part of, a memorial that proclaims the greatness of the Lord Jesus to the next generation?

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