



ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH
PRAYERS AND REFLECTION
BASED ON JOSHUA 3
APRIL 8TH 2026



Israel Crosses the Jordan

³ Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan. They camped there before crossing over. ² At the end of three days, the officers went through the camp ³ and commanded the people, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place. Follow it, ⁴ so that you may know the way you should go, for you have not passed this way before. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits; do not come any nearer to it.” ⁵ Then Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” ⁶ To the priests Joshua said, “Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass on in front of the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went in front of the people.

⁷ The Lord said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I will be with you as I was with Moses. ⁸ You are the one who shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, ‘When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.’” ⁹ Joshua then said to the Israelites, “Draw near and hear the words of the Lord your God.” ¹⁰ Joshua said, “By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites: ¹¹ the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan. ¹² So now select twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. ¹³ When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, come to rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap.”

¹⁴ When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. ¹⁵ Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, ¹⁶ the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing toward the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ While all Israel were crossing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan.

COLLET BASED ON JOSHUA 3

Almighty and powerful God, you guided the children of Israel through the wilderness to the banks of the Jordan. As you commanded Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land, grant me the courage to step forward in faith, trusting in your promises. May I recognise your presence in my life, just as the priests carried the Ark before the people.

Help me to lay aside my fears and doubts, knowing that you are with me in every challenge. Strengthen my heart to follow you faithfully as I embark on my journey of faith. Through Christ my Lord amen.

Thanks and Praise prayer points

- Thank you for guiding the Israelite people across the Jordan and for showing your faithfulness
- thank you for being the guiding presence in my life and of others
- thank you for showing me that nothing is impossible for you

- praise for you Lord for faithfully being present through all the generations for all of time
- praise for you Lord for your almighty acts and empowering people in ways that are unimagined. Your love for us is everlasting
- praise for you Lord for opening doors which have previously been closed.

PRAYER POINTS FOR CONFESSION

- I confess Lord that I have let fear and doubt get in the way of developing and strengthening my faith.
- For choosing my own path instead of following in your footsteps
- For being ungrateful and not allowing you to cultivate a heart of gratitude and see your hands in all things.

WORDS OF GRACE

Lord, I have placed the worst of my thoughts and actions into your hands of love, mercy and grace. You have promised to cleanse me when I confess my sins. I do now so confess and rest peacefully in the cleansing palm of your hand. Thanks be to God amen.

REFLECTION:

When we think of God parting the waters so the Israelites could cross over the waters our first thought goes to the great escape from Egypt. It isn't very often we get to take in this crossing where God also parted the river Jordan for the desert wanderers to cross. This is amongst the very important moments in their journey to the Promised Land. This whole chapter is rich in symbolism, faith, and the fulfillment of God's promise. It serves as a reminder of God's continuing presence and guidance on their journey.

As the Israelites stand at the riverbank looking at the expanse of water, they become aware of the challenge to cross it as they have before them is a river in full flood mode – impassable. However, God instructs Joshua to have the priests carry the Ark of the Covenant into the water. This act of obedience is crucial- it symbolises faith in God's command and the presence of God remains amongst God's people. The Ark, representing God's covenant and God's guiding presence, leads the way, setting an example of trust and love for the Israelites. *When have you been confronted by an issue that you thought was impassable and through prayer, belief and faith that God keeps promises allowed yourself to be guided by God through the issue?*

The miraculous crossing begins when the priest's step into the flowing waters. In a stunning display of God's intervention, the waters of the Jordan are cut off, allowing the people to cross on dry ground – no one is chasing them this time. This event not only reminds us of God's power, it also serves as testament to God's faithfulness. Just as God parted the Red Sea for their ancestors, God now reaffirms God's commitment to this new generation. *At what points in your life have you felt affirmed by God's faithfulness to you, your children, grandchildren and future generations?*



God commands Joshua to appoint twelve men, one from each tribe, to gather stones from the riverbed after they cross. These stones are to be set up as a memorial to remind future generations of God's devoted love and care for them. This act of remembrance is a vital aspect of the Israelite culture, emphasising the importance of recalling God's faithfulness in times of fear or doubt. *If you could, would you lay down stones as a memorial for others to see that God loves and cares for them? If so, where would you lay the stones?*

This reading symbolises new beginnings and spiritual renewal or perhaps even revival. Just as the Israelites left behind the wilderness, we're also called to step into new phases throughout our lives, always placing our trust in Christ and God will continue to be a presence in our lives. Chapter 3 is a lesson of the importance of obedience to God's word, the necessity of stepping out in faith, and the power of remembrance of the past as we move into the future. *What steps do you need to take to leave the past in the past, allowing yourself to experience a renewal or revival of faith and how you express it?*

As we all navigate our own Jordan rivers we are reminded to carry our spiritual 'Arks' forward – our identities as bearers of God's presence. By placing our trust in God and stepping into the great unknown, we open ourselves to the miracle of new beginnings and the joy of fulfillment in our own promised lands. In this way, Joshua 3 serves as both a historical account and a timeless call to live boldly and faithfully in pursuit of God's call. *How has Joshua inspired you to look carefully at your approach to faith, obedience, and allowing yourself to explore faith renewal or revival?*

PRAYER OF INTECESSION

Holy Spirit, it's from you that I gather inspiration from the powerful symbolism in my reading for today. You lead your people across the flooded Jordan so they could enter into the Promised Land. I thank you for your unwavering guidance and presence in not only my life, but the life of people around your world.

Today I bring before all those who are currently facing challenges and feel as if they are standing on the banks of their own Jordan River. Lord, grant them the courage to step forward in faith, just as the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the waters. Help them to trust that you will make a way where there seems to be nothing but roadblocks.

I pray for our communities and those burdened by fear and doubt. May they recognise your constant presence and find strength in your promises. just as you called Joshua to lead,

inspire leaders today – parents, teachers, and mentors to guide those around them with wisdom and compassion.

I lift up to you those who are hungry for new beginnings, struggling to leave behind the wilderness of their past. May they find hope in your endless mercy and grace, and may they be encouraged by the stories of faith that remind us of your faithfulness.

Lord, I also ask that your community remain mindful of the memorials we create in our life as we witness your words as a reminder of your goodness. Help us to share our story of faith and of your faithfulness with others, so they may also find strength and encouragement in knowing that you are always with them.

As you faithful followers who are navigating our personal and communal journeys, may we always look to you as our guide and protector. We are your interceders for those who don't yet know you, that they too may experience the miraculous crossing into a life changed forever by faith.

Thank you Lord for hearing my prayer and for the assurance that you walk with me every day and are with me even in my time of slumber. In the name of Jesus I pray amen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8f7Emjm6oys&list=RD8f7Emjm6oys&start_radio=1

