

People In The Crossing (Again)
Joshua 3:9-4:24

Last week we briefly considered what it means for Israel and for Cornerstone to be a People at the Crossing. This week we want to go one step farther and examine, through the lens of ancient Israel's experience, what it means for Cornerstone to be a People In The Crossing. It is one thing to be camped on the threshold of a new adventure. It is another thing to move and make the commitment to the new journey. This morning we want to survey seven commitments God calls His people in the crossing to make.

Seven Commitments in the Crossing

1. (3:9) Commit to hearing the words of the God

- a. Biblical Descriptions of God's Word
 - i. **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)** *¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
 - ii. **2 Peter 1:21 (ESV)** *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*
- b. Potential Ways the Word is Rejected
 - i. Cultural Conveniences
 - (1) Not the word of God at all but the product of lonely men trying to be important
 - (2) Contains the word of God but rationale intelligence, not faith is required to know what is and what isn't
 - ii. Greatest Danger:
 - (1) any resultant religious conclusion, conviction, or practice is not the revelation of God but the imagination of man
 - (2) any resulting conclusion is. In essence, idolatry
- c. The starting point determines both the trajectory of the journey and the point of destination.
- d. **Commit in this journey to studying, understanding, and obeying the words of God**

2. (3:10) Commit to knowing God as He reveals Himself so that you will understand and appreciate the victory He brings.

- a. **Isaiah 48:9-11 (ESV)** *⁹ "For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. ¹⁰ Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.*
- b. God does what He does as He always has even in the first act of creation, for His glory.
 - i. Nothing exists so magnificent, so awesome, so perfect, so worthy of

- ii. knowing, and embracing, and experiencing than God in all His glory
 - ii. God does what he does for His glory because there is no more perfect reason for God to act at all than that sum of all His perfections, His personal glory.
 - c. **Commit to seeing God as He reveals Himself in your circumstances, as He moves to help you know Him as He really is, and you will understand and appreciate the value that He brings.**
 - d. Personal example: the pain of kidney stones as a revelation of the suffering of Christ

3. (3:11-13) Commit to following the lead of God as He gives it.

- a. It usually seems better to us to read the whole recipe before we start, especially when the outcome depends on us
- b. But in God's economy, so that the outcome depends on Him and the praise is fully His, He leads His people one step at a time.
 - i. Abraham -
 - (1) **Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV)** *¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*
 - (2) God gave Him a command and a promise, but God did not give Him a map so Abram could pot his own way
 - ii. Gideon
 - (1) **Judges 7:1-7 (ESV)**
 - (a) 22,000 leave, 10,000 remain
 - (b) 9700 bend to drink, 300 cup to drink
 - (c) God uses 300 out of 32,000
 - (2) God wins in God's power, but doesn't tell Gideon how the win will come
 - iii. Paul
 - (1) **Acts 16:7-10 (ESV)** *7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. 8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*
 - (2) Prevented, heads south (just another guess), vision of Macedoinan
 - iv. God may knot give you everything you want to know about he journey or the destination, the point is trusting Him to know both where He wants

you and how to get you there!

- v. **Commit to following the lead of God as He gives it.**

4. (3:14-17) Commit to stepping out and stepping in regardless of the apparent obstacles

- a. Obstacles for us are opportunities for God.
 - i. Mary - How can this be?
 - (1) Luke 1:26-38
 - (2) How will this be
 - (3) For nothing will be impossible with God.
 - ii. Disciples - at the teaching of the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:26)
 - (1) Easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven
 - (2) Disciples: then who can enter?
 - (3) With God all things are possible
 - iii. Jordan
 - (1) Flood stage
 - (2) But when the priests step in faith, God dries up the river for twenty miles in either direction.
- b. We face obstacles
 - i. Increasingly negligent and resistant culture
 - ii. Declining attendance and personal engagement
 - iii. Some obstacles may seem insurmountable, like a raging, flooded river,
 - (1) With man it may be impossible
 - (2) But with God., nothing is impossible
 - (3) **Commit to walking in faith and confronting obstacles as divine opportunities**

5. (4:1-10) Commit to building a memorial from your journey that exalts God and instructs the next generation

- a. **Psalm 145:4 (ESV) ⁴ One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.**
- b. This journey we are on is not, ultimately, all about us.
 - i. This journey is about God and His testimony to future generations of believers
 - ii. This journey is about Hab. 2:14
- c. God instructs Joshua to build a memorial
 - i. Men prepared for the task
 - ii. Stones taken from the exact place the priests are standing (where the physical presence of the Lord is identified)
 - iii. Walk out on dry ground with boulders on their shoulders.
- d. Joshua adds His praise to God's personal testimony
 - i. The people set up 12 stones in the camp
 - ii. Joshua set up an additional 12 memorial stones in the river!
- e. **Commit to using this crossing as an opportunity to exalt God and tell the**

story of grace and promise to the world

- i. Why are we here?
 - (1) Because God created the world for His glory
 - (2) Because we have departed from living for His glory
 - (3) Because our sin and guilt and shame threaten us with eternal punishment
 - (4) Because God,
 - (a) seeing our utter ability to rescue ourselves from His justice and the consequences of our sin
 - (b) sent His Son, Jesus
 - (i) to fulfil the requirements of God's law on our behalf
 - (ii) to satisfy the righteous requirements of God's justice in our place through His death on the cross
 - (iii) to extend the full blessing of new birth and eternal life to those who put their faith in Him
- ii. **Cornerstone, we are here today, in this crossing, in this time of transition and growth and development, because, while the world endures, God extends the invitation of gospel grace to the world through the church.**
 - (1) This is our opportunity not to hang up our harps beside the river and sit down to weep over our lost past, as the exiles did in Babylon,
 - (2) This is our opportunity to cross the river into the promise of God and do so making much of His glory!
 - (3) **Commit to using this crossing as an opportunity to exalt God and tell the story of grace and promise to the world**

6. (4:10b) Commit to making progress.

- a. The people passed over in haste.
 - i. Maybe they remembered what happened to the Egyptian army at the Red Sea
 - ii. Maybe they were remembered what happened at Kadesh Barnea that condemned the previous generation to 40 years of wandering
 - iii. Maybe they were just so ready for God's promise they were no longer willing to delay
 - iv. They passed over in haste
 - (1) They made good time
 - (2) They did what it took to get moving and keep moving
 - (3) They trusted God's leading and acted in faith
- b. Doubt and fear and rebellion and selfishness would have sabotaged the crossing.
 - i. All the things that kept Israel in the desert for 40 years would have kept them in the desert another 40 years
 - ii. But they surrendered their fear, and doubt, and rebellion, and selfishness.
 - iii. They trusted God presence and God's promise
 - iv. They made progress.

c. **Commit to expediency in your obedience!**

7. (4:19-24) Commit to God's goals for the crossing.

- a. (4:24) Two goals
 - i. So that all the people of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty (after all, its been 40 years since the powerful Exodus from Egypt)
 - ii. So that you may fear the LORD your God forever.
- b. In order for all the world to be impacted by the testimony of their journey, they had to act in faith and courage for all the world to see.
- c. In order for the journey to have its greatest personal benefit, they, together and individually had to commit to allowing the journey to make their relationship with God more accurate and more intimate!
- d. **Commit to God's goal for the crossing.**

Conclusion

The US Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence wasn't signed on July 4, 1776.

On July 1, 1776, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, and on the following day 12 of the 13 colonies voted in favor of Richard Henry Lee's motion for independence.

The delegates then spent the next two days debating and revising the language of a statement drafted by Thomas Jefferson.

On July 4, Congress officially adopted the Declaration of Independence, and as a result the date is celebrated as Independence Day.

Nearly a month would go by, however, before the actual signing of the document took place.

The timing pales in comparison to the significance of the commitment people made in those moments. Standing on the edge of a new national adventure, they committed to make the crossing. War would come. Death would come. Hardship would come. But so would come a new nation conceived in liberty.

A Greater Commitment

A greater commitment is set before us, a commitment to Christ, to His kingdom, to His eternal glory. Let us, on this July 4th 2021, declare our independence from fear, from worry, and from faithlessness. Christ has brought us to this transition, to this crossing, for His glory and for our good. Let us enter the crossing in faith and in obedience, with commitment and intentionality, knowing that in Christ, God gives us the victory.