**Sermon Based Small Group: Joshua**

**Stop Going in Circles: Joshua 3 and 4**

**Introduction**

* Sometimes we get the runaround, sometimes we get lost, but inevitably we go ‘round in circles. Tell your story!

**Another Chance**

* How do I work with the God Who is at work with me? This is our theme as we study Joshua. How has God helped you to answer this question this week?
* Read Joshua 3. Write down key words as you read this.
* Pastor Mel had a key statement, “He (God) does not change His plan, He does not bless their plan, He gives them another chance to follow His plan, (that is) to receive *His* abundant and gracious life for them. 
  + How is this another chance?
  + How have the people been going around in circles?
  + Think about their emotions as they sat on the shore for three days looking at a raging river. What might they be thinking about?
* How is the ark the main character in this episode? What is the significance of the ark? What does it represent?
  + Read Exodus 19:10-13. Are there some similarities here?
  + Why does the ark go first? How many times does the story refer to the ark?
  + What was in the ark? (tablets, manna, rod; cherubs)
* **Folks, the main reason we go in circles is because we don’t...**

**Let God Lead**

* Pastor Mel quoted,

*“since you have never been this way before.” (verse 4)*  But ... God has!

“You’ve done your way ... but you’ve been afraid to go my way

... and that’s natural, because you’ve not been here before. But I have.”

* Are you a backseat driver?
  + Do you allow God to lead or just tell him what you want?
* Reread verse 5. What does it mean to consecrate ourselves?
  + James 4:8. Pastor Mel described this as, “You’re not ready to get out of the wilderness until you’re ready to get the wilderness out of you.” What does that mean?
  + What sort of bad wilderness practices do you need to get rid of?
  + Hebrews 12:1, 2 (fixing our eyes on Jesus)
  + What are they promised?
* Read verses 9-11. Paraphrase Joshua’s words. Looking at the river forced the people to look at their fears. Joshua tells them to look at God. This is the great choice in life!
  + Pastor Mel made a great comment, “I only see my problems as the big thing when I see myself as the central thing” Is this true?
  + Let the living God, the Lord of all the earth, lead you. How can I look at God?
* As a practical application to let God lead, we were given three steps to help us move ahead, to stop going in circles. Talk about each one.
  + **Consecration:** setting self apart for Him, not for self, including confessing the ways in which you have ***not*** followed him fully.
  + **Focusing** on Him and Him alone: Not on people (what they have, or haven’t done), not our problems (what God has or hasn’t done).
  + **Taking a Step:**  an open, public step.
  + When you look at the river (life’s challenges) what do you see?
    - A raging torrent, or
    - God

**Remember Your Story**

* Read Joshua 4.
* *“These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.” (verse 7)*
* We were taught:

The point of this whole thing was that in the ***challenges*** of living in the new land and the ***distractions*** of living in the new land, they were to constantly **remember their story.** The story they were really living in, the story of a God who ***created us to live in and under Him***, ***Who calls us back***, **W*ho showed up in Jesus as the living God among us,***  to take charge and lead us into the promised land.

* What does Gilgal mean (circle)? Do you think God has a sense of humor?
* How is forgetfulness one of faith’s greatest enemies?
* Read Romans 8:31. Can you stop reading at verse 31? Do you gain confidence as you read this? How did Jesus “show up”? Is God for me or against me?
* On Sunday mornings we figuratively look at these stones, at a new memorial. Three things come out of this:
  + Point ourselves to the Big Story
  + Know how we are called & empowered to live in the Big Story
  + Realize one thing we need to do this week.
* Think about the phrases: I have to, or I get to. Which phrase do these stones emphasize? Why?

**Prayer**

* Is there a special memorial stone in your life? Thank God for it.
* What do you “get to do” this week? Ask God to give you a new perspective.
* In your prayer as a group this year, is there a memorial you can think back on?