



YOU HAVE NOT PASSED THIS WAY BEFORE

Sermon Notes

Text: Joshua 3:1-6

Introduction:

When is the last time you went further than you've ever been before?

40 years earlier Israel stood in this spot and let fear cause them to turn back. Now they had a chance to take a step they'd never taken before - a step into the promise.

This passage challenges our church in three ways...

1. Get Ready

v. 5 "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

Consecrate means to set apart as Holy, or prepare something for a special purpose.

1 Peter 1:13 "...prepare your minds for action"

How can we consecrate ourselves for what God is going to do in our church?

- a) Let's pray
- b) Let's make room

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c) Let's be open

2. Take the next step

For every unbeliever there's a first step, and for every believer there's a next step.

v. 3:13 And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap."

To enter new territory we need to be willing to take a step we've never taken before.

"It's not that Christianity has been tried and found wanting; it is that Christianity has been found hard and left untried" ~G.K. Chesterton.

3. Stay the course

v. 6 "...they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people."

The people were supposed to follow the ark of the covenant - the presence of God.

True north vs. Magnetic north: Magnetic north is the strongest pull in our lives that can distract us from following God's "true north."

Conclusion:

Exodus 33:15-16 "Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

The most important feature of our church is the presence of God. Nothing else will distinguish us from the rest of the world.

Bethel Church Penticton - Sunday, August 30, 2015 - Pastor Dave Funk

Life Group Discussion

1. Warm up: When was the last time you tried something new? Tell the group about your experience.
2. What does it mean to “consecrate yourself”? How does prayer prepare you? How do we “make room” for God? What does it mean to “be open” to what God wants to do?
3. Pastor Dave said, “For every unbeliever there’s a first step, and for every believer there’s a next step.” What is your next step? How can others in the group help you?
4. What is the difference between true north and magnetic north? What do you think true north is for a Christian? What would magnetic north be for Christians? How can we discern the difference? What will help us “stay the course”?
5. What makes Christianity different from other religions and ideologies? Are there superficial differences that we emphasize too strongly? What *should* make Christians stand out from the world?
6. Pray together:
 - a) Pray for God to continue to clarify his calling on our church (and the greater church of Penticton).
 - b) Pray for courage for one another to be able to take their “next step.”
 - c) Other requests:
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