

Sunday AM Service ~ May 7, 2023

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

In Psalm 100: 5 we read *"For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."* Let's start with a time of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we come before You today because you are the one true God, both the God who loves us, and the God who saves us. We confess that time and again we are guilty of letting you down, and for this we are sorry. We thank-you for the completed work of salvation through the death and resurrection of your son Jesus. We pray for your presence this morning and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as we remove distractions, focus on your word, and grow in our faith. We pray all this in Jesus name, Amen.

Song – Worthy of all Praise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CREurB4o54M>

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| 1. Jesus, Lord of creation, King of Salvation, Great God of grace. Messiah, promised redeemer Our risen saviour, Author of peace. | 2. For you sought us, wonderfully bought us You paid for us dearly, The price was your blood. And you freed us, brought us to pardon, Back to the garden, Safe in your love. |
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Chorus

You are worthy of all praise,
Worthy of all honour,
Worthy of glory, wisdom and strength.
And so we'll sing through endless days
That you alone are worthy;
Worthy of all power,
Worthy of all praise.

Bible Reading – Joshua 3:1-17 (NIV)

"Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. ² After three days the officers went throughout the camp, ³ giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. ⁴ Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits^[a] between you and the ark; do not go near it." ⁵ Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you." ⁶ Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them. ⁷ And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. ⁸ Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'" ⁹ Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here & listen to the words of the LORD your God. ¹⁰ This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites & Jebusites. ¹¹ See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. ¹² Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. ¹³ And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut

off and stand up in a heap.” ¹⁴ So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. ¹⁵ Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, ¹⁶ the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

Announcements 7/5/23

Working Bee @ Charlestown Church – Many thanks to all those who helped out yesterday.

Mission Team meeting. Once a term those interested in the work of mission within the Church meet together on ZOOM to talk about mission related topics. Our next meeting is this afternoon from 3:30-4:30pm on ZOOM. All welcome.

Renew (women’s conference) – Sat 27 May 9:15am - 3:30pm at Metford Community Baptist Church.

Michelle Underwood will speak on Chapter 2 of John's gospel. A beautiful morning tea and lunch is included. Cost \$45 pp. Registrations close Mon 22 May. For more details and to register

online: www.hgm.org.au/renew. For enquiries contact Linda 0422 014 250

Offering News

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| Budget Offerings for March | \$31,333 |
| Actual Offerings for March | \$35,292 |
| Surplus for March | \$ 3,959 |
| Surplus for Jan-Mar 2023 | \$ 107 |

We are very thankful for the generosity from all those who regularly give to the work of our Church. Please pray for the Committee of management as they seek to use these finances in the most God honouring way.

Pledges. Don’t forget to be thinking through whether you would like to pledge money towards our proposed building extensions at Charlestown. The quicker we pay off any borrowings, the quicker we can move onto any potential Stage 2!

Charlestown Churches 100th Anniversary. The Charlestown Church was formed 100 years ago this November. We are looking at forming a small group to think through how we might celebrate such a milestone event. If you would like to be a part of this group, please speak to Stephen, Jon or one of the elders. And if you have any historical memorabilia please us know about it.

Hunter Presbytery. On the third Wednesday of each second month, a minister and elder from each of the Hunter regional Churches meet together as the Hunter Presbytery. This last month when we met and among other things, we

- Invited a woman from every Church and talked together about how better to engage our women in this decision-making forum
- We prayed for each of the Churches in the Presbytery
- We discussed and made decisions about a leadership problem in one of the churches
- We talked about how the options of how to help another Church who are getting smaller and smaller each year
- We organised our Presbytery retreat (which happened last Monday/Tuesday)
- We agreed to sell the redundant Dungog Church property

New Elders/Deacons. Please keep Sunday 21st may free as we are hoping to induct Mal Wardrop as an elder of the Church (he has previously been ordained as an elder in a previous parish) and to set apart Jo Barlow, Matt James, Karen Logan & Robynne Wardrop as deacons. We hope to do that at both our Swansea and Charlestown morning services.

Bible Reading – Joshua 4:1-24

4 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 are standing, and 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, 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.” ⁸ So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. ⁹ Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day. ¹⁰ Now the priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the LORD had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua. The people hurried over, ¹¹ and as soon as all of them had crossed, the ark of the LORD and the priests came to the other side while the people watched. ¹² The men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over, ready for battle, in front of the Israelites, as Moses had directed them. ¹³ About forty thousand armed for battle crossed over before the LORD to the plains of Jericho for war. ¹⁴ That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses. ¹⁵ Then the Lord said to Joshua, ¹⁶ “Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan.” ¹⁷ So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.” ¹⁸ And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before. ¹⁹ On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. ²⁰ 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 parents, ‘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 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.”

Pastoral Prayer Points

God loves us “Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, Lord, preserve both people and animals. How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.” Psalm 36:5-7

Pray for Egypt. Pray for a stable and trustworthy government to act in the interest of all its people. Pray for the Church to continue to overcome evil with divine forgiveness and love. Pray for Jesus to reveal Himself to an unprecedented number of Muslims disillusioned by Islamic State.

Pray for gospel growth. Pray for each seed that is sown to be watered, tended, grow, and eventually bear fruit. Pray that God would do amazing things in each life, in each family, in each community for His glory. Pray for the lost to be saved.

Pray for Applebys (Indochina, Pioneers) Please pray for Ruth as she recovers from her mastectomy this week and for results and hopefully no need for further treatment. Pray for the Pioneers Regional South East Asia Retreat running in Thailand June 6-11, the first retreat since 2019, pray for Gilbert and the other 3 team leaders as they run it. Praise God for Sarah’s recent graduation as a doctor which they could attend, and for extra time together as a family while here undergoing treatment. Pray for Lydia as she copes with home schooling changes and processing the situation.

Song – Tell me the old, old story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwJionxs-bs>

1. Tell me the old, old story
of unseen things above,
of Jesus and His glory,
of Jesus and His love.
Tell me the story simply,
as to a little child,
for I am weak and weary,
and helpless and defiled.

Chorus
Tell me the old, old story,
tell me the old, old story,
tell me the old, old story
of Jesus and His love.
2. Tell me the story slowly,
that I may take it in,
that wonderful redemption,
God's remedy for sin.
Tell me the story often,
for I forget so soon;
- 'The early dew' of morning
has passed away at noon.
3. Tell me the story softly,
with earnest tones and grave;
remember I'm the sinner
whom Jesus came to save.
Tell me that story always,
if you would really be
in any time of trouble
a comforter to me.
4. Tell me the same old story,
when you have cause to fear
that this world's empty glory
is costing me too dear.
Yes, and when that world's glory
is dawning on my soul,
tell me the old, old story:
'Christ Jesus makes you whole.'

Sermon – An Amazing Thing (Stephen Taylor)

<https://youtu.be/UJ7W-Ku9XHo>

I was visiting one of our newer people recently and heard from his lips an amazing tale of God doing a miraculous thing in his life. You see his wife was dying, she didn't have many more days to live and his daughter was overseas and heavily pregnant and couldn't travel to see her mum. Until her baby was born. But then there were problems getting a flight, getting a passport for a newborn & getting there before her mother died. It was a truly amazing tale. Where God opened the door again and again when the door seemed shut and even locked. And many years later he was still thankful for what God had done.

You see our God is a God of miracles. And I can, as I am sure you can too, recount amazing things that the Lord has done in my life. Answered prayers. Times when I was protected from danger. Supernatural leadings. They don't happen very often but when they do happen you just know that God is behind it all. And you marvel at how powerful and caring our God really is. And then you forget. Well at least I do. Life goes on. A new set of challenges come before us. And we forget our history and live again in the present.

Slide 2

So how do we stop that cycle from repeating again and again in our lives? Because I don't want to forget God's wonderful salvation in my life. I don't want to be so carried away with the now that I fail to remember all the amazing things God has done for me? Do I need to get a tattoo? Or take a picture? Or organise a plaque? Or set aside a special time?

That's where Joshua 3 & 4 will help us. For in this passage God does a truly amazing thing. He stops the waters of the Jordan and enables his people to go into the promised land on dry land. And to make sure they don't forget he tells them to do two things. They prepare themselves for it and afterwards they do something so that they would never forget it. They do something before it happens and something after it happens to ensure they know that it was God who had acted and that this is a pattern of how God will continue to act with them into the future. So, let's look at our passage this morning beginning with

1. The priority of God's presence (Verses 1-13)

"Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over." Now let's not forget that the Israelites had been roaming the wilderness for 40 years. Joshua and Caleb were the only adults that had personally witnessed the first Passover, the escape from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea and the receiving of the law at Mt Sinai. All the others had perished due to a lack of faith in a God who had already saved them once and was leading them every step of the way.

Slide 4

So apart from Joshua and Caleb, every adult here had not known any other life than a nomad and a wanderer. But now they were coming home, they were about to enter the promised land. ²*"After three days the officers went throughout the camp, ³giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God & the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits between you and the ark; do not go near it."*

Now the next two chapters are filled with this ark. The ark of the covenant. The ark of the Lord or just the ark is mentioned 17 times. Now it hasn't been mentioned for a number of years but here it becomes the focus of our attention. In the words of Dale Ralph Davis, (Slide 5) *"Thus the ark – the sign of Yahweh's presence among his people – meets us at every turn, reminding us that it is Yahweh himself who leads his people into Canaan, who cuts off flooding waters and holds them back as it were by his hand. The whole affair is Yahweh's feat and the Israelites, though active, are still primarily spectators."*

Slide 6

God is leading the way. And the symbol of his presence is the ark of the covenant. You know sometimes when you are in a big city and you have joined a tour group, the tour guide holds up a little flag so that you know where they are and where you need to be. In a similar way God places the ark at the head of his people. They had not been this way before and the Lord wanted to make sure that everyone knew that He was with them leading the way.

And speaking to them. The God they are following has spoken to them from Mt Sinai, is speaking to them through his laws and continues to speak to them through Joshua, who passes it on to the priests and the people. You see God is about to do an amazing thing.

Slide 7

So how do you prepare yourself for what God is about to do? Firstly, you consecrate yourself. ⁵*Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."* They stop everything. Hit the pause button. Examine themselves. Repent. Get ready for what God is going to do next. God's people have to be ready if they are going to appreciate what God is about to do next.

Now I wonder if we have forgotten this today? Is one of the reasons we so easily forget what God has done because we weren't ready for God to do it in the first place? We have forgotten to consecrate ourselves. Ready ourselves. Get prepared so that we may enjoy, savour even, the amazing things that God is doing all around us?

For me part of the enjoyment of a holiday is planning it. Thinking through where we might go and what we might do that will bring joy and refreshment to my family. Likewise, when we press pause on our lives and come to Church each Sunday, when we give ourselves to a daily time with God. When we push aside all the other voices in our head and pray to the Lord and repent of our sins, we are readying ourselves for what God will do in the future.

Slide 8

Here is how the apostle James puts it. *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil & he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”*

Slide 9

That’s what Joshua tells his people to do, to consecrate themselves & secondly to concentrate on the Lord. *”⁹ Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here & listen to the words of the LORD your God. This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites & Jebusites. See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you.”* Keep your eyes on him. Look closely at what the Lord is doing.

Slide 10

Friends as the people of God were about to enter the promised land, they knew without a shadow of a doubt that God was with them. And so they ordered themselves with the ark of the covenant leading them forward. But friends, do you realise that we have something even better going on as Christians. We have God’s Holy Spirit leading us forward. Because Jesus dies on the cross, our sins are forgiven and we now have access to the Father 24/7 through the son by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Have you forgotten that? Are you taking that for granted? Has the ordinary taken over your view from the extraordinary? Concentrate on the Lord this morning. Consecrate yourself to the Lord this morning. When two or three are gathered in His name, the Lord is in our midst. Right here. Right now. He has done amazing things in the past. He will continue to do amazing things into the future. Including one day soon, he will come again. Be prepared. Get ready. Repent and believe. For there is a priority about God’s presence and secondly there is

Slide 11

2. A Method in God’s Madness (3:14-17)

You see at the same time we hear the phrase the ark of the covenant again and again in this passage, we also read the word cross/pass over/cross over 22 times in these two chapters as well. God is going to get his people to cross from the wilderness into the land of milk and honey. From the place of wandering to their spiritual home.

¹⁴” So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest.” What? Did I hear that right? God has been preparing his people for 40 years to go into the promised land and he decides to do it while the Jordan river is in flood! That’s crazy!

Slide 12

Well it’s springtime & the snow has melted on the mountains of Hermon & the March rains have turned the Jordan River into a raging torrent. You see for most of the year, the Jordan River is not much of a barrier. It’s wide, it’s shallow, there are a number of fords that make it easy to cross, except this one short period when it is extremely difficult to cross. Now why on earth would the Lord bring His people to the Jordan at that exact time? Had they arrived a few weeks earlier the river wouldn’t be nearly so dangerous. But here they are now with children and the sick and the infirmed, with their livestock and all their worldly possessions in tow, an entire nation faced with the deafening roar, the thunder of a river in flood.

Slide 13

“Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So, the people crossed over opposite Jericho.”

Slide 14

You see there is a method in God's madness. If God can tame a raging river, then he can defeat the people of the land they are about to enter. If he can stop a flood, he can stop anyone or anything that opposes Israel. If God can get you into the land, he can surely give them the land. It is like Joshua is saying to his people, if God is for us, who can be against us.

Friends, sometimes God brings his people to impossible circumstances, situations so difficult and tough and hopeless that you realise I can't do this on my own. Only God can do this. But here God's people are ready for God to do something. They have anticipated it. They have concentrated on him. They have consecrated themselves to him. They know that there *"ain't no mountain high enough, ain't no valley low enough, ain't no river wide enough"* to keep God from doing the things he has promised to do for his people.

For there is a method in God's madness. Look to the ark and not the river. Do what Peter did when Jesus walked on water during the storm on Lake Galilee. Remember when Peter looked to Jesus, he could do the impossible. But when he looked at the waves, he began to sink. All he had to do was step out in faith. Which is what the Israelites now do.

Slide 15

The priest's step into the raging flood and immediately the water stops. It piles up 30 kms away. And they walk to the centre on dry land. And then the call is for the rest of the people to follow suit. And the Lord does an amazing thing. And the people of God experience God's kindness to them, his grace when they listen to his word and respond in faith.

Now friends did you notice when God does his miracle? Was it before the priests step out in faith or after? Wasn't it when they stepped out in faith. It would be easy to see God acting and then to just do it. Likewise, it might seem all up to us if we were to do our act of faith and then God rewards it with his grace. But the two go together. As we step out, God works. As we respond to his word, God stops the raging rivers all around us.

Slide 16

But friends, the fact that God can do the impossible does not mean he will always do the impossible. As far as I know, this miracle has never been done in recent times. There is no promise from God that he will stop all raging rivers around you. Listen to the words of Gordon Fee, *"No Bible narrative was written specifically about you... You can always learn a great deal from these narratives, but you can never assume that God expects you to do exactly the same things that Bible characters did, or have the same things happen to you that happened to them."*

But God can do the impossible. The tide of anti-God forces may be in full flood in our time and in our place but nothing is outside of God's control. Maybe we should stop looking for wood to build a raft or steel to build a bridge or a shovel to build a tunnel and instead wait upon the Lord. Concentrate on him. Consecrate ourselves to him. And realise we have more than an ark with us, we have the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are called to follow him.

Slide 17

Hudson Taylor once said, *"I used to ask God to help me. Then I asked if I might help him. I ended up asking him to do his work through me."* So, I wonder what work has God got me and you to do? Where does God want me and you to go? Find out. Read God's word. Pray to him. Talk to your fellow Christians about it. Then have the faith to do it. Step into the stream & see God do yet another amazing thing. For next in chapter 4 we see

Slide 18

3. The symbol of God's salvation (4:1-19)

But now that God has done this amazing thing, the Lord doesn't want us to forget about it. In the words of Dale Ralph Davis *"getting through the river is the easy part. The hardest thing is to remember."* Because it

is so easy to forget isn't it? That's why we have our diaries, our calendars, our phones, to remind us of the things we need to remember. That's why we have Anzac Day, Australia Day, Labour Day, Christmas Day because we are so forgetful. We take things for granted. And God knows that and so gives his people a symbol of salvation.

12 rocks. A cairn of sorts. That's not a can of sauce. Just as I have on my desk a picture of Kaylene and I on my wedding day and just as I have a Russian wedder on my finger reminding me that there are three parties in my marriage, the Lord, Kaylene and I. So, God tells Joshua to choose 12 men, one from each tribe to set up a memorial to the day's events. So that whenever anyone sees this pile of rocks, they will remember the amazing thing that God has just done. He stopped a raging river & safely got his people into the promised land.

Slide 19

Actually, it seems there was two piles of rocks. One at Gilgal. ²⁰ *"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 parents, 'What do these stones mean?' "* ²² *tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground... The LORD your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over.'"*

Slide 20

This was one way not to forget. And to pass this amazing truth onto the generations to come. God had done the impossible. There was a method to his madness. He led us to the edge of a swollen Jordan river, only to provide the way through himself. But although, & it is a bit confusing, there seems to be a second pile of rocks that Joshua also set up. Look at 4:9 *"Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day."*

Now what good is that? Those stones would be covered over by the water most of the time. But whereas the pile of rocks at Gilgal are static, the pile of rocks in the Jordan is dynamic. No, you might only see them at certain times of the year but when you do see them, they are an even more powerful reminder that nothing is too hard for the Lord.

Slide 21

We too need static reminders of God's goodness to us as well as dynamic reminders. Which is why we often have in Churches or on our person a cross or a fish symbol. To remind ourselves of Jesus. Who he is and what he did. Now we would never forget Jesus, would we? Well we do! And maybe that's why God gave us the two sacraments. Living testimonies. Dynamic symbols. The Lord Supper. My body broken for you. My blood shed for you. And baptism. New life in Christ. Dying & raising. Sprinkled with his grace because we easily forget

Even coming each week to Church is a reminder. I need you and you need me. I need God's word. I need prayer. And yes, I can do many of these things on my own. But God tells me to meet with others. They are our modern pile of rocks. Because if I don't do these things I will forget. And every Christian now must say to themselves constantly "Lest we forget."

Slide 22

4. Which leads us lastly to **the pattern of God's purposes.**

¹⁹ *"On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho."* Now does the tenth day of the first month mean anything to you? Have a real hard think about it? Because it meant something to the Jew.

Slide 23

You see on this very day, 40 years earlier, the lambs were slaughtered and their blood placed on the doorposts and on the lentils during the very first Passover so that the Hebrew firstborn might be saved from death. 40 years ago, the Israelites celebrated their first Passover. The time when God save his people

from their enemies. And the symbol of that salvation was the blood of the lamb. Now 40 years later God has again saved his people and delivered them into the promised land. So, you see a pattern is progressing.

And during the Passover many, many years later Jesus hands out the wine, which symbolises the blood of the covenant. And he seals that new covenant by dying on the cross. The pattern that begins in the OT points us to the reality of what Jesus did for us. God has done it again. He has rescued his people.

Slide 24

And there is another pattern. God exalts the rescuer. He promises in Joshua 3:7, *"Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses."* And did you notice in the very next chapter the fulfilment of that promise? Joshua 4:14 says ¹⁴ *"That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses."* Here's another pattern, God exalts the human leader that he saves his people through.

Have you worked out where I am going with this? Two millennia later, another Joshua, because Jesus is the Greek version of the Hebrew Joshua, stepped out from the waters of Jordan. Now why was John the Baptist baptising in the Jordan? Because of Joshua 3, this was the place where the people left the wilderness of sin and were welcomed into the promised land of God's promise. Jesus leaves the Jordan, then ministers to Israel and then dies on the cross to rescue his people.

Slide 25

And the book of Philippians goes on to say, *"& having become obedient to the point of death, even the death of a cross, God therefore **highly exalted Him**, giving Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."*

Jesus is the fulfillment of the **pattern to God's purposes**. Jesus' death on the cross is the **symbol of God's salvation**. Jesus' death and resurrection reveals **the method in God's madness**. And when he leaves this earth, he doesn't leave his disciples as orphans but sends them his Holy Spirit showing us **the priority of God's presence**.

Slide 26

That should bring wonder to the world. And worship to the Church. Or in the words Joshua 4:24, 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."* For if God can help them to cross a raging flood, he can help them defeat their enemies and he will be there for any battles they are about to fight. That's true for the Israelites of Joshua time as well as for the disciples of Jesus as well. And we should never forget this. But how will we not forget?

Slide 27

Well let's get ready now for what God will do in the future. Consecrate yourself to the Lord and concentrate on the Lord. Expect that God will do amazing things. And when he does do those things, find symbols, routines, habits that will ensure that you never forget. The call from this passage is to have faith in this God. To put your feet into the water. God promises to do amazing things. He has done amazing things. He will do more amazing things in the future. Just make sure you never forget it!

Song – Jesus thank you [Jesus, Thank You \(feat. Brook Hills Music\) - Official Lyric Video - YouTube](#)

- i. The mystery of the cross I cannot comprehend
The agonies of Calvary
You the perfect Holy One, crushed Your Son
Who drank the bitter cup reserved for me

Chorus *Your blood has washed away my sin. Jesus, thank You
The Father's wrath completely satisfied. Jesus, thank You
Once Your enemy, now seated at Your table. Jesus, thank You*

- ii. By Your perfect sacrifice I've been brought near
Your enemy You've made Your friend
Pouring out the riches of Your glorious grace
Your mercy and Your kindness know no end

Chorus

Bridge Lover of my soul, I want to live for You (x4)

Chorus

Benediction

¹⁰ "We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. ¹¹ When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below." (Joshua 2:10-11)