

Moving Forward In Faith, And Serving The Lord In A Post-Pandemic World

Preacher Grace Lim

Translated by Priscilla Chong

The book of Joshua chapter 3 records the event of Joshua leading two million young and old Israelites across the Jordan River. They were a new generation who had only heard the account of those who had crossed the Red Sea previously and died in the Wilderness. This would be their first challenge before entering the land of Canaan. They had never come this way before. All of us have been through such an experience. In different phases of our lives, we would have to face and cross over our own Jordan River. Although Singapore is in the post-pandemic phase since mid-February, the Covid-19 virus has yet to actually disappear. So what will happen then? How can we move forward? We can learn from the example of how the Israelites crossed the Jordan River:

1. Follow God closely (verses 1-4)

“When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God... follow it. Then you will know which way to go.” This is the instruction given by God to His people. The ark represents the presence of God. To cross the river, they must obey what God has told them and follow His leading. When the Israelites saw the priests and Levites carrying the ark, they knew it was time to cross the river. Likewise, when we do not know how to move forward; we must depend on God and be sensitive to His

guidance. God shall surely lead us forward. He will never abandon nor ignore us, and leave us alone to figure our way forward helplessly. He will guide us through. We must pay heed and follow Him so that we will not veer off the path.

2. Consecrate ourselves before God (verses 5-6)

“Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you (v. 5).” The purpose of consecration is to purify oneself and be set apart. On the second day the Israelites would witness and experience God’s power. The people of God must consecrate themselves so that God will be with them. “Consecrate” is a response from man to God. How do we consecrate ourselves? It includes repenting, departing from evil, focusing on God, worshipping God, depending on God. 2 Tim. 2:21 says “Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.” As we serve, let us consecrate ourselves often, so that we may become vessels appropriate to be used by God in the tasks He has entrusted to us, and for His wonderful works.

3. Readiness of faith (verses 7-13)

Before crossing the river, God also affirmed the Israelites by encouraging them not to be afraid, but to

move forward courageously.

i. God wants to affirm the leader Joshua

“Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel (v. 7).” This is a promise, an encouragement to Joshua, as he was about to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River. Even though he had crossed the Red Sea the last time and the experience was still deeply etched in his memory, it was Moses who was leading while he was following. Now he had become the leader. The responsibility on his shoulders was tremendous not to risk any mistakes. The greatest comfort for Joshua was to have God with him. God promised Joshua that He would be with him the way He was with Moses previously - “I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel”. The Israelites respected Joshua because God was with him and God was working alongside him. When we serve, we need not be afraid as long as God is with us. We can take courage in serving by depending on God.

ii. God wants to affirm the priests:

“When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river (v. 8).” God wants to affirm the priests who were carrying the ark. He wanted them to stand in the water when they entered the river and not to be afraid or worried. God would take over the next step. This was not an easy task. It was a test of faith. If they followed the instructions of God, everyone would witness the power of God and experience His amazing ways. We must follow God’s instructions. If we have faith in God, we will surely experience His working out our situation for us.

iii. God wants to affirm the people (verses 9-13):

“Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God (v.9).” Besides affirming the leaders and priests, God also affirmed the Israelites. As the way ahead was full of uncertainties, God wanted them to draw closer to Him with whom they had established the covenant, listened to His Word, and strengthened their faith. So that they would know God was with them (v. 10), He would drive out the enemies, and help them gain victory (v. 11). Twelve people were selected to walk ahead as witnesses, so that

they could see the priests in action up close, as well as to witness the parting of the Jordan River. However, they needed to be united, fully trusting and looking to God alone, so that the Israelites following behind would move forward steadily. Sometimes when God wants to fulfill a purpose, He would begin by equipping those from the top before doing likewise to those at the bottom. After that, they would move together as one and witness the fulfilment of God’s purpose!

4. Step of faith (verses 14-17):

With all preparations done, the Israelites were ready to cross the river, and a new chapter was about to begin in the history of Israel. The Israelites obeyed God, and moved out of their tents (v. 14a). As they stepped into the water, the power of God was manifested. They had only heard the account of the previous generation crossing the Red Sea, but now they would witness the miracle themselves, and experience first-hand the parting of Jordan River. When they exercised faith (v. 15), God showed His greatness by causing the riverbed to dry up, and the entire troop of Israelites was able to cross the river smoothly (v. 16-17). The Israelites had experienced victory through a step of faith. Through it, their faith was also renewed and restored. God also used the event to validate Joshua in front of the Israelites, and caused them to know that God was truly with them and would lead them into the Promised Land. The people of God need to follow His method, so that they will be able to witness His power and glory according to His timing.

Living Word Myanmar has just crossed its 25th year mark. What will its ministry be like in future? God is our Marshal. We need Him to continue leading us in all areas of ministry, and to guide our building project to completion. Living Word Singapore needs the leading of Jehovah Nissi too, as it faces future challenges. We need your co-partnership. In these post pandemic times, let us move forward in faith, and press on for the Kingdom of God!



Bountiful Returns

Sister Kang Soo Li

Translated by John Leow

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). From the life of Moses, we can see a time for him to learn, to be equipped, and to put it into practice. For the first 40 years of his life, Moses studied all the knowledge of the Egyptians in the palace. For the next 40 years, he learnt to lead as a shepherd in the wilderness. And for the last 40 years, he led the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land. This was God's wonderful plan.

Similarly, God ordained His wonderful plan for me - first to study and to work, then to raise children, and finally to serve Him full-time. Five years ago, God's gracious hand led me to Living Word to become Department Head of the children's ministry. But now that God has given me a new direction, the time has come for me to leave Living Word.

On reflection, I am grateful to God for leading me to serve and learn concurrently, which helped me to grow in many aspects.

1) Expanded networks and enriching experience

Before Living Word, my area of service was limited to my church. Since Living Word serves all denominations, I could serve in different churches and various student care centres. Every visit to a different church allowed me to discover its culture and the specific needs of the church's Sunday School ministry. Some churches have insufficient teachers, so I would help to teach; some Sunday Schools lack teaching materials, especially festive messages, so I would compile teaching materials; some teachers have little teaching experience, so I would share some teaching ideas.

Whenever I led children's meetings in various churches, I would meet all kinds of children. They gave me

new teaching opportunities, which further trained me, enriching my experience and improving my adaptability.

2) Mastering technology and improving skills

Preparing my lessons also allowed me to master various skills, especially the application of information technology and Internet software. During the COVID-19 pandemic when churches and Sunday Schools had to close, Living Word produced children's videos to enable children to attend Sunday School at home. In the process, I acquired many new skills, such as writing scripts, recording audio, searching for visuals, editing sound effects and background music, and other production techniques.

Online teaching, too, became a new method to adapt to the times. In order to arouse interest and sustain attention online, teaching must be concise and lively, accompanied by vibrant and targeted visuals. The preparation of PowerPoint presentations was a basic necessity. Gaming elements were added to further strengthen interaction between teachers and students.

Thank God for His grace. I had to rapidly master various technical skills from different channels so that I could help Sunday School teachers, co-workers and fellow believers in other churches keep up with technological change to continue teaching the Word of God.

3) Experiencing His grace and strengthening faith

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me....



(Psalm 28:7). When I taught Sunday school in my church, I taught the same group of children every time. When I led meetings in different churches, I had to teach unfamiliar children and communicate with the leaders of the church. In the beginning, I felt uneasy because I lack confidence in having to face the adults. God's word became my comfort, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness..." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Whenever I felt weak, I would turn to God and call on His name. Our faithful God always supplies wisdom and strength to help me complete the task at hand effectively. I found Him leading me through each step of the video production, be it getting much needed relevant resources or applying for free copyright. He is indeed Jehovah Jireh,

who provided for all our needs so that the video could be completed on time!

After five years with Living Word, there would not be sufficient pages in this publication if I were to list each encounter of grace that God had so mercifully granted me. Whenever I experienced the Lord's bountiful grace, my faith in Him increased. In bidding farewell to Living Word, I am returning to my own church to head the children's Sunday School ministry. I firmly believe that God's grace will continue to lead the way ahead. May He use my gifts and talents to complete the work He has entrusted to me.

All Thanks to the Lord, and to Living Word, too, for His bountiful returns!

Myanmar Ministry

25th Anniversary Online Thanksgiving Service

Preacher Li Qing Hui

Translated by **Chua Kim Hee**

It has been 25 years since Myanmar Living Word was established. We have commemorated every 5th anniversary five times. For the past four times, pastors from well-known churches had celebrated the occasion with us. Given Covid-19, we were unable to gather physically for our 25th Anniversary event in 2022. We celebrated it online from 19-20 September. We had the honour of having Rev Dr. Michael Shen, Principal Emeritus, Singapore Bible College to speak on "Rebuilding Lives, Faithful To Our Tasks".

On the first evening, Rev Shen spoke on Psalm 139 about "those who are living before God." The message was a timely reminder for all of us who are living under the watchful eyes of our all-knowing and holy God. The Bible not only wants us to know about God's greatness, but also wants us to acknowledge how small we are. Like David, the Psalmist concludes that there is absolutely no place to hide from an omniscient God. We should instead, turn away from sin and submit to God. Those who are true believers of Jesus must walk closely with



Him and live godly lives.

The following evening, Rev Shen chose a passage from Acts 17:16-34 to exhort us to live "a life of evangelism." From his sermon, he showed us how we can remain faithful to the Great Commission in this modern age. Everyone needs the gospel and having our lives oriented to evangelism would seem reasonable and purposeful. The life of the apostle Paul is one such example for all of us to follow. In him, we can see his love for the Lord from his passion for preaching the Word and bringing others to Christ. May all of us become a people devoted to evangelism so that those around us can receive God's salvation.

As a fellow co-worker of Myanmar Living Word, I was encouraged by the online celebration. We could see our board directors serving together with our counterparts from Singapore. We were also able to meet many other pastoral staff, brothers and sisters joining in our thanksgiving service for the first time. Together, we witnessed how the Lord has remained faithful and gracious all these years in using the Living





Word ministry to serve Him in Myanmar.

From 21-22 November, as part of our 25th Anniversary celebration, we organised a talk on "Church Leadership by Pastors and Lay Leaders." The event was led by Rev Dr. Caleb Soo of Singapore Life Church.

The first session centred on the theme "Now is the time for church transformation." Rev Soo encouraged us to be open to changes within ourselves and the church so that we can stay relevant to the times we are now living in. He called on the church to chart the right direction and take concrete steps towards making these changes. We should be continuously learning, renewing and growing as we experience God.

On the second evening, Rev Soo spoke about the "Unity in service for church pastoral staff and lay leaders." Without a united and cohesive leadership, the church will not make an impact in this world. The church

leadership needs to be clear on its goals so that they can lead brothers and sisters to achieving them. Teamwork is very important, and churches and Christian organizations need teamwork service. The team must understand one another, accept one another, and embrace a common goal. From the pastor's sharing and encouragement, it helps us build a good team to serve, live out a good testimony and glorify God in this era.

These two events have now been uploaded to YouTube. We hope all of you can visit the links and benefit from watching them.

In the last 25 years of Myanmar Living Word, we have received God's abundant grace in our ministry. Your constant partnership in prayer, financial support and service have enabled us to grow in many aspects. We have travelled to many places within the country and reached out to many communities. By the grace of God, many have come to know Him and seen their lives transformed!

Covid_19 may be behind us now but the political situation remains unclear. What does the future hold for us? We need to be ready to face our daily challenges at work and in life. As we continue our ministry in 2023, the future development of Myanmar Living Word would greatly appreciate your prayer and support to accomplish the mission God has set for us.



Love Requires Waiting

Preacher Li Mei Yi

Translated by Jovita Chua

In a self-centred environment where everyone cares only for himself or herself, how do we live out God's love in our lives? With many different forms of relationships considered normal today – such as puppy love, love triangles, friends with benefits - how do we teach the younger generation about loving correctly? Different relationships meet different needs: a married couple provides the most intimate companionship to each other; parents provide nurturing care for their child; siblings provide the first friendships. Teenagers are at an age where they enjoy making new friends, desiring affirmation from their peers and identification with those they admire. They are also attracted to the opposite sex, a phase of discovery and exploration which require extra guidance and support. This must be based on the fear and love of God, the same foundation for relying on God in school, at work and ultimately one's choice of spouse.

Here is a summary of the online sharing for youths in October last year entitled: Let's Talk About Love:

We need to expand our social circle in order to make new friends. Yet we also need to be careful in choosing who we allow to enter into our lives because their influence can be for good or for bad. We should also learn how to interact with and care for our friends, by communicating openly to build up healthy relationships. This is built upon accepting and loving ourselves as well as accepting and loving others. Making friends with the opposite sex ought to develop naturally within strong friendships before any romantic relationship.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 teaches us that there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens. When we do the right thing at the right time, we will be blessed. We should therefore not be in a hurry to look for a boyfriend or girlfriend in our teenage years.

It is perfectly normal for teenagers to develop an interest in the opposite sex, and to like someone as a result. But there must be mutual respect. Everybody has the right to be drawn to someone, or to be uninterested



in someone else. Anyone who has felt rejected should not think that that is the end of the world. Song of Songs 3:5 says: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires. In our teenage years, we should be striving to build up ourselves in all aspects – to cultivate a good character, to understand our strengths and weaknesses by listening to feedback from friends and teachers, to make the most of opportunities to learn new things, to allow ourselves to mature.

The co-workers from the various centres found the talk beneficial to the youths. The speaker was clear and presented her message well. The youths, having graduated from the children ministry, were new to the youth ministry. They needed the encouragement to better understand themselves, better understand others and be reassured of God's love for them. The message gave them much food for thought – to reflect on what they need to guard against so that they will not stray from God's word.

The older generations in church must look out for our youths by being role models and disciplining them. Youths can learn to establish a personal relationship with God, to experience His love and walk closely with Him. When we love correctly starting with God's love for us, we are building the right foundation for the Christian family to raise our generation of God-fearing youths. All glory be to God alone! Amen.



Unceasing Grace

Preacher He Rong Ju

Translated by Chua Kim Hee

When the world was overwhelmed by the surge of Covid-19, the grace of God continued to flow freely despite many countries being under lockdown. Interestingly, I have noticed some ironies due to Covid-19:

“You could not travel outside yet you have met many whom you have not seen before.”

“You felt you have lost more yet you have gained much”

“You felt you could not do more yet you have accomplished much”

By God’s unceasing grace, Living Word and Sower Institute collaborated on the “Bible Missions Ministry Certification” year-long online course during the pandemic. In spite of network reliability issues and power outages throughout the course, the students persevered. They graduated in September 2022 at an online ceremony that was attended by 100 participants comprising teaching staff, students, and family members.

These graduates continued to enjoy God’s unceasing grace when they attended a 6-week online course organised by the Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership Training. They graduated from the “International Advanced Leadership Training” in November last year.

The participants benefitted greatly from reflecting on key issues relating to the Great Commission: How does one strike a balance between depth and balance in service? How does one manage one’s Emotional Quotient? How does one manage interpersonal conflicts? Each believer needs to be clear about his/her personal vision and how to set goals to sustain the vision and be a channel of blessing to each succeeding generation. As God continues to bless us, we continue to cherish such learning opportunities.

God’s mission will always bring blessings. Living Word is no different from a church or Christian organisation with a mission to bless others. May all of us continue to extend God’s unceasing grace to others.

Two graduates share their learning journey below:

1. Liao Yan Lian (Deacon in Christ Methodist Church, Kyaukme)

Thank God for His grace! Despite Covid-19 travel restriction, I attended an online course on “Bible Missions Ministry Certification” and the “International Advanced Leadership Training.” I thank God for hearing my prayers. Although my work schedule was hectic, I was able to overcome many difficulties to



complete both courses.

They deepened my understanding of mission work as a task commissioned by God and equipped me for the work of evangelism. A good disciple also needs to be a dynamic leader by constantly upgrading ourselves and training other missionary warriors systematically.

Thank God that I was able to apply what I have learned in my church. I shared with the Sisters’ Fellowship and the Deacons the Bible’s perspective on team spirit, emotional health, and interpersonal relationships to help them work out some differences. . Their relationship has begun to heal!

I have decided to be a missionary to the refugees in the countryside. I have partnered with the local Christians to preach the gospel in the Burmese and Shan languages. To God be the glory!

2. Preacher Cao Dong Mei (Mu Bang Nan Qi Li)

As a housewife, I am always busy with the nitty-gritty of daily life. The instability of Internet access made it challenging for me to complete even one online lesson. Thanks be to God, the organisers resolved this by making the recording available for playback within a stipulated timeframe after the lesson. This helped me greatly and I was able to learn much. The Sower Institute course gave me a deeper insight into interpersonal relationships. I also gained a simple but effective approach to evangelism. The Haggai Institute course taught me about maintaining a balance in my service, as well as leadership skills and managing conflict.



During the graduation ceremony, I was moved by the exhortations from several teachers. Although I would not be able to live out completely their instructions, I have tried my best to make some practical changes in my life. For me, who wants to learn but has difficulty finding free time, I am grateful for this wonderful learning opportunity to study God’s Word with fellow brothers and sisters.

The Journey of Faith

Preacher Susanna Ou

Translated by Roland Sim



The Bible teaches that “faith is the confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see”. (Heb. 11:1). For almost three years of COVID-19, we were unable to meet in person so ministry moved online. Churches reopened only after the pandemic had eased, including the Sunday School ministry. Myanmar Living Word also resumed every opportunity to serve wherever there were needs.

Thank God that I was able to partner Preacher Li Qinghui at Mujie’s “Chen Xin House” where I focused on discipleship training. It was my first time teaching in person so I was quite anxious. I relied on God to help me prepare and have learnt much from the content I was to teach. My stress level was greatly reduced after much practice, when I could apply my skills in the classroom.

The students, all male, were in drug rehabilitation. Their mentor, Pastor Luo Xin Cai, had put them to work in the drug rehabilitation center as well as arranged for them to participate in the services and Sunday Schools of various churches. Following over a week of training, the discipleship trainees were able to practise what they had learnt by teaching in Sunday School at Mujie’s No. 105 Church.

I was glad to see them actively preparing, practising and teaching the children. I thank the Lord, too, that the children were also very engaged in learning. This

was a special experience for the trainees as they were led by the Lord in their learning and practice. Thank God!

We were honestly apprehensive when we started. Myanmar was in dire straits, with political chaos and riots. Criminals were taking advantage to rob and steal and endangering lives. We often heard of rumours of war on the the road from Mandalay to Mujie. Along the way and at checkpoints, many policemen were seen from time to time.

Thank the Lord that we could go forth by faith! We were accompanied and protected by God. We arrived at Mujie Chen Xin House safely, where we had a wonderful time of service. All glory to our Father in heaven!

I also conducted Sunday School teachers’ training at Lashio Holy Light Church. Although it was only for a day and two afternoons, I thank God that everyone actively participated and received practical help.

Thanks be to God for His bountiful grace, keeping and protecting us for wonderful times of service in various places!

