

## Introduction

There are quite a few instances of water being mentioned in the Bible. Water can be:

- A place of chaos
- A context of trust
- A means of blessing

### A place of chaos

Water as a place of chaos is there from the first page of the Bible – the creation story of Genesis 1:

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

<sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light,"

### It is always God's plan to redeem the chaos and bring blessing.

When Jesus talks with the woman at the well in John 4, it is to explain to her that he is the Water of Life – that whoever drinks of his water – will never thirst. Our salvation – through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross – is the ultimate display of how God is always working to bring blessing out of chaos. It is the very heart of God. To redeem and restore.

But very often God calls us to wait on him, and to trust – often we have to experience the chaos – not knowing if, or when, the blessing will come.

And very often we're also part of the redemptive purposes of God – he uses us to help bring restoration to the lives of those around us.

#### Mark 4:39

When the disciples and Jesus were in the boat, and a storm whipped up, and the disciples were afraid – they had to trust that Jesus would act. And Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

#### Exodus 14

In the parting of the Red Sea, so the Israelites could escape from slavery, they came to the chaos of the Red Sea – and they thought their bid for freedom was over. But through the parting of the Red Sea – the Israelites were able to cross safely.

#### In the book of Joshua, in Chapter 1

With the passage of Joshua's calling to be leader, after Moses had died – Joshua had to take the Israelites across the River Jordan in order for them to travel towards the land that God had promised to them.

## A context of trust

So, as we focus on water as a setting for trust – and look at the story of Joshua – my question for us is this – what is God asking us to trust him with? What’s our River Jordan that God asks us to travel through – in order that we would reach a place of blessing?



Bridget and her classmates used to walk long distances to collect water from a contaminated spring. They would often get sick and miss a lot of school. Bridget dreamt of becoming a nurse, but her mum preferred her to help with housework chores and bringing up her younger brothers and sisters and walking to fetch water for the household in the mornings and evenings – Bridget was fearful that she would be pulled out of school, and that she would never finish her education and become a nurse. In her school, tens of teenage girls had started dropping out of school because their mums preferred them to help out at home.

That is a story of chaos.

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## A means of blessing

God says to Joshua in Joshua 1:2-3 - YOU – and the people – GET READY. I am about to give you EVERY place you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

God’s promises didn’t live and die with Moses. **God’s bigger than death. We see that in the resurrection of Jesus.**

The plans of God will always prevail. And with Joshua, the plans of God are about to prevail – because God is raising up Joshua to take on the baton. And if Joshua had refused – because we

Growing up in rural Uganda, Bridget must have felt pretty hopeless.

She must have wondered if God was hearing her prayers, and surely must have thought “why me?” “Why was I born a girl?” She must have wondered if life was ever going to get any better, and desperately longed for a day when her family were healthy, and prosperous.

But this isn’t just about chaos. What I love is that this story is also about trust, and about blessing.

The answer to Bridget’s prayers came with a programme that Toilet Twinning helped fund.

In partnership with the Dioceses of North Kigezi and Kinkiizi (NKKD), Bridget’s village of Rukungiri got fresh, safe, drinking water via a Gravity Flow Scheme. Gravity Flow works by bringing fresh water down from the mountain and into the school grounds via a water pipe and community Tapstand.

Schoolchildren like Bridget no longer have to walk for water. They are also taught in school about the importance of hygiene and share their new education with their mothers and fathers at home. Families are learning about the importance of handwashing and of building proper toilets at their homes.

**The water in Bridget’s village is a symbol of what’s possible when the Church reaches out in love in practical ways.**

all have a choice in this great adventure of faith – then God would have raised up someone else.

But God started with Joshua – and cast a vision – and said to Joshua – trust me, follow me – GET READY. Three days from now you’re going to cross the River Jordan and take possession of the land that the Lord is giving you to own.

So what does it mean to get ready, and to be ready?

**1. We have to be aligned to God – we have to be in step with him and listening to him.**

Imagine if you heard God saying audibly to you – No-one will be able to stand against you ALL the days of your life

I will be with you

I will never leave you nor forsake you

Be strong and courageous

**2. We need to be aligned with one another – we're called to "one another" living – 'love one another' / 'accept one another' / 'be at peace with one another' / 'bear with one another' / 'seek good for one another'**

God's redemptive and restorative purposes are in us, putting love at the centre.

This World Water Day, we need churches to twin their taps to raise funds for the 771 million people in the world who don't have access to clean water. The Bridgets of this world.

Ephesians 6 – part of being ready to go where God calls us to go is about being clothed for this battle in the armour of God. As we read in verse 14, 'Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.'

We can't just sit in prayer meeting after prayer meeting; Bible study after Bible study. We have to run the race, do the things God calls us to do. With feet that are wearing sandals of peace.

How are you and I being called to shine for Christ in this dark world? What are you and I doing to be a bringer of peace – to reveal to people Jehovah Shalom – the God of Peace.

2 Corinthians 4:18 says:

**'So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.'**

God's words are so important for us –

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

This is the thing Joshua most needed to hear – and it's the thing we most need to hear.

We have a job to do. We are Kingdom people – living for the things of eternity. And in that endeavour we have to be strong and courageous, in order to run the race well, and finish it well.

So, please let me end with God's impartation to Joshua – and may God's words go deep into our hearts, and minds and souls:

Be strong. Be courageous. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. For I will be with you, wherever you go.