

Everyone likes a good story, especially when the outcome is good. March 2020 was the beginning of something we've never experienced as a community and entire world. We are aware of outbreaks such as flu strains and ebola. We've witnessed tragedies such as the murder of George Floyd and brutalizing of others. We've experienced economic difficulties such as in 2008. There have been worse things that happened before our lifetimes, such as the great depression and the Civil War. There have been historical tragedies such as the slave trade, the Jim Crow era, and present day white supremacy.

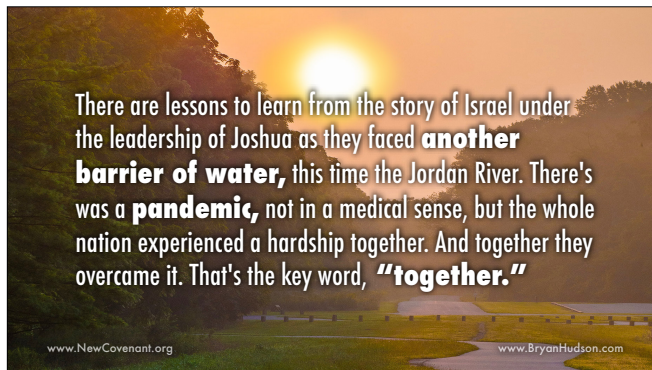
And there were personal challenges such as health, loved ones, death,

financial challenges, changes in our working environments.

Early last year we resisted using the phrase, "New normal." We seemed to think that we would plow through the pandemic and return to doing things the way we've always done them. I heard people say things like, COVID will disappear. I heard a minister say after taking communion, "consider yourself vaccinated." You and I have heard a lot of things from a lot of people. We've heard enough, long enough, to be able to evaluate who is correct, who is incorrect, who is speaking from wisdom and facts, and who is just making stuff up.

We understand now, that we are living a new normal or a new paradigm. By the grace of God and through the skills we've gained, with coped, overcome, and thrived.

The story of Israel under the leadership of Joshua as they faced another barrier of water, this time the Jordan River, we have lessons to learn. There's was not a pandemic in a medical sense, but the whole nation experienced a hardship together. And together they overcame it. That's the key word, "together."



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Key #1 | Embrace Truth and New Ways at Every Level  
Scriptural truth. Truth in things related to life. Truthfulness in intent and speech.

This pandemic could've been over sooner if people understood how good science works. Nothing made me cringe more than to see Facebook posts from non-expert people people advising others about coronavirus or the vaccines.

Here at New Covenant Church and among our friends, we have many people with long careers in professions that rely on fact and science based understanding, best practices, and empirical evidence. I'm talking about Christ followers trained in education, medicine, engineering, business, telecommunications, automotive technology, human services, arts, social science, political science, various skilled crafts, and much more.

Revelation 21:8, But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."



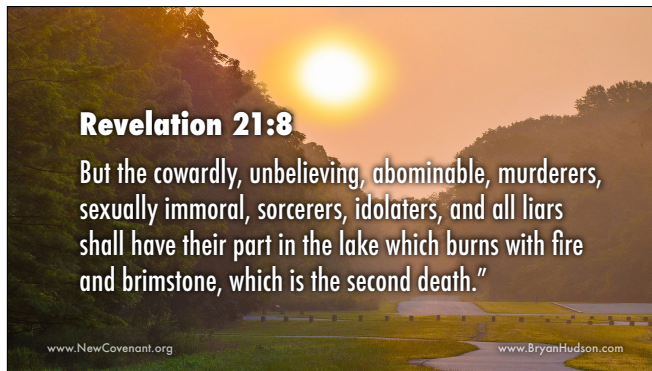
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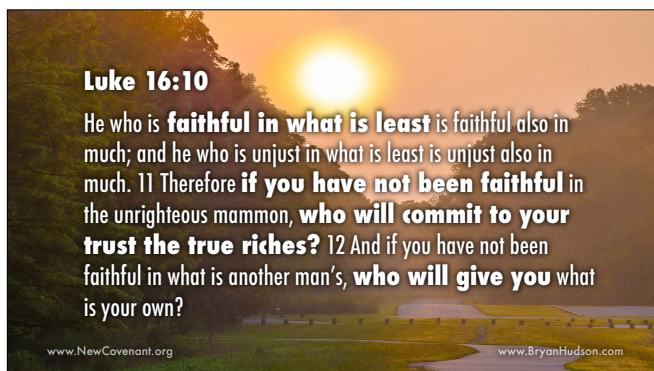
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## Key #2 | Be Faithful in Small Things — Leads to Greater Things

Luke 16:10, He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. 11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?

One thing you cannot do nowadays is make statement and expect people to believe only because you say it. People have the ability to check it. Unfortunately, Too many preachers and believers and that will read and they get all the information from sources that get it secondhand and get it wrong. It is exactly like people to get all their names on the television networks, and did not seek to learn from source documents.



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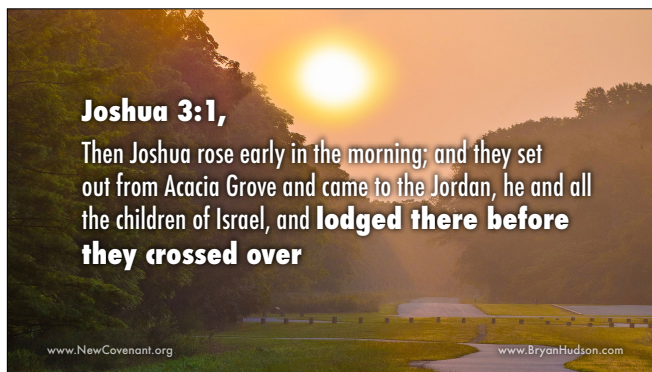
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### Key #3 | Prepare Well for Every Opportunity and Challenge

Joshua 3:1 Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over

**Joshua and Israel did not charge over the Jordan.** The main reason was it was overflowing its banks during this time of year, and was not passable without the help of the Lord. Because there was some 2 million people involved, a plan was needed.



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Joshua 3:2, So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp; 3 and they commanded the people, saying, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. 4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits (1000 yards) by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before.”



Key #4 | Listen to Learn. Pay attention to instructions, especially when you don't fully understand

Israel were to move when they saw the presence of God moving. Follow the emblems of God's provision and power.

“Space between you and it” Room to maneuver. Time to think/plan. Don't tail gate God. He's moves too quickly. Your situation may change, like winter driving.

Qualified people go first where others are expected to follow. Qualified leaders provide clear instruction.

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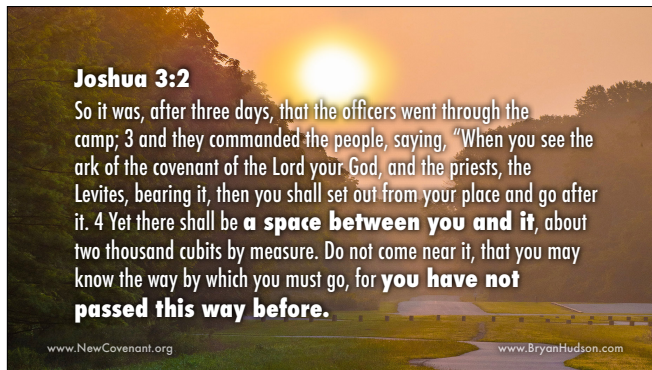
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Key #5 | “Stand in the water.” Put yourself in position to take action

Joshua 3:8, You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, ‘When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.’ ”

When the people gathered to cross over, before the waters receded, God commanded the leaders to stand in the edge of the water.

It was a indication of obedience and commitment to act. It is like making a pledge to our Building His Kingdom, building fund.



## Key #6 | When you change, your circumstances will change

13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap."



## Key #7 | You don't have to see or understand everything that helps you

The waters of a Jordan was stopped out of view of the people. This was not like the Red Sea where the people saw the waters divide and stack up. I don't know why God didn't let the people see how he did it, they only saw the result of it.

Some people have not gotten a vaccination because they don't understand it. Fear and hesitance sometimes keeps us from experiencing help. That's why we have been saying have faith in God and confidence in experts.

It's difficult when everyone makes them self an expert.



### **Application:**

1. What is your New Normal?
2. In what small things are you faithful?
3. What preparation do you need?
4. In what ways do you need to listen to learn?
5. What commitment(s) have you avoided?

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