



new shore

TEACHING SUMMARY

The most obvious next step seemed unmistakable. The enemy was afraid. Jericho lay within reach. The army stood assembled and eager. Every instinct in a soldier's mind urged immediate action: organize the ranks, press the advantage, take ground before resistance could harden. This was the hour to strike.

But the Lord was not moving in that direction.

Instead of a command to advance, a different instruction arrived, one that halted the entire camp in stunned silence. The men were to be circumcised. At the precise moment when strength and readiness appeared most urgent, the Lord called them to vulnerability and stillness.

The order made no sense from a military perspective. They had just entered enemy territory. The Jordan now guarded their rear. Jericho loomed ahead. Yet everything stopped.

The issue had never been only the land. The issue was the heart.

This command reached back to the covenant God gave Abraham in Genesis 17, unconditional in its promises and anchored in His faithfulness alone. Participation in that covenant, however, required obedience to its sign.

Circumcision marked belonging. It declared that a person was set apart to the Lord. The previous generation had received the sign, but in their unbelief, they had abandoned the practice. In the wilderness, neglect had replaced remembrance. An entire generation grew up unmarked by the covenant.

Now the new generation stood in the land itself, yet out of alignment with the promise that brought them there. So the Lord stopped them. Before conquest came consecration. Before victory came, surrender. Before outward advance came inward renewal.

At Gilgal, a name that means rolling away, the reproach of Egypt was removed. The old identity of the world was cut away. This was far more than a physical act. It was a declaration that the past no longer defined them.

Scripture later reveals the deeper truth of this moment. In Colossians 3 the call rings clear: put off the old self and put on the new. The flesh, the former patterns, the old identity must be set aside so that new life can take root. The Lord would not send unprepared hearts into battle. He was forming a people who belonged fully to Him.

Once that alignment was restored, something beautiful followed. The people kept the Passover.

For only the third time in their history, they remembered. The first Passover had come in Egypt, under the shadow of judgment, when the blood of the lamb marked their deliverance. The second had come at Sinai, at the beginning of their journey. Now, here in the land, they stopped again.

They did not rush forward. They did not seize the moment. They remembered.

Passover was never just a ritual. It was a re-centering of identity. It reminded them that everything they were and everything they had begun with rescue. They had been slaves. They had been helpless. The Lord had delivered them by His own power alone.

This pattern carries forward into every believer's life. In Luke 22, Jesus instructs His followers to take and eat in remembrance of Him. The foundation of all forward movement in faith is remembrance of what has already been done. Without it, the heart drifts toward pride, fear, or self-reliance.

From remembrance came transition. The morning after they ate from the produce of the land, the manna ceased.

For forty years, provision had fallen from heaven in a rhythm that required no effort beyond gathering. It was consistent, visible, and predictable. Every morning brought the same supply. Then, suddenly, it was gone.

At first, it might have felt like a loss. But it was growth.

The Lord had not stopped providing. He had changed the way provisions would come. The people were no longer wanderers sustained by daily miracles in the wilderness. They were now inhabitants of a land designed for cultivation, for participation, for fruitfulness. The same God who sent manna would now send rain. The same God who fed them directly would now bless the work of their hands.

This is the movement from dependence to partnership. Scripture speaks of sowing and reaping in Galatians 6 and of abiding in the vine in John 15. The life still flows from Him, yet the branch takes part in bearing fruit. The Provider remains unchanged. The relationship deepens.

Then, as Joshua lifted his eyes, another moment unfolded. A man stood before him with a drawn sword. Was this man for them or against them?

The answer shifted everything.
Neither.

This was not about sides. This was
about authority.

The figure identified Himself as the
commander of the army of the Lord.
In that instant, Joshua understood.
This was no ordinary warrior. This
was a divine encounter. The ground
became holy.

The words echoed a moment from
long before, when Moses stood before
the burning bush in Exodus 3 and was
told to remove his sandals. The same
command came to Joshua now.

The same presence was here.

At the beginning of Israel's
deliverance, Moses received his
commission, and at the beginning of
Israel's conquest, Joshua received his
commission.

Strategy, strength, or numbers would
not win the battle ahead. Only
obedience to the One who already
stood in the field, sword drawn, would
assure victory.

The Lord was in charge, not Joshua.
So Joshua did the only right thing.

On that new shore, Joshua bowed,
kneeling in surrender. He relinquished
his sword, his command, his authority
to Jesus.

