

# ENTERING THE WILDERNESS

## THE EVENT | Session Two

### Can you remember a time in your life when you just had to go for it?

The curtain opened, the puck dropped, the training wheels came off, the ball was passed to you with seconds left on the clock, you sent the text to your crush, the tooth was loose and you had a crisp apple in your hand...

What's one of your "just go for it" moments? \_\_\_\_\_

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No matter how prepared you were, there's a rush of adrenaline when the moment is there, right before you.

### How do you usually feel when you're faced with one of these moments?

Circle the words that answer this question, or write in your own.

Scared                  Confident                  Hopeful                  Courageous  
Afraid                  Ready                  Able                  Terrified                  Excited

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Well Joshua, he's standing right before one of these moments. He has just become the leader of the Israelites, he's ready to bring them into the Promised Land, and only one thing stands in his way... The Jordan River.

Have you ever taken a step out in courage and immediately regretted it? Maybe you agreed to take the lead in a group project before realizing just how much work it was going to be. Or maybe you got the keys to go for a drive by yourself for the first time and were confronted with the realization that mailboxes just jump out from nowhere. Maybe you got the solo you auditioned for and when the spotlights hit, you were, well, like a deer in the headlights. Maybe you started a new workout routine and it's kicking your butt.

The thing after the hard thing - after finally making it - isn't supposed to be this hard.

Moses stands at the edge of the Jordan River with this group of Israelites behind him, and he has a choice to make. He can choose to step out in faith, or he can go back into years of waiting and wandering.

### SCRIPTURE

#### JOSHUA 3:7

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."

In the wilderness, God is faithful.

With the unknown before you - as it was with Joshua - God comes along with *and* goes before us in the journey.

Earlier in the story, with Moses and the Israelites, God parted the Red Sea so the people could escape into the wilderness. And again, in this story, God is faithful to the people and as soon as they set foot in the Jordan River, the river stopped flowing and the people passed through.

When they had crossed through the river, Joshua had twelve people gather stones from the middle of the Jordan, and he set them in their camp as a reminder of God's faithfulness.

"In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' 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." -Joshua 4:6-7

## ACTIVITY

*Supplies:*

- A smooth stone
- A paint marker or permanent marker

Think about it- Do you have any moments in your life you would mark with God's faithfulness? What moments of your life have been difficult? Looking back, how can you see that God was faithful in that time? (write any thoughts/memories in the space below)

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-Stones: Using a stone and paint marker spend some time either writing out, or drawing symbols to remind you of those times in your life where God has proven God's self as faithful. Keep this stone somewhere you can see it regularly, so that when you enter into another wilderness journey, you can remember that God goes with you.

## ALL ABOUT THAT GRACE - JUSTIFYING GRACE

Have you (or someone driving you somewhere) ever missed the exit or taken a wrong turn? The GPS takes a minute to figure out where you are – and where you’re going – and says “**Recalculating.**”

It doesn’t shout “you idiot!” or “that’s not what I told you!” or “you’ve done this a hundred times, how could you screw it up?!” No, it politely tells you “Recalculating” while it figures things out and gets you back on the right track.

That’s kind of what Grace is like. God’s prevenient grace goes before you –setting the path before you. Sometimes you take a wrong turn or miss the exit, and yet God’s invitation is still extended.

*...invitation? to what?*

### **Justifying Grace.**

In typesetting (or in making a word document) when something is “justified” it is aligned – it is in line with an invisible guiding ruler.

When we step onto God’s path – when we respond to God’s invitation – we move into Justifying Grace. We are aligned with God’s way.

And we experience reconciliation, pardon, and restoration. Through the work of God in Christ our sins are forgiven, and our relationship with God is restored. According to John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, the image of God – which has been distorted by sin – is renewed within us through Christ’s death.

Again, this dimension of God’s grace is a gift. God’s grace alone brings us into relationship with God. There are no hoops through which we have to jump in order to please God and to be loved by God. God has acted in Jesus Christ. We need only to respond in faith.

Justification is also a time of repentance – turning away from behaviors rooted in sin and toward actions that express God’s love.

Responding to God’s love and grace isn’t a one-and-done kind of thing. You may miss an exit or take a few wrong turns, but you can always “recalculate” and step back onto God’s way.