

Joshua

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 1900

Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

[0 : 00] As the Lord may help me, I will speak on this occasion from the third chapter of the book of Joshua, the fourth verse, the last part of the verse.

For ye have not passed this way heretofore. The third chapter of the book of Joshua, the fourth verse, the last part of the verse.

For ye have not passed this way heretofore. The children of Israel have had a remarkable experience for forty years of their wanderings in the wilderness.

How the Lord had often appeared for them in times of great danger and difficulty. How he had supplied their daily needs so wonderfully with that manner that every day except on the Sabbath day lay fresh and sweet around their tents.

And how he had guided them by that pillar of clouds by day. That not only guided, but to some extent sheltered.

[1 : 49] And by the pillar of cloud by night. All the more clear and evident because it was night. They had had a wonderful experience those forty years of the goodness and faithfulness and wonder-working hands of their God.

And also they had had sad experiences. They had been heavily chastened for their murmuring spirits.

Their rebellions against God and his servant Moses. The Lord's hands had sometimes been very heavy upon them.

Yet with all he had brought them through. They had had enemies. Poor enemies. But they had been delivered out of their power.

They had had subtle, crafty enemies like Balaam. But the Lord had appeared for them. They had had forty years of the Lord leading, guiding, protecting, providing and chastening hand upon them.

[3 : 17] But now at the time of our text, they were to pass away through a way that was altogether new to them.

Which was quite different from the wanderings and leadings of that wilderness period. For God had raised up Joshua in the place of Moses to bring them at last into the land that was promised to their fathers.

At long last, that promise made to Abraham that had been in abeyance for hundreds of years was now about to be accomplished.

And so the Lord having given directions to Joshua in this matter. Joshua gives directions to the people.

And in those directions come the few words I ventured upon this morning. We have not passed this way heretofore. No past experience would be comparable to that which they were now to enter into.

[4 : 39] It was a different path altogether. It would be a different experience to them. We have not passed this way, Joshua said, heretofore.

And these three words occurred to me as I was speaking a suitable word for this morning's service.

For although we don't make a great matter of days and seasons, but still our period of time and our lives and our experiences in them are marked off by years.

Each year is a distinct period in the journey of our lives. And each year has that experience in that year that belongs to that period of time.

And this is true of us personally, for we each have our own way to walk, our own life to live, and our own personal experiences, both in spiritual and providential ways.

[6 : 02] And it is, I feel, a suitable word this morning for our consideration as a worshipping community.

For it is long now since my way was first directed to this house of God and the church and congregation at that time worshipping here.

It was 49 years ago this month that I first spoke from this pulpit to a very different congregation for numbers and personalities than I see before me this morning.

But there are still those with us who remember those early days and the concern that they felt with regard to this cause of truth that there should be a ministry to feed the flock after the long ministry of my predecessor.

There are still a few who remember those days as I remember them. And as we look back over the long past, 49 years of the ministry, 45 of the pastoral ministry, we must say, well, the Lord has provided for us as a people.

[7 : 37] Things were low in those early days. Even natural provision for our needs was hardly sufficient.

And there were other difficulties that the Lord has provided. we believe we believe we believe we believe we believe he has guided us together as a people so that we have walked in his truth and in his ways with much unity of mind and spirit.

Difficulties we have had, the Lord has helped us, trials we have had, the Lord has supported us, losses we have had, that the Lord has maintained, sorrows we have had, and some of us, deep sorrows, that the Lord has helped us to bear them.

We believe he has even sweetened them. We can look back over many years as a people now, many, and we call to mind the many instances we have had of the Lord's appearing, of his blessing the word, of his quickening souls into spiritual life, of his bringing them forward in the profession of their faith to be baptized, and to observe the Lord's appointed ordinances.

There is much to remember. But now, what are the future? In general, we may say, of course, as each year opens, you have not passed this way here before.

[9 : 30] We know the past, we recognize the Lord's leadings in it, we thankfully acknowledge his blessings and his goodness to us. But, we are entering upon a year that we've never lived before.

And, we know not, of course, what we may have to come into, what we may be brought through in this present year that we've entered upon.

We have not lived through 1969 here to four. It is an unknown period of our lives. The same, of course, applies to us personally as well as collectively.

But, there's another view of this. You have not passed this way here to four. This seems to be especially applicable when the Lord is appointed a different path for us than that which we have hitherto walked in.

Not merely a continuation of the same path through another year with all the unexpected and unforeseen circumstances, but it may be a different path altogether than that in which we have hitherto for being led to all.

[11 : 10] For in this mantra, of course, our ways differ. It is given to some more or less to lead a constant and steady life with regard to their circumstantial paths anyway, and perhaps to some extent they are spiritual in a more even and steady way.

I mean, great changes do not much come into their way. But with others, the Lord from time to time calls them to walk in the path they have not passed through here to forth.

A different way altogether. A different in the sense that the way that Joshua was now about to lead the children of Israel in was different in its character and type and purpose than the forty years under which they had been tided by Moses.

And there said Joshua, you have not passed this way heretofore. Here is a path different from any that you have walked in. It will not be now wandering in the wilderness but passing into the promised land.

The purpose of God is now about to be accomplished as it has never been accomplished before. We have not passed this way heretofore.

[12 : 56] And so it is, my brethren, with us it may be, the Lord may call us to pass a way that we have not walked in heretofore.

A way entirely different. We right now for a few moments consider this text in its setting with regard to the children of Israel because I feel there is much instruction in it which may be applicable to us and whatever the Lord's purpose may be for us in the future.

Especially if we should be called to walk in a way we have not passed through hither to. Now consider this then first that this was the way the Lord appointed for the children of Israel.

will. It was not his will that they should always continue in the wilderness.

There was a purpose whereby they were detained so long in that region.

[14 : 23] We know the purpose and we know the reason the reason was their sinful unbelief. Humanly speaking they could have entered into the promised land long before if it had not been for their unbelief.

All that generation as we know except Caleb and Joshua that came out of Egypt all that generation perished in the wilderness not one of them that were adults entered into the promised land and it was because of their unbelief.

As Paul says so we see they could not enter in because of unbelief. Oh my friends how much unbelief keeps us out from how much rest how much peace how much comfort how much blessing unbelief robs us of how much more we could enter into the rest that Canaan was a type of the gospel rest that is in Jesus Christ into peace with him if only unbelief did not keep us out the Lord deliver us from unbelief and so it was that because of their unbelief all that generation that were adults that were old enough to be responsible for their unbelief for responsibility depends

I believe upon age I won't go into that thought and consideration because it involves a good deal but responsibility comes with age when the mind is capable of its own independent thought and feelings and spirit when it becomes capable of its independent thought it becomes responsible before God well now all that generation who are of responsible age appeared in the wilderness because of their unbelief but now there is to be a different way for the children of Israel this generation were to enter into the promised land so it is my friends to those who believe it is recognized that the way is as

God appoints it we believe that to those of us who seek to follow his guiding hand to commit our way to him and to trust also in him that he will bring our way to task it will be appointed for us it is not for us to make our way to say oh I want a different way than the way I'm walking in I'm weary of this task if not why that in itself is something of unbelief there's something of rebellion in it it is for us to say choose thou the way but still lead on and if it is so indeed that the Lord does choose the way then there may well come a time when it is appointed for us to pass through a way we have not gone here before

[18 : 37] God himself knows no change he is always the same as you read I am the Lord I change not therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed we have much cause to be thankful that although our sinfulness and unbelief may bring God's chastening hand he will not bring his consuming hand I am the Lord I change not neither does the Lord change in his purpose it's always the same purpose of wisdom poor knowledge design and grace but the way in which the

Lord purposes that we shall go may change very considerably it may be his purpose that we must pass through a way that we have not gone here to pour God there's no change in God's purpose but there's a change in what God has purposed so I wanted the children of Israel the time came when they must go different ways because God appointed it for them if anyone would raise a question and it is a very reasonable question to raise as to how we may know when God appoints a way for us especially if it is a way different from any that we have passed through here to forth well to my mind and to my experience too there are broadly speaking two indications to guide us in the way that the Lord has appointed if it is a way different from that we have passed here to forth and I think it is wise to observe these things as we read whoso is wise he shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord in these matters broadly speaking then external circumstances overruled controlled by the

Lord's providential power and purpose and internal meaning in the mind so as far as we are enabled to submit our mind to the Lord's direction I'm sure he gives that direction the mind is inwardly led inclined directed spirit may be the way that the Lord would appoint for you may be part in the way you would appoint for yourself it may be perhaps that the first reaction to the indication of this new way is that the mind turns from it there may be something of that spirit though in a very different way that Peter showed when he said not so Lord not so Lord no I can't go to the Gentiles

I can't eat with them it will bring so much reproach upon my name and my character and that besides I shouldn't feel at all comfortable Lord in sitting down with those unclean uncircumcised Gentiles sometimes the first reaction of the mind to the indication that the Lord gives is not so Lord but if our hearts are right before him and our motives will bear his scrutiny that is that we really desire to do his will he will bring our minds and our hearts to that way and that not so Lord will give place to this teach me to do thy will for thou art my God and thy spirit is good and so lead me in the way that thou shalt choose isn't this true brethren haven't you experienced this that there may be a way the Lord indicates to you that is a way you have not gone here before and you don't readily accept it it's not the way you would choose but still the Lord brings your heart and your mind to that way and to this in this spirit you feel you can enter upon it to veil the way but still lead on it's well to have confirmation with regard to these matters and I always feel that in inward leading if we submit our minds to the Lord to guide us confirm external providential circumstances you hear as it were his voice within you see his hand without the voice within said this is the way walk ye in it and the Lord's hand makes the way for you to walk in it those who have dealings with the Lord and with whom the Lord has dealings will understand me this morning about this matter for these things just cannot be understood unless we have experience of dealings with the Lord in prayer waiting upon him and the Lord has dealings with us in guiding and influencing our hearts and overruling for us our providential matters well now I was saying first that this was the way appointed for the children of Israel and there is a way appointed for us and it may well be a way that we have not passed through here to fall and then there is another consideration as there was an appointed way so there was

an appointed time for God has his time for all his purposes there is no haste with God there is no delay with God there is with man often we may become sometimes impatient through haste and then we may sometimes become backward hesitant unduly so through delay it is a wonderful consideration to those who believe it and have reason to believe it that the whole pattern of our lives not only as to the way in which we are called to walk but the time when each particular feature of our appointed way is brought to pass is a very remarkable consideration to us that God should regard us so minutely as that and then there is another consideration as there was an appointed way and an appointed time for

[28:10] God gave Joshua expressed directions about that he didn't say no Joshua you must if you feel able lead the children of Israel into Canaan no it was Joshua it must be done tomorrow tomorrow is the time Joshua and if they had hastened before that time if they had ventured into the swelling river of Jordan for Jordan at that time overflowed its banks they couldn't have expected that the Lord would have made a way for them through those deep swift waters for the river Jordan was very swift a very swift current they could not have poured in the Jordan just when they wished to do but the time came and when the time came the way was open

I feel I must pause on that just a moment we may try to make our way in particular matters it may seem to us that that is a good and suitable and acceptable way and mark you that may be the Lord's way but today may not be the Lord's time and if we attempt to force our way even though it's the right way before the Lord is with us in it and goes before us in it and makes the way for us in it we can't get through the Jordan you know we can't get through the river there'll be no holding back of the stream that we may pass through there'll be no overruling and perhaps remarkable indication of the

Lord's providential hand with us in the matter river but there's a time when that time comes Jordan presents no difficulty the Lord can make a way through the river the wall city Jericho presents no difficulty the Lord can cause the walls to fall down the enemies in the land present no difficulty but it would never have done for the children of Israel to have attempted to conquer them before the Lord's appointed time but then there was another point I was about to mention and my mind averted a little something as there was an appointed way that they had not passed here to poor and an appointed time for them to pass that way so there was an appointed means and method for them to pass that way as I remember it reads now sanctify yourselves for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders now here's another consideration my brethren with regard to a way we have not passed here before that way may call for something of this sanctifying of ourselves

I've no doubt that with regard to the literal purport of this sanctify yourselves it was that they could perform some ceremonial sanctification that was enjoined upon them by the law of Moses believe that but if we are called to enter upon a new way especially if it is some way in which the Lord will appear for us and work for us for tomorrow will the Lord do wonders we must not rush into that heedless of ourselves and our state of heart and mind sanctify yourself now you know the word sanctify and the meaning of the term has various applications and in the sense in which

I mean it now I do not intend the spiritual sanctification of our souls in the full gospel sense of the word I think I might correctly apply it in this way sanctify yourself means now seek to be renewed in the spirit of your mind for this new way for it may well call for that you must not enter upon this way that you have not passed here to poor without your mind being renewed which is in other words to be sanctified in the spirit of it for instance if we are called to pass away we have not done here to poor we may need the

[34 : 29] Lord to renew our minds with regard to their humble spirit is our mind humble enough to enter upon this way in which the Lord will do wonders for if it is not humble it may get very proud about this and the very wonders that the Lord may do for us in this unknown way may even even minister to our self gratification oh it was wonderful to have the Jordan divided for us see what regard the Lord has for us we're his people he hasn't done this for anyone else well there might be a good deal of pride working in their hearts over that now if the

Lord is about to do wonders we need the Lord to greatly humble our spirit before him but otherwise the wonders that he may do may not work all that for our spiritual good sanctify yourselves means seek to get your mind right before the Lord seek to have it humble made rightly submitted to his will and so of our heart we need to have our heart renewed in its inward motives principles and affections if the Lord should call us to pass your way we have not passed here to for that new way may well mean a new spirit a renewed spirit in our minds and a renewed graciousness in our hearts at least

I think this expression of sanctify yourselves will be aptly applied that way my brethren how much depends on the spirit of mind and heart in which we enter upon a way that we have not passed here to for there may be things in that way that we have never experienced before that will make a right spirit in our minds and in our hearts more necessary than it has ever been before sanctify yourselves before you enter upon this new way a new way needs a renewed mind and a renewed spirit in your heart there's another consideration and I think

I must leave it you're not passed this way here before it was a new way and the Lord provided a new leader this book of Joshua opens in a very direct way God said to Joshua Moses my servant is dead Joshua knew that because the children of Israel had mourned for Moses thirty days they all knew Moses his days but when God said to Joshua Moses my servant is dead he made more than that Moses my servant is dead now it's time for you to take up his duty and his charge for it is a very true word that God there is his work man that carries on his work the Lord's work doesn't depend upon anyone not at all it may well have been that when

Moses died the children of Israel felt at a great loss about the future and of course they had some natural reason to feel so for Moses had been a remarkable leader in every way remarkable for his spirit for he was a meek man above all the men we read from the face of the earth he'd been a wonderful leader and when Moses died they might have felt we will never have another Moses never have another leader like Moses has been to us what shall we do now Moses is dead well of course they didn't have another leader like Moses Moses was Moses but Joshua was Joshua Moses was the man raised up and fitted and commissioned to do the work held to him to do by

[40 : 46] God's command and by the grace of God he did it well but there was another work to be done there was another way for the children to walk in that they had not walked in here to fall and it was not appointed to Moses to bring them into the land of promise for that fall and fault of Moses that provoked the Lord and it might seem as though it was not a hard on Moses that he could be deprived of what would have been the crowning privilege of his long leadership to lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan it might have seemed rather hard on Moses especially as Moses treated with the

Lord to reverse that decree but there's something here that needs to be very very carefully considered the sins of those that live nearest to the Lord and who are most favoured of the Lord may cause him to visit them in a way that perhaps he wouldn't visit any other than those that lived near to him and he is especially privileged people possibly even to some extent gracious people who live far from the Lord may seem to get away with things that those who live near to the Lord may not do you but apart from that

Moses could not bring the children of Israel into this new way Moses my servant is dead now therefore arise Joshua take up your duty for they are appointed to you you've been mourning thirty days for Moses that's long enough Joshua now you must leave Moses and guide and conduct my people into the promised land a new way may need a new leader not a new leader of course in the sense of the Lord being the guide and the leader but in regard to the instruments that he pleases to you the Lord may use one man one minister to lead and instruct and be very useful for some considerable time but the

Lord may remove him and appoint another leader to lead you in the new way that you have not walked in here to for every man has his work to do and every man has his own personal characteristics that the Lord is pleased to use for that particular work Joshua wasn't Moses but Joshua was Joshua and Joshua was privileged to do what Moses was not permitted to do well I leave my observations now this morning the time has passed and I must bring my discourse to a close we have not passed this way here to forth the Lord guides you the Lord guides me in the way that remains for us to pass through the Lord guides us with his counsel and afterwards receive us into that better kingdom that more blessed rest even into his eternal glory

Amen Ezracomings ■ Res accumulate ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ propertiesmn cinair ■ ■ Hudson insuranceουv ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ tá ■ doo Know civilians