

WHEN FOOTMEN BECOME HORSES

PART FOUR

WHEN THE RIVER RISES

A Five-Day Devotional from Jeremiah 12:5c

SUNDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2026

The swelling of Jordan exposes false security, reveals true foundations, and displays the sufficiency of God.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCHES OF GREAT BRITAIN

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THIS WEEK

This devotional continues the message preached on Sunday, 25 October 2026. Read the assigned passages slowly, then work through the devotional, reflection questions, and prayer. Each day is designed for approximately four to six minutes of reading, with additional time for personal prayer and Scripture meditation.

Weekly theme: The swelling of Jordan exposes false security, reveals true foundations, and displays the sufficiency of God.

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DAY 1 | MONDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2026

THE DANGER OF TRUSTING PEACE

READ: Jeremiah 12:5c; Deuteronomy 8:11–18

“And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”

JEREMIAH 12:5

DEVOTIONAL

The Lord's question does not condemn peace; it exposes misplaced trust in peace. Jeremiah had been wearied in “the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst.” Stability had quietly become something upon which the heart leaned. The swelling Jordan would reveal whether confidence rested in God or in the continuance of favourable conditions.

Peace is a gift, but it makes a poor god. Health, income, routine, relationships, cultural acceptance, and familiar ministry patterns can all be received with gratitude. The danger begins when we treat temporary gifts as permanent guarantees. We may confess trust in God while our sense of security actually depends upon nothing changing.

Israel faced this danger in Deuteronomy eight. God warned that full houses, multiplied wealth, and comfortable circumstances could lift up the heart and produce forgetfulness. Need often drives us to prayer; abundance can tempt us to self-sufficiency. The land of peace tests the heart before the river ever rises.

Ask what must remain intact for you to feel safe. If one change in schedule destroys your peace, routine may hold more of your trust than you realised. If a financial loss removes all hope, provision may have replaced the Provider. If the approval of people governs your obedience, acceptance may have become an idol.

The answer is not to live suspicious of every blessing. Enjoy God's gifts, thank Him for peaceful seasons, and steward them well. But hold them with open hands. Let every gift lead your heart back to the Giver. Practise prayer, Scripture, generosity, worship, and service while the banks are still visible.

The river will rise in some form for every life. The time to examine trust is before the water reaches the door. Peace is valuable, but God alone is dependable. Build gratitude for the gift and confidence in the Giver, so that when circumstances change, the foundation beneath your soul does not.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Make a brief inventory of the blessings that currently create stability: health, work, home, family, routine, church, or savings. Thank God for each one by name. Then complete the sentence, “Even if this changed, God would still be...” with a biblical truth. This is not inviting loss; it is relocating confidence. Finish by using one peaceful resource for God's purposes today—give generously, encourage someone, serve, or prepare. Peace is safest when it produces gratitude and stewardship instead of forgetfulness.

REFLECT

- *Which peaceful circumstance has quietly become necessary to your sense of security?*
- *How can you enjoy that gift while deliberately placing your confidence back in God?*

PRAY

Giver of every good gift, forgive me for trusting the land of peace more than I trust You. Teach me gratitude without dependence upon circumstances, and anchor my confidence in Your unchanging character. Amen.

DAY 2 | TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2026

THE FLOOD REVEALS THE FOUNDATION

READ: Matthew 7:24-27

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house.”

MATTHEW 7:25

DEVOTIONAL

Jesus described two houses that looked stable under clear skies. Both heard His sayings. Both experienced rain, flood, and wind. The decisive difference was not the appearance of the structure or the severity of the storm. It was the foundation beneath the house.

Storms reveal what calm weather can conceal. A borrowed conviction may sound strong until it becomes costly. A superficial prayer life may seem sufficient until grief removes every easy answer. A marriage can appear healthy until pressure exposes neglected communication. A church can seem united until change tests whether people are committed to Christ or merely to preference.

The wise man did more than hear the words of Christ; he did them. The rock is not religious familiarity without obedience. It is a life brought under the authority of Christ. Each act of obedience drives the foundation deeper: forgiving when pride wants distance, telling the truth when deception offers advantage, remaining pure when temptation promises relief, assembling with the church when convenience pulls elsewhere, and trusting God's promise when feelings protest.

The foolish builder may have admired the teaching. He may have known the vocabulary and recognised the plan. But hearing without doing left the structure resting upon sand. Knowledge that never reaches practice creates the illusion of strength without its reality.

Do not wait for the flood to begin foundation work. Respond to the truth God has already made clear. If Scripture has exposed an area of disobedience, settle it. If a relationship requires biblical repair, begin it. If your family needs spiritual leadership, lead. If your devotional life has become occasional, rebuild the pattern now.

The promise is not that the house on the rock avoids storms. The flood strikes both houses. The promise is that obedience to Christ creates stability that circumstances cannot supply. The river does not manufacture the foundation; it reveals it. Build upon the Rock today, while there is still time to prepare for rising water.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Ask someone who knows you well what pressure tends to expose in you. Receive the answer without defending yourself. Compare it with Christ's teaching in Matthew seven and identify one act of obedience that strengthens the weak place. If anger is exposed, practise a governed response. If fear is exposed, memorise a promise and take the avoided step. If neglect is exposed, restore the necessary discipline. Storms become useful when their revelations lead to repentance and rebuilding rather than denial.

REFLECT

- *What has a recent storm revealed about the foundation beneath your life?*
- *What truth have you heard but not yet translated into obedience?*

PRAY

*Lord Jesus, keep me from hearing without doing.
Expose every sandy foundation and help me build
upon Your Word through practical obedience. Make
my life stable when the floods come. Amen.*

DAY 3 | WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2026

THE REFUGE THAT HOLDS

READ: Psalm 46:1–11

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

PSALM 46:1

DEVOTIONAL

Psalm 46 does not describe a quiet world. The earth is removed, mountains are carried into the sea, waters roar, kingdoms move, and nations rage. Yet the psalm begins with confidence: “God is our refuge and strength.” Its peace is not created by stable circumstances, but by the presence of an unchanging God.

A refuge is only valuable if it remains secure when danger arrives. Money can be useful, but it cannot shelter the soul from every fear. People can provide comfort, but even the strongest human support has limits. Plans can guide us, but unexpected events can overturn them. God alone is “a very present help in trouble.” He is not distant, delayed, or diminished when the river rises.

This does not mean believers never feel fear. The psalm says, “Therefore will not we fear,” because the people of God deliberately bring fear beneath truth. Courage is not the absence of troubling circumstances or natural emotion. It is confidence that the Lord of hosts is with us and the God of Jacob is our refuge.

The command “Be still, and know that I am God” is not permission for passivity. It is a call to cease striving as though everything depends upon us. There are moments when frantic activity becomes an attempt to control what only God can govern. Stillness remembers His sovereignty and then obeys from a settled heart.

If the river is rising around you, name what has changed—but also name what has not. God's character has not changed. Christ's finished work has not changed. Scripture's promises have not changed. The Holy Spirit's presence has not changed. Your access to the throne of grace has not changed. Eternity has not changed.

Let those unchanging truths become your refuge today. Pray them aloud. Write them where you will see them. Share them with your family. The flood may alter the landscape, but it cannot move the throne. God remains present, powerful, and worthy of trust.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Create an “unchanged” list from Psalm 46 and Romans 8. Include God's presence, power, sovereignty, love, and final victory. Keep the list where you will encounter it during the day.

Whenever anxiety rises, do three things: breathe slowly, read one truth aloud, and pray one sentence of surrender. Then return to the responsibility actually in front of you. Refuge is not escape from all action; it is the secure place from which faithful action becomes possible.

REFLECT

- *Where have you been striving to control what only God can govern?*
- *Which unchanging truth about God must become your refuge today?*

PRAY

God, You are my refuge and strength. When the waters roar, quiet my striving and settle my heart in Your presence. Help me remember what has not changed and obey You from a place of trust. Amen.

DAY 4 | THURSDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2026

A ROAD THROUGH THE RIVER

READ: Joshua 3:7–17

“And they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water...that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap.”

JOSHUA 3:15–16

DEVOTIONAL

Israel arrived at Jordan when the river overflowed all its banks. God did not schedule the crossing for a convenient season. He brought His people to the obstacle at its fullest point, then displayed His power where human ability was clearly insufficient.

The priests carrying the ark stepped toward the water before the path appeared. Their action did not manipulate God; it obeyed God's command. Faith was not confidence in the priests' balance or the river's behaviour. It was confidence in the word and presence of God.

We often want God to reveal the entire dry path before we take the first step. He frequently gives enough light for the next act of obedience. The conversation must be started, the application submitted, the Gospel shared, the ministry begun, the gift given, or the habit changed while the water still appears to be moving.

There is an important caution: faith does not invent a command and then expect God to endorse presumption. Israel crossed because God had spoken. Our steps must be governed by Scripture, confirmed through prayer, and taken with humility. But once God's will is clear, delay can disguise itself as prudence.

The overflowing river became the stage for divine faithfulness. What looked like a barrier became a testimony. Israel would later take stones from the riverbed so future generations could ask what they meant. The place of impossibility became a place of remembrance.

Your Jordan may not part in the way you expect. God may remove the obstacle, lead around it, carry you through it, or supply grace to remain within it. His faithfulness is not confined to one outcome. The promise is not that every difficulty disappears; it is that no act of obedience offered in dependence upon Him is wasted.

Do not worship the river by staring at it endlessly. Look to the God who rules the waters. Take the next scriptural step, and trust Him to reveal the road as you obey.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Write the next clear step God has placed before you, making sure it agrees with Scripture and is not merely a reckless impulse. Seek counsel if the decision carries serious consequences. Once clarity is established, assign the step a time rather than leaving it as an intention. Send the message, begin the conversation, make the appointment, or start the work. You do not need to solve the entire crossing today. Faithfulness at the river's edge means obeying the light already given and trusting God with what remains unseen.

REFLECT

- *What next step of obedience are you postponing until the entire path becomes visible?*
- *How can you distinguish biblical faith from presumption in this decision?*

PRAY

Lord of the river, help me obey what You have clearly spoken. Guard me from presumption and from delay disguised as caution. Give me courage for the next step and confidence in Your presence. Amen.

DAY 5 | FRIDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2026

CHRIST IN THE DEEPEST WATERS

READ: Hebrews 12:2–3; Romans 8:31–39

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.”

HEBREWS 12:2

DEVOTIONAL

Every swelling Jordan ultimately points us toward Jesus Christ. No servant of God ever entered waters as deep as His. He endured betrayal, false accusation, scourging, shame, crucifixion, and death. At Calvary He bore our sins in His own body and faced the judgment we deserved.

He did not avoid the flood. He passed through it and conquered. The resurrection declares that sin was answered, death was defeated, and the grave did not have the final word. Because Christ lives, every believer faces the future from the side of His victory.

This does not mean the Christian will never grieve, suffer, or feel overwhelmed. It means no flood can separate the believer from the love of God in Christ. Romans eight names tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword, then declares that in all these things “we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Notice that victory is experienced “in” these things, not merely after their removal.

The series began with a weary prophet asking why the wicked prospered. God redirected him toward preparation: footmen, horses, and a swelling river. At every stage the central question was where Jeremiah would look for strength. The answer is not found in easier circumstances, stronger personality, or perfect understanding. It is found in the sufficiency of God, revealed fully in Christ.

When footmen weary you, look to Jesus. When horses charge, look to Jesus. When peaceful ground disappears beneath rising water, look to Jesus. He is not watching from a safe distance. He has entered suffering, overcome death, and promised never to leave His own.

The river may rise, but Christ remains. His grace is sufficient, His promises are certain, His presence is constant, and His resurrection secures the end of the story. You do not know every trial the future holds, but you can know the One who holds the future. Finish this month with settled confidence: nothing can separate the child of God from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Review the four images of the series: the burdened prophet, the footmen, the horses, and the swelling Jordan. Beside each, write one lesson God has made personal to you. Then turn every lesson into a prayer of commitment. End by reading Romans 8:35–39 aloud and emphasising every phrase that declares the security of the believer in Christ. Keep the completed page as a reminder when future pressure arrives. The goal of the series is not admiration of Jeremiah's endurance, but deeper confidence in the Christ who remains sufficient through every stage.

REFLECT

- *Which present fear is answered most directly by Christ's death, resurrection, or promised presence?*
- *How has this four-part series changed the way you view present pressure and future difficulty?*

PRAY

Risen Lord Jesus, You entered the deepest waters and conquered. When I am weary, opposed, or overwhelmed, fix my eyes upon You. Anchor me in Your love and keep me faithful until the race is finished. Amen.

NOTES

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WHEN THE RIVER RISES

The swelling of Jordan exposes false security, reveals true foundations, and displays the sufficiency of God.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life... nor things present, nor things to come... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 8:38-39