

WORD OF LIFE STUDY GUIDES

By John Paul Miller



Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

WORD OF LIFE STUDY GUIDES



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The Book of

JOSHUA

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INTRODUCTION

Joshua records the consummation of the redemption of Israel of Israel out of Egypt; for redemption has two parts: "out," and "into" (Deuteronomy 6:23). The key-phrase is "Moses My servant is dead" (Joshua 1:2). Law, of which Moses is the representative, could never give a sinful people victory (Hebrews 7:19;; Romans 6:14; 8:2-4).

In a spiritual sense the book of Joshua is the Ephesians of the Old Testament. "The heavenly" of Ephesians is to the Christian what Canaan was to the Israelite and blessing through divine power (Joshua 21:43-55; Ephesians 1:3).

The government, as before, was theocratic; Joshua succeeding Moses as the ruler under God.

Joshua falls into four parts:

1. The conquest, 1-12.
2. The partition of the inheritance, 13-21.
3. Incipient discord, 22.
4. Joshua's last counsels and death, 23,24.

The events recorded in Joshua cover a period of 26 years (Ussher).

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JOSHUA 1:1-9 - "Be Strong"

INTRODUCTION: (vs. 1-4)

After forty years of disillusionment, death, and despair the children of Israel finally reached the east banks of the Jordan River. For the first time they could see the Promised Land of which their fathers spoke.

To see the land is one thing, but to conquer it another.

For such a conquest they would need:

1. Strong spiritual leadership
2. Personal consecration
3. Divine help

The story of the Book of Joshua!

A new land and new life!

It's not heaven!

It's the spiritual life of rest!

Notice: Israel's four geographic locations

1. Egypt
2. The wilderness
3. Canaan
4. Babylon

Where are you?

God wants you to be strong and enter the promise land!

How?

A new leader

1. His call
2. His control

3. His command.

Notice verse 1, "Moses is dead"

God buries His workers, but His work goes on"

So, God spoke!

How?

To a man names Joshua!

I. God had already called him

Also God prepared him

How?

The promises of God

- a. No one shall stand before you (vs. 5a)
- b. I will be with you (vs. 5a; 9)
- c. You will divide the land (vs. 6)

Thus God equipped him, encouraged him, and now enables him, to:

Be strong and very courageous (vs. 7 also vs. 6 & vs. 9)

- a. Joshua was a slave (40 years old at Exodus)
- b. Joshua the soldier
- c. Joshua the spy
- d. Joshua the servant (vs. 1 "Moses minister")
- e. Joshua the successor (vs. 2)

God calls Joshua "to get up and go" see (vs. 3-4)

- 1. Get up (vs. 2)
- 2. Walk (vs. 3) Us too! by faith

Joshua was to walk! But it would not be a "cake walk".

He would face an enemy!

We too face an enemy: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

II. Joshua was equipped, but he needed to be encouraged (vs. 6, 7, 9)

The inheritance can be "claimed", but it will take "courage".

The Lord encouraged Joshua!

How?

He gave him three promises, not explanations!

1. No man will be able to stand before him (vs. 5)

2. I will be with you. (vs. 5b, 9) Lit. "I will not drop you"

Illustration: Jesus to the disciples in the storm, "It is I be not afraid".

3. You will divide the land (vs. 6)

God always keeps His promises

At the close of his life and ministry Joshua said, "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." (Joshua 23:14)

Yet Joshua must be strong!

Divine Sovereignty is not a substitute for human responsibility.

Thus Joshua is equipped, and encouraged

Now God enables him!

How?

1. By the power of God's word (vs. 7-8)
 - a. Don't turn from the book (vs. 7)
 - b. how do I find strength from God's word?
 1. "Talk about it" with your mouth

Illustration: Parents with children

2. "Think about it" with your mind

"Meditate" (Lit to mutter" Psa 1)

3. "Do it", with your feet

James 1:22 "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

It's the way to power

1 John 2:14 "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."

The Holy Spirit works through God's word!

The word of God brings prosperity and success.

In the life of the Christian believer, prosperity and success aren't to be measured by the standards of the world. These blessings are the by-products of a life devoted to God and His

Word. (If you set out on your own to become prosperous and, successful, you may achieve your goal and live to regret it.) "In whatever man does without God," wrote Scottish novelist George MacDonald, "he must fail miserably, or succeed more miserably", (The questions God's people need to ask are: Did we obey the will of God? Were we empowered by the Spirit of God? Do we serve to the glory of God? If we can answer yes to these questions, then our ministry has been successful in God's eyes, no matter what people may think.

2. "By God's command" (vs. 9)

Nothing left for Joshua to do but obey!

Yes the enemy was strong!

1. But God had prepared him!
2. God had given him His promises!
3. God had provided His power!

The blessings of the Christian life are ours by "invitation", but the conditions for recovering them are "Faith and obedience".

JOSHUA 2 - "Rahab's Faith"

INTRODUCTION:

After Joshua's call and commission the first story we find is not about war, rather it's about a woman!

Its a military spy story with the main character being a woman.

Not just any woman, her name was Rahab and she was a harlot living among the condemned Cannanites.

She believed in the God of Israel and was saved.

“ . . . where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”. (Rom 5:20)

Rahab is held up in the New Testament as an example of faith. (Heb 11:31; James 2:25)

What kind of faith did Rahab have?

I. She had a courageous faith (vs. 1-7)

a. Why were the spies sent?

Answer: God's grace and mercy to a sinful woman

The book of Joshua is a book of God's judgment on a sinful people.

. . . " for the iniquity of the Amorites had reached its full. (Gen 15:16)

Yet even in this book of judgment, the very first story is about the salvation of a harlot in Jericho.

It's a lesson of God's grace!

Rahab had nothing going for her.

We too need God's amazing grace! (Eph 2)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, Who called me here below,
Shall be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

- John Newton -

b. She had a faith that worked!

But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is
dead? (James 2:20)

Rahab put her life on the line!

How?

"True saving faith can't be hidden for long".

Illustration: The story of the lame man carried by his four friends to Jesus.

Jesus saw their faith.

Can others see your faith?

May God give us a courageous faith!

II. She had a confident faith (vs. 8-11)

Rahab had a confident faith because it was in the God of Israel, the only true and living God.

Faith is only as good as its object!

Illustration: Faith in John Miller can only do what John Miller can do! But faith in God can do what God can do! ANYTHING!

"Is anything too hard for God?"

How did Rahab know that the Lord had given Israel the Land?

She "heard" (vs. 10 -11)

From whom had Rahab heard these tales of the God of Israel?

Probably from the traveling salesmen who frequented her establishment.

So her mind was enlightened.

Notice what she believed about God

- a. She believed in one God.
- b. She believed He was a personal God.
"You're God" (vs. 11)
- c. She believed He was an all powerful, everywhere, present God (vs. 11)
- d. She believed the land was given to Israel by God.

(Her people had lived there a long

time)

Now that was great faith!! She showed more faith in the Lord than the 10 spies had 40 year before!

Jesus said, "I have not found so great a faith".

Her faith was based on FACTS, not just FEELINGS.

(Romans 10:17) “. . . faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

How about you, do you have a confident faith?

Are you growing stronger in faith because you're hearing and obeying God's word?

If Rahab could believe with her limited knowledge. How much more should we?

III. She had a concerned faith (vs. 12-14)

Rahab wasn't concerned for her own welfare only!

Illustrations:

After Andrew met Jesus he shared the good news with his brother Simon, (John 1)

The cleansed leper went home and told everybody he met what Jesus had done for him, (Mark 1)

Note: The spies warned Rahab that she must not tell anyone!

Are you concerned for others?

IV She had a covenant faith (vs. 15-24)

The spies made a covenant with Rahab (vs. 18)

The rope was red!

Blood on house of Egypt!

The Cross!

It's important to note that Rahab and her family were saved by faith in God, and not by faith in the rope hanging out the window.

The rope was only a token of her faith!

Lesson: We are not saved by communion, water baptism!

We are saved by FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST!

The rewards of her faith (vs.15-24)

1. Israel was encouraged (vs. 23-24)
2. She and her family were saved (vs. 21-25)

Saved by faith ('The Scarlet Cord')

3. His "Glorification

She not only lived in Israel, but she married an Israelite, and became an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

She married a man of the tribe of Judah name Salmon. Their son was Boaz, who married Ruth the Moabitess, their son as Obed, who was the father of Jesse, who was the father of king David! . . .

JOSHUA 3 - "Crossing the Uncrossable"

INTRODUCTION:

"The difficult we will do immediately; the impossible may take us a while longer!" Following this slogan, battalions of courageous and hardworking men called Seabees followed combat units into newly conquered territories during World War II, to build barracks, bridges, roads, and landing strips. Israel might have desired the same human assistance. But accompanying Israel's army, to enable them to do the impossible, was God Himself; and Israel needed the assurance of His presence. After 40 years of wandering in the desert, thinking they had at last come to their own homeland, they faced what appeared to be an insurmountable difficulty.

For all of us life is full of insurmountable difficulties!

Perhaps right now you're facing some flooded Jordan! Some river of impossibility!

If so Joshua Chapter 3 is for you!

In Joshua chapter 3 we see that "God specializes in things thought impossible"

The Background and setting (2:23-24)

Notice 3:1-2a

(vs. 2) "After three days"

Why?

"The waiting was meant to impress them with the seeming impossibility of the task"

How about you?

Perhaps even Joshua didn't know how they were going to cross the Jordan!

But the Lord had a plan!

They had God's promises
Our part is not to understand, it's to trust and obey!

Notice the steps Joshua gives the children of Israel, if they are to cross the uncrossable.

The same steps apply to us when we face an uncrossable river, or need to conquer the obstacles that keep us from the blessings of our spiritual promised land!

I "Prepare your heart" (vs. 5)

You would think that as a military leader Joshua would have said, "Sharpen your swords" (that's what we do, arm the flesh).

Instead he said, "Sanctify yourselves!"

What does that mean?

It means to set yourself apart from sin and unto holiness.

How?

Prayer!

If Israel expected God to fight for them, and to enter the promised land, sin must be put away!

(Isa 59:1-2) "Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short, that it cannot save; neither is his ear dull, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He does not hear.

Illustration: The story of Achan (Chapter 7)

This doesn't mean that we have to be perfect before we attempt anything for God.

But we should repent of everything in our lives we know is displeasing to God. And we must do it every day!

Erwin Lutzer said, "This process of consecration, this transforming of our character, can be compared to an iceberg which has only 10 percent of its total mass above the water. As the sun shines on it, the exposed parts melt, moving the lower parts upward. As the light of God's Word works in our hearts and we change in those matters brought to our attention, we become aware of even more work that needs to be done. If we have confessed and forsaken all known sin, and consecrated ourselves to God, we will be spiritually prepared to face our swollen Jordan's."

And God will (vs. 5) "Work wonders among us".

Is He in you're life?

II. Focus your eyes (vs. 2a-4; 6-11)

Notice that the people were to follow the ark (vs. 3) "Go after it"

What was the Ark?

A box 4 feet long by 2 feet high and wide, it represented God's presence.

Israel was to follow God. Let Him lead! (vs. 10-11)

Why the space? (vs. 4)

1. To know the way! For it was new territory!

Don't forge your own path!

Jesus is our ark!

He is Immanuel. "God with us".

He is the Shepherd, who leads His sheep!

We can't find our own way so we must follow, even through the "Valley of deepest darkness!"

We should "Focus" on and "Follow" Jesus (Heb 12)

He will never lead us where He can't keep us! (VS. 11)

'He goes before us.

In The Hiding Place Corrie Ten Boom and her sister are in a prison camp discussing their fate with other inmates. Understandably, there is a great deal of bitterness directed toward God. How could He look down from heaven and see this suffering and not intervene? But Corrie remarks, "There is no pit that is so deep, but that God is deeper still." There is no river that God expects you to cross but that God has already crossed it. We begin with Christ on the journey and He stays a step ahead of us to the end. Our greatest challenge is to keep our focus on Him.

1. Prepare you head.
2. Focus your eyes.

III. 'Walk with your feet' (vs. 12-17)

The priests had to take a step of faith! (vs. 13)

and stand in faith (vs. 17)

The water would not stop until the priest took the step.

Picture the scene!

The key is we must step out by faith in God and His promises!

If we do God will work!

We can start like Jeremiah where he said, "Ah Lord GOD! Behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee (32:17)

Like Israel, we all walk a path we have never seen before. Each day is a new experience. A doctor may tell us we have cancer, a child may be injured in an accident, a teen may rebel against God. We may be unjustly fired from our job or discover that our investments have gone sour. We may have to face a hundred injustices from those we thought were our friends. In these and a thousand other circumstances we can be confident that we are not heading into the future alone.

The great lesson we learn from Joshua Chapter 3 is that: no river is too deep or too wide, but that God is able to help us through!

Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?
God specializes in things thought impossible.
He'll do what no other friend can do.

Our part is to:

1. Sanctify yourselves
2. Set your eyes on Jesus
3. Step out in faith following our great High Priest were

ever He leads.

And you will cross over into the Promised Land!

JOSHUA 4 & 5 - "Preparing for Battle"

INTRODUCTION:

The Allied invasion of France across the English Channel took place on June 6, 1944. Involved in this immense maneuver were 5,300 ships, 12,000 planes, 6 infantry divisions, 14,000 vehicles, 14,500 tons of supplies - all for the purpose of establishing a secure beachhead in enemy-held territory. The Germans knew a crisis was imminent. On June 3, German intelligence warned that invasion was possible "within the next fortnight." Casualties numbered in the thousands; but by the end of June the beachhead was established in Normandy, and the Allied armies were striking hard against the enemy across France.

So under Joshua's leadership and by miraculous intervention, some two million soldiers and civilians crossed the Jordan. A beachhead was quickly established at Gilgal, and from every human point of view, it was time to strike the strongholds of Canaan. The morale of the Canaanites had utterly collapsed in the face of the news that was spreading through the land:

From the human point of view it was the perfect time to attack the enemy!

"God's thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways not our ways".

It seemed like the right time to move, yet God told His people to wait.

Why?

So that he might prepare them for battle".

When you cross the Jordan (spiritually that's when the battle starts!)

When you die to the old man, and step out in faith to claim your spiritual blessings Satan will oppose you all the way!

Notice the three first encounters!

1. Jericho
2. Ai
3. Gibeon.

Notice our encounters:

1. the world
2. the flesh

3. the devil

"the Christian life is a battle ground not a playground." - A.W.Tozer

What steps can we take to be prepared to do battle?

The same step's seen in Joshua chapter 4 & 5.

1. Remember God's past miracles (4:19-24)

Why the memorial stones? (4:24)

a. "The hand of the Lord is mighty" (vs. 24)

How about you?

Have you ever experienced the mighty hand of God in your life?

If so, it's good to remember!

Notice; the fact that God told them to set up a memorial is a reminder of how prone we are to forget God's past deliverances!

Make some memorials.

How?

Book, photos at thanksgiving, Christmas.

Don't however, make them idols!

b. "That ye might fear the Lord your God forever" (vs. 24)

c. "that parents might instruct their children. (vs. 4:21-23)

How about you parents?

The memorial stones further proclaimed the duty of parental instruction in God's mercies. They speak of a time when tradition was the vehicle of history; when books were rare, and monuments were relied upon to awaken curiosity which a father's words would satisfy. Notwithstanding all differences in means of obtaining knowledge, the old law remains in full force, that the parent is the natural and most

powerful instructor in the ways of God. The Jewish father was not to send his child to some Levite or other to get his question answered, but was to answer it himself. I am afraid that a good many English parents, who call themselves Christians, are too apt to say, "Ask your Sunday school teacher" when such questions are put to them. The decay of parental religious teaching is working enormous mischief in Christian households; and the happiest results would follow if Joshua's homey advice were attended to, "Ye shall let your children know."

To be prepared for battle remember God's power in the past!

2. Renew your commitment to God (5:2-12)

After crossing the Jordan the Lord told Joshua not to get out his Sword and go after the enemy. But to make sharp knives and circumcise the children of Israel!

Why?

a. "To restore their covenant relationship"

God made a covenant with Abraham.

Warren W. Wiersbe says;" Though this ritual the Jews became a "marked people" because they belonged to the true and living God. This meant that they were under obligation to obey Him. The mark of the covenant reminded them that their bodies belonged to the Lord and were not to be used for sinful purposes. Israel was surrounded by nations that worshiped idols and included in their worship rituals that were sensual and degrading. The mark of the covenant reminded the Jews that they were a special people, a separated people a holy nation (Ex19:5-6), and that they were to maintain purity in their marriages, their society, and their worship of God."

Unfortunately, the Jews made the physical rite more important than the spiritual truth it taught.

For us as Christians it's spiritual.

Rom 2:25-29

Colossians 2:10-13

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all

principality and power:

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

So for us, let God do surgery!

b. To remove their reproach (vs. 9)

What was their reproach?

It most likely refers to the Egyptians mocking the Israelites for not having possessed the land of Canaan.

c. To qualify them to eat the Passover (vs. 10)

A type of Christ!

We must feed on Him

Before battle we often need to renew our commitment to God.

How?

By prayer and surrender let the Lord remove; self-confidence, and sins of the flesh!

Jesus said, If thy right hand offend then cut it off!

It's dying to your old man!

A pig said to a chicken, "what shall we have

for breakfast?" The chicken suggested, 'Let's have ham and eggs.' The pig said, "Oh not ham!" The chicken replied, "Why not? I'll furnish the eggs and you the ham." The pig then said, "For you its involvement; but for me it's total commitment."

3. "A revelation of the Lord" (5:13-15)

In verse 13 we read, "it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho"

Why was Joshua alone by Jericho?

God had just brought the Israelites through the river Jordan, they have set up the stones of memorials, they had reestablished their covenant with God, but now what?

Joshua needed time to pray, to plan to be alone. Humanly speaking Joshua bore all the responsibility of leadership. War loomed only hours away, the flooded Jordan lay behind them blocking all retreat, and the strong walls of Jericho lay before them with its sealed gates shut tight.

He had no doubts about the outcome of the battle. But how the victory would come was the big question!

Note: there is loneliness to leadership!

Perhaps he wished that Moses were still there to lead them?

But God had given Joshua a promise (1:5)

Something happened which was for Joshua alone.

He was about to experience the reality of that promise.

He was going to have a divine encounter.

The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Joshua as "Captain of the Host of the Lord".

"How often God suits the revelation of Himself unto His saints according to their circumstance and needs". - A. W. Pink

Illustration:

To Abraham in his tent; He appeared as a traveler.

To Jacob the schemer: He came as a wrestler.

To the three Hebrew men in Babylon: He met them as their companion in the fiery furnace!

Now he comes to Joshua, as "Captain of the Host"

LESSONS

Before we do battle with the enemy:

1. We need a fresh Revelation of the Lord!

"This appearance was meant to steel Joshua for what lay ahead"

Illustration: Moses, Paul, (Acts 9; 2 Cor 12) and us to!

2. A realization that He will fight for us!

(vs.13) "with his sword drawn"

"Host" angels

Illustration: Elisha and Syria (2 Kings 6)

So let God to fight for you!

Notice how Joshua responded!

1. In submissive worship (vs. 14)

Worship comes before warfare, its important

DON'T COME LATE FOR CHURCH- MISS THE WORSHIP!! (Rom 12)

2. Servant hood, obedience (vs. 14)

"What saith my lord unto His servant"

Joshua was second in command, and he wanted to receive his orders from the Lord.

In a meeting with a small group of missionaries in China, James Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission (Now Overseas Missionary Fellowship) reminded them that there were three ways to do God's work: "one is to make the best plans we, can and carry them out to the best of our ability . . . or, having carefully laid our plans and determined to carry them through, we may ask God to help us, and to prosper us in connection with them. Yet another way of working is to begin with God; to ask His plans, and to offer ourselves to Him to carry out His purposes."

Joshua followed the third plan, and that's why the Lord blessed him.

What does the Lord ask of us?

"To walk in holiness" (vs. 15)

In a letter to his missionary friend Rev. Daniel Edwards, the saintly Scottish preacher Robert Murray McCheyne wrote:" Remember you are God's sword-His instrument-I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."

REVIEW: Three things

1. Remember
2. Renew
3. A fresh revelation.

Is He your friend or foe?

Have you submitted?

Is He captain unto you? "Captain Salvation"

JOSHUA 6 - "Faith's Falling Walls"

INTRODUCTION:

The writer of Hebrews tells us, in a simple sentence, that, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days" (Hebrew 11:30). This reference holds the key to the spiritual interpretation of the fall of Jericho: the walls of Jericho fell because of the faith of Joshua and his people. This display of faith, in fact, stands as the greatest thus far in the nation's history, one never to be exceeded. It is also highly significant because while the fall of Jericho is actual history, it is also a dramatized, extended parable about faith.

I believe our faith can be strengthened by observing the faith of Joshua and the children of Israel, and putting that same kind of faith into practice in our own lives.

What were the factors of their faith?

1. Their obedience (vs. 2-5)

Verse 1 is parenthetical

Notice the certainty of victory! (vs. 2)

A principle of spiritual conflict: "As Christians we fight FROM victory, not FOR victory!"

Jesus has defeated the enemy, Satan!

1. In the wilderness Matt 4
2. During His earthly ministry Matt 12
3. On the cross Col 2:13-15
4. In His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation.

The Lord gave Joshua explicit instructions which demanded implicit obedience (vs. 2-5; 6-13)

From the human standpoint these instructions are absurd!

This is not how you win a war!

R. Kent Hughes: "The uniform witness of military history is that the foe is conquered by force. City walls are cleared by bombardment. Then they are scaled by ladder and rope. Gates are destroyed by

battering rams. Troops are taken by sword. Cities do not fall before mystics making bad music on rams' horns."

Yet Joshua and the people of God obeyed!

Why?

Because of their recent experience with the Jordan!

Faith is not believing in spite of evidence, it's obeying in spite of the consequence

Faith is a life of obedience to God's direction!

Illustration: Gideon (22 – 300) vs. the Midianites (135,000)
It was 450 to 1 but he obeyed!

Would you?

Walking by faith is not walking by sight!

But it's not walking blindly!

Richard Halverson: "No more than the pilot of a 747 flies blind when he is being talked into a landing by the control tower. No more than when a pilot believes his instruments rather than the seat of his pants. One of the hard lessons a pilot learns is to trust his instruments when they disagree with his feel. He is in much greater danger by depending on his feeling than by depending upon his instruments. Ceiling zero - visibility zero - very poor conditions to fly by sight. But the aircraft lands safely when the pilot listens the word from the control tower and obeys it."

To walk by faith is to heed the Word of God .

. . . to read it, to know it, to learn it, to obey it.

Do you obey God in spite of the consequences?

Life situations:

Living together not as husband and wife

Filling out our income tax forms?

A student on a test!

You have been wronged by an enemy!

Jesus said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; " (Matthew 5:43-44, KJV).

R. Kent Hughes: "It is a spiritual law: disobedience reveals our unbelief; obedience reveals our faith. When difficult circumstances assail us, unbelief make us borrow from the arsenals of the world, whereas faith causes us to take up the armor of God. Any Jerichos, threatening circumstance, facing you? Are you wavering between God's way and the world's? Do you believe God will deliver you? The authenticity of your belief well determine your obedience."

2. Their focus (vs. 6-13)

Notice at the center of the march were the priests with the Ark (vs. 6)

God's presence!

Were the children of Israel only imagining that God was present?

NO!

God was truly present!

You may not 'see Him' or 'feel Him' But He's with you!

Illustration: Jacob running from his brother Gen 28, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it. . . ."

By faith we see what unbelief can't see!

(Heb 11) "By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir to the righteousness which is according to faith."

Heb 11:27 tells us that, "Moses saw God by faith: By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is unseen".

As the Israelites encircled Jericho, the Canaanites saw nothing more than a ragtag people carrying a golden box, but the Israelites saw the unseen they saw God and persisted to victory!

Erwin Lutzer: "During World War II there was a young soldier who took his new bride to California, where he was stationed for more training. Then he was taken away for two weeks and his young bride was overcome by loneliness, heat, and the primitive living conditions. She wrote to her mother, saying that she was unable to take it any longer. Her mother wrote back and included these two lines: Two men sit in prison bars One sees mud, the other stars. That couplet transformed the young woman's attitude. She began to see God in her circumstances and looked for opportunities to make the best of her situation."

Is your focus on God?

3. Faith's patience (vs. 14)

We give up too soon!

You may be doing all the right things yet see no results, simply keep doing them!

The enemy may fall into our hands soon.

(Heb 10:36) "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

Keep marching patiently, trustingly!

FAITH

Faith is not in understanding;
Faith is yielding to God's will,
Resting on His Word of Promise
In assurance calm and still.

Faith is waiting for the answer
Though no hopeful ray is giv'n,
Knowing that the final outcome
Now is clearly seen in Heav'n.

Faith is looking through the shadows
To the dawn of endless day,
Singing thro' the gath'ring darkness,
"Christ will lead me all the way!"

Faith is looking unto Jesus
Trusting where it cannot see.
Faith is resting on His Promise -
Faith is glorious victory!

Avis B Christiansen

4. Triumph" (vs.15-20)

(1 John 5:4) "This is the victory that overcometh the world our faith"

REVIEW:

1. Jericho represents the world, Lust of the flesh, eyes, pride of life.
2. Our real battles in life are spiritual, not physical.
3. The promise is also yours (vs. 2)
 - a. An obedient faith.
 - b. A focused faith.
 - c. A patient faith.
4. The fall of Jericho is an encouragement to us that no matter how impossible the situation may be victory is ours by faith in Jesus Christ.

If God be for us who can be against us?

JOSHUA 7 - "The Agony of Defeat"

INTRODUCTION:

Moses described the Promised Land as "a land of hills and valleys".

Even those who live by faith and seek to walk in the spirit from time to time suffer defeat!

God's purpose for us is a life of victory, yet defeat may happen!

In chapter 7 Joshua had a sure fire victory backfire resulting in a humiliating defeat for Israel".

What about God's promise, "There shall not any man be able to stand before you all the days of your life " (1:5)?

What was the problem? Had God's promises failed?

Why did Israel now know the agony of defeat?

I. Disobedience (vs. 1)

Notice the word "But" and contrast it with 6:27

Illustration: Elijah

Lesson: There is great danger after a victory!

Why?

We become Self Confident! (vs. 3)

Also we fail to pray and wait on God!

But why would Achan do such a sinful thing?

a. Perhaps he was dissatisfied with the way God had ordered the affairs of his life.

He should have waited.

Achan's sin becomes even more odious when you stop to realize all that God had done for him. God had cared for him and his family in the wilderness. He had brought them safely across the Jordan and given the army victory at Jericho. The Lord had accepted Achan as a

son of the covenant at Gilgal. Yet in spite of all these wonderful experiences, Achan disobeyed God just to possess some wealth that he couldn't even enjoy. Had he waited just a day or two, he could have gathered all the spoils he wanted from the victory at Ai! "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you?"
Matt 6:33

His dissatisfaction, which was itself a sin, gave birth to Disobedience.

b. Perhaps he rationalized "No one will ever know", no one would miss a couple of bars of silver and gold. And the coat? God didn't wear coats! Or 'it won't hurt anyone'

But that's not true! No one ever sins alone!

(vs. 1) "the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing . . ."

2. The Results of Achan's disobedience (vs. 2-9)

1. Defeat (vs. 2-4)

Notice: "the only time"

Sin always leads to defeat!

(vs. 12) "power", and God's presence'

Pride and presumption

They were self confident not God confident!

2. Death (vs. 5)

36 men. . . our sins affect others!

Parents!

Spiritual leaders

Church members

3. Dismay (vs. 6-9)

3. The Lord answers Joshua (vs. 10-15)

It's not always time to pray!

It's time to ACT!

What do you do?

Prayer can become a cover up for dealing with sin

We must deal with our sin!

4. Joshua takes action (vs. 16-26)

1. The discovery of the sinner (vs.16-23)

God sees and knows!

Be sure your sins will find you out! (Num 32:23) said to God's people.

Notice sin's progress (vs. 21)

"I saw', 'I coveted', 'I took'.

a. I saw

b. I coveted (the 10th commandment)

'thou shalt not covet' in the heart!

c. I took.

It starts in his heart! but resulted in ACTION!

2. The death of the sinner (vs. 24-26)

Lesson. . . God takes sin seriously, even if we do not.

God always judges sin!

Illustration: Ananias, with Sapphira (Acts 5)

(1 John 5:16) "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

REVIEW

1. The danger after the victory!
2. To walk in victory we must obey God's word.
3. We never sin alone!

God see's our sin and will judge it.

"We learn the high cost of hidden sin".

1. It brings defeat into a life that should be marked by victory.
2. It brings dismay.
3. it brings death.

Do you have some hidden sin?

You think it's not hurting anyone?

Confess it to God!

Repent!

JOSHUA 8 - "Turning Defeat Into Victory"

INTRODUCTION:

Alexander Whyte: "The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings"

(Psalm 37:23-24) "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with His hand.

Be warned Allan Redpath states; "the recovery of lost ground in your Christian life is very difficult"

Thirty minutes of willful disobedience can result in 30 years of lost blessing!

I. A New Beginning in God's Word (vs. 1-2)

Once the nation of Israel had judged the sin that had defiled the camp and brought the defeat God could now speak to them again,.

It's a lesson to us, see the contrast (7:26)

How did God speak to Joshua? . . . Audibly?

How does God speak to us today?

His word before us; and His Spirit within us!

The three ways God spoke to Joshua!

He speaks the same way to us through His written word.

1. The word of encouragement (vs. 1a)

Joshua was "afraid", "discouraged", and "beaten down".

Two reactions that often accompany failure

We look back at our mistakes and become discouraged, deprived of hope.

We look ahead and fear wondering if there's any future for us

How about you?

The answer is in hearing and believing God's word!

God says, "fear not", "don't be discouraged".

Illustration: When Abram feared his foes, God gave him the "fear not" or 'protection; 'fear not, Abram I am thy shield'.

When Hagar feared famine God gave her the "fear not of 'provision'".

When Joshua feared failure at Ai, the Lord gave him the 'fear not' of "prospect". (vs. 1)

God will protect and provide for you and give you a future.

2. The word of instruction (vs.1b-2)

God always has a plan for us to follow! And the only way to victory is to obey His instructions.

Joshua's first attack on Ai failed in part because he followed the advice of his spies!

This time he hears and heeds God's instruction and victory comes.

Illustration: Putting Christmas toys together and following the instructions.

Also for your marriage, and parenting!

In verse 2 God gave the soldiers the right to claim "the spoils."

Lesson: Achan should have obeyed and waited! for God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him.

Warren W. Wiersbe said, "when we run ahead of the Lord we usually rob ourselves and hurt others".

3. The Word of Promise (vs.1c) "I have given"

Remember- Israel failed at Ai also because they acted presumptuously.

God's promise made the difference between faith & presumption.

It's so important that we spend time in God's word so that we can act upon His promises.

Vance Havner: "His promises are checks to be cashed not mere mottoes to hang on the wall."

So no matter how badly you have failed turn to God in His word.

Let Him:

Encourage you

Instruct you

Give you His promises

For our God is the God of new beginnings!

II A New Strategy (vs. 3 -13)

The order of events at Ai were to be entirely different than those at Jericho.

Israel had to conquer the city through the normal operations of war.

The outworking of this plan involved three contingents of soldiers.

1. The first was a group of valiant warriors who were sent by night to hide just west of the city of Ai. Their assignment was to rush into the city and burn it after its defenders had deserted it to pursue Joshua and his army. While the text indicates this unit numbered 30,000, this seems an excessively large number of men to hide near the city. Since the Hebrew word translated "thousand" may

also be rendered 'chief' or 'officer,' it appears better to view this as a choice group of 30 brave officers chosen by Joshua for a daring commando-type mission.

2. The second contingent was the main army which came the 15 miles from Gilgal early the next morning and camped in plain view on the north side of Ai. Led by Joshua, this army was a diversionary force to decoy the defenders of Ai out of the city.

3. The third contingent was another ambush unit of 5,000 men who were positioned between Bethel and Ai to cut off the possibility of reinforcements from Bethel to aid the men at Ai.

Lesson: Not only is God the God of new beginnings, He's also the God of infinite variety.

He's not limited to any one method of working.

He is not stereotyped in His operations.

Francis Schaffer: "We Christians should not be surprised when the Holy Spirit leads us in different ways at different times. He will not contradict His own principles or character as set forth in the Scriptures, but He will not act like a machine, always responding to similar situations in exactly the same ways. When a Christian falls into the idea that because Jericho has been taken one way Ai must be taken the same way, he has stopped thinking of God as personal."

Illustration: The different ways Jesus healed!

Lesson: It's important that we seek God's will for each undertaking!

Don't depend on past victories as we plan for the future.

God may lead you a new way!

III. A New Victory (vs.14-29)

A. Ai emptied (vs.14-17)

Lesson: his self-confidence.

B. Ai captured (vs. 18-20)

C. Ai's army and people destroyed (vs. 21-26)

R. Kent Hughes: "don't make our own God"

People ask how could a God of love? Also holy, righteous; He always judges sin, & He's patience!

NO compromise with the flesh! It must be crucified!

D. Ai's spoils claimed (vs. 27)

The first fruits of the spoils at Jericho were given to God. (remember it was a miracle!) But now the men actually had to fight!

Lesson: Achan should have waited and obeyed!

Israel now restored to God's favor, won a great victory!

Lesson: One defeat of failure does not mean the end of usefulness for God.

He is ready to forgive us, restore us, and use us!

Illustration: The Apostle Peter

IV. A New Commitment (vs. 30-35)

Joshua did three things!

1. He built an altar (vs. 30-31)

He built it on Mount Ebal, the mount of cursing!

Why?

Because only a sacrifice of blood can save sinners from the curse of the law (Col 3:10-14)

Notice the 2 offerings (vs. 31)

Israel was saying God we are offering ourselves totally to you and want to walk in fellowship with you.

How about you?

2. He wrote the law on stones (vs. 32-33)

Warren W. Wiersbe : “In the near east of that day it was customary for kings to celebrate their greatness by writing records of their military exploits on huge stones covered with plaster. But the secret of Israel's victory was not their leader or their army; it was their obedience to God's law (Josh 1:7-8) In later years, whenever Israel turned away from God's law, they got into trouble and had to be disciplined. "And what great nation is there that has such statues and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?" asked Moses (Deut 4:8 NKJV)”

Believers today have the Word of God written on their hearts by the Holy Spirit of God (Rom 8:1-4; 2 Cor 3). The law written on stones was external, not internal, and could instruct the people but could never change them. Paul makes it clear in the Epistle to the Galatians that while the law can convict sinners and bring them to Christ (Gal. 3:19-25), it can never convert sinners and make them like Christ. Only the Spirit of God can do that.

3. He read the law (vs. 34-35)

Picture the scene!

Why would Joshua stage this celebration amid a series of battles?

Wasn't this a great risk? Yes!

But:

1. It was in obedience to the command of Moses Deut 27.
2. He waited to reaffirm the law in the land of promise.
3. He feared they would take victory for granted and become lax in their commitment to the Book of the Law.

In the final analysis, obedience to the Word of God is the only way to victory in the Christian life!

As God's people today we stand in a valley between two mounts:

Mt Calvary! Where Jesus died for our sins

Mt Olivet, Where He will return in power and great glory!

We have God's word of grace!

JOSHUA 9 - "The Wiles of the Devil"

INTRODUCTION:

We all know what it's like to make bad decisions

It's only those who do nothing that make no mistakes

The hard thing is we often have to live with the consequences of our bad decisions!

An anonymous wit reminds us that a dentist's mistake is pulled out, a lawyer's mistake is imprisoned, a teacher's mistake is failed, a printer's mistake is corrected, a pharmacist's mistake is buried, a postman's mistake is forwarded, and an electrician's mistake could be shocking.

In Joshua chapter 9 we find Joshua and the leadership of the nation of Israel making a bad decision that they had to live with!

The bad decision is recorded in vs. 1-15

It was the result of two things

1. The subtlety of the enemy
2. The stupidity of God's people.

I. The Subtlety of the Enemy (vs. 1-13)

Allan Redpath: "every victory that the Christian wins in his own personal life is an invitation for a full-scale attack by the enemy of his soul, "Our blessing and battles go side by side".

Israel's greatest danger wasn't the confederation of the armies of Canaan. It was a group of men from Gibeon.

Jericho- world, Ai-flesh, Gibeon- devil

Satan sometimes comes as a devouring lion and sometimes as a deceiving serpent.

For us as Christians Satan poses his greatest danger when he comes as a serpent!

Notice what the Gibeonites did (vs. 3-5)

Gibeon was only 25 miles from the camp of Israel at Gilgal, and was

the next city to be destroyed.

(vs. 4) "They did work wilyly", "made as if"

Eph 6:11 "put on the whole . . . wiles of the devil".

Gen 3:1 "now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field."

Satan is a great Deceiver!

(Rev 12) "Satan which deceiveth the whole world"

Satan is a great Perverter

Satan is a great Imitator or Counterfeiter

He comes under cover!

Illustration: Education, philosophy,
psychology, religion, T.V. movies,
music, now computers the worldwide
"web"

Don't get caught!

(II Cor 11:13-14) he has 'false apostles', deceitful
workers who masquerade as angel's of light.

Notice what the Gibeonites said" (vs. 6-13)

Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44)

Why did the Gibeonites lie?

Fear!

It's the same today with many people!

With tongue in cheek, the American political leader
Adlai Stevenson said, "A lie is an abomination unto the
Lord - and a very present help in trouble."

A. They lied about coming from a far away country (vs. 6)

Why?

They must have known the law in Deut 20:10!

Lesson: Satan knows the Bible and how to use it for his own purposes.

Illustration: Jesus in the wilderness.

Keep alert to rightly divide the word of truth.

B. They lied using the cover up of the "Name of the Lord" (vs. 9)

Even so today, Satan enters the church through people who are not "seekers" but only "sneakers".

C. They lied about their bread, bottles, clothes, shoes (vs. 11-13)

Why, what did they want?

"Make a league with us" (vs. 6, 11)

Satan seeks to "Make a league with us too"

Satan is very subtle! The trap is set!

Illustration: Only one magazine, one movie, only one time!

II. Because of the stupidity of God's people the Trap is Sprung!

Notice the leaders' bad decision (vs. 14-15)

How did it happen?

1. "They walked by sight and not by faith (vs. 14)

Warren W. Wiersbe: "the leaders of Israel took the 'scientific approach' instead of the 'spiritual approach'."

They trusted their own natural understanding based on observation.

(vs. 14) 'took' - Lit, 'took in hand'.

What's wrong with that?

Some time's it's o.k.

It's an error to assume that reality is nothing more than the material. For there is a spiritual world too!

In all spiritual and moral areas we need wisdom that goes beyond any we can derive from sense impressions.

Illustration: Prov 3:5-7

2. They failed to pray (vs. 14b)

"never asking the Eternal for advice"

Prayerlessness always brings failure! for all Christians and especially spiritual leaders.

It's the same mistake they made at Ai.

We never learn!

Why didn't they pray?

1. Because the Gibeonites looked authentic.
2. Because things were going so well.
3. Because the alliance with this little nation seemed "no big thing" (why bother God with such a little thing).

We fail to pray for the same reasons!

(vs. 15) The bad decision: 'they made peace with them'

How many Christians have discovered that the things which seemed 'no big thing' at the time have ruined their lives!

One bad decision and a life time of regret.

Don't give Satan an inch in your life!

Illustration: Marriage, ' an illicit sexual relationship or a lie, 'like a little pregnancy' or drinking, stealing.

F.B. Meyer: "It is very sweet to thing of the grace of God which forgives our sins as being the preliminary condition to transforming the results of those sins to blessing. How often, in the lives of God's saints, the ancient prediction has been realized, that instead of the thorn should come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle tree, that these may be to the Lord for a name and an everlasting sign.

What should we do? (Eph 6)

1. Remember we are involved in spiritual warfare.
2. We must be clothed with spiritual armor, belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, feet-gospel- shield of faith- helmet salvation.
3. Our offensive weapon is the word of God and prayer; sword of the Spirit, praying always.

What if you've already failed?

God will forgive you!

But you may have to live with the consequences of your sin; 'the Gibeonite will always in this world be with us, but they need not rule, but serve'.

Yet even then God can work by His sovereign grace.

Satan is subtle and the saints can be stupid, yet God is sovereign

God worked through a bad decision to bring about good (vs.16-27).

1. The Gibeonites aided in the worship of God.
2. The Gibeonites provided a context for the power of God (Chapter 10)
3. The Gibeonites displayed the grace of God!

God will do the same for us! (in marriage)

God can give you beauty for ashes;The singer Ethel Waters was known to many through her recordings and especially her solos at Billy Graham Crusades. Ethel was born as the result of the rape of a 15 year old girl. She grew up in poverty and without love. "Every child should have a knee to sit on", Ethel would say, 'but I didn't have anyone who would hold me on their lap." Yet, for all the hurt, Ethel said that she spent so much time praising the Lord that she did not have time for self-pity. She is best known for singing:

Why should I feel discouraged?
Why should the shadows come?
Why should my heart feel lonely?
And long for heaven and home?
When Jesus is my portion,
My constant friend is He.
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

JOSHUA 10:1-14 - "How To Defeat The Enemy"

INTRODUCTION:

In our study of the book of Joshua we have seen that the Christian life is filled with conflict!

Why?

Because we face many enemies:

The World

The Flesh

The Devil

Whenever we make progress in one area of our lives, we are attacked in another!

Our battles will never be over till we get to heaven!

In Joshua chapter 10 Joshua and the people of God face a confederacy of city nations.

God was going to turn Israel's past blunder into a blessing

Joshua's conduct demonstrates 3 ingredients necessary to win spiritual battles.

I. A Commitment to Integrity (vs. 6-8)

Think of how easy it would have been for Joshua to ignore this plea from the people of Gibeon.

Joshua didn't see it that way!

He was a man of principle and integrity!

So he did the right thing even though it was inconvenient.

Knowing that what you are doing is right, having a clear conscience is an essential ingredient for victory in battle.
Joshua knew he was doing the right thing!

He had a clear word from God! (vs. 8)

No matter how difficult the challenge, if we know we are doing God's will

and our conscience is clear we are more competent to face the trial.

Prov 11:3 'the integrity of the upright will guide them.'

What is integrity?

It means "wholeness'.

It's the opposite of 'duplicity' or 'hypocrisy'.

How about you?

R. Kent Hughes: "Joshua led his men on a 20 mile forced march up 3000 feet in the dark, armed with the first ingredient for successful battle - the knowledge in their heart of hearts that they were doing the right thing."

II. An Utter Dependence upon God (vs. 9-11)

"The Lord discomfited them before Israel" (vs. 10)

"The Lord cast down great stones from heaven" (vs. 11)

The Lord opened fire with the artillery of heaven.

The key to every battle we face is dependence upon God!

You say, "But John do we simply do nothing?"

No! Joshua did his part!

Psalms 127:1 "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

How about you?

We must remember that we never fight alone that the Lord wants to fight for us!

Let Him!

Eph 6:10 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

A notorious drunkard was converted during the Welsh revival, and became a sober and respectable man. But the taverner was disturbed over losing such a good customer. One day as the Christian walked by, the proprietor called out, "What's gone wrong, Charlie? Why do you keep going past instead of coming in?" Charlie stopped for a moment, and then with a glance heavenward, he replied, "Sir, it is not just that I keep going past; we go past!" And that's the secret of victory - the Lord is present and fights for us. "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

This dependence anticipates the third ingredient of successful warfare

III. An Effective Prayer Life (vs. 12-14)

That's what I call an effective prayer!

No day like it" the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man (vs. 14)

(James 5:16) "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"

Why was Joshua so effective in prayer?

1. He was doing the will of God!
2. He was claiming the promises of God! Not presumptuous faith!

We have as many promises as we need to do the will of God; Donald Grey Barnhouse tells the story of the wife of a French pastor who had made a "promise box" by hand, writing perhaps 200 promises in French. Through the years this box was used by her family and they were taught to trust in the Lord.

But during the war they fell into hard times. No food was available except messes of potato peelings from a restaurant. Her children were hungry; they cried to her for food. In one of her most tragic moments she turned to the promise box in desperation. She prayed, "Lord, I have such a great need. Is there a promise that is really for me? Show me, O Lord, what promise I can have in time of nakedness, peril, and sword." She was blinded by her tears and as she reached out for the box, she knocked it over. The promises showered down around her, on her lap and on the floor. She realized in a moment of supreme joy that all the promises were indeed for her in the very hour of her greatest need. Joshua too took full advantage of the specific promise of

God by mixing it with faith. The book of Hebrews speaks of those who heard the Word of God but did not profit from it "because it was not united by faith in those who heard" (Heb 4:2)

Illustration: When Crowfoot, the great chief of an Indian tribe in southern Alberta, Canada gave the Canadian Pacific Railroad permission to cross Indian Territory, he was given a lifetime railroad pass on the CPR. He gratefully received it, put it in a leather case and carried it around his neck for the rest of his life. There is no record, however, that he ever used his privilege.

Application: We can be surrounded by the promises of God and yet be powerless. They can stay bound in leather, never used to enlist His power. Promises in themselves are like a check, of little value unless it is signed.

3. He was convinced of the power of God.

Notice how great is God's power! (vs. 13)

He has the power to keep His promises!

Our problem in prayer is that we don't really believe God can do it!

Many don't believe this story! (Is anything too hard for God?)

Did God do it?

Yes!

How?

He slowed the earth's rotation!

All the miracles in the Bible are true!

Illustration: Just before V-E Day of World War II, a soldier name Joel wrote his mother in New Jersey about the miraculous deliverance of his platoon. Our outfit has been taken off the army's secret list so now you will hear a little of our activities. We are a part of the 3rd Army under Gen. Patton. My platoon has been working mostly in observation

posts and also a few patrols. One of my best buddies, Tom, with his whole platoon was pinned down by German mortar and artillery fire. They were given the order to move, but couldn't because the Germans had full view of them from a hill and were zeroing their fire in on them perfectly. Tom is the most conscientious Christian boy I have ever met in the service. He knew something had to be done to save the 50 men. He crawled from his foxhole and looked things over. Seeing how things were, he lay down behind a tree and earnestly prayed to God to help them out of this situation. This is true Mother. . . . After he prayed a fog or mist rolled down between the two hills and the whole platoon got out of their foxholes and escaped. They reorganized in a little town behind the lines where there was a church building. They all went in and knelt down to pray and thank the Lord... Then they asked the kid to take the service. That is true, Ma, and it just shows how much prayer can mean - if that wasn't an answer to prayer, I don't know what is. You can bet that Tom is respected by his buddies.

(The Miracle of the Fog: Good News Publisher)

The key to Joshua's victory was his faith in the power of God!

We have the same God today!

Nothing is too great for Him!

What battle are you fighting today?

Remember these 3 things

1. A commitment to integrity of heart, mind, will.
2. An utter dependence on God (Ps 46:1)
3. An effective prayer life.
 - a. praying in the will of God
 - b. Pleading the promises of God
 - c. Blessing in the power of God

JOSHUA 14:6-15 - "The Magnificent Old Man"

INTRODUCTION: Every nation has its forgotten heroes, and this is true of Old Testament history as well. We know well the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and David.

But how often do you hear about "Caleb?" The magnificent old Man

Why?

Because at 85 when most people are looking for security and ease Caleb is saying "Give me this mountain" (vs. 12)

It's not easy to grow old!

You know your growing old, "when"
Your dreams are reruns
You sink your teeth into a steak. . .
You see a pretty girl and you. . .

Caleb was old, yet age did not hinder him!

The disappointments of the past did not embitter him.

And the giants in his future did not frighten him.

How about you?

What's hindering you?

Have disappointments of your past embittered you?

Are you fearful about the future?

Why was it that Caleb was so effective in his old age?

The answer is given three times in our text!

1. by Caleb himself in (vs. 8)
2. by Moses in (vs. 9)
3. by Joshua in (vs. 14)

"He wholly followed the Lord"

How about you?

What does it mean to follow the Lord wholly?"

1. It's a life full of faith (vs. 6-8)

Alan Redpath wrote of Caleb and Joshua's faith: "The majority measured the giants against their own strength; Caleb and Joshua measured the giants against God. The majority trembled; the two triumphed. The majority had great giants but a little God. Caleb had a great God and little giants.

He had faith in spite of the multitude! The people wanted to stone him!

Since he was 40 at Kadesh-barnea he was born a slave in Egypt!

Some believe Caleb was of mixed parentage, his father being a Kenezite and his mother was from the tribe of Judah.

(His name means 'dog'; so he over come race problems)

His great faith was a real wonder!

And you think you have it bad!

2. He kept his heart and mind fixed on the inheritance (vs. 9-11)

What kept Caleb during the 40 years in the wilderness?

A promise (vs. 9)

He suffered because of others! Yet did not grow bitter!

He knew God kept him alive (vs. 10)

He did not live in the past

He knew he was still of use (vs. 11)

He had a "Youthful spirit"

Psalms 92:12-14 was fulfilled in his life!

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree:
He will grow a cedar in Lebanon.
Planted in the house of the LORD
They will flourish in the courts of our God

They will still yield fruit in old age;
They shall be full of say and very green.
The blessings of righteousness.

R. Kent Hughes: "The one motivation that never wears out is serving the Lord. With age, many natural motivations may begin to weaken, such as the desire for personal success or fame or the natural appetites of the flesh. But the one motivation that never slackens or the devoted heart is service to God. This was Paul's experience, which he so beautifully stated in 2 Corinthians 4:16: "Therefore we do not lost heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." Surely Caleb experienced this too."

Living for self life grows stale!

Serving the Lord brings a renewed spirit and a satisfying life!

3. A willingness to welcome new challenges (vs.12-15)

How about you?

Notice verse 12, "Give me this mountain".

He was a man of vitality but also a man of spiritual vision!

At 85 he should have been asking for slippers instead, he ask for his sword!

He was ready to take on the giants (vs. 12)

He knew God would help him do His will (vs. 12)

He was victorious!

He was the only one!

Why?

They wanted the spoils and rest!

"They wanted to be "safe and satisfied"

We must resist the temptation to rest! To live in the past!

We need the "Caleb heart"

Are you facing some "Giants that God wants you to deal with?"

Don't Be Afraid!

The Key: "He wholly followed the Lord!"

1. Lead a life full of faith.
2. Keep your heart and mind fixed on your eternal reward.
3. Be willing to welcome the challenges God brings.

Looking to Him for help and following Him with all your heart!

Old skiers never die, they just go downhill.
Old postmen never die, they just lose their zip.
Old teachers never die, they just lose their class.
Old cooks never die, they just go to pot.
Old plumbers never die, they just drain away.
Old bankers never die, they just lose their interest.
Old musicians never die, they just decompose
Old quilters never die, they just go to pieces
Old fishermen never die, they just smell that way.

JOSHUA 23 - "Joshua's First Farewell"

INTRODUCTION:

General Douglas MacArthur appeared before Congress on April 19, 1951 after being relieved of duties by President Truman. His address ended with these moving words:

"The world has turned over many times since I took the oath on the plain at West Point, and the hopes and dreams have long since vanished: but I still remember the refrain of one of the most popular barracks ballads of that day which proclaimed most proudly that old soldiers never die; they just fade away, And like the old soldier in that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away, an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God give him the sight to see that duty."

Joshua is now an old soldier (vs.1b; 2b)

He's 110 years old.

He's done his duty as God gave him the sight and strength to do it.

But old soldiers do die as Joshua says in verse 14

"I'm going the way of all the earth"

Before he dies he gives a word of final advice to this people.

Joshua was greatly concerned that the leaders and the people would not fall away from the Lord, that they would keep God's word and enjoy the blessings of the Promised Land!

No doubt Caleb was there too.

The setting: In Chapter 23 He speaks to the leaders (vs.2)

In chapter 24 he speaks to the people.

To keep them from falling he did 4 things.

I. He reminded them of what Gods had done in their past (vs. 3-4)

They had seen God work and 'fight for them.'" (vs. 3)

Illustration: Crossing the Jordan! The Fall of the Walls of Jericho, the Sun stands still.

The only way to account for their military dominance is that God fought for them!

Lesson: Recalling what God has done for us has a preserving effect on our spiritual life.

So remember God's goodness!

II. He gave them a promise for the future (vs. 5)

Notice what God would do! (vs. 5)

Not only can we look back at God's past blessings we can be sure of God's future deliverance!

God will not abandon us!

Your future is as bright as the promises of God!

The past is gone!

The future is not yet here!

The greater part of Joshua's speech had to do with the present.

III. He laid down what their responsibility was for the present (vs. 6-11)

How?

By giving them three specific commands that if followed would keep them from going backwards.

1. Obey the Word of God (vs. 6-7)

Remember it was the same thing said to Joshua (1:7-8)

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. "

Since Joshua was a soldier obedience was a natural emphasis for him!

A. There is a connection between the command to obey God's word and the previously stated fact that God had done great things for them.

B. Joshua is continuing the appeal to keep the written law of God.

The same as Moses did!

Why? It's God's standard! It's doesn't change!

It's not the culture of the Canaanites.

It's the same for us today!

We must stay under the authority of the word of God!

Why?

To keep us from becoming secularized see
(vs. 7)

(Rom 12) "Be not conformed but transformed!

R. Kent Hughes: "Bowling to the authority of God's Word and obeying it will keep our heads and hearts right. A mind filled with God's Word can critically evaluate the secular society which surrounds it and resist assimilation. A mind filled with God's Word will be a mind of wisdom. Thus, one of the vital signs of spiritual life is a regard for God's Word."

A warning sign of apostasy is a lessening of respect for the Word of God.

In our personal life
In our family life
In our Church life
In our natural life

2. Cling to God (vs. 8)

As Christian we all feel the pressure of the world round us!

It takes courage to defy the crown (vs. 7) and keep God's word!

Where do I find that courage in clinging to God!

The word "cleave" in verse 8 is the same use in Gen 2:24 to describe a husband's relationship to his wife.

Like Israel we are 'married' to the Lord! So don't be unfaithful

What happens when you cling to God?

A. Victory over the enemy (vs. 9)

B. Strength (vs. 10)

C. Joy

Psalms 63:7-8 "Thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to Thee."

3 Love God (vs. 11)

Be very careful or be on guard!

Literally, "take care of your very souls to love the Lord your God!"

It's the most important!

It's the key, because if you love God you will not do anything inconsistent with that love.

If we love God we will obey Him!

Don't say you love Him if you're not obeying Him!

Like the church in Ephesus have you left your first

love? (Rev 2)

Deut 6:4-5

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

1. Remember the past
2. Promise for future
3. Present
 - a. Keep Word of God
 - b. Cleave word of God
 - c. Love word of God

IV. He reminded them of the consequences of their actions (vs. 12-16)

1. Falling away would bring "Evil things"
 - A. they would be trapped by their old enemy! (vs. 13)
 - B. they would perish! Lose the blessings (vs. 16)
2. If you love God and keep His word and cleave to Him
 - A. God will do all He has promised! (vs. 14)

Because, God is good.

Delight yourself in the Lord and he shall give you the desires of your heart!

"We love Him because He first loved us". John 3:16

JOSHUA 24 - "Joshua's Final Farewell"

INTRODUCTION:

There are many things in life that are not optional!

Illustration: your parents, your gender, your race, your physical make up; your relatives.

On the other hand there are many choices we make in this life!

Joshua in his final farewell calls the people of Israel to make the most important decision any person will ever make (vs.15)

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve"

Why did Joshua call the people to make this choice?

1. He would soon die and he wanted the next generation to continue to follow the Lord!
2. He knew the people's sinful hearts were prone to wander.
3. He wanted them to enjoy their inheritance.

In vs. 1-13 he survey's their history and reminds them of all that God has done.

1. God has chosen them (vs. 1-4)
2. God has delivered them (vs. 5-7)
3. God has guided them (vs. 8-10)
4. God has given them their land (vs.11-13)

A key word: "I" used 13 times to show what God has done

Eph 1:3-13; 4:1

Romans chapters 1-12

"Now therefore" (vs. 14)

He calls them to respond to God in rededication.

God is sovereign yet He lets us choose! (vs. 15)

And: "Choose we must!" It's not whether we serve, it's WHOM we serve!

We all have our gods, (Like what?)

If you're not a Christian you must choose!

Jesus said "Your either for me or against me"

"gather or scatter". No neutrality!

To say NO to Jesus is to say yes to Satan, sin, self.

Illustration: Story of Elijah 1 Kings 18

Joshua was speaking to God's people! They to must also choose.

We not only choose to receive or reject Christ, we also choose the quality of our Christian life.

As Christians we have eternal life; but not abundant life. We are justified, but not sanctified. We try but we never triumph, we have pardon, but no power.

Why?

We make wrong choices!

We choose not to pray
We choose no to read and meditate on God's word
We choose not to be in fellowship
We choose not to serve the Lord
We choose not to yield to the Holy Spirit (Rom 6)

Notice it's "choose you" so YOU must choose!

Don't let others choose for you!

Don't follow the crowd! (Choose the right friends)

When you choose to serve the Lord you may be all alone!

Yet you're not alone!

"This day" (vs. 15)

Ask yourself, who are you serving?

How can you know?

1. What have you been thinking about the most this past week?
2. Whom do you wish to please?

Jesus said' No man can serve two masters"

Breathe on me, Breath of God:
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou would'st do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine
Until this earthly part of me
Glowes with Thy fire divine.

Someone has written:

The dearest idols I have known,
What ere those idols be,
Help me to tear them from the throne,
And worship only Thee.

Notice Joshua's fierce independence!

"But as for me" -- "If no one else serves the Lord - I will"

He had, He was, He will

It's "me and my House" - so He's speaking as a father!

Remember we influence others by our choice!

As fathers - our households!

The People's response! (vs.16-18)

Self -confidence! "glibness & insincerity"

Joshua's concern and warning (vs.19-28)

Illustration Like Jesus - "Let the dead bury the dead etc...."

Lesson - Don't trust self!

What to do?

- (1) Put away false gods
- (2) Incline your heart towards the Lord!

Death ... How much time do you have left?

Don't waste it choose!

Now it's "this day"

Don't go through life with no direction! -- choose!