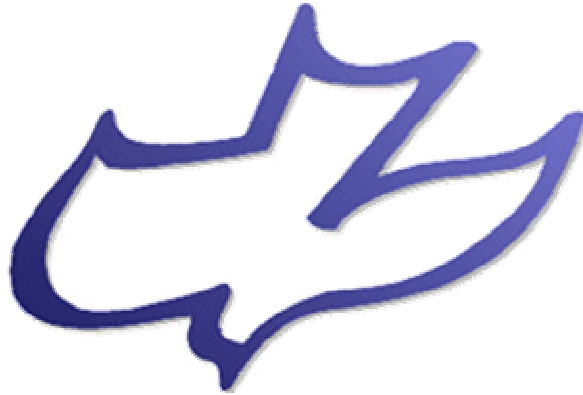


WORD OF LIFE STUDY GUIDES

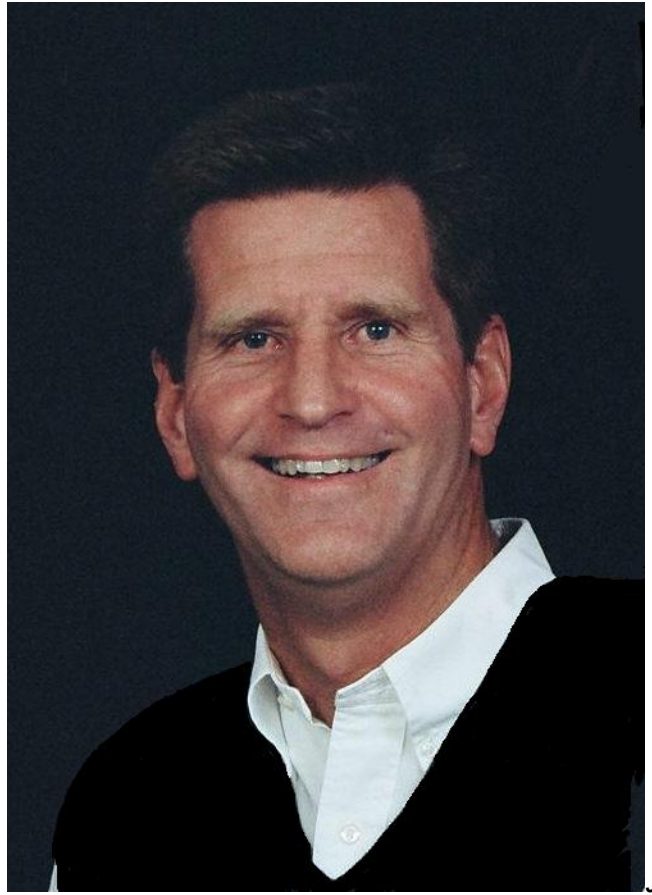
By John Paul Miller



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



Pastor John Paul Miller

John Miller has been the Pastor of Calvary Chapel San Bernardino since 1972. He is married to Kristy and has four children. John's teaching is always based on an exposition of the Biblical text with a clear outline and application for daily living.

Courageous Christian Living
Studies in the Life of Joshua

By Pastor John Paul Miller

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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 and Fear Not"

Joshua 1:1-9, "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. 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. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

INTRODUCTION: 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. To enter the land and to possess it would take faith, courage, consecration, and strong leadership.

God provided a man by the name of 'Joshua' – meaning 'Jehovah Saves!' (vs. 1)

The Book of Joshua is the first book in the Bible named after a person.

Notice its theme and purpose:

- A New Leader
- A New Land
- A New Life

It's important to note at this time, Israel's four geographic locations in history:

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

How about you?

Are you living in Canaan's land (a land of blessings and rest)

How?

By Courageous Christian Living!

By following our Joshua (Jesus Christ) we can conquer our enemies and possess our spiritual blessings.

The Book of Joshua parallels the New Testament Epistle of Ephesians.

In preparing Joshua to lead the people into the land God did three things:

I. God Equipped Joshua (vs. 1-4)

Joshua 1:1-4, "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast."

A. God spoke to Joshua (vs. 1) He was called by God.

B. God prepared Joshua

1. a slave
2. a soldier
3. a spy
4. a servant (vs. 1 – Moses 'minister')

C. God commissioned Joshua (vs. 2-4)

1. Get up and go! (vs. 2)

Lesson: The first step is the hardest – get up and face the enemy, don't be complacent.

2. He reminds them that the land is already theirs (vs. 3-4)

Lesson: God has blessed us

The New Living Translation - Ephesians 1:3, "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ."

Like what?

- election
- adoption
- redemption
- forgiveness
- sealed

All to the praise of the glory of His grace!

A little boy came to the Washington Monument and noticed a guard standing by it.

“I want to buy it.”

“How much do you have?” asked the guard.

“Thirty-five cents.”

“You need to understand three things,” the guard explained. “First, thirty-five cents is not enough to purchase the monument, in fact, thirty-five million dollars is not enough. Second, the Washington Monument is not for sale; and thirds, if you are an American citizen, you already own it!”

Joshua was to walk through the land; but it won't be a 'cake walk!' This is true for us too - there are hostile enemies to face!

The equipped Joshua now need encouragement.

II. God Encouraged Joshua (vs. 5-6)

Joshua 1:5-6, “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.”

Notice verses:

6 - *Be strong and of a good courage:*

7 - *Only be thou strong and very courageous; ...*

9 - *Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed:*

How?

The Promises of God!

1. *No-one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life.*(vs. 5) New International Version

2. *I will be with you* (vs. 5)
3. *I will never leave you nor forsake you* (vs. 5)

In the Hebrew, it's literally – "I will not drop you."

4. *You will inherit the land* (vs. 6)

Lesson: God will always keep His promises!

Consider Joshua 23:14, 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.

Therefore, Joshua must be strong and courageous.

Lesson: Divine sovereignty is not a substitute for Human responsibility.

God does one last thing for Joshua

III. God Enables Joshua (vs. 7-9)

Joshua 1:7-9, "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. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

How can we be strong?

By the power of His Word!

This was the key to Joshua's greatness!

1. Don't turn from God's Word (vs. 7)

Remember, Joshua only had the first five books of the Bible, we have sixty-six!

How do I keep from turning from God's Word?

- i. Talk about it - with your mouth (vs. 8)
- ii. Think about it - with your mind (vs. 8)

Meditate (Psalms 1) - Meditation implies reasoning about the Word and deducing things from it.

- iii. Do it - with your feet (vs. 8)

- We apply the Word to our lives
- *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,..."* James 1:22,
- Notice verse 8, *do all that is written* - obey it entirely

We tend to pick and choose

It's the secret to prosperity and success (vs. 8)

This prosperity and success is not determined by the worlds standards.

George MacDonald – "In whatever man does without God he must fail miserably, or succeed more miserably."

Ask yourself these important questions:

1. Am I living my life in obedience to God's Word?
2. Am I seeking to serve others?
3. Am I bringing glory to God?

Notice too, that God enabled Joshua also by His command (vs. 9).

Joshua 1:9, "...Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

God's commands are His enablings'

Illustration – The man with the withered hand

Matthew 12:10-13, "And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."

It's the same for us:

- be strong
- be of good courage
- be not afraid not dismayed or discouraged

God has:

- prepared you
- given you His promises
- provided His power

Victory and blessing come through obedience and trust in God.

Trust and Obey

John H. Sammis, 1887

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Refrain:

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear,
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,
But is blessed if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of His love
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favor He shows, for the joy He bestows,
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet,
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;
What He says we will do, where He sends we will go;
Never fear, only trust and obey.

Joshua 2:1-24 - "A Prostitutes Faith"

Joshua 2:1, "And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there."

INTRODUCTION:

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

It's a covert military spy story with the main character being that of a woman.

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

She believed in the God of Israel and was saved along with her whole household.

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

I'm amazed at the places we find

Rahab is one of three women whose faith is held up as an example in Hebrews chapter 11's "Faith's Hall of Fame":

- Sara, the wife of Abraham (vs. 11)
- The mother of Moses (vs. 23)
- Rahab (vs. 31) - (also in James 2:25)

What kind of faith did Rahab have?

Not everything that is called faith is really "true" faith!

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

Joshua 2:1-7, "And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate."

We must acknowledge the fact that Rahab lied!

Not wanting to get into the ethics of her lying, I will say this:

As a general rule, the end does not justify the means; we cannot do evil that good will come.

Nowhere in scripture do we find God condoning or endorsing her sin; but we do however, find Him commending her faith.

Lessons: God saves sinners!

A. Rahab was a sinner under condemnation

Romans 3:23 - *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"*

Romans 6:23 - *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

B. We see God's providence ("to see before") and grace

Why were the spies sent?

God had a purpose and plan

Ephesians 1:4, *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"*

God is His grace and mercy reached down and touched the heart of a harlot.

C. We see her faith – it worked!

James 2:20 - *"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"*

James 2:25 - *"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"*

Rahab's faith is seen by her actions

She put her life on the line!

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

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

Mark 2:1-5, *"And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."*

Can others see your faith?

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

Joshua 2:8-11, *"And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."*

Faith is only as good as its object!

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

She believed in God!

How did this pagan Canaanite prostitute come to believe in God? (vs. 10)

Probably from the traveling salesmen who frequented her establishment.

Her mind was enlightened.

Romans 10:17, *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

Her hearing mixed with faith to produce confident action.

What she believed about God

1. She believed God had given the land to Israel (vs. 10)

Ephesians 1:3, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:"*

2. She believed God was powerful (vs. 10)

Nothing is too hard for Him!

Do you believe God has the power to meet your needs?

By our lives we need to reveal to others the greatness of His power.

3. She believed He was a personal God (vs. 11)

"...for the LORD our God..."

He loves you and cares for you!

4. She believed He was everywhere present (vs. 11)

"...he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."

What do you believe about God?

Remember that what you believe determines how you behave.

Her knowledge was limited but her faith was great

It is no secret what God can do.
What He's done for others, He'll do for you.
With arms wide open, He'll pardon you.
It is no secret what God can do.

Portion of lyrics from
It Is No Secret
By Stuart Hamblin

How much more for us?

Matthew 8:10, *"When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."*

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

Joshua 2:12-14, *"Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall*

be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee."

Rahab's faith gave her concern for others (her family)

There's something wrong if, as a believer, you have no concern for others salvation.

Illustrations:

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

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

Joshua 2:15-24, "Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window. And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them: And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us."

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

The scarlet rope is a picture of the blood of Jesus Christ.

"...On Christ, the solid Rock I stand:
All other ground is sinking sand."

Except from
"The Solid Rock"
By Edward Mote

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!

What were the rewards of her faith? (vs.15-24)

1. Her Salvation

She and her family were saved

Joshua 6:12-25, "And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho."

2. Her Glorification

She was immortalized in Scripture.

Matthew 1:5, "And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;"

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!

Jesus was called the son of David.

JOSHUA 3:1-17 - "Crossing the Jordan"

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever found yourself facing a seeming impossible task? A problem, or difficulty that seemed impossible to conquer?

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!

Joshua and the Children of Israel find themselves facing an impossibility – it's called the '*Jordan River*' which lies between them and the promised land.

The lesson which they were to learn is that God specializes in things thought impossible.

God had a plan – even if they knew nothing about it.

Chapter 3 records how God revealed the steps they needed to take to cross the uncrossable.

The same is true for us – to enjoy the Abundant Life.

I. Focus Your Eyes on the Ark and Follow – (vs. 1-4)

Joshua 3: 1-4, "And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore."

The people were to focus on, and follow after the Ark (vs. 3)

What was the Ark? – Called "...the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God,"

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

They were to look to God and follow after Him.

Why the space? (vs. 4) - Because they didn't know the way (vs. 4b)

It's the same for us too!

The Ark is Jesus – focus and follow!

Illustration – Peter walking on the water (Matthew 14:22-33)

Psalms 25:15, *“Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD;...”*

Are yours?

II. Sanctify Yourselves (vs. 5)

Joshua 3:5, *“And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.”*

You would think a military leader like Joshua would have said, “sharpen your swords”.

Instead, He said, *“Sanctify yourselves:...”*

What does it mean to sanctify yourself?

It’s confessing and forsaking all known sin and concreting yourself to love, obey, and serve God.

Romans 12:1, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”*

Notice its importance - Isaiah 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) - Israel could not *“stand before thine enemies,...”*

It’s the same for us - we must keep the same conditions if we are to see God work wonders in our lives, our families, our church, and our nation.

III. Step Out and Stand Still (vs. 6-17)

Joshua 3:6-17, *“And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the*

Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; And as 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, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."

The point is that nothing would happen as long as they stood still.

There must be a step of faith (vs. 13)

The same is true for us – focusing on Jesus is good, sanctifying yourself is good also, both are essential. But little will come of these things unless we take the initial step of faith.

You can have your eyes focused, and your heart and life cleansed. But, you must also move out with your feet in faith.

What are your fears?

Erwin Lutzer - 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.

1. Focus on God
2. Sanctify yourself
3. Step out in faith

As the chorus puts it:

*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.*

In this chapter we have seen:

1. The people were sanctified (vs. 5)
2. Joshua was magnified (vs. 7)
3. The Lord was magnified (vs. 10)
4. The Word was verified (vs. 14-17)

JOSHUA 4 & 5 - "Preparation for the Conquest"

INTRODUCTION:

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

Israel was now on battle ground.

As we study the Book of Joshua we learn that the corporate experiences of Israel picture and parallel the personal experience of Christian Life.

- 1) Jericho
- 2) Ai
- 3) Gibeon

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

Let the Battles begin!

Isaiah 55:8-9, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

Israel was not yet fully prepared to enter into battle.

There are three things that were needed to prepare them for the conflicts that lay ahead.

These same things are what we need to win the battles and conquer the fears that would keep us from enjoying the abundant life God has promised.

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

Joshua 4:19-24, "And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever."

Why the piles of twelve stones? (vs. 20)

1. For parents to instruct their children (vs. 21-23)

Parents, it's our job!

2. To Remember God's Power (vs. 24a)

Memorials of God's miracles in our life.

There is a danger however; we must not live in the past!

3. "...that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever."(24b)

Our response.

What does it mean to fear the Lord?

Psalms 111:10, "...The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:"

The Church has two memorials:

1. Communion
2. Baptism

II. Renew your present consecration to God (5:2-12)

Joshua 5:2-12, "At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised. For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD swore that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD swore unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day. And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year."

For the sword of combat there was the sharp knife of circumcision.

Why?

- a. To restore the covenant made 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 outward physical rite more important than the inward spiritual truth it was intended to teach.

The lesson for us as Christians:

Colossians 2:10-13, “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 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: 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. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;”

It’s your heart – 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.

Illustration – Moses intercedes for the Children of Israel after the golden calf incident.

Exodus 32:14, “And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”

c. To qualify them to eat the Passover (vs. 10-12)

It was a meal of remembrance, same as the Lord’s Supper is today.

We need to remember God’s covenant, promises, and past deliverances and consecrate ourselves for the days that lay ahead.

Lesson: Remember that – what we do is important, but what we are is more important still.

It's more important that God have our hearts and minds than our swords.

Does He?

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."

III. "A Revelation of the Lord" (5:13-15)

Joshua 5:13-15, "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

Why was Joshua alone by Jericho?

To seek God and His plans.

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

Remember that God had given Joshua a promise (1:5)

Joshua was now experiencing the reality of that promise.

It was Jesus! – *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"

He also comes to us through the Holy Spirit (John 14)

The Lessons Joshua Learned:

1. He was second in command – the secret to victory!
2. God already had His battle plan – His way in His time!
3. The battle was the Lords.

"...his sword drawn in his hand:"

Romans 8:31, " *...If God be for us, who can be against us?"*

Joshua's Response:

1. Surrender (vs. 14-15)

"And Joshua fell on his face..."

Romans 12:1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Sam Shoemaker – "To be a Christian means to give as much of myself as I can to as much of God as I know."

2. Worship (vs. 14) – Worship & Warfare

"...and did worship,"

3. Obey (vs. 14)

"What saith my Lord unto his servant?"

Walk in Holiness (vs. 15)

JOSHUA 6 - "Let the Wall's Fall Down"

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.

We all face "Jericho's" in our daily lives.

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 factors are found in their faith that brought Jericho's walls down?

1. It rested on the promises of God (vs. 1-2)

Joshua 6:1-2, " Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour."

Victorious Christians are people who:

1. Know the promises of God
2. Believe the promises of God because the Word of God generates faith in their hearts.
3. Reckon on these promises and obey what God tells them to do.

To reckon – means to count as true what God says about you in His word.

What does God say is true about me in His word?

Ephesians 1:3, " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:"

Like what?

1. election
2. adoption
3. redemption
4. forgiveness

5. sealed
6. earnest

Also,

1. That we were crucified with Christ
2. Dead and buried with Christ
3. Alive and risen with Christ
4. Seated with Christ

Romans 6 & Ephesians 1

As Christians we fight from victory, not for victory!

Christ's victory is ours – John 16:33, "*...but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*"

Know, Reckon, Yield

We have the certainty of victory.

Romans 8:1, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...*"

No Condemnation
No Separation

2. It was obedient to the commands of God (vs. 3-13)

Joshua 6, 3-13, "*And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD. And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD. And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed*

men went before them; but the reward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets."

Lessons:

When God call us into battle:

- He's the captain, we are not in command
- The battle belongs to the Lord
- He will give us the Battle plan and the ability to fight
 - don't make your own plans
- His plan may seem foolish yet we must trust and obey
 - David's sling, Feeding of the 5000

From the human standpoint these instructions were absurd.

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

R. Kent Hughes – "...disobedience reveals our unbelief; obedience reveals our faith. When difficult circumstances assail us, unbelief makes us borrow from the arsenals of the world, whereas faith causes us to take up the armor of God. Any Jerichos, threatening circumstances, facing you? Are you wavering between God's way and the worlds? Do you believe God will deliver you? The authority of your belief will determine your obedience.

Are you willing and ready to obey God inspite of the consequences?

3. It was patience doing the will of God. 9vs. 14)

Joshua 6:14, " And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days."

The seven days of marching was a test of Israel's faith and patience.

God want's patient obedience.

Illustration – The Syrian General Naaman told by Elijah – "*if you dip seven times!*"

You may be doing the right things yet see no results. Simply keep doing them! In God's time the enemy will fall into your hands.

Hebrews 10:32-26 (New Living Translation), "*Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suddering. Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail, and when all you owned was taken from*

you, you accepted it with joy. You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever.

So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised."

4. It was triumphant through the power of God" (vs.15-16; 20)

Joshua 6:15-16, "And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city."

Joshua 6:20, " So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."

Jericho represents the world.

What is your world?

The evil world system apart from God.

How can we overcome the world?

1. Be sure you are born of God through faith in Christ.

1 John 5:4, " For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:..."

2. Believe that through crucifixion with Christ you are dead to the world.

Galatians 6:14, " But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

3. By faith follow Christ and not the ways of the world.

Before our conversion – Ephesians 2:2, " Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

But now the scripture gives us the principles, and the Spirit gives us the power.

4. Love God the father and not the world.

1 John 2:15-17, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*"

5. Seek heavenly things and store up heavenly treasures.

Colossians 3:1-2, "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*"

6. Find your joy in the Lord and not in the world.

So often, even Christians; turn to worldly things to find happiness. But joy is found in the Lord.

1. Is your faith resting on the promises of God?
2. Is it obedient to the commands of God?
3. Is it patient doing the will of God?
4. Is it triumphant through the power of God?

1 John 5:4, "*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*"

JOSHUA 7 - "The Agony of Defeat"

Joshua 7:1-5, *"But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few. So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water."*

INTRODUCTION:

Joshua and the children of Israel have just experienced the "trill of victory" (Chap. 6). But now, sad to say, they are about to taste the "agony of defeat".

They conquered Jericho (The World) by faith yet now they face another enemy, the city of Ai (The Flesh)

The worst enemy that you have is yourself.

J. Vernon McGee - There are two factors that we make dealing with this enemy difficult:

(1) we are reluctant to recognize and identify him. We hate to label him as an enemy (the truth is most of us rather like him).

(2) he is on the inside of us.

The only battle that Israel lost in taking the promised land was a battle in which the defeat came not from without, but from within.

Israel was given a land they never fully possessed.

We are given spiritual blessings but our flesh keeps us from enjoying our blessings.

I. What was it that caused this defeat?

Sin in the camp (vs. 1)

It was not – self confidence (vs. 2-4)

It was not – lack of prayer (Joshua's)

It was a trespass in the accursed thing (vs. 1)

What's that?

Joshua 6:17-19, "And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

- a) perhaps he was dissatisfied with the way God had ordered the affairs of his life.
 - think of how God had blessed him
 - dissatisfaction is sin and often gives birth to disobedience
 - Philippians 4:11, "...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

- b) perhaps he rationalized no one will ever know: no one would miss these spoils of war – it won't hurt anyone.

God knows! – our sins do affect others (vs. 1)

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

Joshua 7:2-9, "And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few. So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O LORD God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?"

1. Defeat (vs. 4)

Sin always leads to defeat (vs. 12)

Joshua 7:12, Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because

they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."

Sin brings a loss of power and God's presence

Notice the contrast in Joshua 6:27, "*So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.*"

2. Death (vs. 5)

- 36 men lost their lives
- Our sins always affects others

Parents!
Spiritual leaders
Church members

3. Dismay (vs. 6-9)

Joshua who had been magnified was now mortified

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

Joshua 7:10-15, "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel."

Lesson: It's time to act, not pray!

Prayer can become a cover up for obedience

We must deal with our sin!

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

Joshua 7:16-26, "So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: And he brought the family of Judah; and he took

the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day."

1. The discovery of the sinner (vs.16-18)

Numbers 32:23, "*But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.*"

You can't hide from God!

2. The confession of the sinner (vs. 19-23)

Note sin's progress (vs. 21)

1. I saw – lust of the eyes
2. I coveted – thou shalt not covet

Materialism – the love of money

3. I took – eyes, heart, hands
4. I hid – we try to hide our sin

Illustrations – Eve – King David

James 1:13-17, "*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down*

from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

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

Lessons:

1. We learn the high cost of hidden sin.

"We learn the high cost of hidden sin".

1. It brings defeat into a life that should be marked by victory.

Marriage, family, church, ministry

J. Sidlow Baxter – "The electric wire of fellowship between God and Israel had been cut by a trespass in the accursed thing and the current of power therefore ceased to flow."

Psalms 32

Psalms 51

2. If it's not repented of - it brings death.

Turn
Confess
Find Forgiveness

JOSHUA 8 - "Failure, the Back Door to Success"

INTRODUCTION:

The great auto maker Henry Ford defined a mistake as 'an opportunity to begin again more intelligently'.

Joshua and the Children of Israel have just experienced the 'Agony of Defeat', but God is the God of the second chance.

God is able to turn our failures into success; failure can often be the back door to success.

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."

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

How do you respond to failure?

In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul said, "... but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

We should learn from the past but not be controlled by it.

How Joshua and the Children of Israel turned defeat into victory?

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

Joshua 8, 1-2, "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land: And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it."

If the defeat came because of disobedience to God's Word then victory comes through obedience to God's Word!

The sin that defiled the camp and brought defeat has been dealt with.

Joshua 7:26, "And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day."

The same is true for us to – deal with sin and God's blessings will come.

Notice that God speaks to Joshua; we need to hear God speak too!

How? – Through His Word (The Bible)

Discouragement over the past and fear of the future are two common reactions to failure. But the answer to our discouragement and fear is hearing and believing God's Word.

Like Joshua we need the:

1. The word of encouragement (vs. 1)

Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: (or "discouraged", and "beaten down")

Are you looking back at your mistakes and growing discouraged?

Illustrations:

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)

Turn to God's Word for encouragement – Let Him give you a future and a hope!

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

God had a plan for them (us) to follow; it's the only way to victory.

1. Take your Army
2. Get up (was he praying?)
3. Go back to Ai

God would give them the spoils of Ai.

Achan should have obeyed and waited on God and obeyed His Word.

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

3. The Word of Promise (vs.1)

"...I have given into thy hand the king of Ai," (vs. 1)

"...thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho" (vs. 2)

To turn defeat into victory I need to get back to hearing and heading
God's Word!

II. A New Strategy (vs. 3 -13)

Joshua 8: 3-13, "So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night. And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready: And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, (For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them. Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do. See, I have commanded you. Joshua therefore sent them forth: and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people. And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now there was a valley between them and Ai. And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. And when they had set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley."

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

Lesson: God is not limited to any one method of working.

Seek God's will for each undertaking.

God may want to work in a new way.

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

Joshua 8:14-29, "And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, that they hasted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. And all the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel. And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city. And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as

soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire. And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai. And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape.

And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua. And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai. For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day."

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)

How could God do this?

1. He had been amazingly patient with them

Genesis 15:16, "*But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*"

2. Remember the wickedness of the Canaanites

3. When the Israelites did not obey God and exterminate the Canaanites, the Canaanites polluted Israel.

4. Remember that whenever a people's cup becomes full God's judgment comes.

- Noah's Day
- Sodom and Gomorrah,
- The United States (today!)

Ruth Bell Graham (wife of Billy Graham): *"If God doesn't judge America for her immorality, he will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah."*

- The Second Coming

Remember – God is Holy!

NO compromise with the flesh! It must be crucified!

D. Ai's spoils claimed, victory enjoyed (vs. 27)

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

Joshua 8:30-35, "Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them."

Joshua did three things!

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

The first one built in the Promised Land

Burnt Offerings – total consecration

Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Peace Offering – fellowship

How about you?

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

For us it's written upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8)

Only God's Spirit can make you like Jesus.

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

Picture the scene!

Lessons:

- One defeat or failure does not mean the end of usefulness
 - God loves you and is ready to forgive, restore, and use you once again
 - Never permit past sin or failure to rob you of future victory
1. Begin anew in God's Word
 2. Seek God's strategy – His plan
 3. A new victory will come
 4. After the victory a new commitment

JOSHUA 9 - "Dealing with the Devil"

INTRODUCTION:

We have all made decisions we have regretted.

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

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.

The hard thing is we have to live with the consequences of our mistakes and bad decisions.

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!

What was the bad decision?

How could this happen?

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)

Joshua 9:3-13, "And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you? And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye? And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey."

Jericho- the world, Ai-the flesh, Gibeon- the devil

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

Peter said in, 1 Peter 5:8, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*"

Satan often poses his greatest danger when he comes as a serpent!

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

Gideon was only 25 miles from the camp of Israel at Gilgal, and was the next city to be destroyed.

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

Ephesians 6:11, "*put on the whole . . . wiles of the devil*".

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

Satan is a great Deceiver!

Revelations 12:9, "*...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!

2 Corinthians 11:13-14, "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*"

Satan has 'false apostles', deceitful workers who masquerade as angel's of light.

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

John 8:44, "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth,*

because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he (Satan) is a liar, and the father of it.
”

Why did the Gibeonites lie?

Fear!

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.

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".

In Matthew 13:25, Jesus taught about the ‘...*tares among the wheat.*

In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus said, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*”

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)

Lesson: Satan seeks to "Make a league with us too"

Satan is very subtle! The trap is set!

II. The stupidity of God's people

Joshua 9:14-15, " *And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.*"

We see 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 - NIV) 'sampled their provisions.'

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

Lesson: Proverbs 3:5-7, " Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil."

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

Not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.

Prayerlessness always brings failure!

Everything looked okay but we should still seek God's will and wisdom.

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

One bad decision and a life time of regret.

Don't give Satan an inch in your life!

III. The Responsibility of the Saints

What is our defense against the subtle attacks of Satan?

1. Live by the Word of God & Prayer

Psalms 119:11, " Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Ephesians 6:17-18, " And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,..."

2. Don't Love The World

1 John 2:15, " Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

3. Walk in the Light – Live a life of Holiness

1 John 1:7, " But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

4. Yield yourself to the Spirit's control

Ephesians 5:18, " And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

5 Abide in Christ

John 15:4, " Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

5. Resist the Devil

James 4:7, " Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

JOSHUA 10 - "Essentials for Battle"

INTRODUCTION:

The leaders of the nation of Israel have made a foolish mistake; yet, as God often does in His grace, He turns our blunders into blessings.

The scriptures say that instead of the thorn should come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle tree.

God was going to use this mistake to accomplish His own purposes.

How?

The story of the five kings who formed a confederacy.

Joshua 10:1-5, "Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty. Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it."

Instead of having to defeat these five city states one by one, He would help Joshua and the army of Israel to conquer them all at one time.

Chapter 10 records a great battle and a great victory.

Joshua 10:14, "...there was no day like that before it or after it,..."

Joshua's conduct demonstrates four necessary ingredients necessary to win great battles.

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

Joshua 10:6-8, "And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us. So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee."

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

Joshua was a man of principle and integrity!

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 battles of life.

How did Joshua know he was doing the right thing!

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

Proverb 11:3 *"The integrity of the upright shall guide them:..."*

What is integrity?

It means "wholeness".

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

Jesus describes integrity in Matthew 6:22-24:

Matthew 6:22-24, *"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."*

The person with integrity has:

1. a single eye
2. a single heart – Love God with all your heart
3. a single will – he seeks to serve but one master.

How about you?

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

Joshua 10:9-11, *"Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night. And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."*

- The Lord discomfited them before Israel (vs. 10)
- The Lord cast down great stones from heaven" (vs. 11)
- The Lord fought for Israel - The Lord opened fire with the artillery of heaven.

In the battle depend on God.

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."

Family!

Ephesians 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!"

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

Joshua 10:12-14, "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel."

Prayer is the indispensable ingredient for meeting and winning the great battles of life.

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

What made Joshua's prayer so effective?

1. It was prayer in the will of God – it was not for selfish reasons
2. It was no doubt a prayer of faith – in God's power (vs. 13)

We should ask in faith – is there anything too hard for God?

Notice in verse 14 that "...the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man:..." and fought for Israel.

3. A willingness to play your part

If you read Joshua's prayer carefully you will notice that he doesn't ask for God to send more stones from heaven. He asked for more time to get the job done.

Lesson: We have a part to play – God's interested in the process that brings victory as much as the victory itself.

R. Kent Hughes – When we face great problems, our prayers should include a willingness to be part of the answer. We must stand ready to wrestle the problem through and grow with the process. Have you been praying that God would deliver you from some difficulty? Or praying for an easy way out? Perhaps you need to change your prayer and say, "God, I will do the job if You want me to. Just give me the courage and the time."

In review we need to 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. believing in the power of God
4. A willingness to do your part.

If you do – see verse 25, *"And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight."*

JOSHUA 14:5-15 - "Caleb: That Magnificent Old Man"

Joshua 14:5-15," *As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land. Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. And the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war."*

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

But how often do you hear about "Caleb?"

That Magnificent Old Man

Why was he so magnificent?

Because at 85, well past 'retirement age', when most people are looking for security and ease Caleb was welcoming new challenges: "... give me this mountain, ... " (vs.12)

Just growing old itself is a challenge.

You know your growing old, when:

- Your dreams are re-runs
- The candles cost more than the cake.
- You sink your teeth into a steak
- You sit in a rocking chair and you can't make it go
- (J. Vernon McGee) You see a pretty girl and you...

Caleb was old, yet his age didn't 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?

Are you embittered over disappointments of the past?

Have disappointments of your past embittered you?

Are you fearful about the mountains or giants in your future?

If so the example of Caleb can be a great help.

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)

Joshua 14:8, "Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God."

2. by Moses in (vs. 9)

Joshua 14:9, "And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God."

3. by Joshua in (vs. 14)

Joshua 14:14, "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel."

What does it mean to follow the Lord wholly?"

I. It's a life full of faith (vs. 5-8)

Joshua 14:5-8, "As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land. Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God."

Caleb's faith had to overcome some great obstacles:

1. He was born a slave in Egypt
2. Some believe he was of mixed parentage, his father being a Kenezite and his mother being from the tribe of Judah – his name means ‘dog’
3. His faith put him in the minority

Notice the story of “Kades-barnea (See Text)

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.

It's all a matter of your perspective.

To the majority – God was not a part of the equation (a grasshopper complex)

Caleb and Joshua were not intimidated by the Anakim because they, by faith, had a divine perspective.

In spite of the obstacles and the multitude, who wanted to stone them, they said, ‘let's go for it!’ – ‘it's a piece of cake.’

Numbers 14:9, "Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not."

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

Joshua 14:9-11, "And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in."

What kept Caleb during the 40 years in the wilderness?

Promises (vs. 9)

1. The promise of the Land of Hebron (vs. 9)

For us it's Heaven (John 14 & Col. 3)

2. The promise of longevity (vs. 10)

God's keeping power – God kept him alive!

Remember that he suffered because of others yet, he didn't grow bitter.

How about You?

3. Those who base their lives upon God's promises and 'follow the Lord fully', will find themselves empowered by God (vs. 11).

R. Kent Hughes, says: "We , too, need to cultivate our faith now if we want the future years to be what they should be. The more one exercises faith, the easier it comes (Conversely), if faith has not been a part of one's life, it comes harder with years. According to the Bible, the greatest years of faith and effectiveness ought to be the later years. We should have greater faith, and thereby greater effectiveness, at twenty than fifteen; and then it should increase in the thirties, the forties, the fifties, and the sixties. We ought to be greater believers at eighty! I personally believe that if my heart grows un faith and dedication, if I become more and more a man of the Word, then my very best work for the Lord may well come when I am eighty – if I live that long."

Examples: Billy Graham, John R. W. Stott...

God kept him alive but he didn't live in the past.

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

Psalms 92:12-14, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;"

Living for self life grows stale!

But serving the Lord brings a renewed spirit and a satisfying life!

If you wholly follow the Lord, life will be full, rich, and rewarding.

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

Joshua 14:12-15, "Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. And the name

of Hebron before was Kirjatharba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war."

Notice verse 12, "...give me this mountain...".

How about you?

Caleb not only had vitality but also had vision. Instead of asking for his slippers, he asked for his sword, instead of a comfortable valley, a mountain!

LESSON:

Age is no barrier to making conquests for the Lord.

Caleb didn't say that the best years were over; he was optimistic and enthusiastic toward life - he looked ahead!

You say, 'but I don't have his health'; true, but you can have his faith, strength, ability and opportunity which God will give you.

"...wholly follow the LORD"

Don't run from the challenges of life, face and embrace them!

We all need a heart like Caleb:

- a heart which wholly followed the Lord
- full of faith
- focused on the eternal reward
- willing to face new challenges

JOSHUA 23 - "How to Stand Fast in the Lord"

INTRODUCTION:

There's something powerful and stirring about the last words of great men.

In American history we think of Washington's farewell to the Continental Army, or of Douglas MacArthur's address to Congress: "An old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty, Good-bye."

We turn to the Bible and see the last verses of Genesis; Joseph is dying and has gathered his brothers about him. He wants to remind them of God's past blessing and of his promised future intervention on their behalf. He says, "*I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.... God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place*" (Genesis 50:24-25).

Again, we think of Moses' farewell, recorded in the last chapters of Deuteronomy. They contain the so-called "Song of Moses" and Moses' final blessing on the tribes.

The New Testament contains Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders at a stopover on his final trip to Jerusalem: and his last word to Timothy in II Timothy 4:1-8, *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

In the twenty-third chapter of Joshua we have the first installment of Joshu'a farewell to the nation of Israel.

Notice the setting in verses 1-2, "*And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age:*"

He speaks first to the leaders

Notice the danger

What was the main concern that Joshua had?

That they would fall away from the Lord!

The same danger exists for us today, whether we be individuals, a church, or a nation.

Joshua's final words are just as relevant today as they were when he spoke them long ago.

They give us three things to remember to help us stand fast and not fall away from the Lord:

I. Remember God's Goodness (vs. 3-5)

Joshua 23:3-5, "And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you. Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you."

Notice that they had seen all that God had done (vs. 3)

1. Brought them out of Egypt
2. The Red Sea
3. The Wilderness
4. Crossing the Jordan
5. The Walls of Jericho
6. The Sun Stood Still
7. Gave them rest

So too for us: recalling what God has done for us has a keeping, and preserving effect.

- God Sent His Son Jesus
- God saved you by His grace
- God sanctifies you through grace
- God sustains you by grace

God's goodness is a fact of history.

It's not feelings, its fact!

Illustrations: When Nathan confronted David (2 Samuel 12:7)

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) – what brought him back?

II. Remember your Obligations (vs. 6-11)

Joshua 23:6-11, "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left; That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither

serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day. For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you. Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God."

Remembering God's goodness and what He has done for us brings us a responsibility or obligation – Notice verse 6, "therefore"

The three specific commands that, if followed, will keep us from falling:

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

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

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. "

- * He was passing on what was true and had worked in his life.
- * It takes courage to obey God's word.
- * It keeps us from Apostasy (vs. 7)

Romans 12:2, "...be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,..."

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."

2. Cling to God (vs. 8)

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

So "cleave" to God and don't be unfaithful!

What happens when we 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)

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

If we love God we'll not do anything inconsistent with that love.

It's the most important thing we can do.

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."

Love thy neighbor as thyself

Remember the church in Ephesus? (Rev. 2)

Have you lost your first love?

Falling away from God happens in steps.

Are you falling away?

III. Remember the Consequences (vs. 12-16)

Joshua 23:12-16, "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

It's time to choose – good or evil things!

If you go back or fall way

- your family life will be affected (vs. 12)
- you become trapped by your old sin again (vs. 13)
- you miss out on God's blessings all the good things (vs. 14-15)
- you end up worshiping other gods and serving them (vs. 16)

It can happen – be careful

Psalms 34:8, "...taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

JOSHUA 24 - "Choose You This Day"

INTRODUCTION:

Joshua 24:14-15, "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

There are many things in life that are not optional – things we have no choice in.

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!

Illustration: to get up in the morning, what to eat, what to wear, who to marry – some important and some not so important.

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 knew that man's sinful heart is prone to wander.
2. He knew he would soon die, and he wanted the next generation to follow and serve the Lord.
3. He wanted them to enjoy their inheritance.

Don't lose what others had fought for!

As great as Joshua's advice at Shiloh was in Chp. 23, he knew that it would only work for those whose hearts were completely committed to God.

His sole purpose in this second sermon preached now at Shechem, was the solidifying of Israel's commitment to courageously serve the Lord.

His words exemplify the process by which we too, as God's people, come to fulfill our commitment to Him.

I. The Preparation for Commitment (vs. 1-13)

Joshua 24:1-13, *“And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea. And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand. And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.”*

Joshua survey's their history and reminds them of all that God has done.

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

God did everything therefore, He is a God worth committing yourself to.

Notice the "I's"

1. I chose you (vs. 1-4) – Abraham's call – our too
 2. I delivered you (vs. 5-7) – Out of Egypt
 3. I guided you (vs. 8-10)
 4. I gave you the land (vs. 11-13) – us too (Eph 1:3-13; 4:1)
- Notice verse 13 – it's all God's work!

Same for us too (Romans 12)

II. The Confrontation for Commitment (vs. 14-18)

Joshua 24:14-18, *“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye*

dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God."

Notice verse 14, "Now therefore..."

- *fear the LORD,*
- *serve him in sincerity and in truth:*
- *put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood,*

With the word "chose" (vs. 15) Joshua urges upon them the necessity of making a choice between the Lord and the popular idols of the Canaanite culture.

God is sovereign yet He gives us free will to chose. We are not robots, we are made in the image of God. We are free moral agents.

Adam was free to choose.

We chose to receive or reject Jesus Christ.

You say I don't want to choose right now.

You say I want to what?

Jesus said, *"He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."* (Luke 11:23)

Your either for Him or against Him – there is no neutrality.

Pilate tried to washed his hands

Matthew 27:24, "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it."

He asked the question, "what will I do with Jesus?"

Matthew 27:22, "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified."

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

Allen Redpath – "We are justified, but not sanctified. We are pardoned, but we have no power. We try but we never triumph."

Why?

We make wrong choices!

- We choose not to read, study, and meditate upon God's Word.
- We choose not to pray
- We choose not to surrender and obey
- We choose not to trust God and live by faith
- We choose not to fellowship with other believers
- We choose how to respond to suffering
- We choose to be Spirit filled or not
- We choose to serve or not to serve the Lord

Notice it's "choose whom" not choose "if"

Don't follow the crowd, follow Jesus!

Illustrations:

- Daniel, a young man
- Moses 40 years old
- Joshua 100 years old

But – so contrast

“As for me” – “we will”

Have you made your choice to serve the Lord?

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

Notice how the people responded (vs. 16-18)

Joshua 24:16-18, “And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God.”

Was their response sincere?

It doesn't seem so.

Why?

III. The Confirmation of the Commitment (vs. 19-28)

Joshua 24:19-28, "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance."

Joshua seemed to detect a note of insincerity or glibness in this predictable and ready response.

It seemed they were taking the whole thing too lightly.

Perhaps they were too self-confident.

It's difficult to wholly follow and serve the Lord.

It's the same for us today.

Joshua's answer: (vs. 19-20)

Joshua 24:19-20, "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good."

The people's answer: (vs. 21)

Joshua 24:21, "And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD."

What to do: (vs. 23-25)

Joshua 24:23-25, "Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem."

1. Put away the strange gods (vs. 23)

Mammon – power, money, material possessions
Baal – intellect, education
Moleck – physical comforts & pleasures, sex, food

What are they for you?

How do you know?

Think about it?

Time, money, wish to please

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.

2. Incline your heart unto the Lord (vs. 23)

Does He have your heart, your devotion?

3. Serve the Lord (vs. 24)

Not self, live by faith

4. Obey the Lord (vs. 24)

The secret of success (remember chapter 1?)

5. Make a Covenant (vs. 25)

Notice Joshua's Courageous Independence:

"But, as for me" – "if none go with me still I will follow".

In the Hebrew: "I have", "I am", "I will".

Joshua dies (vs. 29-31)

Joshua 24:29-31, "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel. And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph. And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim."

1. Death is universal
2. Life is short
3. So teach us to number our days

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