

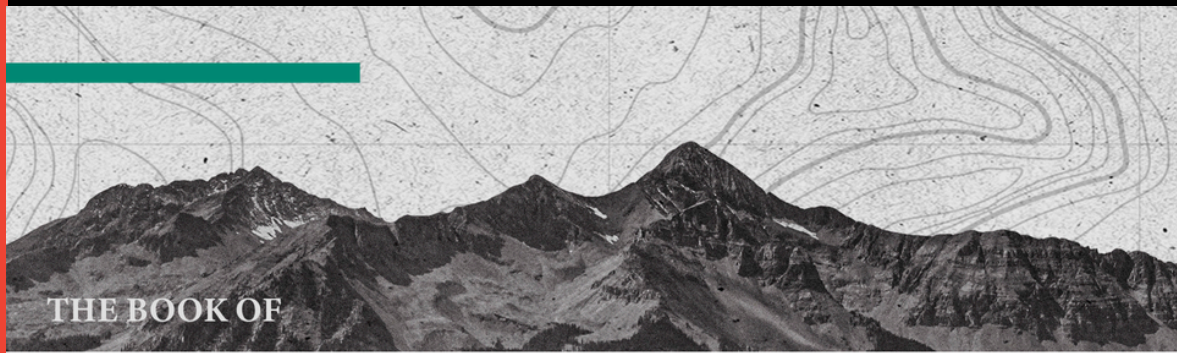


LEADER GUIDE

Sept 14
-
Dec 28



The Life of a Christian



JOSHUA

THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

A STUDY

THROUGH THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

September 14 - December 28

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Written by TJ Johnson

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Sermon Series Overview

This Sunday, we begin a new series in the Book of Joshua. I encourage you to take time to read through this book, as we will be spending the next several months working our way through the text. It will take you around two hours to read the entire book, which covers approximately thirty years of Israel's history.

The book is divided into four main scenes:

1. Crossing into the Land (1:1–5:15)
2. Taking the Land (6:1–12:24)
3. Dividing the Land (13:1–21:45)
4. Serving the Lord in the Land (22:1–24:33)

You will notice that a rather large section is devoted to which tribe settled in which part of the land. While these details may seem superfluous or—dare I say—boring, they serve a purpose. They remind us that God keeps His promises. Some 600 years earlier, God had promised Abraham a people and a land, and that promise finally came to pass.

Of course, the story of the land is about much more than a patch of dirt in the Middle East. It is about God's people in God's place under God's rule. It is a foreshadowing of a coming Kingdom that will endure forever. The people of God were to conquer the land so that they might enter God's rest. Joshua is a reminder that struggle comes before rest, suffering before glory, and war before peace.

It has been said that for every New Testament doctrine there is an Old Testament picture. Therefore, the Book of Joshua should, in some sense, be seen as a blueprint for the Christian life—our journey of sanctification. We must, as Hebrews 4 tells us, strive to enter into Christ's eternal rest. The Christian life is not a playground but a battleground. Until Christ returns or calls us home, may we fight the good fight of faith and be found worthy of our calling.

This Sunday, we will focus on Joshua 1, which functions as an introduction and overview of the entire book.

Striving with you,

Pastor TJ

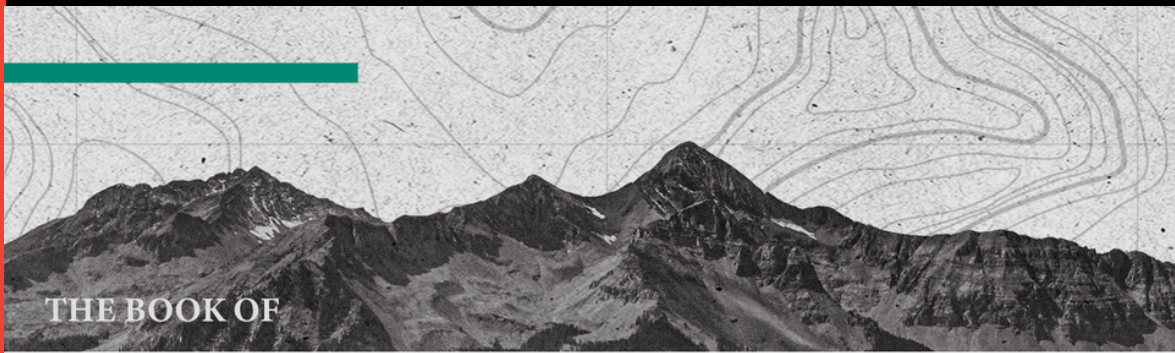


LEADER GUIDE

Sept 14



Courageous Obedience



JOSHUA



Sermon Outline

Title: Courageous Obedience.

Text: Joshua 1

Prop: God has called us to live a life of obedience to Him, living with courageous faith knowing that when this life is done we will rest eternally in His Kingdom.

OUTLINE

1. God Keeps His Promises. Joshua 1:2-3
2. God Sends His Presence. Joshua 1:5-6, 9
3. God Confers His Precepts. Joshua 1:7-8
4. God Charges His People. Joshua 1:12-15
5. God Commissions His Person. Joshua 1:16-18

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. **List** some promises God made and fulfilled in the Bible. Then, discuss: what are some promises God has yet to fulfill, and how can we wait for them with hope?

- **Fulfilled:**

- God's covenant with Abraham: God promised a specific land, numerous descendants, blessings to Abraham and his descendants, and that a blessing would come through him to all nations.
- The end of a global flood: God promised never to destroy the earth again with a flood
- Covenant: The coming of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice brought a new covenant, fulfilling promises for a new way of living.
- Salvation through Jesus: God promised to provide salvation for all who believe His Son.

Yet to Fulfill:

- The coming kingdom: The establishment of God's eternal Kingdom on a new earth, has yet to be fully realized.
- Complete defeat of evil: While the power of evil and death has been broken with Christ, the final eradication of all evil will occur at the end of time.
- Final reunion with God: While believers have fellowship with God now, the promise of complete and uninterrupted intimacy with Him awaits the future.

Waiting in hope

Cultivate an attitude of gratitude for the blessings and provisions God has already given and remind yourself of promises fulfilled knowing God is faithful and will fulfill His promises in His timing. Use the waiting period to serve others and bring glory to God, which will allow us to grow in our faith.



Discussion Questions

2. **How** was God “with” Israel in the book of Joshua? In what ways is He “with” us as believers today?

God's presence was not an abstract concept; firstly, He spoke through the Book of the Law (living and active). There was a personal presence through Joshua's encounter with a mysterious man with a drawn sword who identifies himself as the "commander of the army of the LORD." (Theophany). He acted through His miracles (parting Jordan, walls of Jericho, etc). His glory rested on them through the Ark of the Covenant and tabernacle where the priests would enter to minister before the Lord, etc.

Today, believers receive the Holy Spirit, who guides, comforts, and empowers them (Joh 14:26). God still speaks through the Word of God and acts through His miracles and sovereign ordering of the affairs of the world. He is present through the Lord's Supper and every time the body of Christ gathers together.

3. **What** practical steps do you take to meditate on, speak about, and obey the Bible? Why does God place such a strong emphasis on His Word?

Choose a specific time each day for reading. Focus on a few verses that reveal something about God, self, or humanity. Write down thoughts, insights, and prayers related to passages to deepen understanding.

God's Word, being without error, serves as the primary means of revealing His nature, will, and purpose for humanity. It provides insight into His character and the relationship He desires with His people. Without it we are merely guessing at who He is and what He demands from the world. Without it we make God into our own image rather than being conformed into His image.



Discussion Questions

4. How can we, like the Transjordan tribes (Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh), help our brothers and sisters in Christ find spiritual rest? Alternatively, share a time when someone helped you in your sanctification.

Offer emotional and spiritual support through prayer and fellowship. Share uplifting scriptures and personal testimonies of faith. Engage in acts of service. Create a loving community where individuals can confess sin and struggles. Provide opportunities for growing in our knowledge and love of God.

5. In what ways does Joshua foreshadow Jesus (particularly in Joshua's role to lead Israel into the land)?

Jesus is the true and better Joshua. They share the same name, meaning "Yahweh saves." Joshua saves the people from Canaanite enemies; Jesus saves His people from a spiritual enemy, sin and Satan (Colossians 2:15). Joshua gave Israel a temporary land, Jesus gives us an eternal Kingdom. Joshua brought temporary rest (peace), Jesus bring eternal rest (see Heb. 4:9). Joshua intercedes for Israel on behalf of their sin (Joshua 7:6-9), Jesus intercedes for us on behalf of our sin (Romans 8:34). Joshua secures a physical inheritance, Jesus secures a spiritual inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-4).

SUMMARY:

Israel needed a person to lead them into the land and God gave them Joshua. We need a person to lead us into eternity and God has given us the greater Joshua, Jesus!

As the people were to do all that Joshua commanded, we are to do all that Jesus commands. As the people were to go wherever Joshua sent them, we are to go wherever Jesus sends. Whoever rebelled against Joshua faced death. Whoever rebels against Jesus faces eternal death.



Prayer & Praise

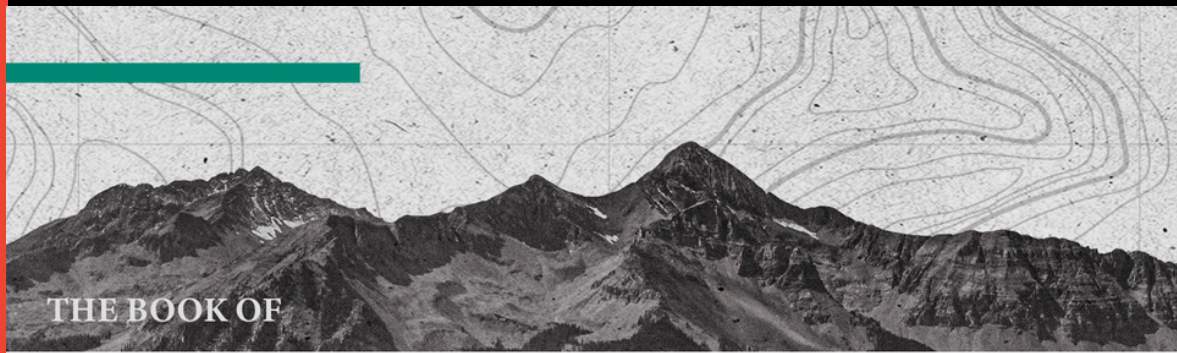
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Remember His Deeds



LEADER GUIDE

Sept 21

JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

In preparation for Sunday take some time to read Joshua 3-4. As you do, you will notice that chapter three focuses on God's miracle of parting the Jordan River. While reading this chapter, ask yourself why God performed this miracle, what it teaches us about miracles as a whole, and most importantly, how it connects to the bigger storyline of Scripture.

When you move to chapter four, while it might seem like a superfluous rereading of the story, note how the miracle is meant to be memorialized. Israel is to take twelve stones from the river and place them at Gilgal as a way for future generations to remember that God has acted on behalf of His people.

Just as Israel was called to remember God's mighty acts, we too must be intentional about remembering how God has worked in our lives of His people. Just as future generations were to trust reliable testimony rather than experience their own personal miracle, so too we are to trust the reliable testimony of faithful witnesses to God's greatest miracle (that of the Resurrection).

Joshua is a reminder that sometimes our faith moves forward by looking backwards. Future sanctification is enacted by remembering a former event (Christ has risen). In our darkest times, in the seemingly silence of God, when it feels as if God is not present or God does not care, faith is sustained through the act of remembering.

Remembering with You,

Pastor TJ

Note: Don't worry, we will come back to chapter 2 in a few weeks.



Sermon Outline

Title: Christianity is a Lifetime of Remembering

Text: Joshua 3-4

Prop: God, through Jesus Christ, has worked powerfully in our lives, therefore we must be sure to regularly remember His mighty acts, lest we forget and our faith falter.

OUTLINE

1. The Miracle

- A. It's Nature
- B. It's Purpose

2. The Memorial

- A. Public
- B. Private

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. **Give** a biblical definition of the word miracle, and provide examples of what is and is not considered a miracle.

Be sure that your definition includes what constitutes a miracle (deviation of natural law) and the purpose of miracles (display God's power and love, to authenticate God's messengers like prophets, apostles, or Jesus).

Far too often we misuse the word miracle, this only lessens the acts of true miracles. For example, to recover from cancer by taking chemotherapy, while being a gracious act of God, is technically not a miracle since this is not a deviation of natural law.

2. **What** are some of the most meaningful miracles in the Bible to you, and why?

Various answers, depending mostly upon felt needs. For example, if a couple is struggling to conceive, they will likely resonate with God opening the womb of Hannah. A person who feels unloved might resonate with Jesus' healing of the man with leprosy because of the personal nature of the miracle...Jesus touching the man, showing compassion, etc. Another way of answering this question is to focus on miracles that get retold in the Bible. The parting of the Red Sea is retold dozens of times, by prophets, psalmists, and NT writers. It's a meaning miracle because it is a foreshadowing of the salvific work of Jesus.

3. **What** were God's purposes in dividing the Jordan River, and what are the New Testament truths this Old Testament story illustrates?

The text lists three specific reasons for God performing this miracle: To identify Joshua as God's servant (3:7), to strengthen Israel's faith in God and His promises (3:10, 4:6), to reveal God's power and glory to the nations (4:24).

14



Discussion Questions

3. **What** were God's purposes in dividing the Jordan River, and what are the New Testament truths this Old Testament story illustrates?

Jesus' miracles, like this one, are signs identifying Jesus as God's servant Messiah (See John 1-2).

4. **Have** you ever witnessed a modern-day miracle, if so share with the group?

The point of this question is to facilitate discussion on the acts of God today. Does God still perform miracles, if so why and how? Does the miracle mentioned pass the Biblical test for a miracle or should it be considered something else?

5. **While** technically not a miracle, share a sacred experience you've had with God and explain why it was meaningful to you.

Various. While not everyone will have seen a miracle, hopefully all those who have repented and believed in Christ do have stories to tell of how God revealed Himself in a special way.

6. **What** are some modern "memorials" you have built that help you remember and share God's faithfulness with friends, family, or children?

Various: Decor like Bible verses or a mezuzah; jewelry like a cross or ichthus; Objects like an "Ebenezer stone;" journal entries, prayer books, special events like Passover or Christmas, etc.



Discussion Questions

Going deeper:

7. **How** does one discern true miracles from false miracles (aka Moses vs Egyptians magicians)?

It's important to note that while miracles are meant to identify God's prophets and apostles, it's possible that false prophets and false apostles perform false miracles. Pharaoh's magicians were able to perform some of the same miracles Moses performed.

Miracles from God seek to glorify God, affirm His message, and promote Biblical truth. Satanic miracles glorify human (or demonic) power, oppose God's will, deceive people, and lead people away from Biblical truth. Jesus gave a universal principle for discernment: "By their fruit you will recognize them" (Matthew 7:16).

8. **What** are some dangers to avoid concerning miracles?

There are certainly two extremes when it comes to miracles. The first extreme is rationalistic skepticism, denying the possibility or continuation of miracles. This response says that the miracles of the Bible or today can be explained away through science, human interaction or circumstance. The other extreme is credulous super-naturalism, an uncritical acceptance of all claims. This response is so obsessed over miracles that they make the pursuit of signs and wonders the center of Christian spirituality. God can perform miracles, God does perform miracles, but God has not promised that He will perform one for you. Our faith is not based on miracles today, but on the most important miracle in History, the resurrection which is confirmed to us through the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself warns us against seeking after additional signs other than what has already been given.



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

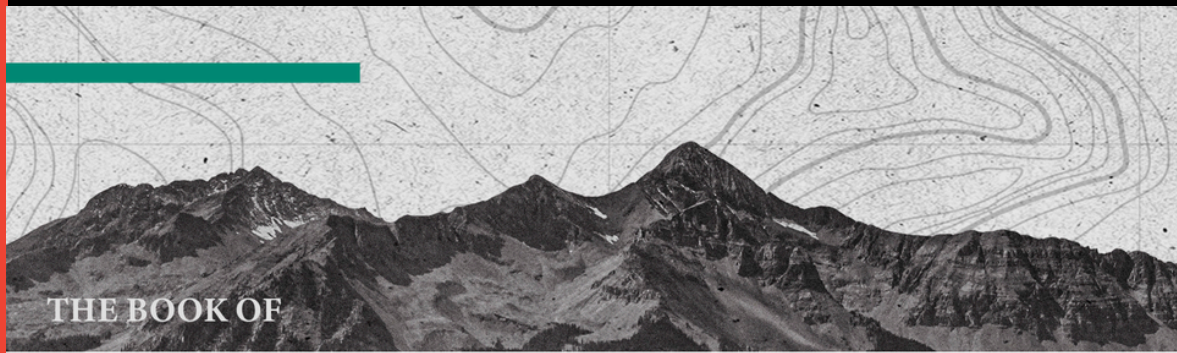


LEADER GUIDE

Sept 28



Confession Through Sacrament



JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

Before their first battle in the Promised Land, God commanded Israel to perform two surprising rites: circumcision and Passover. It was a reminder that the taking and keeping of the Land was not through human effort, but total dependance upon the Lord. In the same way, God has given His church two ordinances—baptism and the Lord's Supper. This Sunday, we'll discover how these gifts powerfully remind us that our victory over sin is found not in our own strength, but through faith in Christ's finished work.

In Him,

Pastor TJ



Sermon Outline

Title: Confession Through Sacrament

Text: Joshua 5

Prop: Through the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, God graciously provides the means for our sanctification, reminding us that victory in the Christian life comes not by our own strength but through faith in the finished work of Christ.

OUTLINE

1. In Circumcision something is removed.

Circumcision points to Baptism

2. In Passover something is received.

Passover points to The Lord's Supper

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. **What** was the Abrahamic covenant and how was it fulfilled through Jesus Christ?

The Abrahamic covenant is God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17 where God promises Abraham a People (father of many nations), a Place (promise land), and Purpose (blessed to bring blessing to all nations).

Jesus is the ultimate descendant (seed) of Abraham (Galatians 3:16) through whom the entire world is blessed and saved. It is through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus that a People for God from every nation is adopted into God's family and given an eternal Place in God's Kingdom (New Heaven and Earth).

2. **What** was the purpose of circumcision and in what ways does that relate to baptism today?

Circumcision was the external sign of being part of God's covenant people (Genesis 17:9-14). It marked a separation for God and reminded them of God's covenant promise and their covenant obligation. Baptism is the New Covenant sign of belonging to God's people. It's about an internal, spiritual reality (Colossians 2:11-12)—a "circumcision of the heart," foretold in Deuteronomy 10:16, Jeremiah 4:4, and Ezekiel 36:26-27.

While there are parallels between circumcision and baptism, there is disagreement among Christians as to how extensive these parallels are. Those who find a very strong connection see justification for pedobaptism.



Discussion Questions

3. **What** role does baptism play in the life of a believer today?

Baptism is an outward declaration (to self, God, and the world) of an inward faith. It signifies union with Christ in his death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). It visibly illustrates that you have died to sin and have been cleansed by the work of Jesus. It's a public entry into the family of the church. It serves as a reminder that we are not our own, but have pledged our allegiance to Christ alone.

4. **How** did the Passover festival point to Jesus Christ, and what connections can we draw between the Passover and the Lord's Supper?

The Passover festival was a reminder that God withheld His righteous wrath against the sins of Israel because He accepted, as substitute, the death of a male lamb, one year old, without spot or blemish. In John 1:29, John the Baptist calls Jesus the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus is the true substitute for sin. He lived a life without sin and then died a death in which our sins were placed upon Him, thereby taking on Himself God's righteous judgment against sin. Like the Passover meal remembered deliverance, the Lord's Supper remembers our deliverance through Christ (1 Corinthians 5:7). It was at the Passover meal that Jesus instituted The Lord's Supper as an ordinance for the church.

5. **What** is the significance and purpose of participating in the Lord's Supper for a Christian today?

The Lord's Supper is a powerful tool God has given a Christian to fight sin and grow in their sanctification. It is a time to remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), fellowship with Christ and with other believers, and remind ourselves of His second coming.



Discussion Questions

6. **What** personal practices or reflections can help us prepare for the Lord's Supper?

A powerful way to prepare is to slowly and intentionally read one of the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion (Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, or John 19). As you reflect on Christ's sacrifice, move beyond vague feelings and engage in specific confession. Ask yourself: "What have I done this week that dishonored Christ?"—such as harsh words, dishonest actions, or indulging anger. Also consider, "Where have I failed to do the good I knew I should?"—like neglecting prayer, withholding forgiveness, or failing to show kindness. To further focus your heart, listen to or sing a hymn about the cross, such as "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" or "In Christ Alone." Finally, actively remind yourself that your standing before God is secured solely by Christ's life, death, and resurrection, not by your own efforts to be holy. This prepares you to receive the elements as a gift of grace.



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

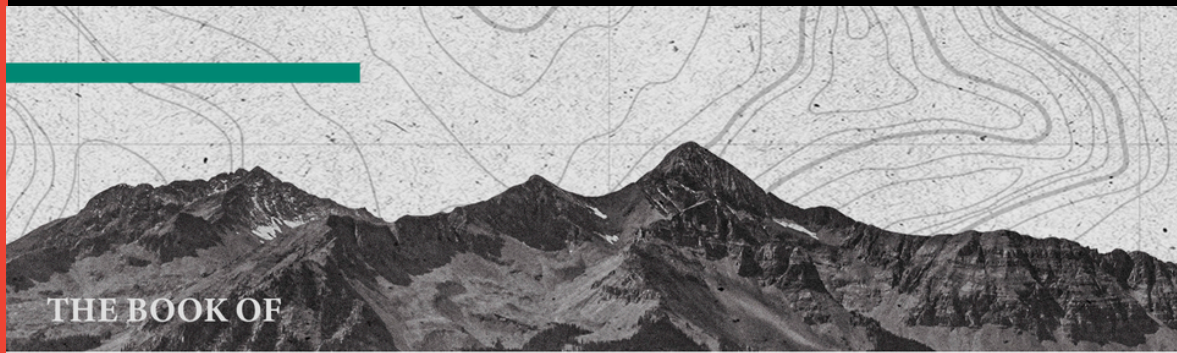
Praise Reports



LEADER GUIDE

Oct 5

Walk By Faith



THE BOOK OF

JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

The Christian life begins by faith, and it must continue the very same way. The stories of Rahab and the fall of Jericho show us that faith often looks foolish by human logic, trusting God's promise over our own strategy. This Sunday we will look at what it means to daily walk by faith and not by sight in every area of life.

In Him,

Pastor TJ



Sermon Outline

Title: Walk By Faith

Text: Joshua 2, 6

Prop: As the Christian has begun their life in Christ by grace through faith, we are to continue to walk by faith and not by sight.

OUTLINE

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. **Rahab** acted on her faith by hiding the spies, a risky decision. What is one practical, "risky" step of obedience God might be calling you to take in your family or workplace this week?

Faith often requires action that involves personal risk or cost. This could be initiating a difficult conversation to pursue reconciliation, taking a stand for biblical ethics when it might be unpopular, generously giving when finances feel tight, or sharing the gospel with a colleague. The "risk" is the potential for discomfort, rejection, or loss, but the call is to obey, trusting that God is sovereign over the outcome.

2. **What** does the story of Rahab (consider her profession and ethnicity) teach us about God's power to save sinners? How does her story encourage you?

Rahab's story demonstrates that no one is beyond the reach of God's saving grace. Her profession (a prostitute) and ethnicity (a Canaanite under judgment) highlight that salvation is not earned by our pedigree, morality, or status. It is received by faith alone. This is profoundly encouraging because it means our past sins, present failures, or social standing do not limit the power of the gospel to fully forgive and redeem us for God's purposes. This is especially encouraging when one considers that the Messiah will come from Rahab.

3. **The** Israelite army marched and shouted, acting in faith that God would deliver the victory. What is a situation in your life where you need to stop relying on your own "strategy" and simply obey what God has already said?

*This often applies to situations where we are tempted to rely on human wisdom or control. Examples include trying to solve a child's rebellion through sheer force of rules instead of prayer and gospel patience, manipulating circumstances at work to secure a promotion rather than working with integrity and trusting God with the results, or worrying incessantly about a problem instead of proactively praying and casting our anxieties on Christ. Obedience in these cases means doing what God has commanded (praying, serving, trusting) while relinquishing control of the outcome to Him. Try to get people in your group to give specific examples from their own life.*²⁸



Discussion Questions

4. Faith is not passive. Israel still had to march and shout. In sanctification, what is the difference between passive waiting and active striving in faith?

Passive waiting is a form of spiritual inactivity that expects God to change us without our engagement. Active striving in faith means obeying the clear commands of Scripture—"put to death" sinful deeds (Colossians 3:5), "pursue" righteousness (1 Timothy 6:11), "work out your own salvation" (Philippians 2:12)—all while relying completely on God's power that works within us (Philippians 2:13). It is our diligent effort empowered by God's Spirit, not a substitute for it. Practically this means we read our Bible, come to church, pray regularly, confess sin, attend small group, etc.

5. Read Hebrews 11:30-31. Rahab's faith saved her entire household. Who in your circle of influence needs to see the hope of the gospel through your faithful actions and words?

Our faithful obedience has a ripple effect on those closest to us. This question invites personal reflection on specific relationships—such as an unbelieving spouse, children who need to see authentic faith, extended family, neighbors, or friends. The call is to consider how our courageous trust in God's promises and our Christ-like actions can serve as a powerful testimony to the hope we have in Jesus.



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

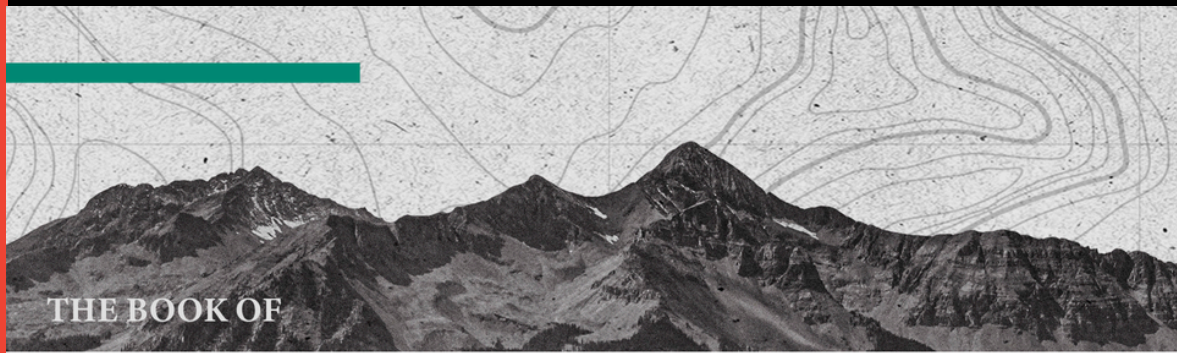
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LEADER GUIDE

Oct 12

Fight Sin



THE BOOK OF

JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

The story of Achan's sin in Joshua 7 is a powerful warning: sin is a serious rebellion that affects not only us but everyone around us. This Sunday, we will be reminded that the journey of sanctification is a lifetime of fighting sin together as a church, removing it from our midst. But we will also see how this story points to our ultimate hope—the forgiveness and victory found only in Jesus Christ.

Fighting with you,

TJ



Sermon Outline

Title: Christianity is a lifetime of fighting sin

Text: Joshua 6:18-8:29

Prop: As Christians, we must take seriously the call to remove sin from among our midst, be it public or private, individual or corporate.

OUTLINE

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

Read Joshua 7-8, summarize the main idea of the text, and share a few key truths from the sermon.

1. **As** a group, create a Biblical definition of sin.

Sin is as any thought, word, or deed that goes against God's commands and moral law (which is a revelation of His character). It is a wrong act done or a right act left undone. It is not loving God with our whole heart and not loving our neighbor as ourselves.

2. **Joshua 7:1-5.** What effect did Achan's sin have on Israel and why (Notice God's language of Israel and not just Achan)? In what ways do we see the "sin of one" affecting the "whole body" today?

Achan's sin caused Israel to suffer military defeat at Ai because God's covenant anger burned against the entire nation. God's language implicates all of Israel, teaching that the disobedience of one member breaks faith and defiles the whole covenant community, compromising its holiness and God's divine presence among the community. This is an important truth to consider in the church today. The church must take sin seriously (see Acts 5:1-11, Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:13).

Practical examples of sins impact can be seen in a drunk driver (individual sin) hitting another car and killing all passengers. A father's decision to divorce his wife (individual sin) causing emotional harm to the children. A CEO's decision to commit fraud can lead to the company's collapse, causing thousands of employees to lose their jobs. no sin is truly isolated; its consequences inevitably ripple out to impact the wider community.



Discussion Questions

3. **Joshua 7:6-15.** What is both right and wrong about Joshua's response to the defeat at Ai and his prayer to God? What can we learn about how we should and should not respond to tragedy today?

In tragedy Joshua turned to God immediately rather than rally his troops or devise a new strategy. He and the elders sought out the Lord. He humbled himself before God (tore his clothes and fell face down). He was most concerned for God's honor, not Israel's situation (Joshua 7:9). However, Joshua's prayer includes that surprising accusation that God brought them across the Jordan only to be killed by the Amorites (Joshua 7:7). In tragedy he was willing to settle for less than God had for Israel (Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan).

When tragedy happens in our own lives, we too, like Joshua, should go to God and not to despair or devise our own solutions. Tragedy can be an opportunity for deep introspection. We should humble ourselves before God, admitting our frailties and mistakes. We must be careful not to make assumptions as to why this tragedy happened. Perhaps God will give us an answer, perhaps not. Perhaps it was due to our sin, perhaps not. Our primary concern should be how a tragedy affects God's honor in the world. If there was sin, we repent. If there was doubt, we have faith. If, like Job, tragedy is a mystery, then we trust God and mourn in community to a God who has told us to cast our cares on Him.

4. **Joshua 7:16-21.** What was the progression (pattern) of Achan's sin, do you see this pattern in other places in scripture or your own life? How can we go about breaking this pattern? What are the Biblical steps one should take when they sin?

SEE NEXT PAGE

35



Discussion Questions

4. Joshua 7:16-21.

The progression of Achan's sin is: seeing, coveting, taking, and hiding. This sin pattern is seen in Eve's sin in Eden, David's sin with Bathsheba, etc. See James 1:14-15 and 1 John 2:16

To break this pattern, we must flee temptation and take sinful thoughts captive. Replace: Sin is often replaced not by will power alone, but by cultivating a greater and more satisfying relationship with God. Renounce: Confess and renounce the false promises that sin offers. Achan believed the plunder would bring him gain, but it brought him and his family to ruin. Relationship: Secrecy allows sin to fester and grow. Confessing sin -both before God and in community-is vital for healing. Biblical steps for when we sin include: immediate confession to God (1 John 1:9), repentance (turning away from the sin), and where necessary, making restitution to those we have wronged.

5. Joshua 7:22-26 What does the severe outcome for Achan and his family teach us about God's perspective on sin? In what ways might we think of sin too lightly today?

If one was to rank the severity of Achan's sin, it probably wouldn't be seen as severe. He took something that was just going to be destroyed anyway. What's the big deal? But God's punishment highlights the absolute holiness of God, which cannot tolerate sin. All sin, even small sins, are infinitely offendable against a holy God and therefore deserves infinite punishment. While we might think of the punishment as severe, it is a light punishment compared to eternal death.

It might be helpful to lead your group into a discussion on "acceptable sins" today. While we are quick to denounce and fight against certain sins (murder, adultery, incest, rape), are we just as diligent to fight sins like gossip, anger,³⁶ lust, etc.



Discussion Questions

6. **In** what ways does this passage prepare us for and teach us about Jesus?

This passage prepares us for Jesus by revealing humanity's fundamental problem: we are all, like Achan, covenant-breakers whose sin incurs a death penalty. It teaches us our need for a substitute who can bear that penalty for us. In contrast to Achan who died for his own sin, Jesus, the true Israelite, died for the sins of his people. He absorbed God's wrath against sin, not to contaminate the camp, but to purify it, taking the curse of the law upon Himself so that we could receive God's blessing. In many ways this passage is a reminder of Adam's federal headship (Genesis 1-3) whose one sin brought consequences for all humanity, which prepares us for Jesus' ultimate federal headship (Romans 5:12-19), whose righteous act brought consequences for all of God's elect.



Prayer & Praise

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Prayer Requests

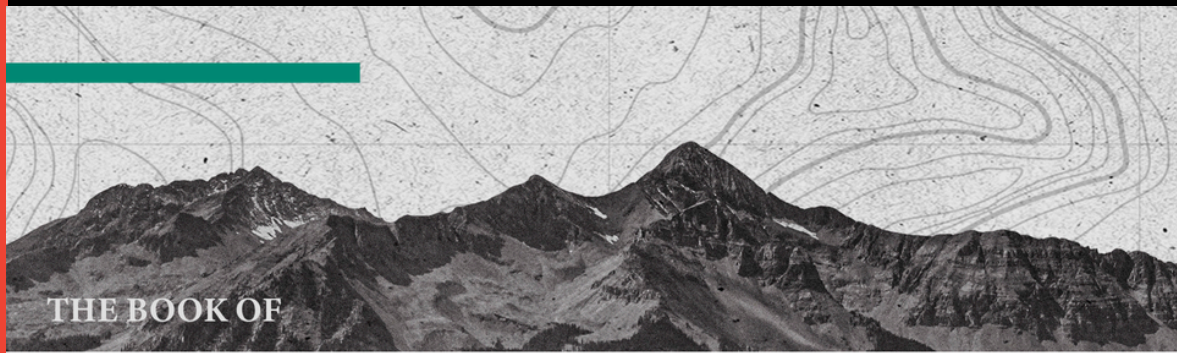
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LEADER GUIDE

Oct 26

The Assembly



JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

Church Family,

Many of us have likely heard that Christians can and should consider themselves sons and daughters of God who have been adopted through Christ. I couldn't agree more, but have you ever considered yourself a Son or Daughter of Abraham? As a kid in a rural Mississippi church community, it was fairly common to be taught a kid's church song called "Father Abraham". I will not list the lyrics here, but they can be searched online. As an adult, I've not really sung that song much; however, I have come to a better understanding of how modern day Christians have a strong connection to the saints of the Old Testament and in particular to a claim of being a Son or Daughter of Abraham.

I encourage you to read Galatians 3:5-14 and the fuller context of that chapter and at least ponder how the faith of a modern day Christian connects to the faith the believers in the Old Testament had in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I promise I'm not setting you up for a trick question! The answer is we serve the same God and are called to have the same faith in Jesus.

Yes....we are still in the Joshua sermon series and this week's sermon will focus on the text of Joshua 8:30-35. I hope you can begin to ask how your faith and our weekly gathering is related to the Assembly we read about at the end of Joshua 8, which involves a ceremony marking the fulfillment of God's promised land to Father Abraham.

We are called this Lord's Day to hear from God's Word together. I hope you will join.

Sincerely,
Elder Grant Jones



Sermon Outline

Title: The Assembly

Text: Joshua 8:30-35

OUTLINE

1. Verses 30 - 32: The Centrality of the Altar.
2. Verses 33 - 34: The Centrality of the Word.
3. Verse 35: Surrounded by the Assembly.

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. Read v. 30 - 35: Consider some examples such as Galatians 3:5-14 & John 5:46. Have you ever considered your faith as one connected to the same beliefs and teachings of Old Testament figures such as Abraham and Moses? What implications does this have for understanding who is truly Israel (Romans 9:6) and the value of the Old Testament for New Testament era believers?

Christianity affirms a deep connection to the faith of old Testament figures like Abraham and Moses, seeing it as part of single, continuous story of God's redemptive plan. According to Christian theology, believers are in Christ are connected to Old Testament figures through a shared reliance on faith and God's promises, not adherence to the Mosaic Law.

John 5:4-6: In this verse, Jesus confronts the religious leaders who revered Moses but rejected Jesus. Jesus states, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me." This establishes a direct link between Moses' writings and Jesus, indicating that the Old Testament itself points forward to Jesus. Jesus confirms that true adherence to the teachings of Moses would have led them to recognize him as the Messiah, showing a fundamental unity in divine revelation.

Children of promise: Romans 9 clarifies that being a child of Abraham is not a matter of flesh but of promise, illustrated by God choosing Isaac over Esau. The children of promise, both Jewish and Gentile are counted as offspring through faith in Christ, creating an anti-typical Israel that transcends ethnic boundaries.



Discussion Questions

2. Read v. 30 - 31: Israel and their leaders organized and carried out the events of this ceremony in accordance with God's commandment to Moses in Deuteronomy 27. In other words, the ceremony at the end of Joshua 8 was not the result of a man-made ceremony that was thought to be a good idea after a great victory, but rather this was a ceremony carried out in accordance with God's instructions. Do you think this has any bearing on how we ought to approach the Lord for the weekly assembly of public worship in modern times (the regulative principle)?

Joshua's actions in Joshua 8:30-31 have a significant bearing on the regulative principle of worship. This event demonstrates that worship must be done to God's explicit commands, not human commands, not human invention, establishing a precedent that modern worship should follow the instructions in Scripture rather than adding elements deemed desirable.

The ceremony at Mount Ebal was not a spontaneous human idea to celebrate victory. It was a direct and deliberate fulfillment of God's instruction to Moses in Deuteronomy 27. This is the core of the regulative principle: God dictates the terms of worship, and any additions are considered man-made and potentially illegitimate.

The passage highlights that both what is offered (burnt offerings and fellowship offerings) and how it is offered are divinely regulated. The regulative principle applies the same logic to modern worship, requiring that the elements of service, like singing, prayer, and preaching, be based on biblical principles.

By emphasizing to a specific, pr-ordained command, the passage underscores a worship model centered on God's will, not on human capacity or cultural appropriateness. This stands in contrast to worship shaped by what is perceived as pleasing or relevant to people today, a tendency the regulative principle seeks to guard against.



Discussion Questions

3. Read v.32 - 34: Consider reading the curses that were read in this ceremony from Deuteronomy 27:14-26. How could God's people rightly say "Amen" even to the curses? Saying "Amen" to curses seems a bit counter-cultural in our modern times, right? Can this show us anything about our understanding of God's holiness? Have you become less comfortable with the curses our Lord proclaims over unrighteousness? If so, why? From a worldly perspective it seems easier to only say "Amen" to the blessings. What is the benefit of remembering the curses our Lord proclaims?

In Joshua 8 the Israelites were able to say amen to the curses from Deuteronomy 27 because they were affirming God's righteousness, holiness and just character, not agreeing with evil. Their assent signified a binding commitment to the covenant, acknowledging that disobedience would justly incur a curse, even among themselves.

The benefit of remembering the curses of unrighteousness is that it highlights the consequences of sin, motivates a desire for faithfulness, and provides a more complete understanding of God's character as both just and merciful. This theological understanding helps believer see the blessings as a gift made possible by God's love and justice, rather than as an entitlement.

Additionally, the curses serve as a powerful reminder that everyone is subject to the consequences of their actions. This can prompt a deeper, more urgent self-examination and greater appreciation for the forgiveness offered through faith.



Discussion Questions

4. Read v. 35: Maybe you have heard there is no “I” in Team. Regardless, let’s play on that thinking and be reminded that there is no “I in Assembly! Why do you (or also why should you) attend public worship? Is it merely a convenience for our conscience, a checklist, a WeChat moment, a break from a hard work week, a social time with friends? Gathering each week is not chiefly about you. It’s about being obedient to the Lord and being with the gathered Assembly. Notice who is assembled in Joshua 8:35 and consider: When preparing and arriving to public worship do you ever just focus on yourself and how you can be benefited? When you consider missing public worship on any given Lord’s Day, do you ever consider how this could impact others? Do you see any danger’s in a me-centered mindset for the weekly assembly of believers?

A me centered mindset in worship runs counter to biblical teachings and can harm both the individual and the church body. The purpose of gathering is not just to receive a personal blessing but to collectively worship God and minister to others.

The author of Hebrews calls believers “to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together”(Hebrews 10-24-25). When someone voluntarily misses a gathering, they fail to provide and receive this mutual encouragement, which is a key part of loving other believers.

Corporate worship is a time to minister to others, not just to be ministered to. An absent member cannot encourage a struggling peer, welcome a visitor, or support the pastor with their presence.

The body of Christ works together to build itself up in love (Ephesians 4:11-16). When believers withdraw from this community life, the entire body is weakened. Every Christian has a God given gift to use for the edification of the church, and when they are absent, the church is denied that gift.



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

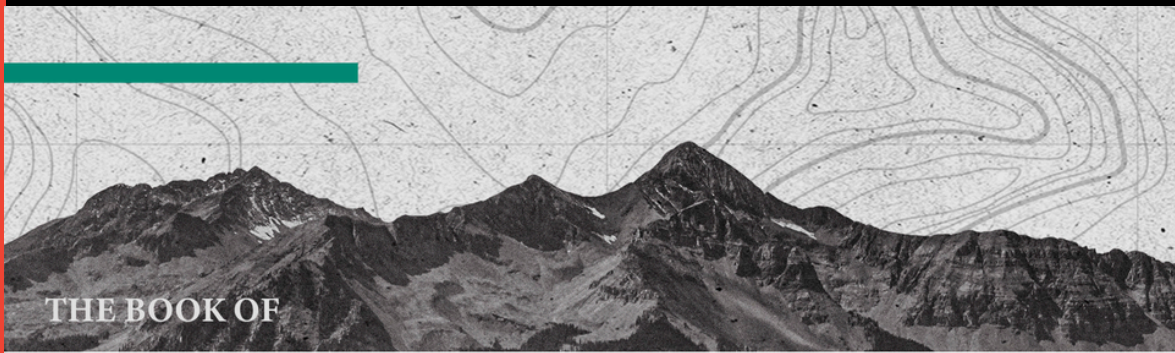


LEADER GUIDE

Nov 2



Keep your word



THE BOOK OF

JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

Have you ever made a decision that looked right in the moment but later realized you hadn't stopped to consult God first? In Joshua 9 and 10, we find Israel deceived by the Gibeonites, an encounter that reminds us how vital it is to seek God's wisdom before acting. Yet, even in the aftermath of their mistake, Joshua's faithfulness to keep his word became a living testimony of God's own covenant-keeping nature.

This Sunday, we will unpack what happens when discernment gives way to assumption and how God still turns our missteps into moments of mercy and mission. Come ready for a word that will challenge our decision-making process, deepen our integrity, and draw us closer to the heart of a promise-keeping God.

Elder Raphael Moffett



Sermon Outline

Title: Christianity is a lifetime of integrity - keeping our word.

Text: Joshua 9:1 - 10:15

Prop: The Christian is called to be people who keep their word even when it is difficult.

OUTLINE

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

Since this is a rather complicated narrative, taking time to individually walk through the COMA method before the small group will help you understand the text well and be ready to make proper application during the Small Group meeting.

C — Context

1. What has just happened in Israel's story prior to chapter 9, and how does that shape the events that follow?
2. How does this story connect to God's command about the nations in the land (Deut. 7:1–6; Num. 27:21)?
3. How is God's mission to bless the nations (Gen. 12:1–3) and the theme of covenant visible in this passage?
4. How does the Gibeonite covenant continue to shape Israel's history in later Scriptures (see Joshua 21:17, 25; 1 Chronicles 9:2; 2 Chronicles 1:3–6; Ezra 2:43–58; Nehemiah 7:46–56; and 2 Samuel 21:1–9), and what does this teach us about the long-term impact of promises made — even those made unwisely?

O — Observation

1. Who are the main characters, and what motivates each group (Israelites, Gibeonites, kings of the land)?
2. Identify verbs that show the Israelites' process (or lack thereof) in discerning God's will — what did they *not* do in v. 14?
3. What repeated ideas or phrases point to the narrator's perspective on the events?

M — Meaning

1. What does this passage reveal about God's expectations for His people in decision making and leadership?
2. Why does God insist Israel keep their oath, even though the covenant was made through deception?
3. How does this episode show both the seriousness of sin and the surprising grace of God?



Discussion Questions

A— Application (*To be discussed during Small Group*)

1. What principles guide you when deciding whether you should or should not make a commitment? What key verses help shape those principles?

Here are a few guiding questions I ask before making a promise:

- *Does keeping this promise require me to break God's commands?*
- *Is this promise coming from love for God and neighbor or my own pride or self-service?*
- *Is this promise outside of my control to keep? (I often differentiate between **Reasonable promises** (I'll meet you next week for counseling) vs. **Unreasonable promises** (I promise nothing bad will happen to you). With reasonable promises, I often clarify, "Lord willing".*
- *Is this promise, as far as I can discern, honoring and pleasing to God? (While it may not break a specific command, does it align with God's character and the way in which He relates to His sons and daughters)*

See Psalm 15:1–4; Ecclesiastes 5:4–6; Matt. 5:37; James 4:13–15, 5:12.

2. What principles help you discern whether a person or a report is trustworthy? Share some everyday examples where you've needed to use these principles of discernment.

Here are some guiding questions I ask when evaluating trustworthiness:

- *Are they known for Biblical character and integrity?*
- *Have they shown consistency over time? I want to see repeated patterns of integrity.*
- *Does what they are saying seem strange? Goes against the character of the person they are talking about, feels sensational, dramatic, or exaggerated, lacks clarity or detail, is second-hand information, benefits the one sharing the information, etc.*
- *Is the information confirmed by reliable witnesses? (Deut. 19:15).*



Discussion Questions

Examples: evaluating workplace gossip, news stories, online/social media chatter, Christian testimony (not all testimonies are reliable), friend advice, etc. This seems to be an increasingly important skill to develop as AI advances.

See Proverbs 14:15; 1 Thess. 5:21; Ephesians 4:14–15.

3. Share a time when it was difficult for you to keep a promise. What made it difficult and how did staying true (or failing to stay true) shape your character and relationships?

Various. Remind the group that faithful obedience is often costly, but God uses those moments to grow us in Christlike integrity.

4. Where might God be calling you to live with greater integrity — especially in commitments you have already made?

Examples might include: marriage vows, church membership, parenting, financial stewardship, work responsibilities, and serving others in the church. When good intentions become neglected over time, God invites confession, renewed obedience, and reliance on His strength.

See Ecclesiastes 5:4–6; Luke 16:10; Philippians 1:6.

5. Share a time when you made a poor decision that God ultimately used for good. What did you learn about His grace and sovereignty through that experience?

Various. If members are struggling to come up with examples remind them that a poor decision might include: a sinful decision (marrying a non-Christian), an unwise decision (marrying in college without a job or long-term plan), a rash decision (committing to marriage after a week of dating), or a pressured decision (choosing a spouse you don't really like but you know your parents will approve of).



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

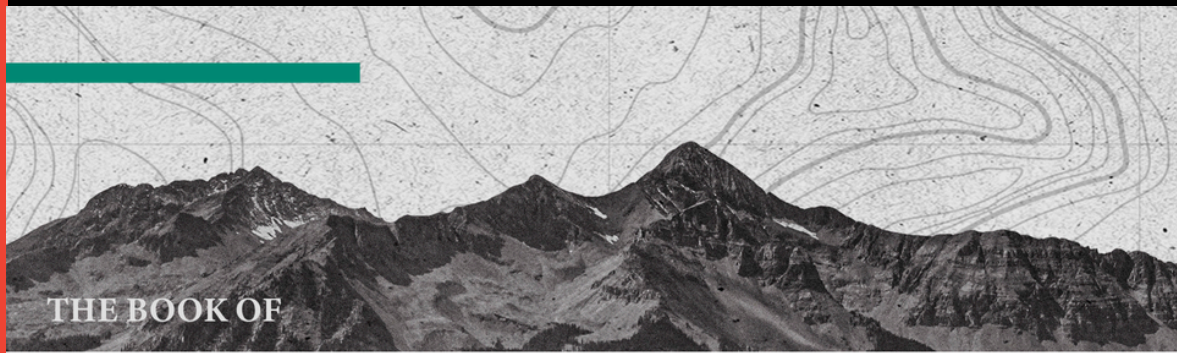
Praise Reports



Life is War

LEADER GUIDE

Nov 9



THE BOOK OF

JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

John Owen once wrote, “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” That is exactly what Joshua 10–12 reminds us — the Christian life is a real fight. If we do not destroy sin in the land, it will eventually destroy us. This Sunday, we will consider both the intensity of our struggle against sin and the endurance needed to keep going. Take time this week to read our Scripture text and come ready to both be challenged to fight sin and encouraged to trust the God who has fought (and defeated) sin through Jesus’ death on the cross.

Fighting with you,

Ps TJ Johnson



Sermon Outline

Title: Life is War.

Text: Joshua 10:16 - 12:24

Prop: The Christian life is a daily battle for holiness; therefore, we must fight in the Lord's strength with all our might until Christ returns or calls us home.

OUTLINE

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. How would you respond to someone who reads these chapters and struggles with God's justice or feels troubled by the violence in the conquest story?

If you want to see more resources on the question of justice, you can check this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POwTmu62FAk&t=550s>

First, acknowledge their discomfort. It is a natural reaction for modern readers to be troubled by these texts, and this discomfort can indicate a moral compass shaped by the values of compassion found throughout the broader biblical narrative.

Historical and cultural context

Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) Hyperbole: The language used in these conquest narratives ("Utterly destroyed," "left no survivors") was a conventional victory rhetoric in the ANE intended to assert the completeness of the victory and the power of the deity. It does not necessarily describe a literal, total annihilation in every instance. The continued presence of the Canaanites in the land after the events of Joshua supports this view.

Judgment on extreme evil: The conquest is presented as God's judgment on the Canaanites for pervasive and extreme evil, including practices like child sacrifice and other vile acts prohibited in the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 18-21).

Theological interpretation

Divine justice and Sovereignty: All humans are sinful and under God's judgment; therefore, any instance of judgment is an exercise of God's authority, while any instance of mercy is an act of grace. God, as the Creator, has the sovereign right to deal with humanity as He wills, and His ways are often beyond our full comprehension.

New Testament Fulfillment: Jesus, who shares the same name as Joshua, fulfills the promise of a peaceful kingdom, defeating evil through non-violence and the cross, not the sword. The violence in the Old Testament points to the ultimate judgment on sin that was borne by Christ on the cross.



Discussion Questions

2. Read Romans 15:4. How does this section of Scripture instruct us today and what are some right and wrong ways believers might apply these conquest chapters to the church?

A right application of Old Testament conquest narratives is to learn from God's faithfulness and the perseverance of believers, which builds hope for the future. A wrong application would be to use the texts to promote or justify violence, spiritual warfare as literal conquest, or to apply them in a way that bypasses the instruction and hope they offer for the current church age.

3. What is a spiritual battle you have faced that felt especially intense or overwhelming, and what made it such a fierce fight in that moment? How did God enable you to stand firm when everything felt difficult?

Spiritual battles often manifest as internal struggles or external challenges that test one's faith and beliefs.

Here are a few Examples and Strategies to overcome them:

- *To overcome doubt and uncertainty, engage in prayer, meditation, Bible study, and the support of Christians and Christian medical professionals.*
- *To overcome struggles with sin or moral dilemmas, establish accountability through Christian family and friends, set clear boundaries, and focus on God's promise never to leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5).*

4. Eugene Peterson describes the Christian life as “a long obedience in the same direction.” In what area of life have you been tempted to give up or grow weary over time, and what has helped you keep following Jesus with patience and perseverance?

Many people grow weary of consistent, daily spiritual discipline, especially in maintaining a regular, focused prayer life amid the constant distractions and demands of a fast-paced world. This can lead to less communion with God.



Discussion Questions

How to keep following Jesus with patience and understanding: *Reliance on grace, not willpower: We must constantly remind ourselves that the Christian life is not sustained by our fortitude and willpower alone, but by the Holy Spirit. When we feel weary, we must pray for the desire to pray. Acknowledging our weakness and relying on God's strength to sustain us shifts the burden from my finite capacity to His infinite grace.*

5. Read Joshua 11:23; Matthew 11:28–30; and Hebrews 4:8–11. How does the rest God gives us now through Christ differ from the complete and eternal rest still to come, and how can the hope of that future rest strengthen your endurance to keep running the race of faith today?

The rest given now through Christ is spiritual and relational, providing peace from the burden of earning salvation (Matthew 11:28-30) and freedom from the struggle of work-based righteousness. In contrast, the rest still to come is a future, complete, and eternal “Sabbath rest” in God's presence, free from suffering, fatigue, and sin. The hope of the future rest can strengthen endurance by assuring believers that their current struggles are temporary and their faith is not in vain, as their eternal inheritance and final rest are secured through Christ's finished work.

6. Read Joshua 10:28, 35, 37, 39, 40; Deut. 7:5, 12:2-3; Judges 2:1-5, 11-15. What was the result of Israel not totally destroying the pagan nations in Canaan? In our own lives, what are pagan influences we tolerate that pull our hearts away from God?

Israel's failure to totally destroy the pagan nations as commanded by God resulted in spiritual corruption, divine judgment, and cycles of oppression. The remaining Canaanites became a snare, leading to idolatry and disobedience.

Pagan influences that are often tolerated and pull people's hearts away from God include materialism, self-worship(humanism), reliance on practices like yoga or certain New Age spiritualities, and cultural traditions/holidays with non-Christian origins.



Discussion Questions

7. Read Joshua 10:14, 30, 32, 42; 11:8. What are some ways we see God fighting for Israel as they take the land? What are some ways you have seen God fighting for you in your sanctification?

In Joshua, God fought for Israel through supernatural events like causing hailstones to fall and the sun to stand still, as well as divine intervention that caused the enemy to flee in panic. These actions provided a miraculous and decisive victory, illustrating that God's power was the ultimate source of their conquest.

In the process of sanctification, God fights for us similarly by intervening in both supernatural and ordinary ways—through spiritual conviction, timely circumstances, and strength to overcome sin, ultimately working to conform to Christ.

8. Read Joshua 11:6-9 & Psalm 20:7. What are the “horses and chariots” we are tempted to rely on instead of God, and what would it look like for you to “burn and hamstring” those things?

The mention of chariots and horses underscores the allure of relying on material wealth and human capabilities. This reliance is contrasted with “burn and hamstring” those things by the biblical teaching that true security comes from God, not from earthly possessions or power.

9. How does this section of Joshua point us forward to Jesus as our ultimate warrior and source of victory, and how does His life, death, and resurrection encourage you to persevere in the fight of faith today?

This section prefigures Jesus Christ as the ultimate warrior and source of victory in several topological ways. The narrative's themes of divine leadership, complete conquest, and the establishment of an inheritance for God's people find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, which in turn encourages believers to persevere in there.



Prayer & Praise

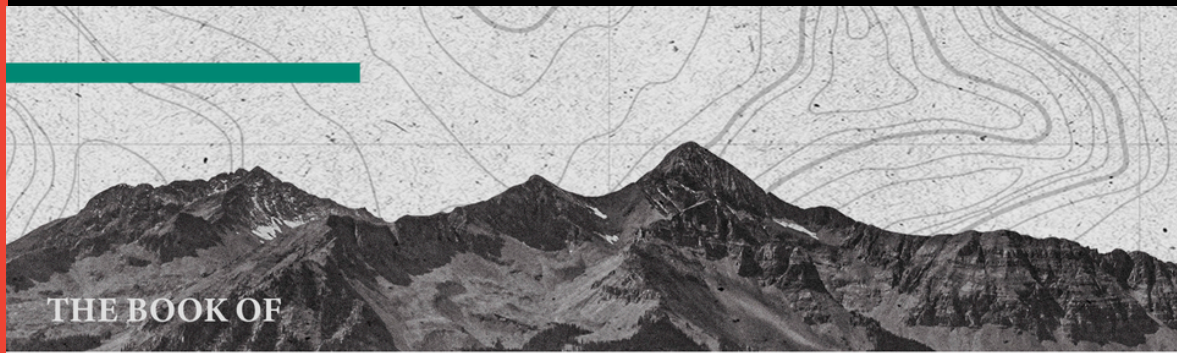
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Promises Kept



THE BOOK OF

JOSHUA

LEADER GUIDE

Nov 16

Sermon Overview

This week we look at the longest section in Joshua—the division of the land. I encourage you to read ALL of these verses, for in them we are reminded that every one of God’s good promises comes to pass. Caleb, Joshua, and the tribes of Israel show us what it looks like (and what it doesn’t look like) to trust God’s promises and seek to possess all that He has promised.

Trusting and Pursuing with you,

Pastor TJ Johnson



Sermon Outline

Title: Promises Kept.

Text: Joshua 13:1 - 19:51

Proposition: Since all of God's good promises will come to pass, let us seek to possess all that God has promised.

OUTLINE

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. Do you think Israel ever cared more about the land than they did the God of the land? Explain. In what ways are you tempted to love the gift more than the giver of the gift, and how do you fight against this temptation?

The text of Joshua 13-19 suggests that Israel's relationship with the land became a point of tension, with their actions showing a greater concern for the land than for God, who gave it to them. While the initial conquest and division of the land were presented as an act of God's faithfulness, Israel's failure to fully drive out the enemies and their subsequent struggles in the land demonstrate a lack of complete obedience, suggesting that their focus shifted from faithfulness to God to earthly possession.

You can be tempted to love the gift more than the Giver (God), prioritizing worldly possessions, success, or comfort over your relationship with God, and viewing blessings as ends in themselves rather than as means to connect with Him. To overcome this, focus on the Giver (God) by praying with intimacy with Him, meditating on His love, and intentionally seeing Him in His Gifts rather than the gifts themselves.

2. How were people saved in the Old Testament? How would you explain salvation by grace through faith to a friend, family member, or coworker? Who can you share this good news with this week?

In the Old Testament, people were saved by faith in God's promises, which looked forward to a future Messiah, just as people are saved in the New Testament, but by looking back to Christ's completed work. Old Testament believers' faith was demonstrated through their belief in God's promises, obedience to His laws, and participation in sacrifices, circumcision, and the Passover lamb, which all pointed toward the eventual coming of the Savior.



Discussion Questions

How to explain salvation by Grace through faith:

Grace means it is a gift: Grace is often described as unmerited favor from God. It's like receiving a wonderful gift that you do not deserve and did not work for. God offers forgiveness and eternal life purely out of His love, not because of anything good you have done.

Faith is how you accept the gift: Faith is simply trusting and accepting His offer. It's like reaching out and taking the present when someone offers it to you. You can't work for the gift; you just have to trust the giver's generosity and accept it. It means believing in Jesus Christ, His life, and resurrection, as the payment for sins.

Make a list of who you can share the good news with. We are often surprised by how many are receptive to the good news found in Christ.

3. In what ways did Israel settle for less than God had promised? What are some areas where we might settle for less than God has promised?

Israel settled for less than God promised primarily by failing to completely drive out the remaining Canaanite inhabitants from the land, leading to ongoing conflicts rather than peace in the land, idolatry, and a smaller territory possession than what was promised.

What are some areas where we might settle for less than God has promised?

Spiritual unconquered areas: We may settle for a life with unresolved sin, unforgiveness, or fear, rather than experiencing the full rest and freedom God promises through faith and obedience.

Partial obedience: *We may obey God in major areas of our lives but compromise in smaller, remote, or obscure corners of conduct, relationships, or thought patterns.*

Apathy or lack of effort: *We can become comfortable with our current spiritual state, ceasing to possess all that God's Word offers for our spiritual experience and growth.*



Discussion Questions

4. In what ways did Israel show discontentment for God's good gifts (expand beyond the book of Joshua). What areas of your own life are you tempted to show discontentment for God's good gifts and why?

Israel showed discontentment with God through various acts in the Old Testament, including persistent complaining and grumbling in the wilderness, idolatry and worshiping other gods, and disobedience to God's laws. This pattern of sin, leading to divine punishment, continued through the periods of the Judges and the monarchy, often rooted in a lack of faith, fear, and a desire to conform to neighboring nations.

In a personal context, this discontent often manifests as coveting what others have, a lack of gratitude for present blessings, or a sense that life isn't fair, which can be tempting because of comparison and a focus on what is lacking.

5. How should you ethically think through God's sovereignty and human free will in terms of: things you cannot change, things you should not change, and things you have the freedom to change?

Ethically navigating God's sovereignty and human free will requires accepting that God is in control of what you cannot change, adhering to divine will for things you should not change, and exercising your freedom to change what is within your ability, all while trusting God's plan. Recognize that divine control and human responsibility can coexist, and your ethical response is to live faithfully by making wise choices in accordance with God's Word, without using God's sovereignty as an excuse for disobedience.



Discussion Questions

6. In what ways did God's covenant blessings pass from generation to generation? What are you doing (or should you be doing) to ensure God's covenant blessings are passed on to the next generation?

God's covenant blessings are passed down through generations by telling stories of God's praise-worthy deeds, integrating faith into our daily life, and encouraging individuals to live out their unique gifts within the covenant.

To pass these blessings, one should share family history, highlight each member's strength, emphasize the freedom to use their gifts for God's glory, and consistently integrate faith into daily life through actions and conversations.

Families shouldn't neglect spending time as a family around God's word daily. Family devotion is a great example of being centered around God's word and making family life dependent on God.

7. What examples does the Bible give of faithful living even in old age? How does Caleb's example reshape the way you view the later years of your own life?

There are many:

Anna the prophetess: Anna was an elderly widow who never left the temple, fasting and praying for the redemption of Jerusalem. She is an example of life dedicated to prayer and worship in old age, recognizing the infant Jesus as the Messiah.

Joshua: Caleb's lifelong friend, Joshua, was an older man when he led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Like Caleb, he demonstrated faithful leadership even in old age.



Discussion Questions

The psalmist: In Psalm 71, the psalmist writes about continuing to trust and praise God in old age, even when his physical strength faded. The psalmist's desire, despite his old age, to “declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come”(Psalm 71:18).

Caleb’s example reshapes the view of later life by highlighting that strength, faith, and purpose can be maintained or even grow, regardless of age. He shows that a person’s perspective is more influential than their chronological age, and that life is a continuous, unwavering faith that can lead to a strong, victorious ending. His example emphasized staying mentally and spiritually fit, continuing to serve, and believing God can empower you to achieve difficult things, no matter how old you are.



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

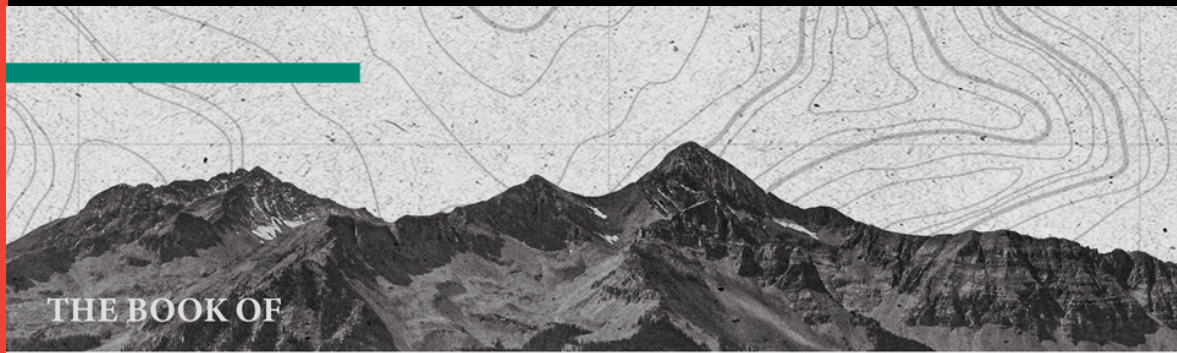


LEADER GUIDE

Nov 23



Christ Our Refuge



THE BOOK OF

JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

In a world shaken by wars and hurricanes, earthquakes and floods, in a world stained by wickedness, sin, and sorrow, every heart longs for a place to run, a shelter in the storm, a refuge in the chaos. But when trials rise against you...when troubles close in... when sin weighs heavily on your soul, where do you run? Where do you try to find comfort? How do you seek forgiveness?

This Sunday, we will look at Joshua 20 as he establishes the Cities of Refuge in the Promised Land. These cities were more than Old Testament stories; they were shadows pointing forward to a greater truth that the Christian life is a lifelong journey of running again and again to Christ, our eternal Refuge.

So, are you continually, intentionally, and wholeheartedly running to Jesus Christ, your only true shelter, in this sinful and troubled world?

Running to Christ with you,

Bemnet



Sermon Outline

Title: Christ Our Refuge

Text: Joshua 20

Proposition: Because Jesus is our perfect refuge, we are called to flee to Him with confidence, trust His mercy, and rest securely in His saving work.

OUTLINE

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

To go deeper on this topic, see: Joshua 20, Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 19, Exodus 21, 2 Samuel 14, Hebrews 6

Exegetical Questions:

1. As you read Numbers 35, what differences do you notice between how the text describes someone who kills “intentionally” and someone who kills “unintentionally,” and how do those differences seem to shape Israel’s understanding of justice, guilt, and innocence?

Numbers 35 establishes a clear legal and judicial framework distinguishing between intentional murder and unintentional killing, primarily based on the killer’s intent, premeditation, and prior relationship with the victim. This distinction profoundly shapes Israel’s understanding of justice by balancing the sanctity of life with mercy, requiring due process, and preventing cycles of vigilante justice.

2. Looking closely at Deuteronomy 19, what specific instructions do you see about how Israel is to set apart the Cities of Refuge and make them reachable, and what might those details suggest about God’s concern for access to protection and fair judgment?

Deuteronomy 19 instructs Israel to set apart six cities of refuge (three initially, with three more for later expansion) and make them easily accessible by dividing the land into three parts and ensuring clear, well-maintained roads leading to them. These details suggest God’s deep concern for both access to protection for the vulnerable and fair, due process for justice, ensuring the innocent are protected from swift retribution, and that intentional murderers are not given refuge.

3. In Joshua 20, what do you observe about who may flee to a City of Refuge, how their case is heard, and who receives them, and how do those features help you understand the role of these cities within Israel’s covenant community and legal system?

In Joshua 20, accidental man slayers, both Israelites and foreigners, could flee to the cities of refuge for protection from the avenger of blood. Upon arrival, elders at the city’s gate would grant them asylum until a trial before the congregation determines their guilt. This system ensured justice by distinguishing intent, protected the innocent from violent vengeance, and demonstrated God’s concern for both the guilty and the innocent by providing a path for due process within the covenant community.



Discussion Questions

4. Across these passages, what patterns do you notice about the person called the “avenger of blood” and the limits placed on that person’s actions, and how do those patterns seem to shape or correct Israel’s practice of justice compared to what you might expect in the ancient world?

In Joshua 20 and Deuteronomy 19, the avenger of blood is a private individual with a duty to kill the murderer. Still, strict biblical laws limit cases of premeditated murder and provide a system of cities of refuge to protect those who accidentally kill someone. This system contrasted sharply with the potential blood feuds typical of the ancient world by establishing due process and distinguishing intent.

5. When you trace the instructions about how long someone must remain in a City of Refuge—especially the connection to the high priest’s life and death—what details stand out to you, and how do those details help you understand how Israel viewed atonement, representation, and restoration to the community?

The cities of refuge illustrate Israel's understanding of atonement by showing that accidental killing, while not a capital crime, required a period of separation from the community until the death of the high priest. This system protected the unintentional killer from the blood avenger, provided a fair trial, and highlighted mercy by granting a path to restoration after a significant, yet unintentional, event. The high priest's death served as a divine, final act of atonement, allowing the individual to return to their home and property without being considered a murderer.

Key aspects of the cities of refuge:

- *Temporary but lifelong separation: The man had to remain in the city of refuge indefinitely, but this was only until the high priest's death, which symbolized a final, but merciful, atonement for the unintentional killing.*
- *High priest as representation: The high priest's death represented a symbolic atonement, and his status as a spiritual mediator between God and people meant that his death served as the ultimate act that released the manslayer.*



Discussion Questions

- *Path to restoration: Once the high priest died, the individual was free to return to their ancestral home, symbolizing the restoration of their life and place in the community.*
- *Divine event: The requirement to stay until the high priest's death underscored that the offense, though unintentional, still had severe consequences and could only be resolved through a divine event—the high priest's death. This most likely atoned for the act of manslaughter and so foreshadowed the substitutionary atonement of Christ (Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17).*
- *Justice and mercy: The system balanced the need for justice with the concept of mercy, protecting the individual from immediate retaliation while ensuring that they still faced a consequence for the life that was taken.*

6. As you consider all the passages together, what parts of the instructions or structure surrounding the Cities of Refuge seem unusual, surprising, confusing, or even difficult to understand?

- ***Exile as an Atonement for the Unintentional:*** Perhaps most unusual is that even a person found innocent of murder (their killing was accidental manslaughter) was still required to live in exile within the city of refuge. They were only free to leave after the death of the currently serving high priest. This implies that the unintentional taking of an innocent life still required a form of atonement, with the high priest's death serving a substitutionary role.
- ***The Role of the "Avenger of Blood:*** The system acknowledges and integrates the ancient Near Eastern practice of "blood vengeance" (a relative's right/duty to avenge a killing) but regulates it with a legal framework. The go'el haddam (avenger of blood) could lawfully kill the manslayer if they caught them outside the city limits before the high priest's death, highlighting a unique balance between communal justice and individual protection.
- ***Accessibility and Infrastructure:*** The law explicitly required cities to be evenly distributed across the land, with roads connecting them maintained to ensure fugitives could flee quickly and safely. This focus on a practical, accessible infrastructure for justice is a striking detail.



Discussion Questions

- **Cities as Levitical Towns:** All six cities of refuge were also among the 48 cities allotted to the Levites, who had no tribal land inheritance of their own. This ensured the manslayer would reside in a place of spiritual and legal instruction, where they could "grow wiser and better".
- **Inclusivity:** The laws applied equally to both the native-born Israelite and the foreigner/stranger living among them, underscoring a commitment to impartial justice for all residents.



Discussion Questions

Application Questions:

1. The sermon stated that God's desire for sinners is always forgiveness but many wrongly think it is for judgement, have you—or someone close to you—ever struggled to believe that God responds to sin is mercy rather than condemnation (see James 2:13)? What shaped that belief, and what helped shift it (or what still makes it hard)?

***It is important to understand belief systems:** Many people are raised with a strong emphasis on punitive aspects of religious doctrine, which can shape a deep-seated fear of judgment. This early foundational teaching can be difficult to reconcile with messages of unconditional love and mercy later on.*

***The role of Scripture:** Passages like James 2:13 and others emphasizing God's grace are often used in sermons and theological discussions to shift this perspective. This early foundational teaching can be difficult to reconcile with the message of unconditional love and mercy later on.*

***Community and guidance:** Dialogue with trusted Christian leaders and friends, participation in support groups, or personal Bible study are common ways to navigate these complex feelings. Sharing experiences can help people realize they are not alone in their internal struggles.*

For many, the shift from a belief in judgment to one of mercy is a gradual process involving:

- *Personal reflection: Prayer and contemplation on the nature of mercy and the idea of a loving Creator.*
- *Focus on grace: A deliberate focus on the biblical concept of grace as an unearned gift, rather than something that must be merited.*
- *Experiential faith: Personal experiences that reinforce feelings of acceptance and love, which challenge the ingrained fear of condemnation.*



Discussion Questions

2. The sermon described the roads, signs, and open gates of the cities of refuge as a picture of how close and accessible God is.

If God is always near and accessible, what are the things that most often keep you from running to Him?

Things that keep people from running to God include sin, fear, pride, self-sufficiency, worldly desires, guilt, and a sense of not being deserving or worthy. These obstacles often stem from an internal struggle with one's thoughts, beliefs, and actions, which creates a sense of separation.

3. Joshua 20 shows the cities were open not only to Israelites but to the foreigner as well. What groups of people do you (or Christians in general) find it hardest to believe can receive God's mercy and why?

In some ways, each of us has prejudices towards different groups of people. Even if we think we don't, if you look deep inside, you can find out one or another type of people that you believe do not deserve God's salvation. One reason we might think they don't deserve God's mercy could be our own pride or self-righteousness. But there are many more.

4. As the manslayer could only be safe inside the city of refuge, so the sinner is only safe when they are in Christ. What are the most common false refuges non-Christians around you seek refuge in and how can you lovingly show them how Christ is their only hope in life and death?

Non-Christians often seek refuge in false religions, philosophy, worldly pursuits such as wealth, self-improvement, entertainment, and human relationships, which fail to provide the true hope found only in Jesus. Showing them that Jesus is their only true hope involves demonstrating His unconditional love, sharing your personal testimony, and patiently pointing them to the absolute truth found in God's Word.



Discussion Questions

5. As freedom came only through the high priest's death; so salvation comes only through Jesus' death. After reading Hebrews 6:17–20, consider your week: In what specific areas of fear, temptation, pressure, or discouragement has remembering Christ's death anchored your hope—or where do you need His death and finished work to steady you now?

Ways to anchor our hope and steady you in Jesus amid fear, temptation, pressure, and discouragement:

- *Stability: Amid trials, believers can find strength and assurance in their faith, knowing God is unchanging and faithful(Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8).*
- *Endurance: The hope of eternal life and God's ultimate justice encourages perseverance through suffering.*
- *Community: This hope fosters unity among believers, reminding them that they are part of a larger body of Christ, supporting one another in faith.*



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

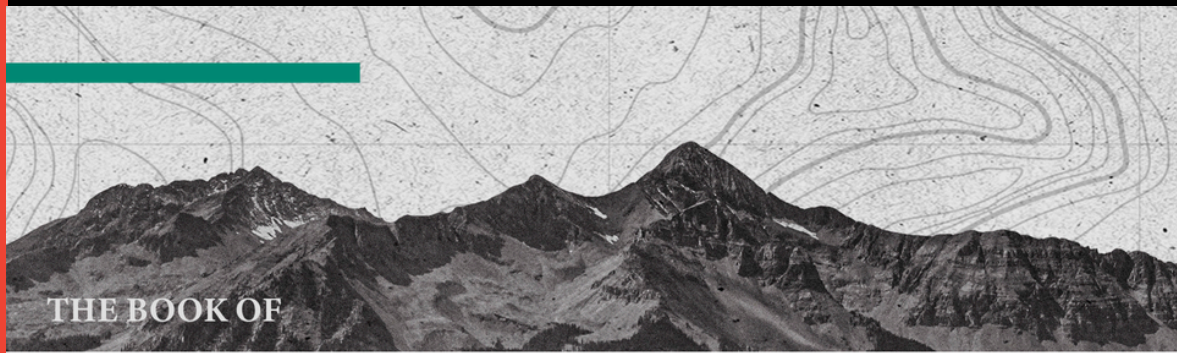


LEADER GUIDE

Nov 30



Commitment to the Church



JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

This Sunday, we'll look closely at the Levites in Joshua 21, a tribe uniquely called and intentionally scattered throughout Israel. They weren't given a single territory, but placed in 48 cities so they could live among the people, offer spiritual guidance, teach God's ways, and keep His presence central in everyday life. Their inheritance was not land, but the Lord Himself.

In the same way, Christians today are on a divine journey. We're strategically placed by God in different communities to be salt and light close to those who need encouragement, truth, and the hope of the gospel. Our identity and inheritance are rooted not in earthly possessions but in Christ, and our placement in the world is purposeful. We will engage five key strategies that keeps Christian's aligned with God's mission, strengthen our commitment to His Church, and remind us that like the Levites, we are set apart to live a life pleasing to God.

Elder Raphael Moffett



Sermon Outline

Title: Commitment to the Church

Text: Joshua 21

Proposition: God has designed it that God's ministers are to live among and disciple God's flock, and this is a symbiotic relationship where both are providing for one another.

OUTLINE

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

Please see a map for reference:

<https://www.preceptaustin.org/sites/default/files/images/leviticalcities.jpg>

1. As the Levites were to live among the people, what practical steps can you take to better live among (build deeper relationships with) City Church members, elders, and deacons?

To build deeper relationships with City Church members, elders, and deacons, you can apply lessons from the Levites by prioritizing service, seeking collaboration, and committing to a personal walk with God. Such actions include serving in church ministries, joining or starting small groups, being a consistent and supportive presence, and openly communicating with and supporting leaders and members.

2. As the tribes contributed land to support the Levites, in what ways does the New Testament call church members to support those who labor in ministry, and how does your current approach to giving, serving, or encouraging leaders reflect (or fall short of) this biblical pattern?

There are many:

- **Financial provision:** *The principle that those who minister the gospel should be supported financially is explicitly commanded by Jesus and the Apostles. Passages like 1 Corinthians 9:14 state that “the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel get their living by the gospel.”*
- **Prayer and spiritual support:** *Ministry leaders, like the Apostle Paul, frequently requested constant intercession and prayers for boldness, wisdom, and strength in their work (Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 1:9-12). Church members are called to cover their leaders with prayer, which is a vital form of spiritual support.*
- **Practical service and partnership:** *The New Testament emphasizes that ministry is a team effort (Ephesians 4:16). Church members support leaders by using their own spiritual gifts to serve the body and by actively participating in the church's mission.*

By evaluating these areas, a church member can determine if their support aligns with the New Testament's call for holistic support of those who labor in ministry.



Discussion Questions

3. In what ways was the Levites' presence meant to keep God's Word central among the people and in what ways is this principle reflected in the New Testament? What practical things can you do (or stop doing) to better engage with the weekly teaching of the Word?

The Levites were central to keeping God's Word among the people through their specific roles in worship, teaching, and serving as a physical reminder of God's presence. This principle is reflected in the New Testament through the universal priesthood of believers (1 Peter 2:9), the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the specific calling of leaders to preach and teach God's Word.

To better engage with the weekly teaching of the Word, you can:

- **Prepare ahead:** Read the relevant Scripture passage before the sermon. This provides context and allows you to follow the sermon flow better.
- **Take notes:** Writing down key points, insights, and questions helps keep your mind engaged and aids memory retention.
- **Pray the Word:** As you listen, turn the ideas and language of the Scripture into prayers, fostering a two-way conversation with God.
- **Engage the community:** Discuss the sermon or Bible passage with others, such as a small group or study, allowing diverse perspectives to deepen your understanding and guarding against self-deception.

4. Since 1 Peter 2:5 teaches that we have now all become priests to God, what are your priestly duties? In what ways are you living out (or can you improve) this priestly role in your home, workplace, school, or community?

As priests in the "priesthood of believers," your duties include offering spiritual sacrifices, living as a holy priesthood through worship and service, and promoting God's virtues by teaching the word of God. You can live this role by offering prayer, serving others, sharing your faith through your actions, and modeling integrity in your daily life. In your home, this could mean leading family devotions, praying for your family, and helping with chores; at work, it may involve being a kind and honest colleague, and in your community, it could be showing love and service to neighbors.



Discussion Questions

5. What purpose do you think God has for sending you to Beijing in this particular season of life and how can we help you fulfill that purpose?

A person may seek to fulfill a purpose of learning, sharing their faith and the gospel, or serving others while in Beijing. Their community could help by providing emotional support, prayer, financial assistance, or connecting them with local opportunities to serve.

6. In what ways did the Levites have clarity about who they were to shepherd? In what ways does church membership bring clarity about whom we A person may seek to fulfill a purpose of learning, sharing their faith and the gospel, or serving others while in Beijing. Their community could help by providing emotional support, prayer, financial assistance, or connecting them with local opportunities to serve. A person may seek to fulfill a purpose of learning, sharing their faith and the gospel, or serving others while in Beijing. Their community could help by providing emotional support, prayer, financial assistance, or connecting them with local opportunities to serve. are responsible to when it comes to living out the biblical “one another” commands? (NOTE FOR THE ONE MAKING THE ANSWER...my reasoning behind this question is that God placed these priests in specific cities among specific people. While they were priests for all Israel, practically, they ministered to a particular group of people they lived near. For example, a priest in Kadesh was not responsible for the day-to-day care of someone from Simeon)

The Levites had clarity about whom they were to shepherd through divine appointment, clear geographical boundaries, and specific assigned duties. Modern church membership provides a parallel clarity through mutual covenant, defined community, and shared community to the “one another commands.

Levite's clarity on shepherding:

- ***Divine selection:*** *God chose the tribe of Levi from among all the Israelites for His service, in the place of the firstborn. This special election meant the tribes meant their role was a matter of divine mandate, not personal choice.*



Discussion Questions

- **Defined geography:** *Unlike the other tribes, the Levites did not receive a territorial inheritance of land. Instead, they were given 48 cities to live in, dispersed among the other tribes of Israel, ensuring that they were strategically positioned throughout the nation to serve and teach people in specific locations.*
- **Specific duties:** *Their flock was the entire congregation of Israel, whom they served through clearly outlined tasks*

The New Testament shifts the shepherding metaphor to apply to church leaders and in a sense, all believers in their mutual care. Church membership defines the specific group of people one is primarily responsible for shepherding and being shepherd by. It answers the question: “Who is “one another?” ?By entering into a church covenant, members make a formal, public commitment to love, serve, and hold each other accountable.

7. What are the main reasons an expat in Beijing might hesitate to pursue church membership in Beijing, and what are the reasons why one SHOULD pursue it?

An expat might hesitate to pursue church membership in Beijing due to cultural differences, language barriers, or concerns about commitment and local support systems. One common answer is that people do not know how long they can stay in Beijing, or they stay only 6 months, and hesitate to become members for such a short period. However, they should pursue it for the sense of community with fellow believers, the opportunity to grow in their faith, to help the church take the gospel to the lost, and integration into a local support network.

8. What were the five key strategies mentioned in the sermon that were most challenging to you personally, and why?



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

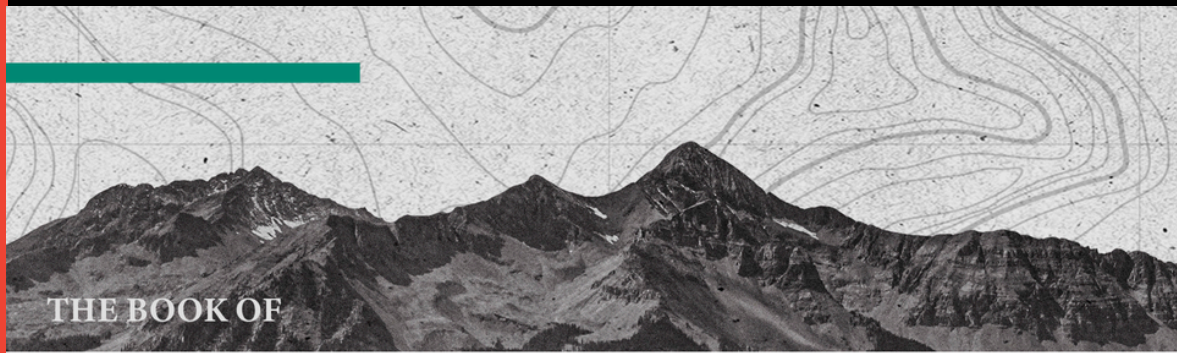
Praise Reports



LEADER GUIDE

Dec 7

Reconciling Differences



JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

As the conquest of the land has come to an end, God has given the people “rest on every side” (Jos. 21:44). We may be tempted to think this is the end of conflict as Israel enters a new era of obedience and prosperity. Yet, the Eastern tribes do not even make it back to their lands before internal divisions arise over an altar they built, leading the rest of the nation to assume they were rebelling against God. War and disaster were averted as the two sides eventually reconciled by communicating their assumptions and intentions.

This encounter serves as a reminder of how easy it is for unspoken assumptions to lead to potentially catastrophic actions, even among the closest friends and allies. While the responses we see in the chapter may seem extreme, they are understandable and even commendable in some instances. All this parallels our world today where individuals, churches, and denominations appear hopelessly divided over a multitude of factors. I do not know the exact path for how all these relationships might be restored, but I do believe Joshua 22 provides an ideal model and at least the first step toward reconciliation.

Join us on Sunday as we explore the various dynamics at play and work together as church toward the Christian mandate to reconcile with our brother and sister.

Pastor Zach Mazrim



Sermon Outline

Title: The Christian Life is One of Reconciling Differences

Text: Joshua 22

Proposition: Joshua 22 highlights how God has given his people both a model and a rationale for reconciliation centered on proper worship.

OUTLINE

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. How have you seen loss of a shared specific vision, pre-existing tensions, and recent events contribute to growing disunity in either the local or global church?

With wars rising over the last few years, as an international church, we ended up having conflicting countries worshiping in one space. Our members might be coming from two countries that are currently at war. Or, if we are not from those countries, we might have different opinions on who is right and who is wrong to justify big political decisions being made in favor of one side or another. The examples could be whether we should help in the war between Russia and Ukraine, or our position on Israel.

2. How can disagreements among believers today escalate when we make assumptions before clarifying motives? Maybe you have a personal example to share.

Disagreements among believers can quickly escalate today, as assumptions about motives often turn differences in perspective into issues of character or faith rather than simple misunderstandings. Assumptions are most of the time wrong because they have only a 50% chance of being right. It is always best to clarify your assumptions, because assumptions are not facts.

3. Read Titus 2:7-10 and 1 Peter 2:11-12. Discuss the types of practices or actions today that more easily lead to misinterpretation by others that we could or should be more aware of.

Practices and actions that we could or should be more aware of:

- *Gossip and slander: Engaging in or sharing them, or engaging in divisive conduct within Christian circles, directly contradicts the call for wholesome, sound speech.*
- *Boasting and materialism: Boasting about personal achievements, possessions, or an extravagant lifestyle can be seen as self-centered and not in line with the biblical principle to love God and others above self.*
- *Argumentative tone: Participating in contentious debates with a harsh or disrespectful tone, particularly on controversial social or political issues, can misrepresent Christian love and gentleness.*

4. How does Joshua 22 guide us in addressing sin (or potential sin) in a way that pursues peace and proper worship?

Joshua 22 guides us to address potential sin with peace and proper worship by first seeking clarification through direct, personal communication to investigate concerns, grounding responses in Scripture, and affirming unity while holding proper worship standards, thereby pursuing peace and preserving the integrity of the community and its relationship to God.



Discussion Questions

5. As noted above, the conflict centered on proper worship of God. When it comes to the conflicts you see in the church and world today, what do you think are the driving forces behind them, right worship or something more selfish or cynical?

Sin is always the reason behind conflict. Different manifestations of sin manifest in wrong worship, selfishness, or cynicism.

6. How difficult do you find it to communicate or give the benefit of the doubt when tense situations arise, particularly among fellow Christians? How might putting these into practice improve your relationships?

It is often difficult to give people the benefit of the doubt or communicate, but the following can improve relationships:

- *Building trust and safety: Giving someone the benefit of the doubt signals that you value their character and intent, even when their actions are confusing or hurtful in the moment. This builds a foundation of trust between the parties involved.*
- *Fostering empathy and understanding: Clear communication, particularly active listening focusing on another's perspective rather than simply preparing a rebuttal, deepens empathy.*
- *Modeling forgiveness and grace: These practices are a practical application of core Christian principles of grace and forgiveness. By extending the benefit of the doubt and seeking clarity through communication, believers model the very grace they themselves have received, strengthening collective faith and unity.*

7. Maybe you are not the type of person who is often engaged in disputes and disagreements. How can this story equip you to help others who experience more relational conflict than you?

The story in Joshua 22 equips you to help others by providing a clear template for mediation, de-escalation, and reconciliation based on principles of communication and humility:

- *Prioritize communication over assumption.*
- *Encourage fact-finding before fault-finding: The main body of Israel assumed the eastern tribes were in rebellion and built a rival altar for sacrifices, a severe breach of faith. Instead of immediately waging war, they sent a delegation to inquire about the situation.*
- *Insist on listening first: You can model and encourage others to "be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger (James 1:19). The western tribes listened to the full explanation of the eastern tribes, which revealed the altar was a witness of their shared faith, thus averting the war.*

Discussion Questions



8. The construction of the altar was predicated on a generalized fear over future generations' access and ability to worship. What concerns preoccupy our minds when we think about the spiritual commitment of those who come after us?

The purpose of the altar was to offer sacrifices to God and serve as a place of worship. The Eastern tribes wanted to ensure that this place of worship, no matter what happened to the Western tribes, would be available to their kids and future generations. Although Western tribes misunderstood Eastern tribes, the idea of the priority of having a place of worship was correct. As we raise our families and pass the word of God from generation to generation, teaching the law of God to our children, raising the next generation in the ways of God should be our priority over their academic successes and achievements. Every single one of us in our Christian communities has a role to play (either as a parent directly or as a spiritual parent) in raising the next generation in the ways of the Lord.



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

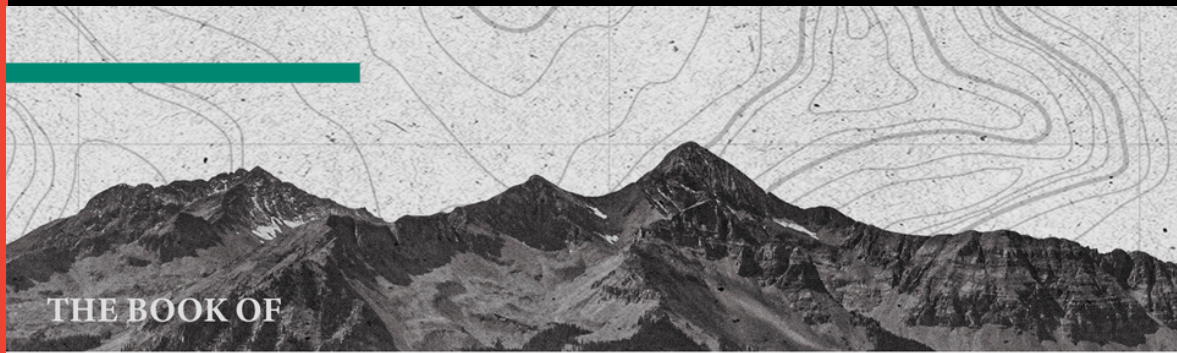


LEADER GUIDE

Dec 14



Grace Alone



THE BOOK OF

JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

In the closing chapters of Joshua, God's faithfulness stands center stage. Every promise He spoke to Israel, every victory, every protection, every blessing, He fulfilled without fail. Joshua reminds the people that their story was never the product of their own strength or strategy, but of God's unwavering grace. And just as Israel was called to remember who carried them, we too are called to recognize that every good thing in our lives flows from the unmerited favor of God.

"Grace Alone" invites us to reflect on the God who keeps His word, who surrounds us with kindness we could never earn, and who walks with us through every chapter of our journey. When we understand how grace works we learn to release the illusion of self-orchestrated success and instead offer God the glory for every blessing in the production that is our life.

This message calls us not only to celebrate God's faithfulness, but also to renew our own commitment to Him, trusting that the same grace that carried Israel will carry us, shape us, and lead us forward.

Elder Raphael Moffett



Sermon Outline

Title: Grace Alone

Text: Joshua 23:1-24:13

Proposition: The Christian fight for holiness fails when, in our pride, we think we are above temptation; therefore, let us daily be reminded that our Christian journey is all of grace.

OUTLINE

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. Read Joshua 23:3, 24:1–13.

What are specific ways you've seen God's faithfulness in your life over the past year?

Could be many and different. Believers have seen God's faithfulness through answered prayers for healing, provision (jobs, finances, daily needs), protection from harm, restored relationships, finding peace in difficult seasons, personal growth (learning, joy, holiness), and His constant presence in both good times and bad, offering strength and hope.

2. Read Joshua 23:6–8, 12-13

As expats navigating a different culture, workplace norms, and social expectations, where do you feel the strongest pull to “blend in” in ways that could compromise your walk with Christ? What temptations do Christians face today to marry non-Christians, why is this wrong, and how can we encourage them to not turn back?

There are many:

- *Workplace ethics and corruption: Navigating business environments where bribery, dishonesty, or unethical practices are the accepted norm can create significant conflict. The desire to succeed professionally, maintain a job, or avoid social exclusion can create immense pressure to conform to local, albeit questionable, standards.*
- *Social drinking and nightlife: In cultures where heavy drinking or an active nightlife is central to socializing and networking, expats may feel pressured to participate fully to build relationships and avoid isolation.*
- *Sexual morality and relationships: Cultural perspectives on marriage, dating, and sexual expression can vary drastically from traditional Christian views. The fear of being seen as old-fashioned, intolerant, or strange can lead to adopting more liberal norms.*

Christians face temptation to marry non-Christianity due to love, or believing they can change them, as well is pressure from the family to settle down (especially in China), but scripture warns against this as it creates spiritual conflict, differing life goals (like raising kids in the faith), and leads to compromising beliefs, referencing being “unequally yoked” (2 Corinthians 6:14) and marrying in the Lord”(1 Corinthians 7:39).

To encourage faithfulness, focus on the beauty of a Christ- centered marriage, emphasize shared spiritual intimacy, offer support, and gently remind them of biblical warnings through grace, highlighting how faith provides true partnership and purpose.



Discussion Questions

3. Read Joshua 23:9-10

Where can we apply these verses to our lives today? And where would it be a misunderstanding to apply this verse, as if God guarantees success in whatever we attempt? Explain your reasoning.

Application for our lives today:

- *Trust in God's power: The central message is that victory comes from God's intervention, not human strength or numbers. Believers can apply this by trusting God to help navigate seemingly impossible obstacles, such as personal addictions, cultural pressures, or difficult circumstances, knowing that "if God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).*
- *Reliance on a faithful God: Joshua reminds the Israelites of God's proven faithfulness in the past, building confidence for the future. We can apply this by reflecting on past instances of God's help in our lives, using that gratitude and assurance to fuel our present trust and obedience.*
- *Spiritual warfare: the "great and powerful nations" can be seen as a symbol for spiritual strongholds and forces of evil that believers face today. The verses encourage believers to be confident in the spiritual victory already won through Christ and to stand firm in the faith.*

It would be a misunderstanding to apply Joshua 23:9-10 as a blanket guarantee of success in whatever personal, worldly, or self-serving endeavor we attempt, for the following reasons:

- *Covenantal context: The promise of victory was specific to Israel's covenant with God, their divine mandate to take possession of the Promised Land, and their obedience to His commands within that specific historical context. It was about advancing God's kingdom and purpose, not personal ambition.*
- *Conditionality: The promise in Joshua 23 was explicitly conditional. Immediately following these verses, Joshua warns of severe consequences, including destruction, if the people turn away from God and intermarry with other nations or worship other gods (Joshua 23:12-13). This demonstrates that the purpose was tied to faithfulness and obedience, not an automatic, unconditional formula for all human endeavors.*
- *God's sovereignty vs. personal will: The text emphasizes that "the lord your God, he is the one who fights for you, as he has promised you." This highlights God as the active agent and the source of victory in battles He initiates and directs, not merely as a helper in every project a person chooses to undertake.*

Discussion Questions



4. Read Joshua 23:11

What are some ways we can stir up our love for God?

Joshua 23:11 calls us to be diligent and careful in loving God, which means actively watching ourselves, making intentional choices to obey His commands, cleaving to Him, and letting Him guide our daily decisions, building a practical, moment-by-moment relationship through obedience, remembrance of His faithfulness, and communion, rather than just going through the motions. Other ways to stir this love include daily focus, confessing failures to persevere, living like Him, and experiencing His presence.

Putting God before everyone else is not something natural for humans. It is a lifelong training program in which we are training our hearts to love the Lord with everything we have.

5. Read Joshua 23:15-16

What do these covenant curses reveal about the eternal nature of God, and how should this shape how we live our lives today?

Joshua 23:15 reveals that God's eternal nature is defined by His unwavering faithfulness, perfect justice, and unchanging character. He is as reliable in bringing about consequences for disobedience as He is in fulfilling promises of blessing, which should shape how we live today by motivating us to pursue wholehearted obedience, love, and spiritual fidelity.



Prayer & Praise

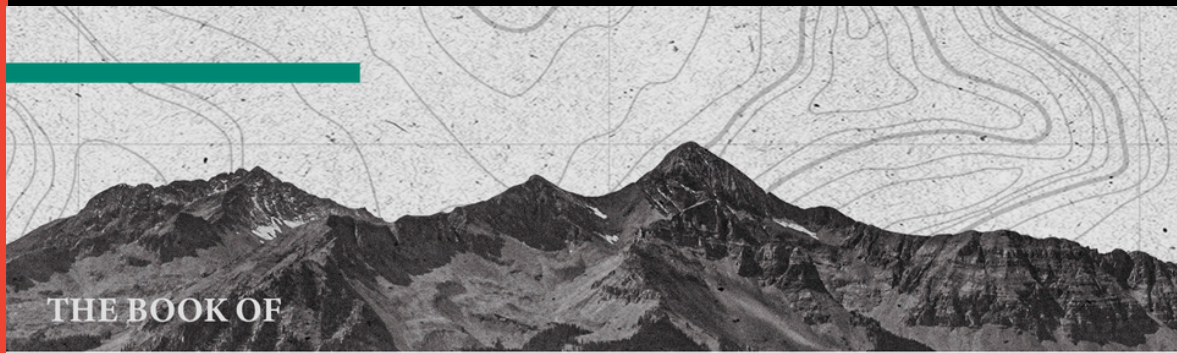
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Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



The Last Stone



LEADER GUIDE

Dec 28

JOSHUA

Sermon Overview

Church Family,

The coming Lord's Day it will be a great privilege to close out our series on Joshua. As we have walked through this book since September, I hope your hunger for God's word has grown. I also hope you have realized how your faith is connected to the faith of our Old Testament brothers and sisters who make up God's people. As we close out this book, we come to a sober and solemn passage. This is Joshua's LAST memorial stone before his death (24:26). The verses we will cover this week are his last recorded words to the full assembly before his death. With his last words he calls the assembly to make a choice.....Choose to Serve the Lord or Choose the other gods. Church this same choice is before us each day! Israel's form of idolatry may seem distance from your circumstances or life experience, but I hope we can explore the dangers of idolatry in the current age and the zeal we as professing Christians must have daily to Choose Christ as our portion.

May we answer daily in the same way as Joshua in 24:15: ".....But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

We are called this Lord's Day to a public assembly of God's visible covenant community. I hope you will join.

Sincerely,
Elder Grant Jones



Sermon Outline

Title: The Last Stone

Text: Joshua 24:14-33

OUTLINE

1. The Choice Presented (Verses 14 - 15)
2. The Communities' Response (Verses 16 - 18)
3. The Cost Weighed (Verses 19 - 25)
4. The Covenant Cut (Verses 25 - 28)

Sermon Notes



Discussion Questions

1. Recount the areas in Joshua where stones are used as memorials (Ex. Crossing the Jordan-Joshua 4:21, Judgement of Achan-Joshua 7:26, Destruction of Ai-Joshua 8:29, Covenant Renewal Joshua 8:32, Judgment of Pagan Kings-Joshua 10:27, Witness Stone-Joshua 24:27). What do you think these stones signified to an Old Testament Israelite? Do you think the same stone reminders in Joshua are helpful for the New Testament Christian today? Why or why not?

These stones represented several important things:

- *They were visible reminders of God's powerful actions*
- *They marked God's faithfulness to His covenant and the people's responsibility*
- *They served as teaching tools for future generations*
- *They also warned against rebellion and unfaithfulness*
- *They testified that God is both merciful and just*

These stones helped anchor faith in real events, making sure Israel remembered what God had done and what He expected.

New Testament Christians are not told to build stone memorials, but the idea behind them is still very important.

These memorials are helpful for several reasons:

- *They remind believers how important it is to remember God's faithfulness*
- *They show how serious sin, obedience, and keeping the covenant are*
- *They show that faith grows stronger when we remember on purpose*

But under the New Covenant, things are a bit different:

- *Now, remembering is more about the spiritual than the physical (Luke 22:19; Hebrews 10:16)*
- *Jesus Himself is the greatest reminder of God's saving work*
- *Practices like communion, baptism, sharing testimonies, and reading Scripture serve a similar purpose*

2. From Joshua's boldness in declaring not only for himself but his entire household would serve the Lord, what can we imply for our own lives? Joshua was the head of his household. The Old Testament & New Testament also describe the husband as being the head of the household. Reflect on how leadership can impact household faithfulness. Mom and Dad, if your children heard you declare the same word's as Joshua in Chapter 24:15, would they believe it, or would your actions and commitments speak differently than your voice? If your answer gives you pause, what idols do you need to put away? Is there anything you need to confess to members of your household?



Discussion Questions

When Joshua said, “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD,” he showed that spiritual leadership is about more than just personal faith. As the leader of his family, Joshua knew his choices would guide and influence the home’s spiritual atmosphere. The Bible often teaches that parents, especially fathers, should lead by example rather than just by what they say. Children learn faith by watching as much as by listening.

Leadership has a strong effect on a family’s faith. When parents put God first through worship, obedience, repentance, and steady habits, their children see that faith is real. But if what parents say doesn’t match what they do, children notice the difference. Joshua’s words had power because he had already shown faithfulness in how he lived.

Asking if our children would believe us if we made a statement like Joshua’s leads to honest self-reflection. If we hesitate, it might show that things like busyness, comfort, work, or control have become too important. Joshua’s call to serve the Lord meant getting rid of false gods, which today could mean changing our values and daily habits.

Being honest about our mistakes at home is a strong way to lead. When we admit where we’ve failed, ask for forgiveness, and show what repentance looks like, we build trust and show what the gospel means. In the end, leading a godly home isn’t about being perfect. It’s about showing real devotion, humility, and a true desire to serve the Lord as a family.

3. Have you ever heard “God hates the sin and loves the sinner”? Does that expression really fit with the how the Lord displays His attributes in the book of Joshua? Consider how God acted towards the pagan nations, Israel, Psalm 5:5, and Romans 8:13. What is a more biblical way to understand God’s position towards sin and sinners?

The saying “God hates the sin and loves the sinner” is meant well, but it is too simple and does not fully match what the Bible teaches. In the book of Joshua, God judges pagan nations and disciplines Israel, showing that sin brings real and personal opposition from a holy God. Psalm 5:5 says God hates “all who do wrong,” and Romans 8:13 warns that living by the flesh leads to death. The Bible shows God as loving, just, and holy. He stands against those who rebel, but He also offers mercy, repentance, and life. A more accurate view is that God hates sin, judges those who do not repent, and lovingly saves those who turn to Him in faith.



Discussion Questions

4. Remember, Abraham himself was saved by the Lord for the paganism of his ancestors (Joshua 24:2-3). Maybe you weren't raised in a Christian household. If that is you, what steps can you take to change the legacy you leave behind?

Abraham's story shows that God can break old patterns and start something new. If you did not grow up in a Christian home, begin by turning to God with repentance and faith. Make it a priority to learn Scripture, pray, and obey, even if you do not have examples to follow. Find a church community that will support and guide you. Center your life on worship instead of past habits. Let your actions show real change to those around you. Teach your children about God's works on purpose, not by chance. Admit past mistakes, set new priorities, and trust that God is pleased to create a new legacy of faith through you today.

5. Many professing Christians today take no pause or issue with participating in cultural celebrations that rooted in false gods or celebrations of spiritual fortune. I think for most believers today we would easily condemn, bowing down and worshiping statues. But if you think more critically about some of the modern day celebrations and the call to participate because it's simply "a cultural experience", do you think those sentiments are supported by the Lord's approach to paganism as we've seen throughout the book of Joshua. For an example read Joshua 23:11-13 as a reminder and discuss some common "cultural" celebrations known by our international community (ex. China's Tomb Sweeping Day, or India's Diwali). How does scripture inform our approach to the question of participating in such festivals?

Joshua makes it clear that God does not see pagan worship as just a harmless part of culture. In Joshua 23:11-13, Israel is warned that accepting pagan practices can become a trap and bring judgment. The Bible often tells God's people to stay separate, not to join in, when celebrations honor other gods or rely on spiritual practices apart from Him. Festivals like Diwali or Tomb Sweeping Day are not simply cultural if their meaning involves worship, prayer, or spiritual trust outside of God. Instead of asking, "Is this normal?" biblical wisdom asks, "Does this honor the Lord?" Loving Christ means using discernment, sometimes holding back, and choosing faithfulness over simply fitting in.



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports