

The Longest Day
Joshua 10:1-28
Sunday, July 13th 2014
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1. The Faithfulness of Joshua

[1] As soon as Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard how Joshua had captured Ai and had devoted it to destruction, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, [2] he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were warriors. [3] So Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, [4] "Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon. For it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel." [5] Then the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered their forces and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon and made war against it.

[6] And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, "Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us." [7] So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.

The king of Jerusalem heard what the Gibeonites had done and announced that these traitors had to be punished. He figures that if a great city like Gibeon surrendered to the Israelites, then that was one more barrier removed from Israel's advancement in the land.

The Israelites would be only a few miles from the city of Jerusalem. It was important for the Canaanites to recover that key city, even if they had to take it by force. Four other Canaanite kings allied with Adoni-zedek, and their combined armies encamped before Gibeon. The poor Gibeonites had made peace with the invaders and were now at war with their former allies!

v6- Gibeonites attempt to make good on their covenant with Israel. They can't stand on their own against this united army. Big Question- What would Joshua do? And knowing first hand the weakness of their own word, the Gibeonites had to be a bit worried about whether or not Joshua will fulfill his obligations.

There are different ways to "fulfill" our commitments and still believe it counts, we have YES, NO, SORTA, KINDA, MAYBE, SOMETIMES, etc.

When we are asked to make good on promises that we *do not like*, we often agree to do the bare minimum and, essentially, break our vow passively.

The goal is to do just enough to fulfill our commitment, not wanting it to cost us too much, but never fully committing, passively breaking our commitment. We do this in our marriages, in our friendships, in our jobs, and even in our churches and our faith. Sometimes motivated by comfort, other times motivated by comparison with our "just enough" people who fail to fulfill their own promises.

Temptation of Joshua- maybe commit. Send a couple soldiers so it looks like he's keeping his promise but actually passively breaking the vow.

There's a benefit to Joshua to not get involved at all. Sit back and let the Canaanites destroy themselves—they deserve it and it would make an otherwise embarrassing situation go away.

But Joshua does not give into the temptation of seeking his own glory, rather, he considers how much breaking his promise would detract from the glory of God.

Commitment is not measured in the giving of your word; it's measured by the faithfulness to your word when it costs you something to do it.

v7 says **So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.**

1. COMMITS FULLY: Joshua fulfills his commitment fully. He doesn't send half a fighting force or a few men, he sends everything he has. Joshua commits his entire army including all the mighty men of valor. He does not bring Junior Varsity; rather, he invests his best time, best energy, and best resources. A partial promise is a broken promise; you can't be half-faithful.

2. COMMITS IMMEDIATELY: Joshua commits immediately with delay. His obligation is a matter of obedience to God and in that, he does not delay. He does not falsely "spiritualize" the decision by praying about what he has already been told is right. At what point does it become rebellious if you know you are supposed to do and delay? Promises like this are meaningless if they have deferments or expiration dates.

3. COMMITS SACRIFICIALLY: Joshua commits sacrificially—it costs him something. At inconvenience and risk to all of the families of Israel, he chooses the harder right or the easier wrong. He/army would march 25 miles from Gilgal to Gibeon under cover of darkness. The journey would include an ascent of 4,000 feet up steep and difficult terrain without an opportunity to rest or catch their breath. And by the time they arrived, his wiped out army would be vulnerable because of their fatigue.

4. COMMITS FAITHFULLY: Joshua commits faithfully, meaning, he does what is right though he doesn't feel like it and God has not guaranteed he will help. If the chronology is right, Joshua starts marching BEFORE he heard God state he would be successful. He didn't wait for God's guarantee before doing what is right. Faith is never required when we feel like it or when we are guaranteed results. Only when the feelings and the guarantees are NOT there, will our faithfulness be tested.

So first thing from this message was Joshua's faithfulness. Next, let's look at the battle and see who the **2. The Warrior of Israel** in (v8-11)

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[8] And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you." [9] So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. [10] And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. [11] And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword.

In this few verses, we read about the battle at Beth-horon.

Before we look at this warrior, I want you to note a couple of things here in verse 8-9. In verse 8 God assures Joshua: **“Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you.”**

This was in essence the same words God had spoken to Joshua in 1:5. This statement in verse 8 is a reassurance of what God has already told Joshua.

This is often the usual way God reassures his children. Not by giving them some new truth previously unknown, but by reaffirming promises already given, which somehow take on special power because of the present pressing need.

Why is it that we are always looking and praying for some new revelation, for some new word from God that is unlike what He's done before?

This is what God's people usually need- they need to be reminded of God's word or God's call to them, not some new call but the some old truth freshly applied to their current need.

So verse 8 gives us divine reassurance, it's a reminder of God's sovereignty, that God will get the victory.

Now sometimes when talking about the sovereignty of God, we minimize human responsibility. Like those two things can't go hand in hand.

Seems as though you either fall hard on the sovereignty of God side of things and minimize human involvement, or you fall hard on the human involvement side of things and minimize the sovereignty of God.

But here we see something different. Verse 9 says **So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal.** Here, God's reassurance, his sovereignty doesn't minimize the people's response- rather is stimulates their ingenuity (the surprise attack).

God's comfort does not discount human activity, but brings it out. Yahweh has promised victory (v.8), but his victory will be achieved through a forced night march and a surprise attack, probably while still dark (v. 9). **The truth of God's sovereignty, rightly used, does not weaken man's responsibility, but should rather energize our response.**

So who is the great warrior of this battle? The answer is in v10,11. Now, depending on which bible translation you are using, you will find a great deal of variety here in verse 10. In verse 10, God is always the subject of the first verb- “God threw them into panic.” The Revised Standard Version, NLT, NIV- Israel the subject of the next three verbs- **(ISRAEL) struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and (ISRAEL) chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and (ISRAEL) struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah.**

But the ESV, which we use, the ASV, NASB, KJV all make God the subject of these verbs. **(GOD) struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and (GOD) chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and (GOD) struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah.**

The traditional Hebrew text assumes God is the subject of all four verbs.

I think this is what the writer intended. Granted, it may sound strange to us to hear of God pursuing, for example, the enemy. But that is precisely the point; the writer wants us to see that it is God who is the fighter; He is the warrior, He is the victor who crushes the enemy.

And as if to summarize this truth, verse 11 says that **God** [emphatic in the Hebrew] threw down great stones from heaven upon the enemy. More perished by God's hail than by Israel's sword (v. 11b). The text is declaring the source and cause of Israel's victory. God is the warrior who defeats the foe; we can't miss this.

One of the dangers I think we face today is we've pacified God and Jesus and no longer view him as a warrior who fights for His people. That kind of God seems too violent, not politically correct. The popular picture of Jesus is that is not only kind and tender but also soft and prissy, as though Jesus comes to us reeking of hand cream. That picture of Jesus doesn't necessarily give me confidence and faith when I'm faced with a daily assault that Satan is waging on my soul.

Scripture gives us a pretty clear picture of God. Psalm 24:8 [8] **who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!**

Revelation 19 gives us the vision of God the Faithful and True sitting on the white horse, as the one who judges and makes war in righteousness.

A nice, pretty, mild God and a soft and prissy Jesus won't give His people hope. It is only as we know Him as the Warrior of Israel who fights for us (and sometimes without us) that we have hope of victory in the muck and mire of life.

So Joshua's Faithfulness, The Warrior of Israel, and 3rd we'll see the **miracle of prayer.**

3. The miracle of Prayer v12-15

[12] At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." [13] And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. [14] There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel. [15] So Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

Sun Stood Still. Now, I'm not sure if you just understood that or not, but let me reiterate what just happened. v12 Joshua spoke to God and said Sun Stand Still. V13 says the sun stood still and did not set for a whole day. A whole stinking day! So like the earth slowed its rotation down so that the sun stayed out over night and then onto the next day, and then finally went down after the 2nd day.

Now this is pretty rad. That's pretty awesome.

Now I know, you science geniuses or maybe Nacho Libre fans- you're saying, Well pastor, **I only believe in Science**, not God.

And you could point to this passage and say look- the bible and science are in conflict. The sun, we know is always still, it's stationary. The earth, it spins on its own axis and rotates around the sun, but the sun, it just sits there and never moves. So how can I trust the bible when it clearly doesn't even know what the sun does?

What the author is doing here though is using observation. He's speaking from the perspective and appearance of things on the earth. We do this in our day. What do you call it when the sun goes down in

the evening? Sunset. Did the sun ever move? It didn't set. But we are speaking from our perspective. So is the author.

Now, this is a pretty remarkable miracle. But the danger in this chapter is to get hung up on the sun standing still. But this miracle is not the point. Look at what v14 says. **There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel.**

This is the main point. This is the emphasis of this text. The day was not unique because the earth's rotation was twice as slow as every other day the earth has existed. This day was unique because God listened to a man's prayer!

The fact that God cares and pays attention to what you and I direct His way, that's indescribable. That's the miracle here! It's amazing that God listens to the voice of every man, woman and child who calls out to Him.

If God truly listens to our prayers, shouldn't that change the way we pray? Doesn't that make our "good food good meat good god let's eat"" monotonous, absent minded prayers seem rather foolish?

The God who is seated on high, who created the world and holds the world in his hand, the God who can make the sun stand still, and can part the red sea- That God stoops down and bends his ear to our lips and hears our prayers.

This same God who made the sun stand still and parted the red sea and destroyed that Canaanites, that same God hears our prayers and He is just as capable to heal that sickness, to give you that job, to save your marriage, to change your life! Psalm 91:15 says **When he calls to me, I will answer him;** this is our God! Don't miss this miracle of prayer.

4. The Sign of Victory v16-27

[16] These five kings fled and hid themselves in the cave at Makkedah. [17] And it was told to Joshua, "The five kings have been found, hidden in the cave at Makkedah." [18] And Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave and set men by it to guard them, [19] but do not stay there yourselves. Pursue your enemies; attack their rear guard. Do not let them enter their cities, for the LORD your God has given them into your hand." [20] When Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished striking them with a great blow until they were wiped out, and when the remnant that remained of them had entered into the fortified cities, [21] then all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah. Not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel. [22] Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave and bring those five kings out to me from the cave." [23] And they did so, and brought those five kings out to him from the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. [24] And when they brought those kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, "Come near; put your feet on the necks of these kings." Then they came near and put their feet on their necks. [25] And Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight." [26] And afterward Joshua struck them and put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees. And they hung on the trees until evening. [27] But at the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and they set large stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day. [28] As for Makkedah, Joshua captured it on that day and struck it, and its king, with the edge of the sword. He devoted to destruction every person in it; he left none remaining. And he did to the king of Makkedah just as he had done to the king of Jericho.

The five kings hide in a cave at Makkedah. Israel traps them in, guards the cave, while the rest of the troops make the most of the rout that begun at Beth-Horon. When they return to Makkedah, v24 Joshua orders the five kings brought out and Israel's military chiefs to 'come near and put your feet upon the necks of these kings'.

Now this act was not simple barbarism or a mere macho move, something Richard Sherman would try on Michael Crabtree. But there is more to it than just a bunch of guys being barbaric. Look at what Joshua said in v25. **"Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight."**

The leaders' feet upon the necks of these prostrate kings was an acted parable, it was a sign, a picture of how God would certainly place all their enemies beneath them. The symbolic action is intended as a visible encouragement to the people of God. They could see and be reminded of what God had already told them, they could be encouraged and be reminded of what God had already promised.

Now, you skeptics may question how this could ever reassure faith, since there is not compelling logic in it. You know, you might be true.

And truthfully, there's not much compelling logic to how God's rainbow in the clouds could make Noah feel the security of God's promise not to destroy the earth through flood again.

There's not much compelling logic as to how the countless stars in the night sky could elicit Abraham's faith that God would give him countless offspring.

These remain mysteries to us, yet they represent something to us as well. I would tell you that these signs weren't for skeptics; they were for believers to encourage their faith in who God is and what He has said and promised.

These are not intended to convince us by cold logic, but rather they are to nurture us by warm encouragement, to make us *feel* that God's word is reliable and his Help is sure.

In the same way, the two ordinances of the church- Communion and Baptism- these ordinances are not designed for skeptics, but they are for believers as props for our weak faith. The skeptic won't understand this, but to the believers, eating the bread and drinking the juice of communion assures us that he crucified and risen Jesus will now and always sustain us, that He is the answer and we have to center our lives and our hearts and our emotions on Him.

So the dirty Israelite feet planted on the royal Canaanite necks provide fresh encouragement that this is what God will do to your enemies.

Conclusion:

I want to close this morning and ask you a few things. We have seen the faithfulness of Joshua, how he is committed even when things aren't favorable to him. What area in your life have you given up on? What areas have you been only giving ½ your effort instead of giving your all?

What is happening in your life do you need to be reminded of God's sovereignty? Maybe you need to be reminded that God is for you, that he is more than capable of dealing what those issues in your life. And if he's sovereign and in control, shouldn't that give you motivation to keep after it and keep moving forward? Knowing God is in control should give us confidence to take the next steps, to trust that God will get you through.

And finally, what does prayer look like for you? Honestly, prayer has been a hard thing for me. But what a magnificent truth- to know that God listens to our every prayer. So let's be bold in our prayers, lest know that God is a mighty warrior fighting for His glory and Honor in our lives.

We're gonna take the next 10 to 15 minutes and respond to God's word this morning. However God has spoken to you today, each of us should have a response during these next few worship songs.

I invite you during these songs to come forward and respond on prayer. You are welcomed to pray by yourself or with someone around you, or if you'd like to come forward to this front row, I'd love to pray for you.

I invite you to respond to God with worship. Take this time to be reminded of who He is and Praise Him for what he's done.

And finally, I invite you to respond to God this morning through communion. Jesus instituted the ordinance of communion on the night he was betrayed. He said the bread represents his body broken for us, and the juice represents the new covenant between God and People- through the shedding of Jesus blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Apostle Paul describes communion as act of worship – a way to remember Jesus sacrificial death on the cross. Paul instructs examine lives, confess sin prior to participating.

After time between you / Lord, invite come forward. Don't take as a group, take your time until you are ready.

Let's Pray.