

Sermon Notes: Aligned With God's Purpose

Series: Walking With Wisdom: Joshua – Conquest

Scripture Focus: [Joshua 7–14](#)

I. Introduction: Trust & Alignment

- **A 700-Year-Old Promise:** God's fulfillment of His covenant with Abraham demonstrates His absolute sovereignty. He does not call us merely to assent to metaphysical truths, but to enter a relationship of total trust in His character and faithfulness.
- **The Vantage Point of Jericho:** In the fall of Jericho ([Joshua 5–6](#)), the Commander of the Lord's Army clarifies that God does not simply take human sides; He acts for the glory of His holy name.
 - [Ezekiel 36:22–28](#) — God acts to vindicate His holy name, transforming the hearts of His people so they walk in His statutes.
- **Obedience over Earthly Success:** Faithful alignment with God does not guarantee earthly wealth, health, or ease. Rather, obedience ensures that God will be glorified through our lives, which is far greater.
 - [John 14:12–14](#) — Whatever we ask in Jesus' name will be done so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

II. Justice and Purpose at Jericho

- **The Eastern Conquests:** Before crossing the Jordan, Moses conquered the lands east of Jordan (Sihon and Og), setting the stage for entering Canaan.
- **Devoted to Destruction:** At Jericho, God explicitly commanded Israel to abstain from keeping any items devoted to destruction.
 - [Joshua 6:18–19](#) — Israel was strictly warned to keep themselves from the things devoted to destruction.
 - [Joshua 6:21](#) — All living things in the city were devoted to destruction, while Rahab and her family were spared.
- **Calibrating an Eternal Perspective:** Divine execution often challenges human sensibilities, but we must view judgment through God's eternal perspective. For believers and young children, eternal presence with Christ is far better than earthly life; for the unfaithful, cutting off evil influence protects the world.

- **No Material Plunder:** Restricting plunder, livestock, and metals made clear that conquering Canaan was not about personal material gain—it served as a type of tithe or firstfruits dedicated entirely to God's purpose.

III. The Lesson of Ai: Strength vs. Power

- **Human Overconfidence:** Assessing Ai as a minor target, Israel sent only a small force and suffered a humbling defeat, losing 36 men.
 - [Joshua 7:3](#) — Spies underestimated Ai and advised sending only two or three thousand men.
 - [Joshua 7:20–21](#) — Defeat occurred because Achan coveted and took forbidden spoils from Jericho.
- **Jericho vs. Ai Contrast:** At Jericho, Israel was 40,000 strong against 2,000, yet victory came solely by God's power. At Ai, human estimation failed because God was not with them.
- **Acknowledging God's Sovereignty:** Sometimes God graciously makes easy things hard or impossible things possible so that we acknowledge Him. Our primary calling is not worldly success or plunder, but eternal rescue.
 - [2 Corinthians 5:18–20](#) — Believers are entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation as ambassadors for Christ.
 - [Matthew 28:18–20](#) — The Great Commission commands us to go and make disciples of all nations.

IV. Sin as Disobedience & The Renewal at Shechem

- **God Defines Righteousness:** After Achan's sin was judged, God commanded Israel to attack Ai again, this time allowing them to take livestock and plunder.
 - [Joshua 8:1–2](#) — Israel set an ambush and destroyed Ai, taking the plunder as directed by God.
- **The Nature of Sin:** Taking plunder was wrong at Jericho and right at Ai because God commanded it. Sin is not an abstract quality of evil; it is active disobedience and rebellion against God's sovereign authority.
 - [John 8:31–32](#) — Abiding in Christ's word brings true discipleship, knowledge of the truth, and freedom.

- **Covenant Renewal at Shechem:** After defeating Ai, Joshua led Israel north to Shechem—a site where Abraham built an altar 700 years earlier.
 - [Genesis 12:6–7](#) — The Lord appeared to Abram at Shechem, promising the land to his offspring.
 - [Deuteronomy 27:1–8](#) — Moses commanded the building of an altar of uncut stones inscribed clearly with the Law.
 - [Joshua 8:32–35](#) — Joshua inscribed the Law on stones and read the entire Torah aloud to all Israel assembled between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim.

V. The Southern & Northern Campaigns

- **The Gibeonite Alliance:** The Hivites of Gibeon used deception to secure a covenant peace treaty with Israel.
- **Defending Gibeon & The Southern Campaign:** Hearing of Gibeon's alignment with Israel, the King of Jebus built a southern coalition to attack Gibeon. Israel defended their allies, and God fought for Israel with miraculous hail and by stopping the sun.
 - [Joshua 10:11–14](#) — God threw down large hailstones and halted the sun as Israel routed the Amorite coalition.
- **Northern Conquest & Allotment:** Northern Canaanite kings formed a massive alliance, but Joshua conquered them over an extended period as their hearts were hardened in judgment.
 - [Joshua 11:18–20](#) — Joshua made war a long time, fulfilling God's sovereign plan of judgment.
- **Faithful Completion:** Joshua conquered the region and allotted the land among the tribes, proving God's 700-year faithfulness and the necessity of His people's obedience.

Call to Worship: [Psalm 119:33–40](#)

Benediction: [Luke 11:28](#)