

How is life going for you now?

- *Are you struggling, under pressure, afraid?*
- *Feel like you fight one battle after another?*
- *In today's lesson, I've got some encouragement for you as we look at.....*

Your Notes

Book of Joshua

9 Lessons on how to fight and win in the battles of life

The first step to winning the battles of life

- Realize you are in a battle!
- The Bible describes the Christian life in this way:
- *This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.* Eph. 6:12(MSG)
- *Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, just as I do; and as Christ's soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in worldly affairs, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army.*
2 Timothy 2:3-7 Living Bible (TLB)
- Very different than many contemporary ideas of the Christian life today, but true.

The book of Joshua can help us as Charles Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers, said in his commentary on Joshua

- *A merely nominal profession is easy enough to make and to maintain after the manner of the times; **but to be a Christian indeed, through and through, to eat, and drink, and sleep eternal life, to live the life of God on earth — this is the work, this is the difficulty.***
- *As soon as you are washed in Christ's blood and clothed in his righteousness, you must begin to hew your way through a lane of enemies, right up to the eternal throne. Every foot of the way will be disputed; not an inch will Satan yield to you. You must continue daily to fight.. . .*
- https://www.preceptaustin.org/spurgeon_on_joshua

These battles are part of the process of sanctification

- Sanctification is defined as: "being set apart for God's use"
- As relating to the Christian life, after we are justified or made right with God, after we trust Jesus to be our Savior, we then begin the journey of sanctification where God intends for us to grow and become more and more like Jesus.
- This is a process that will not be complete in this life—this is what the battle consists of, **and it will continue through all of life.**
- Just as the experience of the Exodus was a picture of salvation from sin, the book of Joshua is a picture of sanctification in both what to do and what not to do.
- So, let's get into it.....

The book of Joshua opens

- After 40 years of wandering, Israel finally gets to enter the Promised Land.
- Moses died just before going into the Promised Land and passed on leadership to Joshua.

- **God was giving it to them, but they still had to fight for it.**
- We can learn from what they did well and how they failed to help us in our battles.

Our plan in this lesson—

9 Lessons from the book of Joshua

- **How to fight and win in the battles of life**
- **Lesson 1:** God's blessings often include challenges
- **Lesson 2:** Successful Battle Plans must be founded on God's Word
- **Lesson 3:** Trust that God goes before you to prepare for victory
- **Lesson 4:** Make sure of your foundational and complete obedience
- **Lesson 5:** Do things God's Way, no matter what
- **Lesson 6:** If you disobey and sin, deal with it
- **Lesson 7:** Don't trust appearances, always seek God's will
- **Lesson 8:** Quitting the battle too soon can have unimaginable, negative consequences
- **Lesson 9:** Never let age or any other excuse cause you to drop out of the battle—finish strong!

Lesson 1: God's blessings often include challenges

- One of the most important things to learn in the Christian life, is to not be surprised at troubles and challenges.
- Or to think we've had enough.
- The Children of Israel had been delivered from Egypt and wandered for 40 years.
- After all that the new generation had 7 years of bloody battles ahead.
- When we face yet another challenge, we often ask "why?" Here are two reasons:

One, To grow us to Christian maturity

- *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; (trials of many kinds) Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2*
- To understand how this relates to Christian maturity, we need to understand the real meaning of "perfect" = *teleios in Greek*.
- It doesn't mean without sin.
- **τέλειος *teleios***, tel'-i-os; from [G5056](#); complete in . . . mental and moral character, etc., brought to its end, finished, complete.
- Trials, challenges, enable us to **become complete spiritually, [perfect]** to be mature in our faith and trust.

Rick Warren sums it up this way

- *"Why doesn't God just take away all your problems?*
- *Because God uses tough times to grow your character. If you never had any problems, your persistence, determination, diligence, and patience would never have a chance to grow. God's work in your life during hard times makes having these character traits possible."*
- Be thankful God cares enough to take you through the growing times.

Two, so we can comfort others

- *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the*

comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

- Our sufferings are not always just about us.
- People are watching, learning from what we do.
- Not only people, but there is a spiritual audience also.
- Remember the story of Job—he had everything, and Satan challenged God, “Does Job serve God for nothing?”

A rather scary thought

- That we might lose what is precious to us,
- Or be tempted in some horrific way,
- To show to Satan (and to ourselves) and others (whatever spiritual audiences there might be) **that no matter what, we will affirm that we serve a good God.**
- Remember that Job never knew **why** he went through what he went through.

We may be in a similar situation

- It isn't popular to say God might allow horrid things and you'll never on this earth know why, but that is reality.
- What an incredible witness that can be if you trust God no matter what—that you shake your fist at the heavens and declare, “I serve a good God.”
- Think about it, when you are in a trial, big or little—what if you knew all of heaven was watching, wouldn't you want God to say of you— “Look at my servant Ken or John, Mary or Beth—and they still trust me, no matter how they suffered what you (Satan) caused.”
- Whether we are aware of that or not—that reality is true—all of heaven is watching how you handle trials—do them in a way that God can be proud of you as His servant....to help in that, let's continue....

Lesson 2: Successful Battle Plans must be founded on God's Word

- ***“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Joshua 1:7-9***
- We must know God's Word to do what is right when we are confronted with challenges.
- There will always be “human” ways to get what we want that will seem easier, more appealing—but that will not result in the spiritual growth through the trial that will result if we do it according to God's way.

To be able to respond to battles according to God's Word

- ***We need to know God's word***
- Both the overall picture of what pleases God and what doesn't, as well as the specifics of what He wants us to do and not do.
- This is especially important these days as there is a loss of common decency and morality in our culture and media.
- We need to know God's Word and HIS standards ahead of time so well,

we don't have to stop and think, "Should I, or shouldn't I?"

- To use an old analogy, the federal agents for counterfeit crimes don't focus their time studying all the varieties of counterfeit currency—what they study to the most minute detail is the Real THING
- Then they can spot a counterfeit without hesitation.
- You need to be able to do that in the spiritual world.

Lesson 3—Trust that God goes before you to prepare for victory

- **40 years earlier the spies were afraid of the people in the land, but when they came into the land, they found out the people were afraid of them!**
- Remember the story of Jericho—Joshua sends spies, Rahab hides them, and before they leave, she says:
- *Josh. 2: 8-11 Before the spies were down for the night, the woman came up to them on the roof and said, "I know that God has given you the land. We're all afraid. Everyone in the country feels hopeless. We heard how God dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt, and what he did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you put under a holy curse and destroyed. We heard it and our hearts sank. We all had the wind knocked out of us. And all because of you, you and God, your God, God of the heavens above and God of the earth below.*

For the last 40 years

- The people of Canaan that they were afraid of had been trembling in fear of them!
- **Application: If God calls you to do something—He has prepared resources, your audience, many things you won't see until you step out in faith.**
- **In addition, God often has people who are ready and willing to help. As Mr. Rogers said, "Look for the helpers."**
- They may be unlikely ones that God will put in your path perhaps for you to change their lives—keep your eyes open.
- People like Rahab, a prostitute who helped the spies and became an ancestor of Jesus and a woman commended for her faith with the heroes of the faith in Heb. 11.

Lesson 4: Make sure of your foundational & complete obedience

- After the spies returned after visiting Jericho before they could fight all the males who had grown up since leaving Egypt needed to be circumcised.
- Circumcision was the sign given to Abraham that they were God's people, but they hadn't done it in 40 years.
- They also celebrated the Passover—remembering God's deliverance.
- **Application on foundational obedience:** Where are you on foundational obedience? Have you accepted Jesus as Savior? Been baptized? Part of a body of believers? As obedient as you can be to what you know to do?
- Can't expect God's help in larger battles if you aren't obedient in these foundational areas.

Lesson 5: Do things God's way no matter what

- The children of Israel were told to DESTROY everything in Jericho.
- Aachen coveted some of the spoils, took them, hid them and because of that sin Israel lost in next battle.
- **We can't pick and choose how we obey God**

- Not only we alone, but others may suffer because of it—many died including Aachen and his family because he thought he could get away with disobeying God.
- When this happens....

Lesson 6: If you disobey and sin—deal with it

- *Joshua cried out to the Lord, “O Jehovah, why have you brought us over the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites kill us? Why weren’t we content with what we had? Why didn’t we stay on the other side? ⁸ O Lord, what am I to do now that Israel has fled from her enemies! ⁹ For when the Canaanites and the other nearby nations hear about it, they will surround us and attack us and wipe us out. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?”*
- *¹⁰⁻¹¹ But the Lord said to Joshua, “**Get up off your face!** Israel has sinned and disobeyed my commandment and has taken loot when I said it was not to be taken; and they have not only taken it, they have lied about it and have hidden it among their belongings. ¹² That is why the people of Israel are being defeated. That is why your men are running from their enemies—for they are cursed. I will not stay with you any longer unless you completely rid yourselves of this sin. Joshua 7:8-12*
- God didn’t want Joshua to wallow in regret, sadness, whatever—He told him to deal with it.

APPLICATION: When things go badly

- Pause, pray, ask God if any sin involved—if you honestly don’t know.
- Or if you are disappointed with yourself, your sin, your habits, or whatever the issue...
- **Get up off your face!**
- Deal with it, no matter how hard it might be.
- *If we confess our sins....He will forgive and cleanse,*
1 John 1:9.
- We must confess and then accept God’s forgiveness.
- We then need to get up off our face and get back into the battle.

Don’t wallow or throw a pity party or think God can never use you again

- Yes, you may have been quite horrible recently or in the past,
- But excessive wallowing can be an excuse, a reason to hide and not be part of the battle.
- Two helpful quotes at that time....
- *No sin which we are capable of committing has ever taken God by surprise for He knew we were just like that. Alan Redpath*
- *I think that if God forgives us, we must forgive ourselves, otherwise, it is almost like setting ourselves up as a higher tribunal than Him. C.S. Lewis*
- And remember....

Forgiveness isn’t about us being worthy of His forgiveness

- We aren’t. God’s people never have been, and we never will be.
- He used Moses after he murdered a man; Peter after he denied him, Paul to build his church after he tried his hardest to destroy it.
- It’s not that we aren’t as bad as any of them or that any of us deserve forgiveness more than they did.
- The point is our God is eternally gracious and as merciful and as much the God of second chances as He has always been.

- **So, Get up off your face and back into the battle!**

Lesson 7: Don't trust appearances, always seek God's will

- Gibeonite deception—Joshua 9—people who lived nearby pretended to be from far away and asked for peace and the leaders of Israel granted it.
- They didn't ask God for discernment.
- They were then obligated to fight for them and had continuing troubles because of them for generations to come.

Application: ALWAYS take time to seek God's will—no matter what the pressure

- There will almost always be a time pressure to do something too quickly.
- To not wait, in reality means you don't trust God.
- Sadly, there will also often be people who will pressure you to act too quickly, to decide NOW.
- **DON'T do it.**
- ALWAYS....If things don't feel right, if you don't have peace, no matter how good something looks, don't act on it until you know what God wants.

Lesson 8: Quitting the battle too soon can have unimaginable, negative consequences

- They didn't drive out the Canaanites completely—in passage after passage, they quit too soon.
- One example: *There was none of the Anakims [giants] left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. Josh. 11:22*
- These and other pockets of Canaanites left were a source of sin and misery throughout their history.
- *Goliath who David fought was from Gath.*
- And still are today.....
- Gaza strip has been a source of continuous conflict for centuries and in the Middle East even today there are battles. Here is a picture of a destroyed school in Gaza.

A contrasting example of how to finish well from the 1968 Olympics

- In 1968 Olympic marathon, a Tanzanian runner, Akhwari cramped up due to the high altitude of the Mexico City. He fell badly wounding his knee, dislocated and injured his shoulder.
- However, he continued running. He finished last.
- The winner of the marathon, Mamo Wolde of Ethiopia, finished in 2:20:26. Akhwari finished in 3:25:27. There were only a few people left in the stadium and the sun had set.
- As he finally crossed the finish line a cheer came from the small crowd. When interviewed later and asked why he continued running, he said, ***"My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race; they sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race."***

Application

- It is often near the end of a big project or difficult trial that we want to quit.
- It is that LAST 10% that is the hardest—the one more final draft, the last correction, the additional thing added to a ministry outreach—we are exhausted and tempted to think, "it's good enough."

- But that is often the time to press through, press ahead, do the one more thing that needs to be done to do all we know the Lord wants us to do.

What if....

- *What if Jesus had lived his perfect life, healed, and preached—*
- *But did not go to the cross?*
- *He finished what He came to do. He finished his race.*

We are also called to finish our race

- *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2*
- Speaking of Jesus, as this passage in Hebrews says, “For the joy set before him, he endured.” **may we do the same.**

Lesson #9 Never let age or any other excuse cause you to drop out of the battle—finish strong!

- Caleb was one of the spies who trusted God when they first came to the land and now he’s still ready to fight when he says
- *Joshua 14: 10 “Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years . . . **So here I am today, eighty-five years old! ¹¹ I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then.¹² Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.”***
- *[and he did, as it goes on to say,] Hebron has belonged to Caleb. . . .ever since, because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. ¹⁵ (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.)*

Caleb finished the battle when others quit

- He went for the city that the biggest and baddest giant who lived in at that time and defeated him when he was 85 years old.
- Other Israelites ran away; allowed the giants to live among them to their later pain and regret. Caleb continued to obey God in the same way he had as a young man.
- **Application: Age [any age] is irrelevant to eternal people called to serve God.**
- You are never too young to begin to do great things for God.
- Never too busy in middle age.
- And never too old.
- To do what God wants you to do in your dreams, obedience, calling in the Kingdom of God.

In REVIEW:

9 Lessons from the book of Joshua

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Some final words of encouragement from Matthew Henry

- *"We should not pray so much for the removal of an affliction as for wisdom to make a right use of it."*
- *"We only bear the cross for a while, but we shall wear the crown to eternity."*
- May we all be strong in our battles so we can say like Paul at the end of his life, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."* 2 Timothy 4:7-8
- Remember these lessons from the book of Joshua, determine to finish strong, and fight well the battles the Lord gives you for your good and His glory.

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