

Joshua 23

V. 1-2

When Joshua was old, somewhere around 110 years old, he called a meeting to give his final words to the flock. What a blessing to see that he cared to the very end, to see God use his life even at such an old age...may all the seniors be encouraged to know how God can still use your life in a powerful way!

There are some Bible scholars that say chapter 23 is directed to the leaders and chapter 24 is directed to the entire nation.

V. 3

You have seen, what the LORD your God has done!

Let's make sure that we give God all the glory and all the honor and all the credit for all that He has done...especially those of us who have seen first-hand, and experienced God's miracles – how accountable we are!

Verse 3 the points to the past.

Verse 4 points to the present:

V. 4

"You have seen" (v. 3)

"See" (v. 4) – there's that word again

Let's make sure we're not blind to the workings of the Lord, let's make sure we still see the past, and at the same time, that we see the present; I believe that as we pray and really spend that time with the Lord, it's there and then that we see most clearly.

Joshua says, we've divided the land to you and for you, from there around the Jordan River, all the way to the Mediterranean Sea.

You've received your allocation, you've received you're appropriation...

V. 3 is the past, V. 4 is the present, and V. 5 is the future:

V. 5

Now of course, in light of all that we've learned up to this point in the book of Joshua, this is a **conditional** promise and prophecy – IF the people of God did the possible, then God would do the impossible – IF the people of God fought with Spiritual weapons, then God would fight on their behalf – IF the people of God obeyed the Word of God then they would experience the promise of God – and the Lord presents the future to them – what do you think – would you like this type of future?

A future of fulfillment; a future of fruitfulness; a future of faithfulness; a future for you and your children after you in which God opens the windows of heaven and rains down blessing upon you?

I'm reminded of God's promise in the book of Malachi 3:10, "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try me now in this, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."

The book of Malachi, the book of Joshua, this book we call the Bible is, in many ways, simply a book of how God wants to bless your lives - even more so.

So Joshua says, you've seen the past – what God has done

You see the present – what He's given you to be and do

And God says to me, in v. 5, if I do things God's way, one thing I won't see, is my enemy having victory over me, persistently (read v. 5 again).

"And drive them out of your sight..."

I think for many Christians, they see way too much of the enemy; in settling down, they've settled for so much less than what God really has to offer.

Joshua knows that this is a great danger, so at the age of 110, as he's about to die, he musters up the strength to speak to the leaders, which is where this starts...it should then flow to and through all of the fellowship.

So notice now the exhortation from Joshua:

V. 6-11

We see first of all the exhortation, which is an address or communication emphatically urging someone to do something.

1. Courageous Obedience to God's Word (6-10)
2. Careful Love for God (11)

1. Courageous Obedience to God's Word (5-10)

Take courage to keep it, take courage to do it; take courage to do **all** that is written in it, not veering to the right or the left, but sticking to this track of truth.

What would this mean for the children of Israel **then**?

It would mean that they would have to take God at His word and do war with the enemy nations that were still among them. It meant that they would have to face fierce opposition, ginormous giants; it meant that they'd have to challenge chariots of iron...this is why Joshua brings up the concept of courage.

Unfortunately, many of God's people only go so far, and no further, not really wanting to dig deep and to face those giants, to deal with those issues, and give God their heart in 100% sanctification.

Some Christians even think that such a message is not right, calling us not only fanatical, but heretical. But I'm here to tell you today, that God wants you to go all the way, every day and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to drive out the sin from within, the sin that has settled down in our lives, the sin we've given nice accommodations, made necessary adjustments, and learned to live together with.

Perhaps it's prayerlessness, or love-lessness; maybe you're lazy, or crazy; it might be pride, or maybe you hide from that relationship in which you've learned to make modify so you can continue to live in sin.

It could be alcohol, it could be anger; it might be pornography, a lack of modesty...all I'm saying is just don't let it linger any longer – and don't be afraid to drive these things out of your life, and out of your "land."

Take courage for whatever the call may be. Often-times like a Martin Luther, or a William Tyndale you might have to risk your own life in order to do what God's called you to do...going against the flow of your so-called friends.

Like Joseph of Arimathea. We read in [Mark 15:43](#) "Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking **courage**, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus."

It's good to be courageous in simple faith...and at the same time, our courage can grow with the love of the brethren. This is what happened to Paul. [Acts 28:15](#) "And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took **courage**."

If we don't take courage to fight and do what's right, Joshua says we will have some very unhealthy roommates (v. 7).

It's inevitable...when you let the world in, and ways of the world within, the devastations of the nations will lead us into idolatry, which is the equivalent to Spiritual adultery. It becomes so subtle...we put other things before God.

Joshua is warning the nation against Apostasy. So we read in:

V. 8-10.

Once again the exhortation (v. 8), the explanation (v. 9) and the promise (v. 10)

Similar to what we read in *Joshua 1:7-9, the message hasn't changed.

We need to have Courageous Obedience to God's Word, and secondly:

2. Careful Love for God (11)

You might know John 14:15, 21 - if we love the LORD we will keep His commandments; this is how we will know if we love the LORD, by whether or not we obey Him.

But whatever you do, don't think that our love starts there; no, our love is not birthed with even the slightest bit of burden.

Our love for Him, starts with His love for us: [1 John 4:19](#) "We love Him because He first loved us."

[1 John 4:10](#) "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

And so, if you're having a hard time obeying God, it's because you're not loving God, and in order to rectify that, take time - to get to know Him, walk with Him talk with Him, bask in Him, and ask Him to reveal Himself to you.

Joshua says, "take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God."

Verses 6-11 is an holy exhortation; verses 12-13 is a heavy warning:

V. 12-13

What will happen if Jesus is not Lord of ALL?

1. Defeat (12-13a)

How important is that heart of sanctification, how vital is the truth of separation.

Jesus said we are Not of this World (John 17:16).

It's amazing for me to see how God's people can drift so far away, that they even marry non-believers, and yet the Bible clearly forbids this.

*2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

First the command 6:14a, "do not be unequally yoked..."

Why would you hook up with a non-believer?

Paul says, there's No fellowship, No communion, No accord, No part, No agreement with one another. Imagine that, not being able to talk about the Lord and the things of the Lord, unable to communicate at the deepest level; no harmony, stuck with someone, with whom you will be, unable to agree on the most important issues of life.

Paul uses some vivid contrasts:

Righteousness/lawlessness

Light/darkness

Christ/Belial (a name for Satan = worthless and wicked)

Believer/unbeliever

God/idols

They do not belong together, they cannot coexist;

Do not be unequally yoked, not only for what it does to you, but primarily because of who lives in you (v. 16 again).

Be so careful to maintain righteous relationships, courtships and friendships:

1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits.""

Psalms 106:35, "But they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works."

If you do, it will lead to: #1 defeat (12-13a)

2. Torture (13b)

Imagine them having thorns in their eyes; it's hard enough when we get an eyelash in there, imagine having a thorn stuck in your eye.

How bout a life of scourging – weapons to whip them – leather stands weighed down with pieces of bone or metal, wearing away, and tearing away at their bodies.

They can't even walk their way in peace; surrounded by snares and tons of traps that rob them of enjoying a stroll in the sunset.

Defeat and torture and:

3. Death (13c)

To perish is not pretty, the peace is gone, good promises are gone, vomited out of the land, it's the escalation of devastation, in a life of one of God's children that refuses to listen to their Father.

This is what eventually happened to the Jews, in 722 B.C. it was the northern Kingdom of Israel; and then in 586 B.C it was the southern Kingdom of Judah.

The message is simple, I'm reminded of the message from Moses:

Deuteronomy 11:26 “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse:”

Deuteronomy 30:19 “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;”

So someone says, “Well that's Moses, Jesus would never say anything like that!” O really? Have you not read ***Matthew 7:21-27?**

Joshua was a picture of Jesus.

And so, before Joshua died, he laid it all out before the people to encourage them to live a life of good-old-fashioned-obedience. A weighty word of warning.

V. 14-16

God is not a liar; He keeps His Word.

You tell you're kid you're going to play ball with him – do you follow through on your promise? “Yes, and we had a great time!”

You tell your kid he's going to get in trouble if he disrespects his mom, do you follow through on your threat? "Yes, and it was a heavy lesson."

If we don't - shame on us, we're not true to our word.

If we do - good; and yet, how much more does God keep His promises?

Joshua warned the people of God against **apostasy**;

He wanted them then, and us to be a **theocracy**, governed by God; where Jesus is my Savior and Jesus is my **Lord**, it was all part of the agreement we made with Him, from the very beginning.

Romans 10:9 "that if you confess with your mouth the **Lord** Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

May God help us to live lives of:

1. Courageous Obedience to God's Word (5-10)
2. (caused by a) Careful Love for God (11)

Lest we experience:

1. Defeat (12-13a)
2. Torture (13b)
3. Death (13c)