

# **Joshua 23-24**

## **“Possessing the Land – part three”**

### **Introduction – read Joshua 23:1-5**

- Tonight we come to the end of our study in the book of Joshua - And as you remember from last week this book is divided into three sections

### **The Book of Joshua**

#### **Entering the promise land – Joshua 1-5**

#### **Conquering the promise land – Joshua 6-12**

#### **Possessing the promise land – Joshua 13-24**

- God told Abraham hundreds of years before – I will give your descendants this land
  - And the book of Joshua is the story of how God keeps His promises

### **As we now come to the end of the book, Joshua as he says in the opening we just read, He is old**

- when we put the chronology together he is somewhere between 100 and 110
  - and yet Joshua is not done, he does not use age as an excuse
  - He is going to keep going until the day God takes Him home
- Sometimes we can get in our mind – I’m old, its time for the next generation to take over – I’m 36 and all washed up, the Lord can’t use me anymore
  - But in reality Moses didn’t even start his public ministry until he was 80, Joshua was very similar in age when he took over for Moses

### **We can’t use age either way as an excuse**

- we can’t say, I’m too old to serve the Lord because Moses and Joshua would beg to differ with you
  - nor can we say – well I’m just a kid – because Daniel, Jeremiah were teenagers when they started serving the Lord
- No matter what age or what stage, we need to be willing to follow the Lord with all of our heart in whatever He calls us to do

### **Joshua, a great example of this, calls first the elders of Israel together in chapter 23 and then the whole congregation in chapter 24, and then he gives them one final sermon to help them continue in victory**

- you see the major battles at this time had been won
  - but they needed to continue in victory
  - they needed to keep fighting against the enemy
- God has given to many of us great victory in our walks with Him
  - But we also need to continue in that victory until the Lord takes us home
- And Joshua, with 100 plus years’ experience, gives them a four point sermon in how to continue in victory
  - And this really speaks to me, because I would think it be all about military strategy
  - I would think coming from a general it would be about maintaining the high ground and keeping the upper edge
- But notice what He says, and remember it comes from a man who knows, He has been walking with God, watching God work, learning from Moses for all of his life
  - He says in verse 5, God will give you victory, but you have to do your part – what part???

### **The 4 Keys to Continued Victory – Joshua 23-24**

#### **#1 – Stay in the Word – Joshua 23:6**

#### **#2 – Stay out of the world – Joshua 23:7**

#### **#3 – Stick with the Lord – Joshua 23:8-16**

#### **#4 – Serve only one God – Joshua 24:1-33**

- Let’s look at those one at a time

## **The 4 Keys to Continued Victory – Joshua 23-24**

### **#1 – Stay in the Word – Joshua 23:6**

- The first exhortation is to stay in the Word!
  - Sometimes I hear people say, well I know you guys at Calvary Chapel are “real teach through the Bible” people, but there is so much more to Christianity
  - We need to feed the hungry and provide homes for the homeless
- And personally I think those are wonderful things – our faith should give us a love for people and a desire to minister to them practically
  - But one thing we can not ever get away from is being men and women of this book

### **The reason is so often we are pulled in one direction or another**

- philosophies and ways of thinking start to gain popularity on TV and the leaders of our country
  - and because we live in the world and are influenced by the world – our hearts have a tendency to drift
- And that is why I need a rock to come back to, something that does not change that does not alter, to course correct if you will the messages I hear all the time outside those walls

### **It is important that we stay in the word corporately because there is always the tendency for me as a pastor to preach on what I like**

### **I like prophecy, to be quite honest, there is some great stuff in there but I am not a huge fan of laws in Leviticus and ceremonial laws in Numbers and Deuteronomy**

- I love history and so I am like a kid in a candy store for the next year, year and half as we work our way through the history of Israel

### **But here is the deal, one of the reasons I am a Calvary Chapel pastor is not because I don't love Baptist or Presbyterians or Pentecostals**

- but I'm a Calvary Chapel Pastor because I know we are committed to go though the whole Counsel of God
  - and when we are determined to do that – we will be exposed to everything God wants us exposed to

### **If Pastor Rob or I only taught on what excites us, well then you would have a steady diet of things we think are cool**

- but that is not good
  - I am a well rounded eater, but if I had one last meal, it would involve steak and buttery carbs – I love that stuff
  - But if that is only what I ate, I would not be healthy
- And so too – I don't want to only preach on sin, I want to also preach on the love of God
  - We need to hear both
  - Our hearts need to be exposed to both
  - So we don't get off track in this world

### **We need to stay in the Word corporately, but we also need to stay in the Word individually**

- If we don't stay in the word, we can get off as a church, and if we don't stay in the word, we can get off track as individuals as well

### **I remember when I was a youth pastor, money was super tight and we were trying to figure out how we could get a place of our own and so I decided – hey the people of Israel tithed to the Levities and the Levities tithed to the family of Aaron, and Aaron as priest of the Lord just lived for the Lord**

- I am a priest, I am pastor – instead of giving to a church, I am just going to put that money into a place for Christy and I to live because, you know, because we are the King's kids and God wants us happy – I am such a great talker into
  - And the more I thought about it, the better it sounded

- Until the next day I just happened to be reading through the Bible in the book of Haggai

**And you know now I have been through the Word so many times I kind of know what's coming – but at this stage in my life I had no idea what Haggai was about and then I read this...**

**“Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?" Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: " Consider your ways!"” – Haggai 1:3-5**

- Oh – so it's not a good idea
  - From that day forward Christy and I have not ceased to give to the Lord. Sure things get tight at times like for all of us, but we have never wanted for anything – It was a Biblical Course correction – thank you Jesus!

And I hear from time to time – I don't want to tell people to read their bibles, but I don't want them to have some kind of legalism on them – I don't know how many times my wife and I have been fighting, then God changes one of our hearts through the Word, our kids – who doesn't want the people around them influenced daily by the Word – I don't get it

**If you do nothing, this world will pull you off track, even just a bit**

- but you have heard the classic illustration – that if you leave San Diego on an airplane headed for Hawaii, first of all I am jealous, secondly though if the pilot is one degree off his course, you will miss the islands completely and then I am not so jealous
  - This world will pull you off course
  - So you need to stay in the word and get constantly course corrected
- You want continued victory – stay in the Word and...

**The 4 Keys to Continued Victory – Joshua 23-24**

**#1 – Stay in the Word – Joshua 23:6**

**#2 – Stay out of the world – Joshua 23:7**

- Secondly we need to stay out of the world
  - If I want to walk in victory I need to stay in the Word but I also need to stay out of the world

**Now I know we live in the world, we are called to be salt and light in this world**

- In no way do I think it is God's heart that we build Christian communes and put walls up between us and the people of the world
  - No – that is the opposite of the great commission – to go into the world and make disciples of Jesus
  - We need to be in the world

**But just a boat is designed to be in the water, it is certainly not designed for the water to be in it**

- there is a fine line between being a religious prude and unrighteous dude
  - but I think we have the balance and the example in Jesus
- Jesus loved the people in the world – Jesus spent time with people in the world, sinners in the world, but He never compromised with it

**It is really high time that we get our heads out of the sand and realize – that there is a lost world out there to reach, but there is also a world system**

- there are sermons being preached out to you with every song and every TV show and movie we watch
  - the world is a powerful and persuasive preacher, better than I will ever be at swaying hearts
- and we must get our heads out of the sand and understand the way to reach the lost in the world is not to be influenced and altered at our core by the same system that is ripping them off

- but we are altered and we are influenced by the Word of God and life of God's people
- and then we go into the world as a light into a dark place
- as living water where there is only thirst
- And we change our culture from the inside out, not become changed from the insider out
  - You want victory – stay in the Word
  - Stay out of the world

### **The 4 Keys to Continued Victory – Joshua 23-24**

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#### **#3 – Stick with the Lord – Joshua 23:8-16**

- The third key to victory is to simply stick with Jesus, cling to Him
  - Hey listen to me – in relationships of any kind you can not beat good old fashion time spent
- With your spouse – how would your marriage be if you were together for 10 minutes every Tuesday and Saturday
  - In trouble is what it would be
  - I need to spend time with my wife – and as we spend time together, the relationship just improves

### **Listen, listen – marriage is a great picture of what God intends our relationship with Jesus to be like**

- you can't beat good old fashion time spent
  - when I draw near to Him He draws near to me
  - when I decide I am going to go take a walk and talk things over with Him
- I am really tempted to go in a direction I know is detrimental, but I want to talk it over with the Lord
  - So often when time is spent – I am changed because He is so lovely – He is so wonderful
  - It is a great God that you and I serve

### **And the problem so often when I don't want to trust in Him, when I don't want to follow Him**

- it is because I don't really know Him, I don't really remember who I'm trusting, who I am following
  - Joshua reminds the people – not a Word of the good things that God said He would do have failed toward you
  - Joshua reminds the people – He is lovely – He is worthy for us to follow
- It happens with good old time spent

### **Listen to what King David said...**

**“Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak. Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them. O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is your help and your shield.” - Psalm 115:4-9**

- David tells us another reason to stay away from the things the world worships is we eventually become like what we worship
  - And though that is a great warning to stay away from idolatry, it is a great encouragement to be with Jesus

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### #4 – Serve only one God – Joshua 24:1-33

- In the final chapter of this book Joshua presses the children of Israel to make a choice
  - And he starts with the basis for that choice – look with me at the first 13 verses

#### **Joshua reminds them of how good God has been to them**

- that God called their forefathers when they lived in a different land and worship false gods
  - God called Abraham out of that, and gave him Isaac and He gave Isaac Jacob
  - And God took Jacob and his sons down to Egypt
- Gave them the best of the land where they multiplied from 70 people to 2 million
  - And then God got them out of Egypt with a miraculous hand
  - And brought them through the wilderness
  - Gave them victory in Canaan and now they live in cities they didn't build and eat fruit from trees they did not plant
- God had been so good to them – it should have been an easy choice

#### **Yeah for them – but I haven't seen anything like that in my life**

- Wait just a second! - God called you out of darkness just like he called Abraham
  - God has saved you from the bondage of sin like He did the children of Israel from Egypt
- Yes I'm sure you have had hard things happened to you – we do live in a fallen world with sin and consequences

#### **But all the time God has been there**

- and if you trust Him and walk with Him, He leads into good things
  - from glory to great glory
  - there is no one like our Jesus
- So the choice should be obvious!

#### **It was for Joshua – Joshua 24:14-15**

- you have to make a choice
  - you need to choose to follow the Lord and by that, to choose not to follow the false gods of this world
  - you need to choose
- And for Joshua the choice was obvious!
  - As we looked at on Sunday – He declared – as for me and my house we will serve the Lord

#### **And that was first of all a bold declaration**

- we are going to serve the Lord – this is not a option for my family
  - we are going to make the tough choices, we are going to take serious spiritual things
  - we are going to walk with the Lord
- And your family needs you to be strong – not to just hope it works out – it won't just work out
  - They need you to lead them, of course in love, of course with kindness and joy
  - But you need to lead them and say to your family – we are going to serve the Lord!
  - It was a proclamation

#### **But it was also a sobering realization**

- we are going to serve the Lord – if I do what God has called me to do, this is what is going to happen

God lays before them a very clear choice – God who dwells outside of time, He can see what will happen in our lives if we choose to follow Him and He can see what will happen if we choose not to follow Him – and He declares to Israel clearly the ramifications of their decisions



**But Joshua sees it as a prophecy – I am going to serve the Lord, and if I will serve the Lord – this is what is going to happen in my family**

- Joshua understood it starts with him
  - He needed to serve the Lord
  - And as He made the choice to serve the Lord, the family would follow
- This is something I think we forget or the enemy tricks us into thinking its not true
  - Dad, Mom, if you want your kids to serve the Lord – you need to serve the Lord - Who you want your kids to be, is who you need to be

**Do you have little secrets things that you think no one knows about and no one sees and it's not affecting your family at all?**

- can I tell you because I love you, that is ridiculous
  - Jesus said speaking of secretly loving Him and worshiping Him – what you do in secret God will reward you for openly
  - In other words – what you sow in secret you will reap
- David at 16 years old was a giant killer and in II Samuel 21 toward the end of his life, God is listing David's mighty men – and what has always ministered to me about it, is one after the other, you see they giant killers too
  - Now Saul the first king of Israel when the scriptures talk about his mighty men – they never killed a giant, why – because Saul never did
- Something is transferred in the Spirit when you and I as leaders of our home, as leaders of our church, say – we are going to serve the Lord
  - I know its start with me – I want to love your Word, I want to love worship and prayer and time spent with you

**And I believe as I love you, as I choose you Lord, my family may have some bumps and hiccups because we all have to make our own choices**

- but by faith I believe, because it starts with me, as for me and my house we will serve the Lord

**It's a bold declaration and sobering realization, but Joshua also lists a problem – look with me in verse 16-33**

- Joshua says, you can't serve the Lord
  - What???? – not a very good pastor
  - Walk back to your seat, you are not cut out for this
- But Joshua is being honest with them, because he knows something in verse 23 – that they have foreign gods among them, in their tents
  - This wasn't theoretical – it was real
  - And Joshua knows you can not serve two masters

**You can make all the declarations you want – I will serve the Lord**

- but if there are foreign gods, you won't
  - you can not serve god and the world
  - we trick ourselves into thinking – I can, I compartmentalize my life – and this part of my life is for the Lord and this is for other stuff and it is okay
- no it is not okay - Jesus said ...

**“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.” – Matthew 6:24**

- you can't have both
  - you are either serving the Lord or you are not
  - you are either worshiping the Lord alone or you are not

**And I think it would be a great exercise for all of us to pray through the things that we allow in our lives and in our homes**

- I am not going to list things as examples, because I am not your master – Pastor Rob is not your Lord and savior

- But you do have a Master – you do have a Lord
- And you can go to Him and pray
- Lord are there things in my life that are leading my heart astray
  - Are these things I allow in my home and in my mind that take me purposely, let's not forget it is the plan of the enemy
  - That takes me purposely off course
- Identify those things, something I am watching, something I am listening to, something I am clicking on, something I am reading
  - Is it from you, glorifying you
  - Or it is glorying a god, and ideal of this world
  - I can't serve two gods
  - And there is no one like you
  - So show me – because as for me and my house we will serve the Lord

**Now you might say, well I have prayed about that – and the Lord is fine with me filling my head with that kind of stuff**

- I used to be so bothered by that – I would encourage someone that what they were involved with was harmful to their walks with God and they would declare, well I have prayed about that and the Lord says it's okay
  - How could that be
  - The Lord is not the author of confusion
  - But I was confused until I came across this passage in Ezekiel 14

**“Now some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity.” – Ezekiel 14:1-2**

- Now stop right there – I don't know if there is a better description of what we do as Americans when it comes to false gods that turn our hearts than, “they put before them that which causes them to stumble.”
  - But God goes on to say in verse 3

**“Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them? “Therefore speak to them, and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD: “Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols.” – Ezekiel 14:3-4**

- did you hear that
  - If you are going to ignore the warnings of the Lord and let idols just dominate your heart and your home
  - Then when you come and pray to the Lord – Lord is this really an issue? – Totally not
- God says through Ezekiel – I am going to let the idol answer you, it is the voice of the idol you are going to hear
  - That is heavy, but it explains so much

**A guy has set up the idol of lust in his heart and he tells me I am leaving my family for this other girl, I say, “don't do it, it will destroy you” – well I have prayed about it and God wants me to be happy**

- danger – it's not the voice of God, it's the voice of your idol who wants to destroy you

**Maybe you would say – Jason I don't know about that**

- but I do know you are kind of scarring me tonight
  - listen – Joshua didn't want the people to be deceived
  - He didn't want them to go off track
- And so he encourages them to stay in the word and out of the world, and cling to Jesus

- And I think his exhortation is as critical today with me and with you as was to the nation of Israel many years ago

**You are shaped and molded by what you worship**

- You will become like that you worship
  - If you worship the gods of this world, they will slowly change you into their image
- If you worship the Lord
  - Day by day, moment by moment – He will change you into the image of His son

**“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” – II Corinthians 3:18**

- You cling to the Lord
  - You make Him your God
  - Repent from these other gods
  - And He will change you by His Spirit
  - And that is what we need and our families need