

Joshua 9

The Danger of Walking by Sight

Now we left off last week with Israel in the Valley between Mt. Ebal & Mt. Gerizim,

A) It was there they would reaffirm their commitment to the Lord,

B) While they were there the kings in Canaan were getting ready to attack.

C) They had heard about the defeats at Jericho and Ai and were not about to give up without a fight. Plan was to UNITE

1) It was time for them to go on the offensive and attack these Jewish invaders.

D) But Israel's greatest danger wasn't the confederation of the armies of Canaan.

1) It was a group of men from Gibeon who were about to enter the camp and deceive Joshua and the Leaders of Israel. – See tonight

And it came to pass when all the kings who were on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard about it, 2 that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord. 3 But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4 they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors.

And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, 5 old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. 6 And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.”

7 Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?”

8 But they said to Joshua, “We are your servants.” And Joshua said to them, “Who are you, and where do you come from?”

9 So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the Lord your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, 10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at

Ashtaroth. 11 Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, “We are your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us.” ’ 12 This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. 13 And these wineskins which we filled were new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.”

14 Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.

15 So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.

When God promised the land of Canaan to Moses, God SPECIFICALLY told them that they were NOT to make any alliances or treaties with the inhabitants of the land. (Deut. 7:1-6)

A) Instead, they were to UTTERLY destroy them

B) The reason for this command was the people whom they would find living in the land would be involved in perverse life styles & religious Practices

C) They sacrificed infants to their false gods. They worshipped their gods in all sorts of sexually perverse acts.

1) The very nature of their religious practices were grossly immoral

D) God wanted every aspect of that to be REMOVED from the land.

1) Because God knew that if ANY of that was to remain that it could eventually infect and destroy His people.

So God ordered that these people & their religious practices to be destroyed

Their places of worship destroyed./ Their idols destroyed.

A) There could be NO covenants... NO peace treaties with them.

So the UNGODLY influences could not co-exist with God's people

B) Now if that seems harsh to you on God's part – Realize this: God had given the Canaanite people 400yrs to repent of their wickedness – Refused

C) So now they were like a Cancer in the land that had to be removed so that it doesn't spread to infect God's people coming into the land

D) None of us – would think ill of a Doctor seeking to eradicate a Cancer from a loved one's body.

1) That is how we need to understand this move on the part of God

Now The Gibeonites FEARED the people of God V.24 – Heard stories

A) When the Gibeonites heard of the conquest of Jericho and Ai, they knew that their number was up.

B) They got together and said: *"We are facing extermination" "We either make a treaty of peaceful co-existence or we die"*

1) Devised a Plan of Deception: Make it look like come from far country....

Clothes tattered / shoes worn / Bread moldy

C) And They were careful to only mention the Victory over Egypt / Amorites & those Kings who were defeated when Israel was in the Wilderness

1) If they talked about the recent stuff – Crossing the Jordan / Jericho / Ai – give away the fact that they lived nearby {Gibeon only 25 miles from Gilgal

D) Now The plot was successful because of what we are told in v.14 that Joshua & the leaders of Israel **DID NOT SEEK the counsel of God.**

1) Had Joshua INQUIRED of the Lord, the Lord would have REVEALED the deception to them.

The Bible declares in Prov 3:5, 6

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your OWN understanding, in ALL your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.”

E) Acknowledge is not an FYI – seek his heart and mind

Israel made this UNGODLY ALLIANCE because they trusted in their own judgment and DID NOT inquire of the Lord.

A) It was All because Joshua and the elders based their decision upon what APPEARED to be OBVIOUS to them

B) "Just look at that bread... ANYONE would know that these guys would have to be from a far away place to have their bread so moldy"

1) "Just look at their shoes and their wineskins and their clothes"

C) They made the Grave Mistake of Walking by Sight instead of by Faith

But Paul declared concerning the Christian: 2 Cor 5:7 *That we are those who walk by faith and not by sight – or feelings*

A) We are to NOT be those who are being led and directed ONLY by our physical senses

1 Jn. 5:4 we are told *whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith.*

B) Note the victory is not in how we FEEL about something / it is not in OUR feelings or emotions / but in our faith !

1) It is in what we believe to be true about God/ So Learning to walk by faith & not by our sight/feel is an essential part & vital part of the Christian life

Most PEOPLE naturally walk by SIGHT - Easy

A) They have a saying “Seeing is believing,”

B) The person who walks by sight is one who usually places value on what he can see –

1) Like a Child – you come to : In one hand you have 10 quarters / in the other hand you have one \$100 bill { You say Choose

C) Nine times out of Ten – He will pick the coins – because they are bigger and there are more of them – shinny and pretty

D) That is the nature of the natural man – He places value on what He can see

The Problem is there are many people in the church who continue to live so much of their lives like the Natural man – Live by sight

A) In his amazing book – Eternity – Pastor Joseph Stowell – Moody – calls them earth bound believers

“Earthbound Christians live the most important segments of their lives only in the context of this world. Their expectations dreams hopes and plans all relate to what they can acquire and experience now. We are Content to Sing about Heaven and to hear sermons about the authority of Christ and the values of His Kingdom but we fail to live here, in light of there. And when it is all said and done we look back upon our lives

and see that we have poured into the bottomless bucket of this world and the bucket is still empty.” Joseph Stowel – Eternity

The Person who walks by sight is typically *short sighted* – Like the child building sand castles down at the Beach

A)He will spend all day pouring buckets / fetching water / shaping his master piece – completely un aware of the incoming tide/ that will destroy it

B)He spends the day – sweating building – forgetting that – He will not be able to take his masterpiece home w/ him

1)And it won’t be there when he returns in the morning

C)Those who walk by sight spend all their time caught up in the moment and never see the BIG PICTURE

But the man of faith places value on that which is unseen / He will Value those things that God places Value on {Eternal reward - Heaven

A)It was said of Moses in Hebrews chapter 11 ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

B)Moses chose a life of difficulty over pleasure because he was focused on an eternal reward

C)Told of Abraham in Hebrews 11 ⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God

Now I know what some of you are thinking – walking by faith is easier said than done – because Life is so daily.

A)Jobs – families- mortgages, cars that break – Kids sports – the list goes on and on.

B)I am constantly bombarded by the cares of this life that are ever before my eyes.

C)And that makes it hard

So how do we do this? How can we be men who walk by faith and not by sight?

A)I think it starts with what we talked about on Sunday – I know what my purpose is as a believer living on Planet earth –

B)Bear fruit that glories God – that is the big picture – I apply that to every area – Work – Family – Ministry – Relationships

C)If I can keep that in the forefront of my heart and mind – then I will naturally walk by faith –

D)Naturally abide in Christ – when I am abiding – I am seeking to be IN TUNE – AFFECT MY PRAYER LIFE

E)Naturally be less prone to move on instinct and emotion and more prone to seek the Lord.

Back to our story: Joshua and the Leaders of Israel don’t seek the Lord and they totally act on instinct – watch what happens next.

¹⁶ And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbors who dwelt near them. – WHAT? DUPED AND TAKEN - How frustrating is that?

¹⁷ Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. ¹⁸ But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel. We made a covenant and we need to honor our word.

And all the congregation complained against the rulers. When we walk by sight and we make a mistake – those following us – Complain – lose respect

A)Impulse buying – Wives complain – YOU DID WHAT?

B)But when guy is praying and seeking the Lord talking with his wife – even if the decision doesn’t work out the way you thought

C)I have seen most wives are like – Ok – we sought the Lord – we sensed this is how he is leading – we need to trust him now

So now Joshua and the leaders are having to explain themselves

¹⁹ Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, “We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them.

The rulers of Israel were wise in not allowing a second sin (wiping out the Gibeonites) to follow their previous sin (making the oath without seeking the LORD).

This was especially admirable considering the public pressure to do otherwise.

Two wrongs don’t make a right

They come up with a plan

²⁰ This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.” ²¹ And the rulers said to them, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them.”

We can redeem this by allowing them to be our servants – work for us!

²² Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, “Why have you deceived us, saying, ‘We *are* very far from you,’ when you dwell near us? ²³ Now therefore, you *are* cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves—woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.”

²⁴ So they answered Joshua and said, “Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. ²⁵ And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us.” ²⁶ So he (Joshua) did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. ²⁷ And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.

Here we see the grace of God toward the people of Israel and the people of Gibeon –

A) Great example of how the Lord can turn our blunders into blessings
God is so good guys. So good to cover us – help us

B) So the Gibeonites were spared but they were made servants - Wood cutters & Water carriers

C) But notice where they get to serve – v.23 woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.”

D) And v.27 woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.

They are serving the Priest around the Tabernacle the house of God/ before the altar

A) In other words - although they were servants they had privilege of being brought close to spiritual things on a regular basis

B) And When the land of Canaan was divided, Gibeon was one of the cities given to the line of Aaron./ Priestly line

C) And Gibeon became a special place where God was known!

Now Approx 400 years later David put the Tabernacle in that city.

A) This meant that the altar and the priest were in Gibeon as well

B) At least one of David’s famous MIGHTY MEN (those closest to him in battle) was a Gibeonite

C) Solomon made burnt offerings at Gibeon. It was there that Solomon had a vision and God spoke to him about his coming rule.

Much later - about 500 years before Christ - in the time of Zerubbabel,

A) the genealogies of the Jews who returned from captivity under the Babylonians included a list of the Gibeonites.

B) This is pretty remarkable because the names of some who claimed to be Jews were not found in the registry 1) and they were not allowed to be a part of the Jewish nation

C) In the days of Nehemiah the Gibeonites were mentioned as being among the people who helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

D) So these The Gibeonites had come in among God’s people and after 100 years they were still there!

E)See God in His infinite Grace - honored this covenant and blessed both sides with each other. Blundering into blessing!

How Great is our God!!!

Questions for tonight

Describe a time in your life where you made a decision without seeking the Lord, that turned into a disaster?

Note: This is a time to be real but also to have some humor - if you were married at the time include your wife's/family reaction.

How do you navigate the tension between walking by faith and all the day to day responsibilities that are before your eyes that can make it so easy to walk by sight and respond in the moment ?

Describe a time in your life where God met you with his grace and covered a blunder in your life?

What about the grace of God are you most in awe about?