

# Unity is Our Witness! (Joshua 22)

## Today's Lesson is about Unity (Important in Relationships!)

It reminds me of a story about a child who asked, "Daddy, where do babies come from?" The Dad answered, "Well God made Adam and Eve, they had babies, and they had babies, and so on, and so we had you!"

Not satisfied the child went and asked her mom, "Mommy, where do babies come from?" The Mom, answered, well there was a big bang, and cells became living creatures and over the course of millions of years they evolved into monkeys and which evolved and became humans and so here we are!

The child went back to her dad, and said, "You lied to me! Mom said cells evolved into monkeys and monkeys evolved into humans like us!"

**The Dad responded, "O yes, your mom was talking about HER SIDE of the family!"**

## Unity is Important in Relationships!

*As we survey Joshua 22 there are 3 Things I believe we should consider as we read...*

### 1. Our Enemy is NOT our Brother

**Ephesians 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

### 2. Our Minds are a Battlefield

**2 Corinthians 10:4** For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...

- Though Human our war is Spiritual therefore our weapons are for the purpose of false reason and false arguments, and false assumptions.
- Paul is saying we must be on alert at all times
- Taking captive the enemies rebellious thoughts he is striving to divide with.

### 3. Our Unity is Our Witness!

**John 17:20** "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who [ ] will believe in Me through their word; **21** that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

# The Enemy is NOT our Brother!

**22:1** Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, **2** and said to them: “**You have kept all that Moses** the servant of the Lord **commanded you**, and have **obeyed my voice** in all that I commanded you. **3 You have not left your brethren** these many days, up to this day, but **have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God**. **4** And now **the Lord your God has given rest** to your brethren, **as He promised them**; now **therefore, return and go to your tents and to the land of your possession**, which **Moses** the servant of the Lord **gave you** on the other side of the Jordan.

## 2 Encouragements : Well Done & Enter Rest

### 1. Well Done Good and Faithful Servants!

- You kept the command | You obeyed my voice | You stood by your brothers!

*I pray Jesus our greater Joshua will say the same to us!*

- You kept the commands | You obeyed my Spirit | You stood firm with your brethren!

### 2. Enter the Rest God has promised you!

The LORD is your Rest | The Lord is Faithful | Return to your land!

## 2 Instructions : Love God & Love One Another

### *How to Love God*

**5** But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which **Moses** the servant of the Lord commanded you, **to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.**”

### **CAREFUL HEED : With Diligence & Might Do the Law to Love**

**To Love Him** : To Desire God | Cultivate Intimacy | Develop Friendship

**To Walk With Him** : To Follow | Be Led | Live Life with

**Keep His Commands** : To Preserve them | Be aware of Them | To Regard them | To watch | To Wait

**Hold Fast to Him** : To Cleave | To Be Joined to | To Pursue Closely

**Serve** : To Work | To Labor | To Worship | With ALL HEART and SOUL

### **When was asked : Teacher what is the greatest commandment?**

- **Matthew 22:37** Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ **38** This is *the* first and great commandment. **39** And *the* second *is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ **40** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

## ***How to Love One Another***

**6** So Joshua **blessed them** and **sent them** away, and **they went** to their tents.

**7** Now to half the tribe of **Manasseh** **Moses had given** a possession in **Bashan**, but to the **other half** of it **Joshua gave** a possession among their brethren on **this side of the Jordan**, westward. And indeed, when **Joshua sent them** away to their tents, **he blessed them**, **8** and spoke to them, saying, “**Return with much riches** to your tents, with very much **livestock**, with **silver**, with **gold**, with **bronze**, with **iron**, and with very much **clothing**. **Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.**”

## **2 Times Joshua Blessed | 2 Times Joshua Sent**

- Jesus is our Greater Joshua who has blessed us & Who has sent us...
- To love Him and to Love Others!

## **How to Love Your Brethren : Divide the Spoil**

- I believe this command is contrary to what we would naturally do!
- I see it in me, I see it in kids... THAT'S NOT FAIR!
- ***I believe the Wisdom of God's Spirit moved Joshua to command this for a reason!***

**9** So the children of **Reuben**, the children of **Gad**, and half the tribe of **Manasseh** returned, and **departed from** the children of Israel at **Shiloh**, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go to the country of **Gilead**, to the **land of their possession**, which **they had obtained according to the word of the Lord** by the hand of **Moses**.

## **Due of Sin we tend to gravitate to Self-Love / Preservation...**

- It takes faith to believe God and Loves Us
- It takes faith to trust He will always take care of us so that we can give liberally what we have!

***Why did Jesus say to one - Sell what you have and give to the poor?***

***Because he wants us to Trust God***

***Why did Jesus say to others - Do not worry about your life what you will drink or wear?***

***Because he wanted us to be Secure in God's Love!***

**Our greatest enemy often is ourselves...**

**Our Enemy is NOT our Brothers or Sisters!**

# Our Mind is a Battlefield

*We need to be beware of the Danger of our Assumptions!!!*

**2 Dangers to Look for :**

**The Danger of “Hear Say” | The Danger of Anxious Imagination**

## *1st Danger : The Danger of Hear Say*

**10** And when they came to the region of the Jordan which *is* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great, impressive altar. **11** Now the children of Israel heard someone say, “Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel’s side.” **12** And when the children of Israel heard *of it*, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.

**The Brink of Civil War : Because Israel Heard Say!**

**Hear Say is a Very Dangerous thing.**

- How many Churches stand in opposition because “*I heard*”
- How many Ministries endure grief because “*I heard*”
- The Enemy is not your Brother... Our Mind is a Battlefield
- ***Hearsay is Gossip and Gossip will poison the well, once the enemy can plant a thought in one’s mind, perspective is tainted.***

## *The Wisdom of Discourse*

**13** Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, **14** and with him ten rulers, one ruler each from the chief house of every tribe of Israel; and each one *was* the head of the house of his father among the divisions of Israel. **15** Then they came to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying, **16** “Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord: ‘What treachery *is* this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the Lord?’

**The Best Way to Fight lies is to Discern Truth :**

**This takes Communication!!!**

- The Good News is they are talking
- The Bad News is brutal accusations are being made!

**17 Is the iniquity of Peor not enough** for us, from **which we are not cleansed till this day**, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord, **18 but that you must turn away this day from following the Lord?** And it shall be, **if you rebel today against the Lord**, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.

## **Remember Moab and the 24,000 perished!??**

Numbers 25 - Phinehas' zeal put an end to the plague - But the people suffered!

**19 Nevertheless, if the land of your possession is unclean, then cross over to the land of the possession of the Lord**, where the Lord's tabernacle stands, and **take possession among us; but do not rebel against the Lord, nor rebel against us, by building yourselves an altar** besides the altar of the Lord our God. **20 Did not Achan** the son of Zerah **commit a trespass** in the accursed thing, and **wrath fell on all the congregation** of Israel? And **that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.**' ”

## **Remember Achan who it affected!??**

- We will give you some of our land!
- REMEMBER : YOUR ACTIONS DON'T JUST EFFECT YOU!

## **Paul Called THE CHURCH the Temple of the Holy Spirit...**

- When one member hurts all hurt | When one member compromises all are affected!

## *2nd Danger : The Danger of Anxious Thoughts*

**21 Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered** and said to the heads of the [ ]divisions of Israel: **22 “The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know—if it is in rebellion, or if in treachery against the Lord, do not save us this day. 23 If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the Lord Himself require an account. 24 But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, ‘In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, “What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? 25 For the Lord has made the Jordan a border between you and us, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the Lord.” So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the Lord.’ 26 Therefore we said, ‘Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, 27 but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, “You have no part in the Lord.” ’ 28 Therefore we said that it will be, when they say this to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, ‘Here is the replica of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between you and us.’ 29 Far be it from us that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn from following the Lord this day, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the Lord our God which is before His tabernacle.”**

## **The Danger of Anxious Thoughts...**

- Verse 24 : The Ultimate Reason for this Replica Altar is Fear (Hebrew : Anxiousness)
- Fear of WHAT MIGHT happen
- Fear of WHAT COULD happen
- All these fears are IMAGINARY!

## **There is a Reason the Bible Reminds us NOT TO FEAR Nor Give heed to Anxious Thoughts!**

- **Philippians 4:6-7** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **7** and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
- **Proverbs 12:25** Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.

## **This Conflict is because the people on both sides of the Jordan are GUILTY of Assuming the Worst in one another!**

- **Romans 12:3** For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

## **There is a Battle for OUR minds!!!**

- **The enemy laughs when we give into the thoughts of Assumption / Anxiety!**
- This is why WE MUST REMEMBER For **the weapons of our warfare are** not carnal but **mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...**

- 1. Our Enemy is not Our Brother*
- 2. Our Mind is a Battlefield*
- 3. Our Unity is Our Witness!**

# Our Unity is Our Witness!

**30** Now when Phinehas the priest and the rulers of the congregation, the heads of the divisions of Israel who *were with him*, heard the words that the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them.

## How do you spell RELIEF!

**31** Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh, **“This day we perceive that the Lord is among us**, because you have not committed this treachery against the Lord. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord.”

## God is Among Us!

*His Grace / His Sovereignty / Wow, A Civil War has been Averted!*

**32** And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the rulers, returned from the children of Reuben and the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought back word to them. **33** So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, **to destroy the land** where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

## The people were Fired Up! Over what???

**False Assumptions on Both Sides - In the Form of Hearsay and Anxiety!**

**34** The children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar, *Witness*, **“For it is a witness between us that the Lord is God.”**

**Blessedness of Unity! This Altar becomes Symbol of Unity!**

# Our Unity is Our Witness

- **John 17:20** “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who [ ] will believe in Me through their word; **21** that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

## ***Their Altar of Witness was a Replica of the Altar at the Tabernacle***

- **28** Therefore we said that it will be, when they say *this* to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, **‘Here is the replica of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made**, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a witness between you and us.
- **Our Unity with One another is a Replica of Jesus’ Unity with the Father!**

# **In Conclusion:**

Our Unity as a Congregation is our Altar of Witness that Jesus is the Head of the Church

Our Unity as a Congregation is our Altar of Witness to the Truth of the Gospel

**Take every thought captive to Christ and HIS word!!!**

- 1) When you assumed the worst in others... Take it captive**
- 2) When you anxiously expect the worst... Take it captive to Christ**

**1 Peter 5:7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you**

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Minds are A Battlefield | Our Unity is  
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