

Joshua 8:21-35
Jason Huffman
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Victorious Living

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you feel about the judgment of God? Why?
2. If you were in a courtroom, describe the perfect judge.
3. How do we know whether to destroy what is destructive or enjoy what God gives? How can you tell the difference?
4. Why do people let their passion go beyond God's prescription? Do you ever see this happening?
5. What was helpful or important for you today in the message?

Last week we looked at Joshua's second chance at Ai.

We saw some really powerful lessons for ourselves too.

- Faith over in fear in failure.
- Taking no half measures.
- Fresh starts require fresh tactics.
- Keep close, be ready, and stay humble.
- Stretch out your hand.

At the Lord's direction, Joshua set an ambush.

This time the Lord was w/Joshua and victory is w/ the Lord.

I want to remind us again...

Canaan is under the specific judgment of God for their sin.

The judgment of God is a hard topic especially because...
...we have become so humanistic, we think we can judge God.

As an adult it would be foolish to try to explain to a 3 year old the complexities of all of your difficult life decisions.

Part of trusting anyone is trusting when we don't understand...
...There is no faith if there is complete understanding.

We should lean into what we understand, not what we don't.

1st, the wickedness of the Canaanites is horrific.

Sexual perversions, immorality, rape, incest, child murder.

2nd, For over 400 years, the Lord had waited for judgment.

3rd, God is the creator,

He is flawless in character and complete in knowledge,

He is rich in mercy and perfectly just.

Joshua was not to conquer the whole world.

This was not a conquest for more land or power.

God also does not command this today.

God is not bringing His kingdom through our power.

We are not meant to conquer and establish a physical kingdom.

**We have authority and power to bring His Kingdom
spiritually in hearts and lives.**

We are not taking over the world, we are not setting up a new government, we are not putting special people into the highest roles of business and culture so that Jesus can come back.

The kingdom that we bring in the name of Jesus is a spiritual kingdom, the only power we have is His power, and everything must line up with what God has written.

So today we will see Joshua's victory at Ai and after.

Today we will look at "Victorious Living".

How can we live victoriously for the long term?

Make simple, daily investments for continual victorious living.

8:21 Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. **22** Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were *caught* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape.

1. Follow God's plan

If you follow God's plan, you will find His victory.

Long obedience in the same direction will result in success.

Trust that God knows best and figure out what God wants.

Pursue God's plan for your life.

23 But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

24 And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. **25** So it was *that* all who fell that day, both men and women, *were* twelve thousand—all the people of Ai. **26** For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

2. Destroy what is destructive.

This was no half measure.

They were not toying with their enemy or flirting with the devil.

They made sure there were no third chances.

27 Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the Lord which He had commanded Joshua.

3. Enjoy what God gives.

A life of faith is not meant to be a life without joy.

There is joy, there are blessings, there is fun and good times.

Don't go around making yourself or others miserable.

When you don't enjoy life, you burn out, and you miss out...

..Live an abundant life within His will.

Within His will, God has given us richly all things to enjoy.

There are ups and downs, work the hills and enjoy the downhills.

28 So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. 29 And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones *that remains to this day.*

Another heap of stones is another place to remember.

The heap of stones here spoke of judgement and victory.

It reminded them of their sin and their second chances.

Those are good things to remember...

...God builds things to remember, because we are forgetful.

With the king, this was an ancient way of making a statement

...But they didn't let their passion carry them...

...outside of God's prescription.

4. Follow God's prescription not your passion.

The king was cursed, and hung on a tree.

Deuteronomy 21:21-23

And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance

**If the prescription is to take two pills every day...
...don't take 6 and think that is better.**

If God said, be slow to speak, that doesn't mean you never talk.
Do not be unequally yoked doesn't mean avoid all unbelievers.
If the Lord says be holy, that may not mean you can't own a TV.

Sometimes we can just get carried away.

Don't be a martyr or a madman...follow God's prescription.

30 Now Joshua built an altar to the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, **31** as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: "an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron *tool*." And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings. **32** And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written.

After they had their victory, Joshua builds an altar.

This is the first altar they build in the Promised Land.

And Joshua worshipped "as it is written".

5. Worship biblically.

Worship is not optional.

God is worthy of our worship.

And when we love and honor Him, we express it in worship.

But, to worship in a way He doesn't prescribe isn't worship.

It is annoying...

What does worship look like?

There is an altar...that means worship is sacrificial.

It has a cost, it has a worth, it is a gift to Him not just for me.

It is of whole stones...that means it is not manufactured by men

It comes from our hearts and lives.

There were burnt offerings and peace offerings...

It involves total dedication and real relationship.

It involved God's word...

It is connected and submitted to God's word.

John 4:23 true worshippers will worship in spirit and in truth.

33 Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them *were* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.

6. Gather in God's presence.

This is for everyone, the Jew and the stranger.

This is where the blessing is and the warning.

There is joy and strength, unity and encouragement.

They are not just attending, but participating.

They came to hear and worship, to sacrifice and to give.

34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. **35** There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

7. Read God's word.

We don't just talk about how to have a better marriage or how to be your best self or how to get the most out of your life.

We read and study God's word, because we believe it is what matters for life because it is from God.

From young to old, at their level, God's word helps us to know and follow God.