

Sermon Discussion Guide

The Sun Stood Still; History Keeps Moving

Joshua 10:1–15

Passage Summary

Joshua 10 tells one of the most extraordinary stories in all of Scripture. After the Gibeonites make peace with Israel, five Amorite kings join forces to attack them. Facing a powerful coalition of enemies, the Gibeonites cry out to Joshua for help. Joshua responds by marching through the night to defend them. But before the battle begins, God reminds Joshua of a promise he has heard before: "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands" (v. 8).

Throughout Joshua's life, God has repeatedly reminded him of his presence, his promises, and his faithfulness. Joshua has every reason to be afraid, yet God's Word continually calls him to trust something greater than his circumstances. Like Joshua, we are people who are easily frightened, distracted, and prone to wander. We need God's Word woven into the ordinary rhythms of our lives, reminding us again and again of who God is and what he has promised.

As the battle unfolds, God fights for his people in remarkable ways. He throws the enemy into confusion, sends great hailstones upon them, and then, in one of the most astonishing moments in Scripture, the sun stands still at Joshua's request. It is a passage that has puzzled readers for centuries. How exactly did this happen? While Christians have wrestled with the mechanics of this event, the central message of the passage is unmistakable: the God who created and governs the heavens is the same God who faithfully keeps his promises to his people. Verse 14 tells us that the Lord fought for Israel. The extraordinary event serves to magnify God's power and his commitment to accomplishing his purposes.

Yet this story also points us beyond Joshua to a greater Deliverer. Later in the chapter, the five defeated kings are put to death and hung on trees (Joshua 10:24–27). Deuteronomy 21:22–23 tells us that one who is hung on a tree is under God's curse. Centuries later, the apostle Paul uses this same language to explain the astonishing work of Jesus Christ: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

Here we encounter the beautiful reversal at the heart of the gospel. Jesus, the perfectly righteous King, willingly took the place of the guilty. The One who deserved blessing bore the curse so that those who deserved judgment might receive the blessing of belonging to God. As George Herbert so beautifully portrays in his poem *Love (III)*, we

come before God conscious of our guilt and unworthiness, only to discover a Savior who graciously welcomes us to his table.

Joshua 10 reminds us that the God who fought for his people then is the same faithful God who has accomplished our salvation through Christ. We may not know what tomorrow holds, and we may face circumstances that leave us fearful or uncertain. But we can rest in the promises of the God who rules over creation, keeps his Word, and has demonstrated the depth of his love for us at the cross.

Discussion & Reflection

1. Throughout Joshua's life, God repeatedly reminds him, "Do not be afraid." Why do you think God so often repeats this command to his people?

What are some of the fears that most frequently occupy your thoughts or shape the way you live?

2. Joshua was not promised a life without battles, but he was repeatedly promised God's presence in the midst of them. How is that different from the kind of security we naturally want from God?

When you face uncertainty, are you more inclined to ask God to change your circumstances or to help you trust him within them?

3. The sermon emphasized the importance of God's Word being present throughout every part of our lives. What tends to have the loudest voice in shaping your thoughts, desires, and decisions during an ordinary week?

How might regularly hearing and remembering God's promises change the way you respond to fear, disappointment, or uncertainty?

4. We often know God's promises intellectually but struggle to believe them when life becomes difficult. Why is there sometimes such a gap between knowing what God says and actually resting in what he has promised?

Is there a particular promise of God that you need to be reminded of in your present circumstances?

5. Joshua responds to God's promise by taking action, marching through the night to defend the Gibeonites. What does this teach us about the relationship between trusting God's promises and faithfully responding to what he has called us to do?

Where might fear be keeping you from taking a step of obedience, trusting that God will be faithful even when the outcome is uncertain?

6. The account of the sun standing still is one of the more difficult passages in Scripture for modern readers. How do you typically respond when you encounter something in the Bible that you cannot easily understand or explain?

How can we approach difficult passages with both intellectual honesty and humility, while remaining attentive to what God is revealing about himself?

7. The central emphasis of this extraordinary battle is that "the LORD fought for Israel" (v. 14). What does this reveal about the source of Israel's victory?

Where are you tempted to believe that the outcome of your life ultimately depends upon your own strength, planning, or ability to control circumstances?

8. Later in Joshua 10, the defeated kings are hung on trees as a sign of judgment. Galatians 3:13 tells us that Jesus willingly became a curse for us. What is so astonishing about the fact that the righteous Son of God would take the place of guilty sinners?

How does understanding what Christ bore on your behalf deepen your appreciation for both God's holiness and his love?

9. George Herbert's poem *Love* portrays someone who feels unworthy to approach God, yet is graciously welcomed by Love himself. How does this reflect the way we sometimes approach God?

When you are especially aware of your failures or sin, do you tend to withdraw from God, attempt to make yourself worthy again, or rest in the welcome Christ has secured for you?

10. Joshua 10 reminds us that the God who governs creation and directs history is also the God who gave his own Son for our salvation. How should these truths shape the way we face the uncertainties of everyday life?

What would it look like this week to live with greater confidence in God's promises, greater dependence upon his Word, and deeper gratitude for the grace you have received in Christ?

Closing Prayer

As you close, consider praying through these truths together:

- **Thank God for his faithfulness.** Praise him that his promises do not change with our circumstances and that he remains faithful even when our faith is weak or our hearts are prone to wander.
- **Confess our fears and self-reliance.** Ask God to reveal the places where fear, anxiety, or the desire for control have become more influential than our trust in his promises.
- **Pray for hearts saturated with God's Word.** Ask the Holy Spirit to make Scripture a constant source of truth, comfort, correction, and encouragement in our homes, relationships, workplaces, and everyday decisions.
- **Ask for courage to obey.** Pray that remembering God's presence and faithfulness would free us to follow him even when obedience feels costly or the future is uncertain.
- **Praise God for his sovereign power.** Thank him that the God who governs creation and directs history is neither surprised by our circumstances nor powerless to accomplish his purposes.

- **Thank Jesus for bearing our curse.** Praise Christ for willingly taking upon himself the judgment our sins deserve so that we might be forgiven, reconciled to the Father, and welcomed into his presence.
- **Pray for deeper assurance of God's love.** Ask that when we are conscious of our guilt, weakness, or failures, we would not run away from God but toward the Savior who has graciously made a place for us at his table.

Close by thanking God that our hope does not rest in our ability to understand every circumstance, overcome every fear, or remain perfectly faithful, but in Jesus Christ, the faithful Savior who bore our curse and has promised never to leave or forsake his people.