



# A Passionate Push

Joshua #10 • March 8, 2026

## Series Recap

We made it! Today is tenth and final week of our sermon series in the book of Joshua. We started this series at the beginning of the year, and today we will wrap things up. We've covered important sections of this 24-chapter Old Testament book of history, talking about **real people in real places** and the **real God** they relied on. And their experiences in the book have given us some **real truth** to ponder.

We've been challenged to ask...

- *What will we risk to follow God?*
- *What should we do while we wait for Him?*
- *Who wants it?! (Who wants to embrace God's divine assignment?)*

We've been reminded that...

- *God strengthens those He sends!*
- *We must take care of the first things first!*
- *There is a public cost of private sin!*
- *We must follow Him, despite our flaws!*
- *...and more!*

I hope that God's word has blessed you and challenged you... but we're not done yet! Today, we encounter one final section of Joshua that offers lessons for our lives.

## Opening

As we approach the final three chapters of this book, **two major tasks** for the Israelites have now been accomplished: **conquest** and **division**.

*"So the LORD gave to Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. And the LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had solemnly promised their*



*ancestors. None of their enemies could stand against them, for the LORD helped them conquer all their enemies. Not a single one of all the good promises the LORD had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything he had spoken came true.” (Joshua 21:43–45, NLT)*

The leader of the people, Joshua, has been **strong and courageous** as he followed God’s commands...and now he must *continue* to be strong and courageous as he approaches the end.

## At the End

Moments at the end can be sentimental.



*Back in my high school days, I played football. For three seasons, I had played under a coach I didn’t like, and as I considered it my senior year (even though I was going to be a starter on the offensive line), I decided I was done. Why put myself through misery? So, I skipped summer workouts and enjoyed life. But then I got a call. The old coach was gone, and on the line was our new coach, Coach Graber. He asked me to reconsider my decision and give it a try – to give HIM a chance.*

*So, I did...and the season was great! He made football fun again, and we had a successful season. We accomplished a lot of the goals we had set, and we had built a better culture. At our final game of the year against Phillipsburg, Coach Graber pulled all nine of us senior players together into the locker room before the pre-game warm-ups. He talked, and his voice cracked with emotion. He thanked us for being strong leaders. He thanked us for giving him a chance. He thanked us for making his season a memorable and positive experience.*

*It was a fitting way to conclude the season and my HS career.*

When I think of “reaching the end,” that’s the kind of emotion I think about. The kind of emotion that **looks back**.

But sometimes moments at the end **push for more**. Sometimes there is more than just reminiscing. Sometimes there is a passionate push!



*Recently, I led a funeral service for one of our church members, Joann Schultz. And while the family wanted to have a nice opportunity to look back and remember her life, they were adamant that the service*

*not be simply a memorial. They wanted it to be inspirational. They wanted to follow Joann's wishes and make sure the service wasn't about her. The service needed to be about following Jesus!*

*Reaching the end was not about looking back; it was about looking forward.*

Joshua, in the same way, is looking forward. His goal wasn't sentiment. His goal was to...

**...passionately push his people to pursue God!**

How did Joshua push? I want you to see how he does it, because his example is worth imitating.

## Passionate Speech

Joshua first pushes his people through **passionate speech**.

Three times in the final three chapters, Joshua calls together a group of people so he can share a message:

- He talks to the **tribes** who were going to return to the other side of the Jordan River (22:2-5)
- He talks to the **leaders** of the nation of Israel (23:2-16)
- He talks to the **remaining tribes** at a major assembly (24:2ff)

Each speech is different, but they all have the same flavor. Joshua shares the promises of God, as well as the commands of God. What promises and commands does he give?

Promises	Commands
<b>God will finish driving out the nations</b>	Be strong
	Continue obeying the law
	Do not associate with other nations
	Do not call on other gods
	Remain faithful to God
<b>God will fight for you</b>	
	Be diligent to love God
<b>If you turn from Him, God will fight you!</b>	



Whenever we find “final messages” from godly people in Scripture, they always seem to lean into similar themes. There is passionate encouragement to pursue things that truly matter!

- **David, talking to his son, Solomon, tells him to put God first:**



*“As the time of King David’s death approached, he gave this charge to his son Solomon: “I am going where everyone on earth must someday go. Take courage and be a man. Observe the requirements of the Lord your God, and follow all his ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go.” (1 Kings 2:1–3, NLT)*

- **Paul, talking to the elders of the Ephesian church, tells them to put God’s people first:**



*“So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders.” (Acts 20:28, NLT)*

- **Solomon, talking to anyone who would listen to wisdom, told us what matters most:**



*“That’s the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone’s duty.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, NLT)*

When you reach the end, you realize that most other things we talk about are... meaningless. It doesn’t matter what is happening in the news, on the baseball diamond, at the grocery store, or in the middle school cafeteria. In the light of eternity, those things are worthless! When you only have a few words left, we need to talk about what really counts.



**So, what about your own speech?**

My family has a habit of saying “I love you” whenever we leave each other, because we never know if that’s the last thing we will get a chance to say. Stuff happens! I don’t know if I’ll see Deb or Jacob or Chaynee at the end of

the day – I could be hit by lightning, or run over by a car (or both – “Kachow!”<sup>1</sup>).

I want my final words to convey something important.

And in my speech with others, I don’t know when I’ll see them again, either. **So...am I...are we... using our speech to passionately push people to pursue God?** Am I talking about things of eternal value, consistently? Am I ashamed to talk about Jesus or proud to share about the One I follow? I want all of us to make Jesus a core part of your vocabulary and conversations.

**Let’s use passionate speech to speak about what matters most!**

## Passionate Accountability

Joshua also pushes people to pursue God through **passionate accountability**.

Chapter 22 includes a story that I had forgotten about, but I really like it!<sup>2</sup>  
Read with me starting at verse 7.

*“Moses had given the land of Bāshan, east of the Jordan River, to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (The other half of the tribe was given land west of the Jordan.) As Joshua sent them away and blessed them, he said to them, “Go back to your homes with the great wealth you have taken from your enemies—the vast herds of livestock, the silver, gold, bronze, and iron, and the large supply of clothing. Share the plunder with your relatives.” So the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh left the rest of Israel at Shiloh in the land of Canaan. They started the journey back to their own land of Gilead, the territory that belonged to them according to the Lord’s command through Moses. But while they were still in Canaan, and when they came to a place called Geliloth near the Jordan River, the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh stopped to build a large and imposing altar. The rest of Israel heard that the people of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had built an altar at Geliloth at the edge of the land of Canaan, on the west side of the Jordan River. So the whole community*

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<sup>1</sup> aka Lightning McQueen from the Pixar movie *Cars*

<sup>2</sup> Fun fact... the Bible is full of small stories we forget. Always good to rediscover material!



*of Israel gathered at Shiloh and prepared to go to war against them.”*  
(Joshua 22:7–12, NLT)

Allies just became enemies! The nation of Israel (led by Joshua) is ready to go to war over this action!

Why? Because it seems like these tribes were setting up a **rival site** of worship! It's like a manager at McDonald's going across the street and opening a Burger King!

God had been very clear in the Law – there was only *one* place for the Israelites to worship and offer sacrifices:

*“Give them this command as well. If any native Israelite or foreigner living among you offers a burnt offering or a sacrifice but **does not bring it to the entrance of the Tabernacle** to offer it to the Lord, that person will be cut off from the community.”* (Leviticus 17:8–9, NLT)

Here is where the story gets interesting. In other places in Joshua, we were given omniscience as readers (ex: Achan's sin before the battle of Ai – we knew about it before anyone in the story did). Here in chapter 22, we are left in suspense with the rest of the tribes as they try to understand this (seemingly) foolish action.

Here's the bottom line: *IF* the Transjordan tribes were doing this, they deserved a fight! But that's a big “*IF*.” And the people of Israel have wisdom enough to wait. They exhibit the wisdom of Proverbs 18:13, which says,

*“Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish.”* (Proverbs 18:13, NLT)

**[Write that one down. Some of you need to add that to your life!]**

Joshua and the people send a delegation of men to investigate. Phinehas, son of the high priest, and 10 other leaders go to confront the tribes.

*“What have you done?!”* they say with passionate accountability. *“Your private sins are about to have public consequences. If your own land isn't good for worshiping, move back with us. But just don't rebel against God!!”*

They are willing to work with their brothers, but they can't allow such sin to go unchecked! But listen to the response:



*“Then the people of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered the heads of the clans of Israel: “The Lord, the Mighty One, is God! The Lord, the Mighty One, is God! He knows the truth, and may Israel know it, too! We have not built the altar in treacherous rebellion against the Lord. If we have done so, do not spare our lives this day. If we have built an altar for ourselves to turn away from the Lord or to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or peace offerings, may the Lord himself punish us.” (Joshua 22:21–23, NLT)*

As they explain, it was only a **non-functioning copy** of the official altar back in Israel. They wanted it to be a *reminder* – a “witness” – that *even though they were separated geographically* from Israel, they were still part of the people...and part of God’s promises. They didn’t want to sacrifice on it; they just wanted to have a visual reminder for future generations that their tribes absolutely belonged to God!

Their words were an acceptable explanation. The Israelites stood down, and all was well.

But I want you to see that Joshua and Israel were passionate enough to hold their brothers accountable! They were willing to confront, willing to act, and willing to lose the relationship for the sake of something more important.



**Church, what about you?** Are you willing to hold each other accountable?

- It may be as simple as giving a look or a challenge (“Language!”) when your sister in Christ slips and says a profanity.
- It may be as difficult as questioning a brother’s intentions before he tries to move in with his girlfriend before marrying her.
- It may be as heart-breaking as asking a leader to step down from a church position because he has been hiding an addiction.



*“Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:1–2, NLT)*

**Are we passionately pushing people to pursue God by holding them accountable?** If we love them, we can’t stay silent. We can’t let them fall away from God without fighting for their lives!

I hope all of us care enough to stand up to one another in love.

**Let's use passionate accountability to protect the ones we love!**



## Passionate Example

Joshua doesn't just use speech or accountability. He also uses his own life! He pushes people to pursue the path to God by being a **passionate example**.

We can always look to history for reminders of what faithfulness looks like. As Joshua talks to the people in chapter 24, he is standing at Shechem.



Shechem was the ideal location for this moving farewell address by Israel's great leader. It was at Shechem that God promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land (Gen. 12:6–7), and there Jacob built an altar (33:20). Shechem was located between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, where the people of Israel had reaffirmed their commitment to the Lord (Josh. 8:30–35). Shechem was indeed “holy ground” to the Israelites.

History gave them a chance to remember God, as it says in 1 Chronicles 16.



*“Remember his covenant forever— the commitment he made to a thousand generations.” (1 Chronicles 16:15, NLT)*

Joshua's words point the people back to the distant and recent past – to Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob; to Egypt; to Balaam; to Jericho. He reminds them of the source of strength they've shared:



*“You have seen everything the Lord your God has done for you during my lifetime. The Lord your God has fought for you against your enemies.” (Joshua 23:3, NLT)*

But he isn't content to have them look to the past. He wants them to look in the present. He wants them to see and example to follow. It was “them” long ago; it is “me,” now!



*“But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? **But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.**” (Joshua 24:15, NLT)*

I think that verse is one of the highlights of the whole book (for me).

*I am proud of my family at home. I appreciate them and their accomplishments.*

- *My son was a state-level debater, a drum major, a lead actor in school musicals, a prom king, a major scholarship winner, a college graduate, and on track to be a law school graduate this December.*
- *My daughter is a three-time all-state choir member, a gifted actress who has had lead roles in musicals and plays, a section leader in band, a straight A student on track to graduate next year.*
- *My wife is smart – a top student in school and college, someone who has degrees from Bible college, and medical certifications for her job. She assists in operations on eyeballs, and after she washes her hands, she bakes some of the best food I've ever tasted.*

*I am so proud of my family! But I count it as nothing compared to the fact that we all love Jesus. I got to baptize both of my kids, and I get to watch them serve and grow and be part of the Kingdom of God...right now...as well as for eternity.*

*I don't claim that it is because I'm anything special, but I want to work my hardest to be a godly example for them!!! I want them to look at me and see what it means to follow God.*

Joshua felt the same with his tribes. Do you feel the same with your **family...and your church family?**

- Like Joshua....do you want to see wholehearted devotion – a faithful following of the Lord?
- Like Joshua...are we equipping them to take the torch to lead the next generation?
- Like Joshua...are we warning the ones we love about the effects of sin?
- Like Joshua... do we treat others with love and do what is best for them?

**We must passionately push people to pursue the path to Jesus!**

And we need our lives and **examples** to do part of the pushing.

I said at the beginning of this series that I want to look around this room and see that kind of example from you!

- **Men, I want you to lead like that!** To have the courage and strength to put your God first - above work and success, above leisure or pleasure.
- **Women, I want you to love God like that!** To have the focus and passion to pursue your God as your first love – above kids or career, above beauty or trends.
- **Kids, I want you to serve like that!** To demonstrate a love for your God, learning and growing in your faith, showing what it looks like to follow Him with sincerity and trust.

I need YOU to be an example to our kids, to our church, to your friends, to your neighbors, to your family.



*“... Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12, NLT)*

**Let’s be passionate examples to show others how to follow Jesus.**

## Closing

That’s what matters. And that’s what I want you to take from Joshua.

We saw it from Joshua...and Rahab...and Caleb...and others in this OT book. Now, I want to see it from you.

- I want to see it in your speech
- I want to see it in the way you hold each other accountable
- I want to see it in the example you present

**Passionately push people to pursue the path to God and to Jesus!**



## Prayer

## Invitation

Why are we pushing people to Jesus? Because He is the only thing that matters.

- We desperately need a cure for our guilt and sin
- Jesus is the only cure!
- His sacrifice on the cross is what we all need – we need Him to be our Savior...
- His victory over sin and death is what we want to live in – we need Him to be our Lord...

If you have been pushed to follow Him today, we invite you to share that decision with us.

If you have been encourage to do better at pushing others – through passionate speech, accountability, or example, we invite you to ask for prayer (in person after the song, or on your connection cards) so we can lift you up to Him!

We invite you to share those needs and decisions as we stand and sing our invitation song.

# Sermon Notes

## Passionate Speech

(Joshua 22:2-5; 23:2-16; 24:2ff; 1 Kings 2:1-3; Acts 20:28; Ecclesiastes 12:13)

## Passionate Accountability

(Joshua 22:7ff; Leviticus 17:8-9; Proverbs 18:13; Galatians 6:1-2)

## Passionate Example

(Joshua 24:1ff; 1 Chronicles 16:15; Joshua 23:3; Joshua 24:15; 1 Timothy 4:12)

# Sermon Discussion Questions

- As we wrap up our sermon series on Joshua, what have been the biggest takeaways for you? How has God used Joshua's life and example to transform your own faith?
- In Joshua's speech to the tribes (Joshua 22:2-5), what promises of God does he share? What commands did he give? How are the two related?
- If you were giving a similar speech to others at the conclusion of your time together, what spiritual truths would you share?
- Do you talk about those truths on a regular basis with others? How does the brevity of life encourage you to talk about such things more frequently?
- Read Joshua 22:7-34. Summarize the story. What level of accountability were the people of Israel willing to provide? What was the outcome?
- What does Christian accountability look like? (ex: Galatians 6:1-2) Why is it important for us to hold people to their faith?
- When is the last time you held your brother or sister in Christ accountable? What were the results?
- Read Joshua 24:15. What would it look like for you and your family to serve as passionate examples of faith? How closely does that description match reality?
- What is one step can you take this week to be a better example of love, faith, and/or purity (1 Tim 4:12) to those around you?