

Joshua's Farewell Address

Joshua 23:1-2

Now it came to pass, a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: "I am old, advanced in age.

Joshua's message to the leaders of the nation

I Am Old

Joshua realizes that his position in the body has changed.

He is no longer Israel's valiant warrior

He is now a wise, old sage

He will no longer be wielding a sword a leading the charge

Instead he will be providing guidance to the next generation of leaders

This happens to all of us

David seemed to struggle with his

2 Samuel 21:15-17 describes how 4 Philistine Giants were defeated

"When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint. Then Ishbi-Benob, who was one of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose bronze spear was three hundred shekels, who was bearing a new sword, thought he could kill David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel."

During battle David, Israel's most valiant warrior grew faint.

Faint - from a Hebrew word meaning to fly away.

His strength flew away

Age caught up with David but it seems he refused to admit it

His servants had to remove him from the battle

2 applications

First - When David left the battle Israel continued to succeed

2 Samuel 21:17

*But **Abishai** the son of Zeruiah came to his aid, and struck the **Philistine** and killed him.*

2 Samuel 21:18

*Now it happened afterward that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then **Sibbechai** the Hushathite killed Saph, who was one of the sons of the **giant**.*

2 Samuel 21:19

*Again there was war at Gob with the Philistines, where **Elhanan** the son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed the **brother of Goliath** the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.*

2 Samuel 21:20-21

*Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of **great stature**, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was born to the giant. So when he defied Israel, **Jonathan** the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him.*

All this is summed up

2 Samuel 21:22

These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

God's method has always been for ministry to be passed from one generation to another

When David aged and could no longer effectively wield the sword a generation of young men stood up to his challenge.

Second -

If David does not get out of the way, this process won't happen

2 Samuel 21:17

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel."

Quench - to put out. Speaks specifically of a fire. It is blazing, until a bucket of water is poured upon it

Paul used this same illustration when writing to the church

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not quench the Spirit.

If David will not:

- Accept his new role
- Allow God to use those behind him
- And invest his resources in them
- Then he will quench the work God wants to accomplish

Joshua's address

The wise old sage stands before the leaders of Israel without a sword in hand. This time his weapon of choice is the word of God

We will look at his message in 3 Parts

First he reminds the next generation that God will fight for them

Joshua 23:3

You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the Lord your God is He who has fought for you.

Joshua 23:4-5

See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. And the Lord your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the Lord your God promised you.

Joshua 23:9-10

For the Lord has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you.

It seems to be of the utmost importance to Joshua that the leaders understand that God will fight Israel's battles.

- What does it mean that God will fight for us?
- How does God fight for us?

It is a battle of participation

Have you ever purchased a gift for your children that included the phrase "Some assembly required"?

IT MEANS THAT YOU WILL BE INVOLVED

- The Jordan did not part until the feet of the priests got wet
- The walls of Jericho did not fall until the people circled and shouted.

This is vividly illustrated in the story of David and Goliath

For 40 days the giant defied Israel and their God

It was not until David courageously walked into the valley with a sling and stones that the giant was defeated.

David declared

1 Samuel 17:47

Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands."

This battle was designed to teach us about all battles.

Among other things we learn that the giants will remain until we are willing to step into the ring with faith and courage and take them on

The battle is the Lord's but he requires participation

What battles do we face?

- How many have circled a city this week?

- Anyone venture into a valley to face a 9-foot tall warrior?

What are our battles?

The flesh

Both actions and reactions

Our responsibility

We need to be faithful for the sake of the task, the reward and our witness

The ministry

Winning lost souls to Christ and helping believers in their walk with God

With all these we need to keep in mind that the Lord requires participation

How do we implement this principle in our daily struggles?

- The actions of the flesh

Or it's desires

Paul wrote

Galatians 5:17

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

KJV

Reads - wars

The flesh warring against the spirit is like an involuntary muscle

Involuntary muscles - muscles not under conscious control. The heart is an example. It pumps without you having to think about it

The flesh almost seems to act without stimulus. It seems that anger, frustration, lust or worry suddenly and without warning attack our well being

How do we fight this battle?

Paul writes that the spirit in turn wars against the flesh

This is more like a voluntary muscle. It requires thought and action to use.

We must consciously decide to respond to the outburst of the flesh with a barrage from the spirit

It is when we do not fight back that we will be defeated and soon become captive

When we do God brings victory

The same rings true when it comes to the Ministry

This ministry is to reach the lost near and far with the gospel.

This requires participation

Rarely will a person come to Christ apart from the work of others. Even in the rare cases that resemble the conversion of Saul of tarsus there was still considerable human involvement in the witness of Stephen and so many who had been drug off the prison or death

Paul wrote

Preaching

NLT

Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe.

Berean

For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not know God, God was pleased through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those believing.

KJV

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Notice the promise given to those who will engage in battle

Joshua 23:10

One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you.

That is a vivid picture of a mighty hero - one man chasing an army away

If we will participate with the Lord and rely upon Him we will become another generation of heroes putting enemies to flight

Concluding-

If we want to experience God fighting for us we must be willing to step into the ring. A meteor did not fall on Goliath and the enemies we face will rarely fall on their own. We need to grab a handful of stones and courageously engage in the battle against the flesh and for the furtherance of the kingdom.

Joshua 23:6

Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left,

Remember Joshua is speaking to the leaders about what will enable them to keep going and take the land

He takes them back to the message he first heard from the Lord

Joshua 1:7-9

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

- Strong - to be made strong
- Courageous - firm, determined or even obstinate
- Meditate - to think about, ponder or chew on

Joshua also gives a unique perspective of the word

Joshua 23:14-15

"Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the Lord your God promised you, so the Lord will bring upon

you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

The word of God will never fail.

We can count on the promises, both positive and negative ones

Every warning God gives has a reason.

Paul put it this way

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

You cannot toy with God the warnings of God.

Gravity will not be mocked and neither will the promises of God

FINALLY, JOSHUA WARNS THE PEOPLE AGAINST IDOLATRY and BAD RELATIONSHIPS

Idols are things that take the place of God

God should have first place in our lives

All other things should be processed in light of God and His Word

My value system should be established based upon the things that matter most to God

We call this thinking biblically or having a biblical worldview

Whether conscious or subconscious, every person has some type of worldview

- For example, a 2-year-old believes he's the center of his world, a secular humanist believes that the material world is all that exists, and a Buddhist believes he can be liberated from suffering by self-purification.
- Someone with a biblical worldview believes his primary reason for existence is to love and serve God.

However,

George Barna who has been researching cultural trends since the mid 1980's

Barna says, "Although most people own a Bible and know some of its content, our research found that most Americans have little idea how to integrate core biblical principles to form a unified and meaningful response to the challenges and opportunities of life."

It is possible for our worldview to be diluted

How?

Here is the big problem. Nonbiblical worldview ideas don't just sit in a book somewhere waiting for people to examine them. They bombard us constantly from television, film, music, newspapers, magazines, books and academia.

The idols that constantly tempted and plagued Israel represented varying world views

Some represented power, others pleasure or some other desire that was elevated to the most important pursuit in life

As Israel moved toward these idols they moved away from the Lord

It would not be long before their worldview changed their lifestyles

Joshua 23:12-13

Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

- They will be snares
- They will cause scourges in your side
- They will blind your eyes

Ezekiel 14:3

“Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?”

Ezekiel 14:4-5

“Therefore speak to them, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols.”’