

Read Through the Bible

Week 12, March 22-27, 2010

Readings: Joshua 4 – 20; Luke 2 - 5

Reflections and Questions

By Lynda Kieckhefer

God wisely chose Joshua to lead the Israelites and to capture the rest of the land of Canaan, the land God promised to their ancestor Abraham. The Book of Joshua is rich with God's teachings for us on how to live a blessed and full life. Joshua's character and his relationship with God teach us how to receive God's encouragement, to obey and trust God, and to deal with our enemies (sins) so that God may richly bless us. God generously gives us what we need but we must be willing to "purpose" to trust, obey, receive and remember God's faithfulness. That is our part in our relationship with God.

Through out Joshua, God often begins instructions to the Israelites with encouragement: "do not be afraid..." (8:1, 10:7 & 11:6), "do not be afraid, do not be discouraged..." (10:25). Even before God gives us instructions, He equips us to obey. Why then do we often struggle with obedience and with trusting God's word? Possibly it is because we do not "purpose" to trust God and to receive His Word as the truth. In our relationship with God, He is always trustworthy. Joshua reminds us that our part in that relationship is to choose to believe and receive what God is pouring out to us.

Do you "purpose" to receive God's encouragement? If you struggle with this, why?

In what areas of your spiritual walk can you "purpose" to receive God's encouragement?

God always gave Joshua specific and different instructions before each battle to conquer the cities. God does the same for us, because no two battles are exactly alike. God will provide guidance specific to the situation we are facing. God expected the Israelites to follow his orders in every detail, and He expects nothing less of us: "And Joshua did it: he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses" (11:15). Joshua knew that the secret of success was to love and obey God totally. Because of his obedience the Israelites were able to occupy the Promised Land. Just like Joshua we may "purpose" to obey or choose to disobey. Disobedience to God leads to failure as the Israelites learned when Achan hid the plunder from the conquest of Jericho. They cried out "why have we failed?" (7:7) But God is always faithful and in the next campaign God restored victory. God sent the Israelites to conquer Ai with these words: "Do what the Lord has commanded. See to it: you have my orders" (8:8). There is much that we have no control over but we can choose to obey, this is our part.

Do you "purpose" to choose obedience over disobedience?

In what areas of your daily life and spiritual life do you most struggle with obedience?

Have you asked the Holy Spirit to help you "purpose" to obey God's directions?

God's instructions to Joshua dealt with conquering the enemies that occupied the Promised Land and addressing the sins that could hinder victory. God is telling us to attack our enemies head on (8:12). These enemies can be sins, illnesses, relationships, bondages, attitudes, anything that keeps our hearts from obedience and keeps us from reaching our 'promised land.' Even before we attack our enemies, God is at work confusing the enemy and giving us the advantage (10:10). God tells us to pursue our enemies, run towards them, and "put your feet on the necks of these kings. This is what the Lord will do to all the enemies you are going to fight" (10:24-25). Furthermore, God is teaching us that if we don't completely eliminate our enemies they will continue to haunt and pursue us with disastrous results. The Israelites did not completely drive out the Canaanites and it cost them dearly. Once again, we must "purpose" to eliminate our sins. God is already empowering us to have a lasting victory and to receive God's blessings. We must choose to receive God's power, this is our part.

What enemies do you need to "purpose" to pursue and face head on?

God is just waiting to send you his power to overcome your enemies; are you ready to choose to receive His power?

Joshua was an excellent example of a godly leader. For me personally, as someone God has called to be part of His ministry of Women of Wisdom, the cry of my heart is: Oh, to be a Joshua!

The Jesus Storybook Bible, Where every story whispers his name (Sally Lloyd-Jones) tells about Joshua asking the Israelites to promise they will do what God says. "They didn't keep their promise, and many years later things became very bad and enemies captured the Israelites and God's people scattered into many different lands. But God's plan was still working. One day he would give his people another Leader and another home. But this home no one could ever take from them."

The book of Luke tells us about that 'other Leader' -- Jesus Christ, and how He came to encourage, teach obedience and give us power over our enemies, just as God had done for the Israelites.

Will you "purpose" to choose Jesus Christ as King in every area of your life? Remember that is our part, Christ will do the rest so you may bring Him Glory and He can bless you.