

**Remembering All the Good Things that God Has Promised**  
**Joshua 23:1-16 & 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1**

The last two chapters of Joshua deal with God's promised blessings and warnings to Israel. The people will be blessed for obedience and cursed for disobedience. Just like in Eden, obedience will keep them in the land while disobedience will bar them from the land. Why? Because everything that Israel enjoys in the Promised Land is a unearned, undeserved gift from God.

- \*Unearned because God, as the titleholder, gave them the land
- \*Undeserved because, as we have repeatedly witnessed in God's care of Gentiles, God could have made any people his people.

Israel's primary threat is not from external enemies. Their greatest enemy is the loss of love for God that will drive them toward false gods.

*Judges 2:6-15 - ' When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land. ' And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the LORD had done for Israel. ' And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years. ' And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. ' And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. ' And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. ' And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger. ' They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. ' So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. ' Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for harm, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.*

This brings to mind the importance of generational faithfulness to God and faithfulness in the midst of godlessness.

Everyone who heard Joshua's words must choose their own future, of obedience or disobedience.

Joshua's speech is divided into two parts:

- 1) 2-11 = Reminding the leaders of what God has done for them
- 2) 12-16 = Warning the people about disobedience

But before we get to the actual speech, the context is important.

- 1) V 1 - *A long time afterward, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies, and Joshua was old and well advanced in years,*

Joshua was 110 when he died. If he was close in age to Caleb, and Caleb was eighty-five when the land was distributed (Joshua 13:1), then Joshua's farewell speech comes approximately 25 years later that event. Israel has been in the land for about 25 years.

2) V 2 - Joshua summoned all Israel, its elders and heads, its judges and officers,

Joshua assembled the leadership who represented Israel and who were responsible to convey God's directives to the nation.

This reminds us of the responsibility people in leadership possess whether in the church, the home or the world.

Our primary vocation is to "image" or "represent" God. Our greatest responsibility is to live and convey what God has said; nothing more, less or else.

### **First: Remember All that God has Done. 3**

These men

- Saw the Jordan river split at 'high tide.
- Witnessed the walls of Jericho fall without a battle
- Eaten manna and quail only to see it replaced by Canaan's bounty
- Watched the sun stand still in the sky
- Experienced victories over greater tribes

Vs 9-11 - *For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day. <sup>o</sup> One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as he promised you.*

- Israel drank from wells they did not dig, ate from vineyards they did not plant and lived in houses they did not build. God gave them the land and its bounty.
- Israel had seen every promise of God come true

### **Second: Remember Your Commitment to God. 6-8**

Israel's distinctiveness is their God and their commitment to him.

This struggle between God and gods will be something that Israel endures for their entire existence.

Solomon's downfall was that he loved foreign women and was influenced by their pagan practices.

1 Kings 11:4 - *...when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.*

This love of other gods felled both the Northern and Southern kingdoms

Even when Israel returns to Canaan, like Jacob their forefather, they bring false gods back into the land with them

Joshua's warning is almost a prophecy of what will happen

### **Third: Remember to Love God Most. 11**

*Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God.*

*Deuteronomy 6:5-6 - You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ‘And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.*

*Matthew 22:37-38 - You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ’ This is the great and first commandment.*

Love is a complex thing. Contrary to popular notions, love is not a feeling or an emotion that you can fall into and then fall out of. Love is complex, meaning that love involves many things. Classically speaking, our human faculties are made up of the mind, the will, and the affections. Using these, then,

- a) love is rooted in knowledge;
- b) love is exercised in willful decision;
- c) love is experienced in the affections.

To love God involves all of this and God demands this kind of love

*Matthew 10:37-39 - Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ’ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ’ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

- a) We know what God commands
- b) We do what God commands
- c) We love what God commands

When we do what God commands and find benefit and satisfaction in it, it makes us love God emotionally.

- a) We can’t love what we don’t know -
- b) We don’t love what we don’t do -

The first part of loving God is

- a) knowing,
  - b) obeying and
  - c) rejoicing in Him.
- a) What are you doing to know God better?
  - b) Where are you disobeying God even in the slightest?
  - c) What greatest joy do you possess?

But the second part of loving God is an awareness of what robs us of love for God.

*12-13 - For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, ’ know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you.*

**Luke 14:16-20 –<sup>16</sup> But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many.”<sup>17</sup> And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’<sup>18</sup> But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’<sup>19</sup> And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’<sup>20</sup> And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’**

*The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie. It is not the banquet of the wicked that dulls our appetite for heaven but endless nibbling at the table of the world. For all the ill that Satan can do, when God describes what keeps us from the banquet table of His love, it is a piece of land, a yoke of oxen, and a wife (Luke 14:18-20). The greatest adversaries of love to God are not His enemies but His gifts. And the most deadly appetites are not for the poison of evil but for the simple pleasures of earth. For when these replace an appetite for God Himself, the idolatry is scarcely recognizable and almost incurable. Jesus said some people hear the Word of God, and a desire for God is awakened in their hearts. But then, “as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of life” (Luke 8:14). In another place he said, “The desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful” (Mark 4:19). “The pleasures of life” and “the desires for other things” are not evil in themselves. They are not vices. They are gifts of God. They are your basic meat and potatoes, coffee and gardening, reading and decorating, traveling and investing, TV watching and Internet surfing, shopping and exercising, collecting and talking. Any of these can become deadly substitutes for God.*  
– John Piper

The choice before Israel is a simple. Worship and serve the God who loved them, delivered them and who gives them the blessings of the land of Canaan, or reject God and let pagans influence the future course of Israel.

#### **Fourth: Remember All the Good Things God Has Promised. 15-16**

One of Joshua’s last comments in this speech is to remind the people that all the good things God had promised had come to pass.

Every person standing there knew it to be true. Not one promise had failed. Israel is, that day, enjoying the promised blessings of God.

But there are 2 things Israel should remember –

15a - *just as all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you,*

15b – *so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things...if you transgress the covenant...which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them.*

Why are there two parts to God’s promises: blessing and curse?

**John 6:68-69 - Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,<sup>68</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.**

- a) God has the words of eternal life.
- b) That life is in believing that Jesus is God

Watch him in the Garden. Obedience = life and disobedience = death.  
See him in Egypt. Obedience = life and disobedience = death.

Follow him in Canaan. Obedience = life and disobedience = death.  
 Observe him in the Gospels. Obedience = life and disobedience = death.  
 Read him in the Epistles. Obedience = life and disobedience = death.  
 See him in the Revelation. Obedience = life and disobedience = death.

God is passionate about the truth about him because anything that opposes that reality is false and doesn't lead to life but death

*Psalm 23:3 - He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

Life is the result of honoring God's name. God's honor and salvation are synonymous. You can't do one without the other. Honor God = Life. Dishonor = Death.

Bottom line: All the good things that God has promised is Himself.

*Psalm 84:10 - For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.*

*Psalm 16:11 - ...in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Even in heaven, God himself replaces the all-important Temple so as to insure Israel understands that it is a Person and not a place that saves them

*Revelation 21:22 - And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*

The passage ends, not with a promise of blessing but a warning of condemnation. Why? Because it is our tendency not to love God. In spite of what we know about God, it is our tendency to grant our affection to false gods.

### **Conclusion:**

What good things has God promised you and what with what good things has God blessed you?

If you're in trauma, remember what God has done and believe what he will do.  
 If you're in blessing, remember what God has done and believe what he will do.

### **Groups:**

- 1 - What great things have you seen God do that you could brag about?
- 2 - In this passage, God expected Israel's leadership to share the news of his blessings and curses.
- 3 - How are you leading others into those blessings and warnings? As a parent? A friend? A family member? A co-worker?
- 4 - Count your blessings. What has God given you?
- 5 - Are there specific promises God made you that have come true?
- 6 - How do God's fulfilled promises motivate us to trust and obey God in the future?

- 7 – What false gods challenge our society for allegiance to God?
- 8 – What false gods challenge you for your allegiance to God?
- 9 – Read the John Piper quote and discuss what good pleasures/desires can derail us from allegiance to God?
- 10 – How do we protect our hearts from ‘good’ things?
- 11 – We are to love God with our minds. What are you doing to know God better?
- 12 – We are to love God with our hearts? How are you increasing your passion for God?
- 13 – We are to love God with our bodies. How are you serving God?
- 14 – Are there areas of known disobedience to God that you need to correct?
- 15 – If so, how will you go about this? Who will hold you accountable?
- 16 – What daily steps do you take to protect your heart for God (make him your greatest joy)?

