

JOSHUA

Week Three

The Battle is the Lord's

Significant truths:

Chapter 3

- 1. God will fight our battles, but we must first consecrate ourselves and deal with the sin in our lives.**

Joshua is now ready to cross the Jordan and launch a military campaign. But look at verse 5, Joshua commands the people to consecrate (set apart) themselves in preparation for the wonders the Lord will perform among them. What a strange request. Knowing that hand to hand combat awaits them as they seek to conquer Jericho and beyond, shouldn't Joshua have requested them to sharpen their swords and spears and polish their shields? But God's ways are not our ways, and spiritual preparation is extremely necessary to establishing a right relationship with God to allow God's power to freely flow in our work and ministry.

How does that apply to us today? When we cleanse ourselves, we acknowledge God's holiness and the door to fellowship with God opens up. Without faith in the cross and its cleansing, no man can be set apart for God's use or blessing. God will not use unclean vessels. To experience God's power, protection, and deliverance, we need to prepare our hearts and deal with the known sin in our lives by confessing our sin and committing ourselves to Jesus.

Chapter 4

- 2. God expects us to be a testimony and witness of His power.**

As Israel crossed the Jordan in fulfillment of God's promise of a new homeland, God commanded that his people remember his faithfulness. He told them to build a memorial to remind them of this day and gave three reasons why. First, so that the people's children would learn from the things God did in their lives (vv.6, 21). Second, so that other people who didn't know God would see His power at work in the life of Israel (v. 24). Third, as a personal and abiding reminder to fear God above all (v. 24).

As you reflect on the way God's sovereign hand has led you through your life, remember the markers that He left, the touches He left on your life. Use them as testimonies to God's power and grace at work in you. Allow them to stand as reminders to you and your children, and as solid examples of God's power who do not know Him yet.

Chapter 5

3. While our inclination is to seek God's help, the significant truth is that we are to submit and follow God for it is His battle not ours.

Joshua is faced with a great responsibility and he does not take it lightly. He makes his way to Jericho and stands there surveying the situation, planning his strategy, when he encounters a man standing in front of him with drawn sword in his hand. Joshua asks him "Are you for us or for our enemies?" This is arguably the preincarnate Christ appearing before Joshua to teach and reinforce certain vital truths for God's people, especially for those in leadership. Joshua's question reveals a typical mindset that is a hinderance to our effectiveness in serving our Lord. That is, we tend to see the battles and the forces we face as forces marshaled against us and our individual causes, concerns, agendas, and even our theological beliefs. And in a way, that is true, if we are truly standing in the cause of Christ. But there is another sense in which that is simply not true.

We find that in the answer given to Joshua. "No, rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord: (vs. 14a) He is making it clear to Joshua that he was there, not to take sides, but to take over as Commander of the Lord's army. Joshua recognizes the superiority of the Commander standing before him as evidenced by his responsive question, "What has my Lord to say to his servant?" He is asking for orders and it is then that he received the orders for taking Jericho. When we step back and survey the situation, it is critical for us to know that God is in control. He is ever present and His powerful provision, always carries with it the promise of His infinite supply and power no matter how impossible the situation or problem may appear to us. And Joshua came to realize the significance of this truth. There was Joshua and his army, but there was also the myriads of God's angelic forces who always stand ready to do God's bidding and to serve the saints. Can you imagine the burdens that faded away as Joshua began to submit and follow God as he fell on his "face to the earth and worshiped" (Vs 14). How comforting to know that we never have to bear our burdens or face our enemies alone. But remember that the battle is His and that our role is that of soldier-servant. We are to serve Him, to do His will, to follow Him and depend on Him completely.

Questions and Discussion: Look at the key truths provided in Chapter 3, 4, and 5 of Joshua and consider the following questions for discussion:

How important is it for us to purify and cleanse ourselves before we encounter God?
How can we be fully emptied of our sin so that we might become a holy vessel ready for God to use?

What is your story? What markers can you point to that demonstrate God's involvement in your life? Who needs to hear your story? Can you share these stories with your children and others?

When faced with a difficult situation, what is your inclination – to ask God if He is on our side or the enemies' side"? But what should your response be and what action should you take?

Read Exodus 14:14 and 1 Samuel 17:47? How willing are you to remain quiet and allow God to fight the battle?

Do you believe in the myriad of angels that form God's powerful army of hosts? Read 2 Kings 6:8-17, Matthew 26:53, and Hebrews 1:14. How does that give you comfort?