

The Faithfulness of God

by Brent Yim

The sermon emphasizes the faithfulness of God to His people, as demonstrated through the story of the nation of Israel and the city of Jericho, and encourages listeners to trust in God's promises even when everything doesn't make sense.

Duration: 57:38

Scripture: Joshua 6:1

Topics: "Gods Faithfulness", "Trusting God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the faithfulness of God, highlighting the importance of surrendering to Him and trusting in His promises. It explores the story of Rahab, showcasing how faith and obedience can lead to salvation and blessings for oneself and even extended to family members. The message encourages believers to heed God's warnings, avoid resurrecting past strongholds, and trust in His faithfulness to bring victory and fame to those who honor Him.

Transcript

Jesus, here I am before you, and I'm broken. I feel like there is not an answer to my problems. But I know that you are so much stronger when I'm broken.

And I know that, Jesus, you're the answer to my problems. Jesus, you are the answer. Father, we do thank you that we can approach you.

We have the access into your presence through the person of Jesus Christ. As Paul would write to Timothy and say that there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who came as a ransom for our sins. And we thank you that it's through the forgiveness of sins in Christ that we have a relationship with the Father.

That we can approach you and we can ask for grace and mercy in time of need. And what a great ministry we've been given as intercessors. We think of the scripture found in the book of Hebrews that says, Jesus lives always to make intercession for us.

He sits at the right hand of the Father and is praying according to the will of God for us in the Spirit. As we're able to enter into that same ministry, we know that there's many needs concerning those who are around us. And we want to lift those needs up, Lord, before you.

And those that are being highlighted today, Lord, we want to first lift up Trinity Jameson and her family. We thank you for the witness and the boldness that she has during this time of hardship. As she's going through the treatment, and I can sympathize personally with what she's going through.

I know there's times of anxiety and fear and discouragement. As her body is taking its toll through the treatments. I'm just asking that you strengthen her with a supernatural strength.

Lord, we come in agreement and just pray for your hand to touch her and bring healing in her life, Lord. We ask that as she would come in contact with medical staff and others that are suffering with cancer, going through these treatments, that you would use her as a light and a witness, as an ambassador in that environment, Father. Lord, we're just asking for an outpouring of your Spirit in her life.

Lord, we know that the number of her days have already been determined by you. Lord, that she exists for your glory. And so we're asking, Father, that you would complete that work that you began in her.

And we pray that you'd be merciful to her, Lord. Lord, if it be your will, Lord, we implore, we ask and beseech you that you would touch her and bring healing, Father, in her life. And that it would be a miraculous testimony and witness to your healing grace and your ability.

So we just offer her into your hands, her family into your hands, that you would give them peace that surpasses understanding. Strengthen them in the midst of this valley of the shadow of death, Lord. That you'd uphold them by your righteous right arm, and they'd be able to look back and see that you were faithful every step of the way.

So I just lift them up into your hands as well. And I just lift up Nolan and Bridget and Tyler and the rest of the family, that you would strengthen them during this time. Lord, I thank you for the mercy that you've already demonstrated to this family, the quality of life that you've given Nolan.

Just love that kid and him running up and the big smile on his face. And always just joy in his heart, Lord. What a blessing he is.

What an encouragement he's been to me, that he's provoked me to love and good works. He's endured well, Lord, and he's suffered well with many surgeries. He just has the joy of the Lord.

I thank you for the witness of his life, Lord. And I pray that you continue to touch his head as well, that you continue to touch his brain, Lord, and shrink those tumors. Lord, we know that the doctors can't go in and they can't remove those.

So only you can touch his brain and diminish and shrink those tumors, Lord. Lord, we just pray for your mercy over him. You continue to use him to reach out as an ambassador to those who are around him to just reflect and demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ.

We thank you for that entire family and the blessing that they've been to so many of us, Lord. We pray you continue to bless them and a provision and protection will be over them. Lord, we're just going to give you glory in advance for what you're going to do because we know everything you touch and everything you do is wonderful.

So we commit Nolan to your hands as well. And then those who are sitting here today, I just felt like one of those sitting here, there's those here today that have been brokenhearted because of relationships, and I

don't know what that entails, maybe a spouse, children, or a boyfriend or a girlfriend or someone that they just had this expectation, this hope that this person was going to fulfill them and they haven't come through. I just pray, Father, that you would draw near to them and that you would strengthen them, that you remind them that you are the God who is faithful, and that when everyone else around them lets them down, you are the one that will be true.

You are the one that will be faithful to them in every area of their life. So I pray that you just draw near to them right now and that you heal their broken heart and that your anointing spirit would just minister to them and bring them out of that pit that they're in right now because of this broken relationship, those broken relationships, and that you'd restore and renew and rejuvenate, Lord, according to your spirit. And we pray right now that you'd revive us according to your word.

We love you and we offer these things into your hands. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, Joshua chapter 6. Lord willing, today, many of you thought it'd be impossible for us to finish chapter 6. We might finish this morning.

If you're taking notes this morning, the title of my message is The Faithfulness of God. I think it's an appropriate title for what we'll be covering this morning but also for many in your life that you've acknowledged. Maybe even this last week, there's been instances where you can reflect upon and acknowledge that God was faithful to a promise or he was faithful to answer a prayer.

I know my wife and I, over the course of the last couple of days, we've just been meditating upon all of the answered prayers that God has executed on our behalf and according to the prayers of the saints. Many of you have asked me how I've been feeling, and I just want to thank you for praying for my strength and for my fortitude because this last week and even the week before that has been just wonderful, being able to come into work and be available a little bit more for the school and the people who are around, and the Lord has really strengthened me. So I just want to thank you for praying for me and my family, and we're just looking forward to what God's going to continue to do as we serve him.

And so, Joshua chapter 6. Last week we covered verses 1 through 11, and we spent time together looking at and meditating upon five principles that we gleaned from how the Lord arranged the children of Israel as they were walking around the city of Jericho. And it was interesting because that march we called the victory march of the nation of Israel. Even though they hadn't conquered the city yet, we called it the victory march because the Lord had already promised them the victory.

And so as the nation of Israel was walking in obedience with the Lord, the reason God brought them into the promised land of Canaan was so that they can enjoy a life of abundance in the Lord. If you remember, for 40 years the nation of Israel had been traveling or meandering in the wilderness, and it was because of their unbelief that they were unable to enter into the promised rest there in Canaan, which that represents. But the Lord had now brought them, and they'd passed through the Jordan River from the east side to the west side.

They're in a place called Gilgal, camped out. The Lord had given Joshua instructions as they were going to be facing that first military stronghold, the city of Jericho. It was a stronghold there in the middle of the land of Canaan.

And the Lord gave Joshua instruction. He said, Joshua, this is how you're going to defeat the city of Jericho. And we've talked about how their approach to that warfare was unconventional.

The Lord said, you're going to walk around the city 13 times, and at the end of seven days there's going to be a shout. As you hear the trumpets blow, there's going to be a shout, and the walls are going to come tumbling down. And so this by no doubt was a test of faith for everyone who was involved.

Could you imagine if you're Joshua? All right, guys, this is how we're going to defeat the city of Jericho. You're going to walk around the city, and then you're going to shout. The walls are going to come crumbling down, and the Lord's going to give you the city.

And so this would have been a test for everyone who was involved. But the Lord was seeking to nurture in His people that faith, because that was the way they were going to possess the promised inheritance that God had given to them through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God is the covenant.

God has said, this is what I want for you as my people. I'm giving you this land. I'm going to bless you.

I'm going to give you a land overflowing with milk and honey. And all I'm calling you to do is to walk by faith and not by sight, listen to my instructions, and obey me. And I guarantee you that I will be faithful to my word.

And so we've seen throughout the history of Israel that God has given the nation of Israel promises, and the Lord has always been faithful to fulfill His promises. And so we're going to see once again as we open up the text and begin in verse 12, that the Lord will prove His faithfulness to the nation of Israel. Because remember, without faith, it's impossible to please God.

And so the Lord was in the process of nurturing this faith in the nation of Israel so that as they would walk with Him, that He would bring them into that rich fulfillment. And for us as believers, or those who are believers today, what this demonstrates or what this exposes to us is that God wants us to live and to walk in a life of abundance. He wants to bring us into rich fulfillment.

He wants us to experience the realization of everything that God has accomplished for us in Christ. And He says, as you're walking by faith according to my word, then you're going to experience these victories in your life. And so there's much application for the believer as we look at this historical account, as God was faithful to the nation of Israel, so God will also be faithful to us as well as we trust in Him.

So we pick up in verse 12, and this is what it says. And Joshua, as the leader over the nation of Israel at this time, he rose early in the morning and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. The seven priests bearing seven trumpets, remember, seven represents perfection of ram's horns before the ark of the Lord.

They went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them, but the rear guard came after the ark of the Lord while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp.

And so they did for six days. Now, you can imagine the anticipation moving like waves through the ranks of Israel. And for six consecutive days under the leadership of Joshua, the divinely arranged procession had circled the city of Jericho.

And at this point, I'm sure that they were probably wrestling in their minds with the rationale behind what they were doing. And as we've seen, they're now approaching the seventh day, and this would have been a definite test for everyone who was involved. But something that's important to acknowledge is the Israelites wouldn't personally experience the promised triumph unless they endure through a season of

doubt.

And so the Lord will put His people in seasons of hardships where He gives you a promise, but He says, I want you to walk by faith and not by sight. But the Lord is, in that process, producing in us a patient endurance. Are we going to endure through that season of doubt? Even when the circumstances surrounding our life aren't making sense, or the details, they look like they're in disarray.

We don't see the unfolding of what God had promised. Are we still going to walk with the Lord? And so for seven days, the nation of Israel has been walking around the city of Jericho. They've reached the seventh day, and they're required to walk around seven times.

And so no doubt the anticipation was growing. It was being challenged. This plan that God had laid out before them was no doubt being challenged in their mind.

But the reason the Lord allows His people to go through seasons such as this is because, as it says in the book of Hebrews, the Lord is producing in us that endurance, that after we've done the will of God, we might receive the promise. God had given the nation of Israel a promise, but what He was producing in them was this endurance to wait upon the Lord to see, will God be faithful in this instance as He's been faithful in the past? The children of Israel, they were given a promise by God, but through His instruction, He was testing their faith and nurturing in them endurance. And maybe that's what the Lord is doing in your life presently.

You're in a season where God's plan for your life is being tested in your mind. You're wondering, God, I don't see the rationale behind what we're doing or what my family's doing or what I'm doing personally. But Lord, I know You've given me a promise.

And you're wondering, what is God doing in my life at this time? Well, as we see in this example, He's wanting to nurture in you a greater faith. The Bible says that the Lord is taking us from faith to faith, from strength to strength, from glory to greater glory. And so as we walk with the Lord, we're going to find that God wants to mature us.

And so don't think it's strange when you fall into various trials, as it says in the book of James, knowing that the testing of your faith is going to produce patience, and when patience has its perfect work, you'll be complete, perfect, lacking nothing. That's what God is producing in our lives through trials and hardships, patience as we wait upon Him. The Bible says that eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor is it in the heart of men the things that God has prepared for those that love Him.

But what's interesting is when that is first quoted in the book of Isaiah, he says, eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor is it in the heart of men the things that God has planned for those that wait for Him. And so Paul, in the New Testament, he changes the wording a little bit under the inspiration of the Spirit, and he says, God says that those who love Him are going to wait for Him. And so as we're waiting upon God and patiently enduring through our hardships, it's a proof that we love God because we're trusting in His promises.

And that's what the Lord wants from us. The task isn't the ultimate objective. I mean, God speaks things into existence by His Word.

What the Lord is wanting to do through us in times such as this is to nurture in us a greater endurance and faith in Him. Now, the reason I'm emphasizing this point is because there are going to be seasons in every

believer's life when your human reason is challenged and is challenging your decision to walk with God according to His promise. And sometimes all we have to cling to is His promise.

And I don't know if you've ever found yourself in this position, but I know I have. Your emotions aren't settled. Your feelings are shifting, and there's no other choice but to continue to walk with God.

Everything doesn't make sense at all, but the only plausible choice is to stay the course. You know, one of the examples that I think of, even as I was studying over my notes, was when the disciples, they came to Jesus, and Jesus was speaking to the masses, and He said, Okay, if you want to participate in relationship with Me, if you want to be in relationship with Me and continue to be My disciple, then you have to eat of My flesh and drink of My blood. The disciples look at Jesus, What are you talking about? Eat My flesh and drink My blood? And obviously the Lord wasn't referring to the physical eating of His body and drinking of His blood.

He was speaking in a spiritual sense that we have to assimilate, we have to identify with Him in order for us to experience relationship with Him. But many of the disciples, they heard these words of Jesus, and they turned around and they walked away. And the Lord looked at His twelve and He said, Are you going to walk away as well? And Peter turned to Jesus and said, Jesus, we're not going anywhere, because You alone have the words of eternal life.

And there's going to be times in our life where we're challenged, and the Lord will require us to do something where it's difficult, taking steps of faith, that include our family members and the people who are around us, that could affect them if the Lord doesn't come through and He isn't faithful. And we're thinking, Lord, this doesn't make sense, and my emotions, they're not in line with what You're telling me to do, but God, I have this promise and I'm going to cling to this promise. And that's the only thing that I can do.

And people are going to be challenging you, is that the right thing to do? Do you really think that you should be doing that? Do you really think you should be dragging your family from place to place? It doesn't make sense to the world. But you know you have a promise from God, and the Lord is going to say, Alright, are you going to continue to walk with me when things get hard? And why does He do that? So we can turn to Him and say, Lord, there's no other choice for me. You alone have the words of eternal life.

My allegiance, my loyalty, it's to You and to nothing else. And so the Lord wants us to possess that conviction and that disposition as we walk with Him. And as He grows us and matures us in our walk with Him, there are going to be instances where we find ourselves in this place, where there's those questions, those doubts, those concerns, those anxieties.

But the Lord says, Walk with Me according to My promise. Stay the course. Well, notice in verse 15, But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner.

On that day only they marched around the city seven times, as the Lord had commanded them. And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people, Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. Now, this is like one of those annoying pauses before we find out what happens, right? Like the commercial, before you find out something while you're watching your TV program.

I want to take a moment, I want to consider the details of this setting. The first observation is at this point, the children of Israel, they've walked around the city 13 times. So the adrenaline, it's pumping, the anticipation is no doubt overwhelming.

Everybody's probably holding their breath with eagerness. And I want you to put yourself in their position. What do you suppose they were thinking at this point, when they heard the instruction to shout? I don't know about you, but I know for myself, I would have been thinking, Is God going to follow through on His promise? Is God going to follow through on His promise? They've been walking around the city, they've already committed all of these days, all of these hours, to walking and following the instruction of the Lord.

Now comes the instance, where the priests blow the trumpet. And the children of Israel are called at this time, after they've been on a word fast for seven days, they couldn't even make a noise for seven days. They shout, and I know the thing that would have been going through my head is, Is the Lord going to be faithful to His promise? I mean, imagine the impact, if the Lord wasn't faithful at this time, to follow through on His promises, the impact that this would have had, on the nation of Israel.

And on God's part, was He going to prove Himself to be faithful? If God was not faithful at this point, to follow through with what He had promised, this would have completely destroyed the relationship between God and His people. Why? Because if God can't be trusted in one area of our life, He can't be trusted at all. Because the Bible says that God promises Himself to be faithful.

He validates His promises by saying, I'm going to back it by my name. That I am a God who will be faithful in every instance, according to my promises. And so if the Lord did not follow through, in fulfilling His promise to the nation of Israel, then He couldn't be trusted at all.

He was an unfaithful God. And imagine what that would have done to the nation of Israel. Imagine the effect that that would have had upon His people.

The things that He would call them to do in the future, could God really be trusted if He didn't follow through at this time? And so I know that would have been going through my mind, and I know that would have been going through the mind of the nation of Israel. And as I was reflecting upon this idea, I was reminded of the weightiness of this idea. You know, it's obvious from this account that God wanted to prove the integrity of His promises to His people.

He wants His children to remain and maintain the unwavering conviction that His word can be trusted unreservedly. Do you possess that conviction? Can you really say today, when you open up your Bible and you read the promises of God, that you maintain the conviction that what God has promised you, what He's speaking to you into your life, He can be trusted unreservedly? One of the verses that I've been meditating upon this last week is found in the book of Isaiah, as I'm making my way through the book of Isaiah in 34:16. And this is what it says, Search from the book of the Lord and read.

Not one of these words shall fail. That is a powerful promise. I mean, think about it.

The Lord is challenging His people to open the Bible and to read from the book of the Lord. And He says, Read my promises and I can guarantee you this, that not one of these words shall fail. Not one word.

And that's why Jesus was able to say, Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. The only constancy that we have in our life, the only thing that we can place unreserved conviction in, is the word of God. And that's amazing, to think that believers have such a hope.

And that just as God has promised in His word, so He will be faithful to complete, even until the day of Christ. I mean, that promise is for me, that promise is for you, when you open the word of God. God's word is so true, that not one of His words will fail.

I mean, who can you attribute that type of faithfulness to in your life? Because even the person in your life that has been most faithful to you, and has come through in various instances, has let you down to some degree. And the only one that will never let you down is the Lord. And He says, Here, I'm going to give you a book.

I'm going to preserve my word for you, and give it to you to study, to look into, to dig into. And I'm going to guarantee you this, that when you read my word, and when you obey my promises, and when you place your faith and trust, in what I'm calling you to do, as is relayed and communicated in my word, that not one of these things shall fail. Wow.

I mean, that's some stability in the midst of instability. And when you look around at the world, and all the candidates that are vying for these different positions politically, and not just politically, but in every arena of life, and you see the wickedness, and the instability, and the debauchery, and you see all of this wicked type of stuff happening, and the instability that it's creating in the world. And then the Lord says, God, the creator of heavens and earth, says, come to my word, and read my word, not one of these things shall fail.

Talk about bringing us back, and grounding us. And that's what God promises us. And so it's amazing that the Lord was seeking to prove the integrity of his promises to his people.

And he wants us to maintain that unwavering conviction that his word can be trusted unreservedly. And as we walk with God by faith, and we place our trust in the Lord, and in his word, he's going to prove himself faithful. I mean, we could go around, and we could spend the rest of the morning, and probably many hours, talking about how God has proved himself faithful.

And we probably should have more instances like that, where we encourage one another in our faith. I mean, many of you are sitting here today, and you can think back, maybe this last week, or this last month, how the Lord has been faithful to you. Maybe he hasn't shown you all the details, but he's been faithful to you.

And that's produced in you a greater faith, and trust in the Lord. That's what he wants. It's all about the relationship.

God wants to remind us on a continual basis that he can be trusted. But before we find out what happens in this story, there's a pause that records some extremely important instructions in verses 17 through 19. And so let's read in verse 17.

It says, Now the city shall be doomed, speaking of Jericho, by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Rahab and the harlot shall live, she and all who are in her, in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. Okay, you remember in chapter 2, I don't know, for some of you who haven't been here and don't know the story, that's recorded in the book of Joshua, Rahab was a harlot.

She was a prostitute in Jericho. And two spies, they went to Jericho prior to the military engagement of Jericho by the nation of Israel. And the Lord led these two spies to a harlot's house, to a prostitute's house.

And it was while they were there that messengers came from the king, looking for these two messengers, and they were going to kill them. And she hid these two spies on the top of a roof. And when they were on top of the roof, she came up to the roof and she said, hey guys, I know the God that you serve, I know that He's given you this city and all the rest of the land, so I'm just asking that you be merciful, because I've hid you.

I'm asking that you be merciful, and when the nation of Israel comes to destroy this city, will you please spare me? Will you have mercy on me? And so the spies said, yeah, what you're going to do is hang this scarlet cord out of your window so we know that this is your house, and because you hid us and you showed us mercy, we will show you mercy when we conquer this city. And so we saw how the Lord, He arranged, divinely arranged these relationships, because even though this woman was a prostitute, God loved her, He saw her heart. And so here the instructions are given, when the city is destroyed, the person that you're to bring out is Rahab and all those who are in her house.

And so we see here the compassion of the Lord, because she hid the messengers by faith. Side note, Hebrews chapter 11, where the Lord records those who lived lives of faith, Rahab is one of two women that are mentioned in that text. And of all the women in the Bible, Sarah and Rahab are mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11, which is absolutely amazing.

By faith, she hid these messengers. God recognized that, even though she was a prostitute, and He spared her in His compassion because of her faith. Wonderful picture that we're given here of God's mercy and His grace.

Well, verse 18. More instructions. And you by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse and trouble it.

But all the silver and gold and vessels of bronze and iron are consecrated to the Lord as the first fruits, and they shall come into the treasury of the Lord. And so let's look at these instructions first. The city and all the inhabitants were to be destroyed.

Now some of you may hear these words and wonder how a merciful and loving God could command such a thing. But you have to read these instructions with a proper historical perspective. This city, the city of Jericho, and its inhabitants were so corrupted with wickedness, there was no other choice.

I wouldn't even begin to share with you some of the behavior and things that these inhabitants did in Jericho. I mean, it wouldn't even be appropriate to talk about the things that they were doing. But they were so morally corrupt they were so debased that the Lord says, you need to destroy everything that's within these walls.

Let me help you with an illustration. Say somebody walked through this door this morning and you looked at them and they said, I have a very contagious disease that's terminal, right? They walked through those doors and they wanted to shake your hand, give you a hug, and they wanted to encourage you and the Lord maybe, but they have this contagious disease that's terminal, very contagious. Would you interact with that person? Well, of course you wouldn't.

Of course you wouldn't interact with them because you wouldn't want to contract that disease that will ultimately lead to your death. Well, it was the same thing spiritually. The Lord knew that if those people in Jericho continued in the land that they would ultimately pollute His people.

That their practices, that their idolatry, that their wicked and corrupt behavior would influence the nation of Israel which the Lord was seeking to preserve so that He can bring forth the Messiah. And so the Lord says, Okay, this is what you're going to do, guys. All the inhabitants, the livestock, everything that's in this city, it's so corrupted, it's so defiled.

And I don't know if we can truly understand or comprehend how debased and defiled this culture was. But the Lord said, I want you to destroy everything. It was so polluted, the Lord said, I want you to completely destroy it.

But notice the exception. This is so wonderful. The exception that's stated at the end of verse 17.

But Rahab and all who are in her house are to be spared. And so this reminds us that no matter how wicked or immoral a place might be, God always preserves a remnant. Isn't that amazing? He says, I want you to destroy everyone that's in this city except for Rahab the harlot.

And you're thinking, Rahab the harlot, don't you think she would be the one that you would destroy first? The Lord says, No, because I see the heart. And the Lord says, I've spared Rahab and all those who are in her house. And so again, it reminds the believer that no matter how wicked or debased the place may be, the Lord always preserves a remnant for his times and for his reasons.

And that remnant at times is the person that you at times least expect. Out of all the inhabitants, it was a prostitute in her family that was spared because God knows the heart of every man and woman. And He exercises compassion toward those whose hearts are tender toward Him no matter what they've done in the past.

And I think that this is great instruction for us because we often judge people based upon their actions, their deeds, what they've done in the past. And the Lord says, If their heart is tender toward me and they turn toward me, then they're going to be spared. And we see that in the life of Rahab.

I mean, someone that you would least expect God to show mercy toward. And the Lord says, No, this is a woman that not only would be labeled and identified and highlighted in the hall of faith, but she was also in the genealogy of Jesus. Rahab was included in the genealogy of Jesus through this pure line to bring forth the Messiah.

Rahab, this woman of faith, this prostitute, was mentioned in Jesus' genealogy. It's amazing. Because again, it shows us that the Lord's heart is toward those whose hearts are toward Him and He has compassion upon those.

And many times, it's the people that we least expect. And there's people in our life right now who when you consider their behavior and you consider their past and the things that they give themselves over to, and you're thinking, there's no way that this person could ever come to know Jesus. There's no way that God would ever have compassion upon them.

And many times, it's that exact person that the Lord will show compassion toward. Because where sin abounds, grace abounds so much more. And I rejoice in that.

Because if God was to judge me according to my sin, number one, I wouldn't be sitting here before you, but I'd be dead. I'd be in hell right now. But the Lord doesn't deal with us according to our sins.

He deals with us now according to the righteousness of Jesus Christ for those who have placed their faith in Him. But it's just amazing, again, the Lord's compassion here and what we see in this story. Well, the third instruction is God gave very explicit instructions that they were to stay away from the things that would create a stumbling block in their lives.

And so God was indirectly tutoring His people in what the Bible refers to as holiness. This morning, we were singing a song, and many of you know this song, Holiness, Holiness is What I Long For. And as we look through the Word of God, we see that God, when He calls His people out of the world, He calls them into this place where He wants to consecrate them for His use and for His service.

And that's called holiness. God wants His people to be holy, to be set apart, to reflect the character of Christ in this world. In a world that is so dark, God wants His people to shine as lights.

God wants His people to communicate His heart and His love to those who are around us. And so the Lord says, I don't want you to take anything that's going to create a stumbling block in your life or in the life of your neighbor. And some of you might think, well, this is just an Old Testament concept.

No. The New Testament has a lot to say about holiness. And much more now because the power in Christ that we possess, we're able to overcome sin.

Where we didn't have the ability to overcome sin before we were in Christ, now we have the ability to overcome our sin in Christ. He gives us the strength. Not only has He destroyed the penalty of our sin, but the power of sin as well.

And so God gives us the strength. He gives us the ability to walk in victory and to walk in holiness. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7, he says, come out from among them and be separate.

Do not touch what is unclean. That's what he's saying to his people right now. Don't touch the things that are unclean.

And for believers, there's so much application in this. Because the Lord tells us, don't touch the things that are unclean. Don't take souvenirs from the world, in a sense.

And we often, we don't heed the warnings of the Lord. And we take things from the world, we dabble in the things of the world. And the Lord is saying, don't touch that.

Don't become defiled with the things of the world. I want you to be separate. I want you to be distinct.

And the reason the Lord had called His people to be set apart, was so that they can be a witness to those who are around them. And that's the same thing for you and I today. God wants us to be so dissimilar.

He wants us to be so distinct, so set apart, that when we interact with the world, they would acknowledge that we're a different people, we're of a different breed, we're of a different family. That's what God wants from His people. And that's what's going to impact the world today.

But in order for us to be that proper representative of the Lord, we have to purpose in our hearts and ask the Lord to create in us, to produce in us a holiness where we say, you know what, we're not going to touch those unclean things. Not because of an obligation, not because we're afraid we're going to go to hell, but because we don't want to break intimacy with the Lord. And we want to fully fulfill in our lives that which God has called us to fulfill, that which He's ordained before the foundations of the world for our lives

and for our families.

And what we're going to find next week, Lord willing, if we get there in the Lord Terry's, is when you don't heed those instructions, when you don't heed those warnings, it has a far-reaching effect upon those who are around us. Our sin, our decisions, produce consequences not only in our life, but in the lives of those who are around us. The Lord had called His people to be holy and set apart, and that's why He gave them this explicit instruction that they were to stay away from the things that would create a stumbling block.

Well, as we re-engage in our story, notice what happens next in verse 20. So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets, and it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet and the people shouted with a great shout that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before Him, and they took the city.

So, for multiple verses, we've been ascending to this climactic event, but what's interesting to me as I was looking over and studying this text is the crescendo, this event that they'd been anticipating is captured in one sentence. Right? So we've been reading and studying all of these lessons that God has been wanting to teach us through chapter six. We've been talking about the city of Jericho and the nation of Israel conquering the city.

We've mentioned it over and over and over again. And then when we get to the climax, what God does is captured in one sentence. It's like God is saying, and oh yeah, I'm faithful.

Right? And oh yeah, I'm faithful. I promised that it would happen this way, and this is exactly how it unfolded. Have you ever had those moments in your life where you've been stressing, you've been anticipating, you've been worrying, you've been anxious, and then it comes to maybe a trial in your life or a decision in your life and the Lord, he's faithful.

It's like, oh Lord, you're faithful. Right? That's what you've told me. That's what I've preached.

That's what I've shared with others, and oh God, you're faithful. And it's amazing because the Lord, knowing the frailty of our flesh, knowing the tendency of our humanity, he does this in our life. And there's those instances where he says, son, I'm faithful.

Daughter, I'm faithful. I know you doubted me. I know you're discouraged.

I know that you're lacking faith, but I'm faithful. And that's why Paul was able to encourage Timothy even when we're faithless. He remains faithful because he cannot deny himself.

And that is a wonderful promise that there are going to be times in our life where we doubt, where we're anxious, where we're discouraged, but the Lord says, even when you're faithless, I remain faithful. Our relationship with God is not based upon reciprocity. If I do something good, then God's going to do something good for me.

And a lot of us, we have a mentality when it comes to God. Well, if I just do enough for you, Lord, then you're going to bless me. And the Lord says, no, I bless you, my son.

I've already seated you in heavenly places. And it's hard for us to really embrace that truth because our world and the relationships around us, it's all based upon what others can do for us and what we can do in return for them. If someone does something nice for us, we feel like we have to do something nice in

return for them.

But that's not a relationship with God. God says, I'm faithful even when you're faithless because it's according to my grace. And we rest in that.

And then our response is, Lord, based upon your goodness, based upon your mercy and your faithfulness, there's no other decision for me but to lay myself down as a living sacrifice. Lord, do whatever you want with my life because I know you're good. And I know that you have what's best in mind for me, for my life, for my family and those who are around me.

And so, God, I willingly give myself to you. I willingly serve you, Lord. I willingly give to you of my first fruits financially, Lord, not because I feel like I have to or the pastor's saying, don't come to church unless you give.

But, Lord, I want to give to you because you've given to me so much. That's worship. Right? When we come to the Lord and we say, God, I'm just going to worship you, I'm going to honor you, I'm going to serve you, I'm going to bless you, I'm going to bless your people, Lord, because of what you've done for me, Lord.

And I still can't repay everything that you've done. And, Lord, I'm not trying to repay you, Lord. I just want to revel in your love and in your grace.

That's what God wants. That's a true relationship with the Lord. But I just love how he reaffirms to the nation of Israel, I'm faithful.

And the capturing of the sea wasn't the ultimate objective. The ultimate objective was God reaffirming his commitment to his people. He was reestablishing in their lives and in their minds his faithfulness to follow through with what he's promised.

And that's what Jesus refers to in John 17, verse 3, where he says, And this is eternal life, that they may know me experientially, the one true God in Jesus Christ whom you've sent. And just as God was faithful to the nation of Israel, so God is also faithful to you and I. And he demonstrated that by giving his very Son. And that's why Paul was able to say in the book of Romans that I know that all things are going to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose because if he's given me his Son, how much more is he not going to give me everything readily to enjoy if God's given us his most prized possession? And isn't God going to continue to bless us and keep us until we see him face to face? And this should be encouraging for them.

Our hearts should respond in thanking God for his commitment to his people and that he's faithful not to leave us where we are. That he wants to grow us, he wants to nurture in us a greater faith to experience him to a greater degree. Well in verse 21 he continues, and they utterly destroyed being faithful to that instruction that was in the city both man and woman, young and old, sheep and donkey with the edge of the sword.

But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, go into the house, the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has as you swore to her. And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. And so they brought out all of her relatives, left them outside the camp of Israel, and they burned the city and all that was in it with fire.

Only the silver and the gold and the vessels of bronze and iron they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. And so she dwells in Israel to this day because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

Now, there's two quick thoughts that I want to share with you that inspired my heart when I was meditating upon these verses. The first thought was, you know, I think it's so wonderful how the Lord allowed these two spies to return to Rahab's house and participate in the celebration of God's faithfulness. You know, they had promised this woman that the Lord was going to spare them when they conquered the city.

And it wasn't like the Lord just proved himself faithful and think about it. She was living on the wall, the wall that crumbled. So the Lord supernaturally preserved her life and her family's life.

Divinely intervened. And the Lord says, I'm going to send those spies back, the ones who promised that I would be faithful to my word. I'm going to send them back and I'm going to allow them to celebrate with her the faithfulness of God.

That just encouraged me. Because when you go forth into this world and we're called as ambassadors to bring the message of Jesus Christ and we're affirming the words of God and we're speaking the words of God and when you're preaching the words of God, you can preach and speak these things with conviction because you know, without a shadow of a doubt, that God is going to be true to His word. And there's nothing that's more encouraging for a pastor when someone comes to you, you've given them counsel based upon the word of God and they come back and they say, well, it's happened just like you said.

Yeah, because God's faithful to His word. And it's not about the messenger, but it's about the faithful message that God stands behind and says He's going to back 100%. And then you can go to different people and as they're walking according to the word of God, you can celebrate together that the Lord is faithful.

And that's what we see here. The Lord allowed these two spies to participate in that celebration as Rahab and her family were celebrating and rejoicing in the faithfulness of God. And there's no doubt that when we're faithful to preach God's word, that we'll be affirmed as God's messengers.

Well, the second thing that we see here is I want you to contemplate the eternal influence this woman had simply because she chose to live a life that was counter-cultured during the time in which she lived. You know, her family, her entire family, all of her relatives were brought into the promise of God because she lived a life of faith. And God wants us to have that same type of influence and impact on those who are around us, especially our families.

Rahab's life became a point of reference for her relatives. And she warned them, God's going to destroy this city, there's judgment to come. And they were watching her life and they responded to that message and that warning.

And they entered into her house and when God judged the city, God preserved them. And so you can see the application for you and I is we're warning the world and those who are around us of the judgment that's to come. And there is judgment coming.

God promises it in His word. There's judgment that's coming. And we are sent into this world to warn people that God, as a just and holy God, is going to recompense upon humanity according to their deeds, the things that were done against the Lord, and the Lord wants us to go forth into this world and to warn

people.

Judgment's coming. And only those who are under the provision of Christ will be spared from the judgment to come. Not just temporarily, but eternally.

One of the things that compelled Paul to preach the gospel was the terror of the Lord. He says, knowing the terror of the Lord, I persuade people. And yet as a church, we've strayed from that type of preaching.

We don't warn people because we don't want people to feel uncomfortable. Listen, I'm here today to warn you, if you're not in Jesus, what you get to look forward to is not heaven, no matter what the world says. The Bible says that if you're not under the provision of Christ, if you haven't accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you're going to a place called hell where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Not because God isn't loving, He loves you enough to send His Son here to this world to die on the cross for our sins so that there is provision for us. But we have to be faithful to warn people. Say, listen, if you don't give your life to Jesus, if you don't embrace Him as your Savior and kiss His hand as Lord, then there is an eternal judgment to come.

All roads don't lead to heaven. Jesus Himself said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.

And Rahab, she was faithful even in the midst of a culture that allowed their inhabitants and allowed their people to do whatever they wanted to do much like we see today. Rahab lived a counter-cultural life and her faith in God became that point of reference for her entire family. And they listened and they were spared.

And many of us, we have family members and friends and people around us who don't have Jesus Christ into their heart or haven't accepted Jesus Christ in their heart. And they need to hear the gospel and at times they need to be warned. Jude says in his gospel that some have compassion but others pluck them out of the fire hating even the garment that's defiled by the flesh.

There are times that we have to be bold and say, you know what, this is the consequence for rejecting Jesus as is explained in the Word of God. And we need to be faithful to do that and there are going to be people who respond to that. I know that was the way I was saved or recommitted my life to the Lord.

Someone looked at me and said, you're Satan. And the fear of God fell upon me. It wasn't someone coming alongside saying, hey buddy, you know, accept Jesus and everything's going to be cool.

No, someone called me Satan and I didn't find out until later that Satan actually meant one who was opposing God. I was an enemy of God. I was stumbling as children.

And it was at that point that someone said that to me that the Lord plucked me out of the darkness I was walking in and set me on that path of righteousness. And I thank God for His mercy. I thank God for that girl who spoke that into my life.

Even though I didn't like it at the time, it was the best thing that I could have heard. And for some of our family members and the people that are around us, that is the best warning that we can share with them. Well, verse 26, then Joshua warned them at that time saying, cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds the city Jericho.

He shall lay its foundation with his firstborn and with his youngest. He shall set up its gates. We find in 1 Kings there's a man named Hillel from Bethel who, he didn't heed the warning of God.

And both of his sons died just as the Lord had proclaimed in His word because he didn't heed that warning of the Lord. And the lesson that we can learn from this account, and I was thinking about this yesterday, is we ought not resurrect or reestablish those strongholds in our lives that God destroys. God destroys strongholds in our lives and often we have the tendency to run right back to those things.

And the Lord says, don't resurrect these things. Don't reestablish these things because the consequences are far reaching. And also, when God says, no, we ought to listen.

That's a pretty simple message there. Well, I don't understand. The Lord says, no, we ought to listen to Him because God knows why He said no.

And then verse 27 as we conclude, so the Lord is with Joshua and His fame spread throughout all of the country. That's just amazing. Once again, we discover that God honored Joshua because Joshua honored God.

And that's really what it comes down to. Joshua wasn't seeking after a position. He wasn't seeking after fame.

The Lord, He exalted Him because He humbled Himself unto the mighty hand of God. And that should also be our attitude and disposition before the Lord. If the Lord wants to raise us up, then praise God.

If your responsibility is to be a stay-at-home mom or to work a job your entire life and just to worship Jesus and do what's right before you, praise God. Just be faithful to that. And I guarantee you this, that when you stand before God in heaven, that your fame is going to be known.

Not based upon what you've done for God, but because you trusted the Lord. Just like Rahab was mentioned in the Hall of Faith. I wonder how many of us are going to be mentioned in the Hall of Faith.

In God's economy, in His kingdom. And that should be all of our aspirations and desires. To please the Lord, to hear those words, well done, good and faithful servant.

Father, we thank You for this morning and we thank You for Your word and Your truth and the way that it penetrates the deepest parts of our hearts. And we thank You that according to Your word, Lord, You're going to be faithful to answer us in Your timing and Your way according to Your promises. And we can trust fully in Your promises.

As Isaiah said, we can open up the book and read from the Lord. Read from the book of the Lord and not one of these shall fail. But I'm asking this morning, as we've been encouraged that we would receive and respond in our heart, Lord, that You would teach us how we can respond in terms of application, that we wouldn't allow these words to fall upon deaf ears.

I'm praying specifically for those who are sitting here today that have never called upon Your name and maybe they don't feel worthy to call upon Your name. They've done too much and there's no way that God can forgive me for all the things that I've done, Lord. And I just thank You so much that Your word declares that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved and that all of our sins that we've done past, present, or future in Christ have been cast as far as the east and from the west never to be remembered

again.

We often remember our sins, but You don't. We thank You that You're such a God of compassion and mercy, Lord. We thank You that You're a God of love and I'm asking that today we'd respond to that.

If there's anyone in here today that doesn't know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, it's very simple. In your heart, you say, God, I recognize that I'm a sinner. I recognize that I've transgressed Your law and I know I need a Savior.

And I'm calling upon the name of Jesus as the propitiation, the substitute for my sins that Jesus took the punishment that I deserve so that we might obtain eternal life. Thank You for the gospel. Lord, and I pray that this morning they would call upon Your name.

They wouldn't leave this place before calling upon Your name and saying, God, come into my life. Come into my heart. Change me from the inside out, Lord.

I need You. I need You desperately. Everything else in your life has just been one disappointment after another.

Relationships have come and gone. All of the things that You've placed Your hope and Your faith in have all let You down. I can guarantee you today as I sit here to choose the Lord who is faithful to the nation of Israel to fall through on His promises so He'll be true to His word to you as well.

All you have to do is call upon His name. Say, Lord, I trust You. I give You my life.

I surrender my all to You. Take me and do it that way. Your glory.

Lord, as we sing this last song we just want to respond to Thanksgiving. We thank You, Lord, if we're in Christ and we're new creations. Old things have passed away and we know all things are new and we look forward to a hope that's incorruptible, that's undefiable, that fades in our way and it's reserved in Heaven for us.

We're going to see You face to face. We're going to know You just as we're known. Thank You for that expectation.

We wait with anticipation. So we just offer these words into Your hands, Lord, this song into Your hands, our hearts into Your hands and we're going to sing God be blessed, be delighted in Your hands for all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

How about you stand and let's stand together and sing this last song and just respond to the word that was spoken. Just thank God for this. Jesus, here I am before You and I'm broken.

I feel like there's not an answer to my problems. I know that You are so much stronger when I'm broken. And I know that Jesus, You're the answer to my problems.

Jesus, You are the answer. You are the way. You will never let me fall.

Only You can help me stay. You are the answer. You are the way.

You will never let me fall. Only You can help me stay. That I'm free.

That I'm free. Jesus, You are the answer. You are the way.

You will never let me fall. Only You can help me stay. You are the answer.

You are the way. You will never let me fall. Only You can help me stay.

That I'm free. That I'm free.

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