

(Through the Bible) Joshua 1-8

by Chuck Smith

God's promise to Joshua is a reminder that He has given us a glorious, full, rich life of victory in Jesus Christ, and that we must trust in Him to experience His presence and power.

Duration: 1:16:26

Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:11-13, Joshua 1:7-8, Joshua 3:3, Joshua 5:13-15, Joshua 6:20, Joshua 9:1, Psalm 1:1-3

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Holy Ground"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the excitement and importance of walking after the Spirit. He references the story of Joshua encountering a man with a drawn sword near Jericho. The man reveals himself as the captain of the host of the Lord and instructs Joshua to remove his shoes because he is standing on holy ground. God speaks to Joshua, encouraging him to lead the Israelites and promising them victory in every place they set foot. The preacher emphasizes the need for faith and obedience in claiming the abundant life and prosperity that God has already given to believers.

Transcript

This time you may be seated and we'll turn to the book of Joshua. Now it came to pass after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses' minister doesn't mean that Joshua was Moses' pastor. The word minister there actually is in its true meaning, which is servant.

It is interesting how that somehow we've really sort of twisted the concept of a minister. And so many men in the ministry today really don't look at the ministry as servanthood, but they're almost wanting people to serve them. You know, you ought to bring it to me because after all, I'm your minister.

And that's totally opposite of what the word minister really means. It means a servant. Jesus said, if any man would be chief among you, let him be the servant of all.

So a true minister is a man who is there not to be ministered to, but who is there to serve the needs of the people. And so when it reads that he was Moses' servant or his minister, it means that he was Moses' personal servant. He accompanied Moses, he helped Moses do the things, and Moses was, you know, he was just his valet sort of, just his servant.

Now, after the death of Moses, God elevated him from Moses' servant to the servant of all of the people of Israel. Faithful in the little things, now the Lord has entrusted into his hand even greater things. And this is always the process of God.

Jesus said, because thou hast been faithful in little things, now I will make thee ruler over many. He said, if I've entrusted to you the little things and you haven't been able to take care of them, how can I entrust you the things of the kingdom? As the Lord encourages us to the faithfulness in our service, no matter what avenue of service He may call us to. Many times we look with disdain upon particular ministries within the body.

And we look with sort of envy or desirability on other ministries within the body. And men are prone many times to put greater honor on certain ministries. Actually, the particular ministry that I have within the body is one that people often look up to in an enviable kind of a way because it is a particular ministry that draws a lot of prominence.

Because I stand before people. But it doesn't really follow that my ministry is more important than your ministry within the body. There are some ministries that never cause any attention or notice to be drawn to them, which God has placed as some of the most vital and important ministries within the body.

There is that ministry of intercessory prayer. Rarely do you know who it is who has that ministry. And yet, what an important ministry within the body.

And what great honor God places upon that ministry. And what great rewards will that person have who has and is faithful to that ministry. I don't know that they'll have rows in heaven.

I hope not. Because I'm afraid I'll have a back row. Because there is so much feedback to the ministry that I have.

It's so neat to have people like you who display and show so much love and so much warmth and so much kindness. And I fear less. I often am getting all my rewards here and there'll be nothing left for me when I get up there.

And I'll have to stand in the back on my tiptoes trying to see down to the front. And some of you people who have never been on the platform, never been in the public eye, you'd be right down there in the front row. Because you have been faithful to God in that ministry that He has called you to fulfill.

Though it wasn't one that caused a lot of attention to be drawn to you. But you were faithful in that to which God called you. We need to get away from this concept of full-time ministry looking at that those who are on the Calvary Chapel staff or those who have been hired by some mission board are full-time ministers.

You are, all of you, called by God to be a full-time minister. Now, Citizen Roebuck may pay your salary or some other corporation. But you have been called of God to full-time serving the Lord.

And whatever you're doing in word or deed, you should be doing for the glory of God and as unto the Lord. And knowing that from the Lord you are going to receive your reward. And so we need to have the proper concept of the ministry and especially those who do serve on any church staff.

We need to get away from that idea that the minister, you know, is someone who is especially holy or, you know, is someone above the others. Because as a minister, I'm actually a servant. And can you imagine

seeking to serve this many people? But yet, that's what God has called me to do.

So, Joshua was Moses' minister. That is, he was his personal valet or servant. Now, after the death of Moses, the Lord then spoke unto Joshua.

His name is a very significant name. It was given to him by Moses. Originally, his mother called him Hoshea, which means salvation.

But Moses, after he saw the quality and all in this man, called him Joshua or Yahshua, which is Jehovah is or Jehovah's salvation or Jehovah is salvation. It is the same name as Jesus. This is in Hebrew, Yahshua.

In Greek, it is Jesus. And so we find in Joshua a very interesting type of Jesus Christ who, Joshua, led the people into the inheriting of the land. Now, Moses could only lead the people so far.

Moses led them out of Egypt and to the border of the promised land. But Moses could not lead them in. Moses stands for the law, and the law cannot lead you in to the fullness of God's blessings for your life.

The law can lead you up to the border, but the law can't take you in. So Moses, the representative of the law, could lead them up to the border of the promised land. He could not lead them into the promised land.

It is necessary that Moses now lay down his leadership. Joshua takes up the leadership to lead them into the promises of God. Now, there have been given unto us exceeding rich and precious promises.

God has a life for you that is a super-rich, abundant life in Jesus Christ. It isn't God's will that you be on a spiritual roller coaster, that you be a yo-yo in your spiritual experience. It is God's desire that you enter into the full, rich life that He has for you in Jesus Christ, and that you enjoy that life of victory in Christ.

But the law can't lead you into that. Only Jesus Christ can lead you in. So where Moses had to leave off, Joshua took up.

Where the law led them as far as it could, and now their new relationship is going to be one of faith. They're going to have to begin by stepping out in faith, coming into this land that God had promised. Now, their conquest of Canaan is typical of the Christians entering into the life of victory that God has for us as we are conquering over the giants of the flesh that have been entrenched so long in our lives, as we enter into that glorious victory in and through Jesus Christ that the Lord has for us.

Now, it is interesting that Joshua could only lead them so far. He led them into the conquering of the land, but he never brought them into a rest. That is something that was reserved for Jesus Christ.

And in Hebrews, the contrast is made of how that Joshua led them in but could not bring them to the place of rest. That is a work that was reserved for the finished work of Jesus Christ. And once Christ made the work of salvation complete through His death upon the cross, then He has brought us now into the rest where we rest our salvation, our eternal life in that finished work of Jesus.

And we have that neat rest in the Lord. So, Jesus has done for us that which Joshua could not do. He brought them only into the land, not into the rest.

But Jesus has brought us into a glorious rest. And so, you get into some of the typology and it makes a very fascinating study. Now, God spoke to Joshua and the words of the Lord were actually words of encouragement.

Commanding Joshua now to take up where Moses led off and for him to lead the people, the children of Israel. And the beautiful promise in verse 3 where God said, Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you as I said unto Moses. Now, I like that because this is stepping in and laying claim to that which is already yours.

Notice it's in the past tense. Every place you put your soul, I have already given to you. Now, God has already given to you a glorious, full, rich life of victory.

All you have to do is go in and take it by faith. Go in, wherever you put the sole of your foot, the Lord said, I have given to you. You can go in and begin to lay claim to the blessings of God, to the promises of God.

And let us beware, lest God having given us a promise, that we would fail to receive it or enter into it. It is important that we begin to lay claim to those victories over the flesh life that God has promised to give to us. Every place you put the sole of your foot, I have given to you.

From the wilderness, from Lebanon, even to the great river Euphrates. Now, the tragic thing is that they didn't put their soul all the way. You know, God said, it's all yours.

Every place you put the sole of your foot down, I have given it to you. And they only went so far and then they quit. They never did go over to the river Euphrates.

They never did take all that God had given to them. Now, it is also tragically true that so many times we fail to take all that God has given to us. We fail to enter fully into that life of victory in Jesus Christ.

We hesitate or we become, as they did, satisfied. We say, oh, this is all we need. And we become more or less complacent in our spiritual growth.

We just hit a plateau and we say, oh, praise the Lord, this is wonderful. And we don't press on any further. So, when God tells them the area that is theirs, it is sad that they never did take all of the area that was theirs.

They never did fully possess their possessions, that which God gave to them. That is why the Scriptures are constantly exhorting us, let us go on, let us go on into the completeness, into the fullness. God has so much for you.

God wants to do so much for you. If you'll just press in by faith, lay claim, take it, it's yours. Now, the Lord is encouraging him.

No man will be able to stand against you. As I was with Moses, so I'm going to be with you. I will not fail you nor forsake you.

Be strong and of good courage, for unto this people you're going to divide this inheritance, the land. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do all that is written according to the law and all. Now, the encouragement for Joshua, as God promises his presence, his power, and then as God again tells him the conditions upon which he will experience that presence and power of God, be careful that you observe to do the whole law.

Don't turn, don't deviate from it to the right or to the left. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein. For thus thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and thou shalt have good success.

Now, God is saying, look, keep the law, don't deviate from it. For it is by this, observing it day and night, meditating in it, thus thou shalt make thy way prosperous, thus you will have good success. As we turn to the first Psalm, we read, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law does he meditate both day and night.

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. People looking for prosperity, people looking for success, God has given you the rules.

Meditate in it, observe it, and thus shalt thou make thy way prosperous. For these are the rules to prosperity, these are the rules to success. And so, the conditions upon which he can know the power, the presence, the victory.

So, Joshua commanded the officers of the people saying, Pass through the land and command the people saying, Prepare your food, for within three days you're going to pass over this Jordan and go in and possess the land which the Lord your God gives to you to possess. And to the Reubenites and the Gadites and after the tribe of Manasseh, he said, All right, now you promised Moses you were going to go in and help us and all. And he reminded them of their promise, told them now to leave their wives and so forth and to get the fighting men together that they might cross with them and take this land that God had promised unto them.

Until the Lord has given, verse 15, your brother's rest as he has given you, and they have possessed the land which the Lord your God has given to them, then you will return and enjoy this land. And they answered Joshua saying, All that you command us we will do, for whethersoever thou send us, we will go. And as we hearken unto Moses, so will we hearken unto you.

Now in chapter two, Joshua sent out two men to spy out the land, actually to spy out Jericho because Jericho was the first city that they were going to come to. Jericho is one of the oldest cities in the world. And it was one of the first, it was the first city that they came to once they crossed the Jordan River.

So these two spies came to Jericho and they went into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab. And Rahab received them into her house. And she shared with them how that everybody was afraid of them.

For they had heard how that God was with them, and how that God had parted the Red Sea so that they could come through. They heard how that they had destroyed the strong kings, Sihon and Og. And thus the fear of them had come upon all of the inhabitants of the land.

Now someone came to the king of Jordan, or Jericho, and he told him that there were two spies from Israel who had come into the city of Jericho and they had gone to the house of Rahab. So he sent to Rahab and she said, Oh well, last night about the time it got dark, just before they closed the gate, these men slipped out. Maybe if you hurry you can catch them.

In reality she was drying flax up on her roof and she hid them under the flax. And so the king sent out men down towards the Jordan River to find these spies. And after they were gone out, she told them, you know, the king knows you're here and I know that God is going to give you this city and I want you to spare me and my family.

And so the spies said, all right, we'll make a covenant with you. Now she lived right on the wall of the city and she let them down over the wall with a scarlet cord, a rope. And they said, when we take the city, you leave this scarlet rope out and everyone who is within the house will be saved.

If any of your family goes out into the streets, then they're taking their lives into their own hands. They'll be slain with the rest of the people. But in order that they might be spared and be safe, they've got to stay in the house.

So you let this scarlet rope down so that we'll know the house. And when we take the city, we'll spare all of your family that is gathered in the house. Of course, there is a beautiful picture really of our place in Christ Jesus, the safety that we have abiding in Him.

Those that are within Christ are safe. No matter what comes, abiding in Christ, I have that safety. Outside of Him, I have nothing.

I'm an open prey, but within Christ, that beautiful safety that is ours. So the spies made this covenant with her and she said, now look, when you get down from here, you flee on up into the mountains. Now the mountains are right behind Jericho.

They're actually the opposite direction from Jordan. But she said, they're going to look for you and you wait there in the mountains until they come back into the city and then, you know, scam on down and cross the Jordan and get back to your people. So they went up into the mountains just above Jericho there and waited for the men to come back from their futile search.

And then they made it on back and they told Joshua all that Rahab had told them of the fear that had come upon the inhabitants of the land and how that the Lord had delivered them into their hands. It is interesting to me that as we read the genealogy of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, that there are a few women that are listed in the genealogy. I can think of three off hand.

One is a prostitute, Rahab. She's actually listed in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. The other is Ruth, a Moabitess.

And the third was Bathsheba, David's wife. That he took by illicit kind of ways. Interesting that three such women should be chosen by God to be in the lineage of His Son.

But yet, to me, there is a beauty to it because Jesus came to identify with sinful man. That he might take upon himself man's guilt and sin and die in his place. And so rather than coming from some pure royal blue blood lineage, we find very common sinful people listed in the line of Jesus Christ.

As we get into chapter 3, Joshua rose early in the morning and they removed from Shittim and they came to the Jordan. He and all the children of Israel and they lodged there before they passed over. And he commanded the people and he said, now when you see the Ark of the Covenant moving out, you stay behind it 2,000 cubits, which is about a half mile that they were to stay behind the Ark, maybe two-thirds of a mile back from the Ark of the Covenant.

And the Levites were to bear the Ark of the Covenant before the people. And then he said, sanctify yourself for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you. And Joshua spoke to the priest and he said, take the Ark of the Covenant and pass over before the people.

And they took up the Ark of the Covenant and went before the people. The Lord said unto Joshua, this day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And now shall command the priest that bear the Ark of the Covenant saying, when you are come to the brink of the water of the Jordan, he shall stand still in Jordan.

Joshua said to the children of Israel, come hither and hear the words of the Lord your God. Joshua said, hereby you shall know that the living God is among you. And he that will, and he will without fail drive out from before you the inhabitants of the land.

Behold, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth passes before you into Jordan. Now, therefore, take 12 men out of the tribes of Israel, every tribe a man. And it shall come to pass that as soon as the souls of the feet of the priests that bear the Ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above and they shall stand upon a heap.

And so it came to pass that the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan and the priest bearing the Ark of the Covenant before the people. And as they bear the Ark, and as they had come to the Jordan, the feet of the priests that bear the Ark were dipped in the brim of the water for Jordan at this time overflowed all of its banks during the time of the harvest. And the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city which is beside Zeratan.

And those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed and were cut off. And the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan and all Israel passed over.

So even as God parted the Red Sea, now God stopped the Jordan River in flood season so that they were able to pass over. Now the interesting thing to me about this is when they came to the Red Sea, Moses stretched forth his rod and the Red Sea was parted. They went through on dry land.

But with the Jordan, the Lord is now testing their faith and developing their faith. He let the priests get their feet wet, walking right into the edge of the river, getting their feet in the water, stepping out now really in faith. That wasn't easy, I'm sure.

I imagine that even Joshua himself had some anxious moments as he saw those guys starting to wade into the water. Now Lord, that's what you said. But this is coming into a new relationship with God, that relationship of faith, which is so very important for every one of us to really develop in that full relationship with God.

It has to be that relationship of faith. And God is bringing them now into a new relationship of faith. Before they sought, before they stepped in, they saw the sea parted.

But now God is letting them take one step further in faith. Go ahead and step out before you see any evidence, before you see any signs. Go ahead and step out in faith.

Get your feet wet. And so here is a new relationship, an exciting relationship to be sure. As they stepped into the water, and as they did, God caused the waters to cease flowing.

God threw up a dam, and the waters of Jordan ceased, and the people all passed over. Now, they were commanded to take these stones out of the bottom of the Jordan River, where the priests were standing,

holding the Ark of the Covenant. And when they came up on the other side, they were put to put these stones in a heap.

And Joshua commands them there in chapter 4, that this may be a sign among you that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, what do you mean by these stones? He shall answer them that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord when it passed over Jordan. The waters of Jordan were cut off, and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel forever. And so the children of Israel did as Joshua commanded.

So, it is interesting to me that God is desiring that His power and His truth is transmitted to our children, that they not forget what God has done for us. It is sad and it is tragic that very few revivals ever go into a second generation. Now, I don't know if you know it or not, but we are experiencing here a marvelous revival.

What God is doing in our midst is a spiritual phenomena that the whole world is looking at and talking about. Because of God's marvelous work in our midst, and there is a real move of God's Holy Spirit, God's raising up a whole new element of people, you might say. There are now over 150 formal fellowships that have sort of sprung out of Calvary Chapel, plus hundreds of other informal fellowships that are developing.

One sociologist that was studying this whole thing that is happening said, if the Lord doesn't come in the 1980s, he said, at the rate things are going, I anticipate that there will be 10,000 Calvary Chapels across the United States. God is working in a very beautiful way. And we have had the excitement and the thrill of seeing God work.

When you consider that we're only 14 years old, and you look at what God has done, we just stand in amazement and in awe. But unfortunately, there have been other moves of the Spirit like this in the history of the church that are marvelous. The people are there, they enjoy it, but rarely do they ever carry into a second generation.

Because, you see, as we grow, it'll be necessary to more or less begin to formalize things, to establish sort of codes and rules. And the minute you start putting the fences around it, then you're restricting that work that God wants to do. And when I die, some fool will want to raise a memorial to Chuck Smith, and we'll have a Chuck Smith gymnasium or something, you know.

Oh, God forbid. This should remain a memorial to Jesus Christ for what He has done. And never a memorial to any man.

God keep us from that memorial state. Nobody needs to remember me. We need to remember the work that God has done.

The monument wasn't built for Joshua. The monument was built so that the children, when they say, Hey, what's that pile of stones, Daddy? Those stones were once in the bottom of the Jordan River, and when we walked through, we picked up these stones out of the river. That's because God stopped the river so that we could come through.

That's the kind of a God we serve. And it was to remind them of the work of God. And oh, that we will always keep that in the forefront of our minds, that the work that we see is not a work of man, nor is it to the credit of any man.

The work is to the glory of God. And let's keep our memorials unto the Lord for the work that He has wrought. Now, God seeks actually that we would pass on to our children His truths, His glory, His power.

And His method for doing this is by creating questions in the minds of the children. You ever wondered why a child is so inquisitive? That's been placed there by the Spirit. And the purpose of that inquisitive mind of the child is that he may learn.

Teach him. And let your memorials be memorials that will allow you the opportunity to share. Share the work of God and the power of God.

It is marvelous that we remember what God has done. But it is also important that we relate to our children who did not have the privilege of seeing that work that we saw. The work that God has wrought by His Holy Spirit.

So, these stones were to create questions in the minds of the children to give them the opportunity to share with their children the glorious power of God. So, Joshua, verse 9, set up the twelve stones in the midst of Jordan in the place where the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the covenant stood. They're there unto this day.

Now, it'd be fun. They set up two memorials. They took stones and set them in a pile in the Jordan River.

And then they also set a pile up on a bank. It'd be fun to get some scooby gear. It says they were there till that day to see if the stones were still there in the Jordan River that Joshua set up.

Now, the priests which bear the ark stood in the midst of Jordan till everyone was finished. That the Lord commanded Joshua to speak to the people. All that Moses commanded Joshua, the people hastened and passed over.

And so it came to pass when the people were clean, passed over. The ark of the Lord passed over the priests in the presence of the people. All the children of Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, about 40,000 of those from those two and a half tribes prepared for war.

On that day, the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel. They feared him as they feared Moses all the days of his life. And the Lord spoken to Joshua saying, Command the priest that they bear the ark of the testimony that they come up out of Jordan.

And so he commanded them to come up out of Jordan. And when they were come up from the midst of Jordan and the soles of the priest's feet were lifted up to the dry land that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place and overflowed their banks as they did before. And the people came out of Jordan on the 10th day of the first month.

They encamped in Gilgal in the east border of Jericho. And so it is actually just four days prior to the feast of Passover. And those 12 stones which they took out of Jordan, Joshua pitched in Gilgal.

And he spoke to the children of Israel saying, When your children will ask their fathers in time to come, what are these stones mean? Then let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. So the memorial by which they could share with their children the work of God. Now in chapter 5, we read where all of the adult males were at this point circumcised.

It was a rite that they did not follow while they were in the wilderness. So that those who were born in the wilderness, now were men, did not go through the rite of circumcision. But now that they are to enter into the land, the circumcision was always a type of the cutting away of a heart after the flesh.

God wanted a people whose heart was after the Spirit. And so it was a symbolic act. And God said, circumcise your hearts.

In other words, cut away from your heart that longing or desiring after the flesh. And Paul in the book of Romans speaks of the error of the Jews in observing a rite without the reality. And though they had gone through the rite of circumcision, yet their hearts were after fleshly things.

And thus there was an inconsistency there. Now that they are going to enter into this new relationship with God coming into the land, because it is to typify a new relation after the Spirit, which is that new relationship that God wants to bring you into, a life of victory over the flesh. So it was necessary that they go through the rite of circumcision and all of the adult males be circumcised in order that they might cut away the flesh and thus signify the fact that they were going to walk after the Spirit and a heart after God.

And so, as I said, it was not done in the wilderness. And so it was done after they entered into the land. The first thing was this circumcision in order that they might again declare themselves a people unto God to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh.

And so God said, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off of you. Therefore, the name of the place is called Gilgal, which means a rolling because God there rolled away the reproach of Egypt, which is a type of the flesh and the life after the flesh. They long for the flesh pots of Egypt.

And Egypt always is symbolic of living after the flesh and lusting after the flesh. And so the children of Israel encamped there in Gilgal. They kept the Passover from the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

So this is the first Passover in the promised land. They came in just four days beforehand, circumcised themselves, and now are beginning this new relationship with God, observing the Passover now in the new land. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, the unleavened cakes, the parched corn the same day.

And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land. Neither had the children of Israel manna anymore, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. So again, coming in now to a new diet.

The life of the Spirit is a life of variety. It's a life of excitement. It really is thrilling to walk after the Spirit and live after the Spirit.

You never know what God has planned for you today. It's just an exciting life, a life of variety. I never lack for excitement.

Walking after the Spirit is the most exciting experience in the world. And so, they are leaving now the old manna, that monotonous kind of a diet, and now going to begin to eat of the fruits of the land that God had promised as they come in now to the land of Canaan. I love verse 13 through 15.

And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho that he lifted up his eyes, and he looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went unto him and said to him, Are you for us or for our enemies? And he said, Not for your enemies, but as captain of the host of the Lord. Am I now come? And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place where you stand is holy.

And Joshua did so. Here, Joshua met Jesus. Jesus, the captain of the Lord's host.

You see, if it were an angel, then he would have refused his worship. John, several times in the book of Revelation, tried to worship the angel. And he said, Stand up, worship the Lord.

The Lord said, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only. Therefore, the captain of the Lord's host is none other than Jesus, who is standing there ready to lead him into the land of promise. As the captain of the Lord's host, have I come? And Joshua fell on his knees on his face and said, What do you want me to do, Lord? Much like Paul, the apostle, Lord, what will you have me to do now? Here is a true picture of leadership.

The finest leader is the man who is led. The finest ruler is a man who is ruled. God chose Joshua for a leader to rule over the people of Israel, because Joshua was ruled over by the Lord.

Proper chain of command. And no man is fit to rule who is not ruled. That's the tragedy of history where we have had despots upon the throne.

These autocratic despotic rulers, who did not feel a responsibility to anybody else, but became the final authority within themselves, they became tyrants. And the people always suffer under the rule of such people. But those who have a consciousness of the fact that they are ruled, those who have submitted themselves to his throne are able to reign upon their thrones.

But you've got to have that chain of command. When the centurion came to Jesus and thought that Jesus would heal his daughter who was very sick, Jesus said, I will come to your house. He said, oh no, Lord, that isn't necessary.

I'm not worthy that you should come to my house. For you see, I understand authority. I also am a man of authority.

Having under me men. I am also a man, he said, under authority, having under me men. He sees the chain.

I'm a man who is under authority, but I have under me men. He recognized the position of Jesus. Having submitted to the Father, a man under authority, yet having authority himself.

So I can say to one man, do this and he'll do it. To another, do that and he does it. I have authority, but I am under authority.

And I know that you have authority and all you have to do is speak the word and my servant will be healed. I said, all right, that's far out. I haven't seen this kind of faith among the Israelites.

A man who recognized what true authority is. Oh, that we would realize that we don't have any right to rule unless we ourselves are ruled. And so Joshua, the leader over the people and yet being led.

What do you want me to do, Lord? The real heart of the servant. And so the Lord didn't have much for him to do. He just take his shoes off.

The ground where you're standing is holy. So much as the Lord spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, the commander remove his sandals, so also to Joshua. So as the captain of the Lord's host to lead the people of God into the conquest of the land.

And so in chapter six, we begin the conquering of the land and the method by which they took Jericho was very fascinating. Indeed, the Lord said to Joshua, I have given to you city of Jericho, its king and its mighty men. Now you're to encircle the city, all of your men of war and you're to walk around the city once.

And you're to do this for six days. And the seven priests shall bear before the ark, seven trumpets of ram's horns. And on the seventh day, you shall circle the city seven times and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

And we'll come to pass when they make a long blast with the ram's horn. And when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout and the wall of the city shall fall down flat and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. And so Joshua called the priest, told him to take the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear the seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark of the Lord.

And he said to the people, pass on and encircle the city and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord. And so it came to pass when Joshua had spoken unto the people that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of the ram's horns passed on before the Lord and blew with the trumpets and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. And Joshua commanded the people, you're not to shout or make any noise with your voice.

Neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth until the day that I bid you to shout, then shout. So I can imagine that those who were in the city of Jericho began to get a little quizzical after a few days. Here is this army that is coming to take their city.

And here are seven guys going around with these ram horns, blowing on these horns and behind it, these other fellows who are carrying this box between the staves. And then all of the army just walking around, not saying a word and then going back home. And every day, here these guys are out there, traipsing around for six days.

And then the seventh day, back again, early in the morning, woke us up this morning. And after the seventh time around on the seventh day, then the long blast with the trumpets and the people began to shout. And as they did, the walls of Jericho fell.

Now, this is a very unlikely story. But it's true. And you should have no problem with it if your God is big enough.

So God brought down the walls of Jericho and the city was taken by Joshua and the children of Israel. Now, they were commanded that they were not to take any of the spoil of Jericho to themselves. This is the first city in the land that they are conquering.

Any gold or silver or brass or iron that is there is given unto the Lord. It goes into the Lord's treasury. This is the first fruits.

The first fruit always belongs to God. And so they weren't to take any treasures of the city to themselves. And so the walls fell, the city was conquered, and Joshua there in verse 26 pronounced an interesting prophecy and curse.

Joshua adjured them at that time saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord that rises up and builds this city Jericho. He shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn and in his youngest son he will set up the gates of it. Now, how did Joshua know that? It didn't happen for several hundred years, but you will read in 1 Kings 16 and 34 where the king decided to rebuild the city of Jericho and they started building it in the time of his firstborn son.

And then when his youngest son was born, they set the gates of the city of Jericho. And the prophecy here of Joshua was literally fulfilled. And the man was cursed also.

So the whole prophecy was fulfilled. Now, in chapter 7 we read that the children of Israel committed a trespass against the Lord in the holy things, or in the cursed things rather. For Achan took of the accursed thing, that is, he took some of the spoil that they said was to go only to God, and he took it for himself.

And God's anger was kindled against the children of Israel. So, Moses sent some men up to look over Bethel and Ai. Now, Jordan is down in the plains.

Jericho is down in the plains of Jordan. And it's quite a climb up the valley from Jericho to Bethel and Ai. Actually, when you're in Jericho, you're about 1200 feet below sea level.

When you get up to Bethel, you're about, oh, 2800 feet above sea level. And there is this valley that goes up, a very beautiful valley, that goes up from Jericho up to Bethel. It was the natural route.

And so the men went up and they looked at Ai. And they came back to Joshua and they said, Joshua, there's no need of sending the whole army. Just give us two or three thousand men and we'll take Ai.

So, Joshua sent a regiment up to take the city of Ai. And the men of Ai came out against them. And they began to flee and the men of Ai pursued them.

And 36 of them were slain and they came running back to camp. And Joshua fell on his face before the Lord, down in verse 7. And he prayed, tore his clothes, fell to the earth on his face. And Joshua said, alas, and that's a term that means we've had it kind of a thing, you know.

Alas, O Lord, why have you brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? Would to God we have been content and we'd stayed on the other side of Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns their backs before their enemies? When the Canaanites hear of this, they shall encircle us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will you do to your great name? And the Lord said unto Joshua, stand up, why are you lying on your face? I like this.

It's like when Moses was lying on his face when they had found themselves trapped between Pi-Hahiroth and Beth-Zephon and the Red Sea in front of them and the Egyptian army had cut off their retreat routes. And Moses cried out unto the Lord, we're trapped. And the Lord said, wherefore cryest thou unto me? Well, who else I'm going to cry to? You know, you're the one that led me down here.

The Lord said, stretch forth your hand. In other words, hey, now's not the time to pray, time to move. And there comes a time to move.

And there's a time to pray, true. But then there's a time to get up and start moving. And Moses, this isn't the time to pray, this is the time to move.

Now with Joshua, here he is, you know, laying out the whole lament to God. Lord, what are you doing to us? You know, what are we going to do? Turning our backs to the enemies. Boy, when this word gets around, they're all going to come down.

We're going to get wiped out. We've been better off. We stand on the other side.

Lord, what are you doing? And the Lord said, stand up. Why are you crying unto me? And then the Lord revealed to him that there was sin in the camp. They have transgressed.

God's covenant. For they have taken unto themselves of the treasure from Jericho. Now, as we make a spiritual analogy here, and I think it is important that we do it.

You see, spiritually now, we are entering into a new dimension of relationship with God. The life and the walk of the Spirit. Now, God hasn't promised that it's going to be all victory.

There are battles. There are giants in the land. Your flesh has been deeply entrenched for a long, long time.

Now, they conquered over the first obstacle, because they followed the instructions of the Lord implicitly. But having gained the first victory, a danger arose. And that was this business of self-confidence.

Lord, we don't need your help with AI. We now know what the process of victory is. We're flush with victory.

God has just delivered this strong city into our hands. AI, it isn't nearly as big as Jericho. If we can conquer Jericho, then AI will be nothing.

Lord, we don't need you on this one. We can handle this one on our own. Joshua, don't send the whole army, just a couple thousand of us.

We'll go up and take that thing for you. How many times when God has given us a victory over some major issue of our flesh, we get flushed with victory and with a feeling of confidence, and we think, oh my, I've got it, I've arrived. I don't need help anymore.

I can handle this little area of my flesh. That's really nothing, Lord. I'll be able to manage this one.

No problem, God. And I go out on my own without first seeking God. God says, stand up.

Why are you crying unto me? Had he prayed first, he wouldn't have been in the predicament he was in. Now, that is often true of our lives. If we had only prayed beforehand, we'd have never been in the mess.

So many times when we're crying unto the Lord, we say, oh Lord, why, oh Lord, is this happening to us? You say, hey, why are you crying to me? Where were you before you started the thing? I didn't tell you to go there. I didn't command you to get into that mess. I'm not the one that directed you there.

You went there on your own. Self-confidence. I think, Lord, I can manage this.

I can handle this. I don't need your help. And man, that's when the enemy always gives me a real trumping.

Beware of that kind of self-confidence. And know that you can't conquer the least of the areas of your flesh without divine guidance and help. Sorry about that.

But you're just as weak as I am when it comes to dealing with the flesh. And we've got to have the help of the Lord in every area of our lives if we are going to know victory over the flesh. Now, the reason why that is so is because God doesn't want you to become a proud fool and to go around boasting of how you conquered over your appetite or you conquered over this or that or the other and start laying heavy trips on us and becoming sort of parasitical against us, saying, well, you know, I used to have that problem too, but I just did this and that and the other.

And anybody can do it if they really set their mind to it, you know. That kind of baloney. And you start putting down everybody else like, you know, if you're only as good as I am, then you can make it.

And so God lets us realize how hopelessly and helplessly we are lost without His help. So that when the victory comes, all I can say is, oh, thank you, Lord. You did it.

I tried everything, everything to get rid of my temper. You don't know how hard I tried. I hated it.

I hated myself whenever I would lose my temper. But one day, God took it away. For a long time, I was trying to control my temper because that's what my mother told me.

Son, control yourself. And I tried. And there were times when I was relatively successful, building up a real head of steam inside, but keeping it capped.

But then sometimes that cap didn't work. And then when I blew, I really blew because there was so much pressure inside at that point that, you know, then you really go wild. You just tear everything up.

And then you feel miserable and horrible. Oh, no, why did I do that? Oh, you know, and you're just going through the whole thing. One day, God took it away.

It was no longer a process of controlling my temper. I didn't have a temper. I didn't realize that he had taken it away for several years.

And one day, something happened that would have really triggered me with a tremendous outburst, and there was no outburst. There was no steam. There was no anger.

And I realized, God has taken that vile, horrible, temporal way. Oh, praise the Lord. So, I don't have any little formulas for success on how to control your temper.

I tried them all and they didn't work. But I have discovered that what I couldn't do for myself, the Lord was able to do for me when I came to the end of myself, when I despaired of myself, when I knew that I couldn't do it, and I cried out in desperation, God, help me, I can't do it. Now, so often we think that, oh, that's the end of the road when I have to call upon God when I can't do it.

Oh, how tragic that you would get to that point. No, how blessed. Because that final cry of despair is often the prelude to the first cry of victory.

When God brings you to the absolute end and despairing of yourself and you know that there's no way you can do it and you give up, then is when God has the opportunity to step in and begin His work because He's taking you one point beyond yourself. That's always a great point to be. God, it can't be done unless you do it.

So that then when He goes ahead and does it, I then don't play the fool and take the glory as though I did it. Now, God wants the glory for the victories in your life. God gave them a glorious victory at Jericho.

They thought, we got it made. Don't send the whole army, we'll just go up. And they got whipped, came running back to Joshua.

God said, don't cry unto me. There's sin in the camp. If everything was all right within the camp, you would have had the victory, but there's sin in the camp.

They've taken of the accursed thing. And so they called off the tribes. Had the tribes come by and God chose the tribe of Judah.

They had the families of Judah come by and God chose this particular family out of the tribes of Judah. And then God had the families to pass by and God then picked out from the family this fellow by the name of Achan from the family of the Zarhites. And Zabdi was taken and he brought his household man by man.

And Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, the tribe of Judah was taken. Now, if you were Achan, how would you feel? You know, as all the tribes pass by and then they say the tribe of Judah, you think, oh, I wonder. You know, then they have all the families of Judah pass by and they choose this family of the Zarhites.

You think, oh, getting closer. Then they have all the families of the Zarhites pass by and they choose then your own household. And then it comes right down to you.

And Joshua said unto Achan, my son. And I love the way that Joshua deals with him in tenderness. Of course, he dealt pretty firmly in a little bit, but gives him a chance to repent at least.

Joshua said unto Achan, my son, give I pray thee glory to Jehovah, the God of Israel, and make confession unto him and tell me now, what have you done? Don't try to hide it from me. And Achan answered Joshua and said, indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel and I've done this. When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonish garment and 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold and 50 shekels weight, I coveted them.

And I took them and behold, they are hid in the earth in the middle of my tent. The silver is under it. So Joshua sent messengers and they ran to the tent and behold, it was hid in his tent and the silver under it.

And they took them out of the midst of the tent and brought them to Joshua and all the children of Israel. And they laid them out before the Lord. So Achan was guilty of stealing.

This belonged to God. It was to be given to the Lord, all of the spoil of Jericho. But this man coveted.

He saw this beautiful Babylonish garment. He saw the silver, the gold, and he coveted these things. And he took them and hid them in his tent, figuring no one would know, no one would see.

But his sin was costly. It cost the lives of 32 of the men or 36 of the men of Israel who fell before the men of Ai. A lot of times a person thinks that his sin only bothers me.

My sin, you know, it may hurt me, but only hurts me. My sin only hurts me kind of bit. No, sir.

Your sin has a bad effect on others. And so Achan and his family were brought forth and Achan was stoned for his sin. And then they went back to Ai.

Now, this time under the direction of the Lord. And Joshua sent part of the army around the other side of the city to hide in ambush. And then he said, we'll come to the city like before and attack it with a frontal attack.

And then we'll pretend like we are retreating as before and we'll start running and let them chase us. And after they've all come out in the chase after us, then you fellows come from your hiding places and take the city. So Joshua sent some of his troops around behind the city to lie in wait.

And so in the morning, he with his troops came up to the gates of the city and the king came out against him with his men. And Joshua and his men began to retreat. And the king called all of the men out to pursue them.

Let's wipe them out this time. And they began to pursue Joshua and his men. And they began to run back towards Jericho.

And then after the men were all drawn out of the city, Joshua raised his spear. And the men who were hiding in wait, when they saw the signal, they came swooping upon the city that was devoid of men. And they set the city afire.

And as soon as they saw the smoke of the city rising, then Joshua and his men stood firm and they started to fight. And these fellows turned around and they saw their city in flames and their heart was gone, no more heart to fight. And the men of Ai and the city of Ai and Bethel were then taken by Joshua and by his troops, guided now by the Lord.

They are successful. Doing it and trying to do it by their own ingenuities, they failed by their own abilities, but now directed by God, they experienced the victories. So they came then to Mount Ebal.

They moved on through and now are in about the middle of the land, Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. And there, as they were commanded to do, when you come into the land, you're to stand there in the valley. You're to read the law of the Lord to the people.

And in verse 34, afterwards, he read all the words of the law, the blessings, the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. And there was not a word that Moses commanded, which Joshua did not read before the congregation of Israel were the women and the little ones, the strangers that were conversant among them. And so they told them again, the conditions by which they would be blessed of God, the conditions that would bring the curse of God, the conditions by which they could be established in the land, the conditions by which they would be driven from the land, the blessings, the cursings, all conditional upon their obedience to the commandment of the Lord.

So we get next week into chapter 9. Shall we stand? May the Lord be with you and bless you. Give you a good day tomorrow. May He strengthen you by His hand.

May your life just really stand out as a neat, beautiful example for Jesus Christ. And God keep you from the accursed thing that could spoil your witness and your testimony. May you enter into a new dimension of relationship with Him, walking after the Spirit, experiencing more and more the neat joys of the victory of Christ within your life.

As He gives you victory in those areas where you have been struggling so long in vain, may you begin to really enter into the glorious victory through the power of God's Spirit. May the Lord be with you and give you and your family just a very special beautiful day as you celebrate God's love and the gift of God's love, Jesus Christ. We love you and we thank God for the privilege of serving you, representing Him, feeding you in the knowledge of Him.

What a joy. What a blessing. What a privilege.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6334.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-joshua-1-8/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net