

Joshua (Part 10): No Peaceful Co-Existence

by Richard Siple

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of complete obedience to God in driving out sin from our lives to achieve spiritual victory.

Duration: 43:30

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:14

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Surrender To God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the Cold War and draws parallels to the spiritual battle that Christians face. He shares his personal experience of surrendering his life to God and the challenges he encountered. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not compromising with the world and highlights the biblical example of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land. He also mentions the political tensions and accusations between the communist and non-communist nations during the Cold War. Overall, the sermon encourages believers to fully surrender to God and trust in His victory.

Transcript

So how do you follow that? Oh, thank you, thank you, wow. And all God's people said, wow, amen, hallelujah. Good morning.

You know, there are some things that God gives through his children that are just ageless, aren't they? And that's a great hymn of the faith. Praise the Lord. We are going to win.

Because Christ has already won for us. And we trust him with all our hearts. Hallelujah.

One of the strangest political situations in my lifetime was the Cold War. Remember the Cold War? Cold War is the term used to describe the intense rivalry that developed after World War II between groups of communist and non-communist nations. On one side were the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the USSR as we called it, and its communist allies, often referred to as the Eastern Bloc.

On the other side were the United States and its democratic allies, usually referred to as the Western Bloc, of which Canada was a part. The struggle was called the Cold War because it did not actually lead to fighting or hot war on a wide scale. The Cold War was characterized by mutual distrust, suspicion, and misunderstandings by both the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies.

At times, these conditions increased the likelihood of a third world war. Remember? The United States accused the Soviet Union of seeking to expand communism throughout the world. And they were.

The Soviets, meanwhile, charged the United States with practicing imperialism and with attempting to stop revolutionary activity in other countries. And they were. Each bloc's vision of the world also contributed to East-West tension.

The United States and Canada and their allies wanted a world of independent nations based on democratic principles. The Soviet Union, however, attempted to tightly control areas it considered vital to its national interest, including much of Eastern Europe. During the late 1940s and the 1950s, and I remember them well, the Cold War became increasingly tense.

How many of you remember the picture on your television screen of the leader of the Soviet bloc beating his shoe on a table? Anybody remember that? In a rage. And you felt like, whoa, we're going to have a nuclear war here and destroy the world. I remember him shouting at Stevenson, how long will that blockade sit there? And he said, till hell freezes over.

Things were ready to explode. Well, each side accused the other of wanting to rule the world. Each side believed its political and economic systems were better than the others.

Each strengthened its armed forces. Both sides viewed the Cold War as a dispute between right and wrong. And that's the way I saw it.

How did you see it? They saw every revolt and every international incident as part of the Cold War. This situation made it difficult to settle any dispute. Fear grew among all peoples that a local conflict would touch off a third world war that might destroy humanity.

In February 1956, Khrushchev called for peaceful coexistence. Remember the term? What he meant was competition without war between East and West. The USSR stressed peaceful coexistence, giving special attention to economic and scientific progress, but the Soviet Union continued to encourage small wars of liberation, so-called, which meant communist takeover in that country.

As a result, the United States came to regard peaceful coexistence as a communist effort to conquer countries without a major war. Canada felt the same. Many of our allies felt the same.

Democratic nations were at war with communist nations, but not openly. War was not declared, and there was no frontal attack. Both groups talked about peaceful coexistence.

Nevertheless, behind the scenes, both groups sought the destruction of the other. And having heard a series of sermons on this many years ago, I sat and waited for the communist monstrosity to disintegrate. In the late 1980s, however, Cold War tensions began to ease sharply after the signing of a major U.S.-Soviet arms control agreement.

Tensions further decreased after major democratic reforms took place in Eastern Europe. And then, thank God, in 1991, the Soviet Union broke up into a number of independent non-communist nations. These reforms and other developments marked the end of the Cold War.

A brief history. Do you remember it? I remember it. I remember the Six-Day War back in those days when Israel took over almost all the land that God had prophesied would be theirs.

It made me have goosebumps. When Israel came out of Egypt and invaded the land of Palestine, God had warned them that peaceful coexistence with the Canaanites would not work. And I want to say that again because we need to get this in our hearts this morning.

We have seen it in the history of our world in our day. We have seen it in biblical history. And we need to see it in our own individual lives.

When Israel came out of Egypt and invaded the land of Palestine, God had warned them that peaceful coexistence with the Canaanites would not work. Please notice with me the following scriptures in Numbers chapter 33, the book of Numbers. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, the fourth book.

Numbers 33, verses 50 to 55. Remarkable words. On the plains of Moab by the Jordan, that's the Jordan River, across from Jericho, the Lord said to Moses, this is before Moses died, this is before the Israelites crossed the Jordan and destroyed Jericho.

Speak to the Israelites and say to them, when you cross the Jordan into Canaan, drive out all, underline all, the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols and demolish all their high places. Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess.

God says, I have given you the land, it's yours, but you have to possess it. Verse 55, but if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live.

And the Old Testament from there on, Old Testament history is full of that. We are still in the book of Joshua, go to Joshua chapter 11. The book of Joshua chapter 11, you'll find it after Leviticus, which you'll find after Numbers.

You have it? Joshua 11, I want to read verses 18 and 19 and 22 and 23 and verse 18 is very important. Joshua waged war against all those kings for a long time. Let me ask you, as a Christian, how much of your life will it be necessary for you to fight against evil? Oh boy, the whole thing.

You say, aren't we ever going to come to a place where we don't have to fight? Nope, not until Jesus comes and sets up the millennial reign of Christ on earth. What a day that will be, but I'll tell you, I don't know what your theology may be, but if it has any idea that we're in the millennium, you are really messed up. So Joshua took the entire, and so it says then, no Anakims or giants were left in Israelite territory.

Listen now, only in Gaza. You ever hear of Gaza? Huh, recently. Only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive.

So Joshua took the entire land just as the Lord had directed Moses and gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions and the land had rest from war. Joshua 12 verse 1 and verse 24. These are the kings of the land whom the Israelites had defeated whose territory they took over east of the Jordan from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon including all the eastern side of the Arabah.

Ever hear of that? Yes, if you read the news. 31 kings in all. Now, I want to stop and talk to you about something very serious this morning.

God said, when you go into the land of Canaan which was to be the land of victory and blessing and God's full provision for His people. It's a type of the Christian victorious life. And He said, when you go in there you are to drive out all the inhabitants do away with all their gods, all their false religion and clean the place out.

And if you don't, anything you leave there will be a pain in the neck from then on. And you wish you'd gotten rid of it. They did what God said almost.

Almost. You've heard preachers talk about going all the way with God. All the way.

This is what we're talking about. This is what God was talking about. There were five major cities of the Philistines.

There were three of them they did not conquer and destroy immediately. Gaza, Gath and Ashdod. Those three.

Gaza, Gath and Ashdod remained briars in their eyes and thorns in their sides. Let me talk about those three cities just very briefly to point up the truth of this part of Bible history. Gaza.

Do you realize that the city of Gaza is where Samson got in trouble? Samson had been born miraculously by the promise of God and was to be a Nazarite from his birth. He was never to drink strong drink, never to have his hair cut because it was to be a sign of God's separation and anointing on his life. He became the judge of Israel.

And when the Holy Spirit came on him in power he had supernatural power. And you remember the great accounts of the life of Samson. But when Samson started to look around at women his parents said, why don't you take a wife from among the people of God? Isn't it a shame that there were any others where he could go? But the trouble is that the city of Gaza was there and that's where Samson went and that's where he fell in love with a woman who was a pagan.

And then he fell in love with another one and finally he fell in love with who? Delilah. Just think how Bible history might have been changed if they had done away with that city like God said. Now that's not an excuse for Samson.

There's no excuse for him. But that city was left there and it was a place of evil and wickedness and paganism and idol worship and immorality. It was a place in the life of Israel that God said should not be there and it was a place of defeat for Israel continually.

It's a city from which the Philistines constantly invaded and harassed the nation of Israel. In early Christian history many Christians were martyred in the city of Gaza. It became Muslim and is a hotbed of terrorists to this day.

The Gaza Strip continues to make headlines hundreds and hundreds of years later. Does God know what he's talking about when he says go all the way, clean it all up, get rid of all of it, don't leave any place where there's any other king but Jesus? Right? And that's what God's trying to say to us. Gath.

Well, Gath was the city of the Anakims or the giants, a city from which came the giant Goliath of Gath. And we already talked recently about him but you know how he was over nine feet tall and came out and challenged Israel and humiliated them and mocked their God? And the city of Gath, which God said

destroy, was not destroyed and continued to produce giants who harassed and attacked Israel and were a constant shame and humiliation to them. And when Goliath came out to challenge them day after day, the Israelites trembled in their tents and King Saul, who stood head and shoulders above everybody else, trembled in his tent.

I want to ask you a very serious question. Just think about it. Is there anything in your life that you really know shouldn't be there that makes you afraid and makes you tremble and makes you hesitate to serve God like you know you should? Those are the kind of places that the devil uses to defeat his people.

And then there was Ashdod, the third city that was not conquered. During the time of Eli and Samuel, as judges of Israel, the Ark was always taken with the army into battle. When Israel was terribly defeated, it was a time when Eli fell and broke his neck and died, the Philistines captured the Ark of God and they took it to the Temple of Dagon in Ashdod.

That's where that army came from and that's where the Ark of God was taken. There's a fascinating passage that speaks of something out of Bible history that happened many years later. Of course, just go right down through all the history of Israel and all their kings and the division, the two divisions, Israel and Judah, and everything that happened to them all the way down until they're finally totally defeated and carried away into captivity.

That's a fast history. And then the time came when God sent them back to rebuild the Temple and the walls and the city of Jerusalem again. Remember? Nehemiah 13, verses 23 to 27.

Nehemiah. Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod. This is terrible.

After all these years, after all this history, after hundreds of years of history and the Jewish nation being taken away into captivity to Babylon and Assyria and everything, and the walls of Jerusalem had broken down and burned with fire, the Temple's been demolished and burned with fire, and finally God, hundreds of years later, through Cyrus and through Artaxerxes, he sends back a contingent to clean it up and rebuild it, and there's still a problem with Ashdod. Amazing. He said, I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod.

Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. I rebuked them. You want to know how God feels about this? Relax, I won't do this.

I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and say, You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves.

Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon, king of Israel, sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel. But even he was led into sin by foreign women.

Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women? See, when God said, Clean it up, get rid of all of them, He meant business. He said, If you don't, you will live to regret it. So these 31 kings represent places where someone else was king in control rather than Jehovah.

Israel's king was the Lord. All other rulers must be destroyed. No other king could be tolerated anywhere.

And Israel's experience illustrates the life of the individual Christian. Now listen to me carefully. You say, That's Old Testament.

Listen, constantly the New Testament says that God has given us the Old Testament as an example to speak to us that we should live holy lives. So there it is. God has warned you and me that peaceful coexistence with sin will not work.

Christ must be Lord of all. No king but Jesus. Amen? Every place of bondage in my life will become a barb in my eyes and a thorn in my side and will hinder my Christian life from being all that God really meant it to be.

These places of bondage will blind and cripple us spiritually. And God says they must be destroyed. You say, Do you have New Testament Scripture? Well, I don't have time this morning to read the whole New Testament.

But basically all the letters from one end to the other are talking about this. But I'll just read a couple of short passages, okay? First, from 2 Corinthians 6. 2 Corinthians 6, beginning with verse 14 and going down through the first verse of chapter 7. Listen carefully. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.

For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Satan? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God, as God has said. I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from them and be separate, says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

There it is. Separation is not isolation, right? God doesn't want us to isolate ourselves from the world, but he wants us to be separate from the world. He wants us to be in the world, but not of the world.

He says, Father, I pray not that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil that is in the world. So God has put us here to represent our wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ, and he wants us to be in the world, out there in the world, in the midst of the world, among the people of the world, but separate from the world. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away with all of its passions and desires, but he who does the will of God abides forever.

You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? New Testament Scripture. So God is saying to us, he wants us to bring every place of bondage that still remains in our life to him in faith, and surrender, and let him release us from its power, and take it out of our lives. The Israelites could not drive out all these kings in their own strength, or their own wisdom, or their own military cleverness.

They couldn't do any of that. They had to obey God, but they had to trust in him, and it was his power that did it. I think before I'm finished with this series, I'm going to have one sermon on all the miracles in the book of Joshua.

It is laced with the supernatural power of God. They couldn't do it, but God could do it, but he said, you have to be willing for me to do it. And you know, some of us are like Samson.

We find some very attractive things in some parts of those cities, those places. Fascinating passage in Colossians 3. He has just said, if you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth, for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is our very life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. And then he says, because of that, because we died with Christ, because we have been raised with Christ, because we have the resurrection power of Christ in our lives, therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead too. And then there's a long list.

Consider them dead. Why? Because you're dead. You died with Christ, and you've been raised with him.

Take those things to the cross. Immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed, idolatry. On and on he goes.

But now, put all of these things aside. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech. Do not lie to one another, since you've put off your old self and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him.

The deeds of the flesh in Colossians 5 are evident. They're listed, but we don't even have to list them, do we? But the fruit of the Spirit. Ah, yes, thank you, Lord.

What your Holy Spirit can do. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Now, it says that Joshua waged war with those nations for a long time. Can I share with you some of my own experience? And then, because I have found it to be the experience of others, all right? And so, I feel free to share mine.

Everybody woke up. Oh, boy. Relax, it won't be that exciting.

But I remember, as a young man, being a Christian, having received Christ as my Savior as a child, and then, when I was 16, hearing the call of God and surrendering my life to Him for full-time service, and then getting through Bible college and, you know, starting to try to live for God, and then hearing the call of God to make full surrender. Full surrender. Everything.

Everything. All your life given to God. Now, when I came to the Lord with that deep message burning in my heart and wanted to give my life totally to Him, I meant business.

I did. You believe me? I did. When I said to Him, when I sang, I surrender all, I meant it.

I said, Lord, I give all my life to You. Everything, mind, body, soul, strength, everything, I give my life to You. I surrender everything to You.

Cleanse me from all my sin and fill me with Your Spirit. I want to live just for You. And that's just great.

From that day to this, I have never had any problem with sin. If you believe that, I'll sell you the fairies that belong to me. It doesn't work like that.

Next thing I knew, there were two or three kings attacking. You guys are supposed to be dead. We're not dead.

Here we come. Oh, boy. So then you have to deal with that one, and then you have to deal with that one, and then you think you've got them all cleaned up, you know, and everything is great and you feel so good.

And then one of the ancestors of one of the, I mean one of the descendants of one of the kings finds out, you know, that his great, great, great grandfather was the king in Gaza, and then he comes after me. Raises his ugly head. I said, I thought you were dead.

I'm not dead. And then finally you come to the place you say, I know you're not, but I am. I am.

I'm dead. See, the Israelites were never able to conquer one of those kings without the supernatural power of the Spirit of God. And my friends, you'll find on your insert this morning a long list, and there's supposed to be 31, but I made a mistake and left out 19 and 26, but you can certainly fill it in, I'm sure.

And I don't have time to even deal with them, but you can deal with them in pure thought life, gluttony, oh, I shouldn't have put that in there, idolatry, something you put ahead of God, occult practices, bitterness, unforgiveness, hatred, wrath, jealousy, envy, selfish ambition, quarreling, addictions, covetousness, greed, gossip. There wouldn't be anybody here that does that. Slander, who, unclean conversation, lying, cheating, dishonest business deals, grumbling and complaining, a critical spirit.

God hates it. Shut your mouth. Pray about it.

Arrogant attitude and actions, flattery, cruelty, violence, immorality, unbelief, on it goes. But you see, maybe some of you are struggling like Paul was in Romans 7, when he said, the thing I don't want to do is what I do, and the thing that I want to do I don't do, and oh my, a wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? He said, thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And then you go to Romans 8, and he says, there is therefore now no condemnation of them which are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life.

That is the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. Then he goes on to say that the mind set on the flesh will be defeated, but the mind set on the Spirit will have victory. And he says in Galatians, this I say, walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Here's the point. Somebody says, well, there are things in my life that are strongholds of Satan. I'm a Christian, I'm on my way to heaven, I'm saved by God's grace alone, not by my own righteousness, but there are areas in my life that are displeasing to God, and I know it, and they need to be gotten out of there and cleaned out.

And so I'm going to do something about it. Good luck. Well, there may be some things you can just quit before you get home today.

But if that's true, they're not very big bondage. But there are some things that you can quit a hundred times and they still come back, right? See, my friends, sanctification is both a crisis and a process. There is a point where you see that you need to give up your life to the cross of Jesus and let him have everything and ask him to fill you with his spirit, and he will.

That's the crisis. In fact, that crisis may happen numerous times in your life when you come to a new point of surrender, when you see the self-life deeper than you've ever seen it, and you yield it to the cross again, and you have a fresh experience of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. Is this making sense to you? All right.

But then there's a process in which we are struggling with some of those kings that are stubborn, that are determined to stay there and hold their ground in our life and defeat us. And my friend, the only way that that can be dealt with is by the power of the Holy Spirit. And you have to come to God and say, Lord, I admit that I can't do it.

But this Christian life is a life of faith. And Paul said, O you foolish Galatians, having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect with the flesh? See, you started, you were saved by grace, right? Are you awake? You were saved by grace, right? Amen. You were saved by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit who convicted you and brought you to Christ and gave you the new birth, right? It was all of God, right? Every victory over sin must be all of God.

He will not allow you to live the Christian life in your own strength. You didn't start in your own strength. You're not going to continue in your own strength.

You're not going to be perfected in your own strength. It is the self-life or the Christ life. If you set your mind to it and say, I'm going to do it, you're going to be defeated.

But if you humble yourself at the feet of Christ and say, I can't do it and I yield up that thing in my life to the cross. Lord, you put it to death. You kill it.

And he can do it. Do you know a man never was able to crucify himself? Can you picture somebody trying to crucify themselves? You know, you might, if you were a very strong man and had tremendous courage, you might get your feet nailed to the cross. I can't imagine it.

It'd be horrible. And then somehow you might get one hand up there. But then you're stuck.

You're not going to make it. You know, I still remember when I was ordained. You say, you were ordained? Yes, I was.

And I remember my oral examination which went for about two hours after you did all the other papers and everything. And dear old Dr. Forrest, who was president of a Bible college in Georgia, he said to me, he said, how do you crucify yourself? I was just a kid. I don't know where it came from, but I said, you can't do it.

He said, what do you mean? I said, you can't do it. And I gave that same demonstration. He said, why don't you come and teach at my Bible school? No.

You have to come to him and surrender that place in your life with deep humility and brokenness into his hands, confessing that you can't do it and that only he can do it. And then by faith, by faith, say, Lord, I believe that you will set me free from this sin, that you'll kill this king and you'll be Lord in that place in my life. And this may not be good news for you, but I think you'll be doing it occasionally all your life.

Joshua waged war with those nations a long time. And when he was an old man, God came to him. This one really bothers me.

When he was an old man, God came to him and said, you're now old and well advanced in years. I say, I'm listening. And there is yet very much land to be possessed.

My friend, when you see Jesus, you'll be like him and it'll all be finished. But until then, there will be times when you have to come back to the cross again and bring another king that's gotten control of some area in your life and humbly admit you can't handle it and surrender it to the cross and to the power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit and let him break it and set you free. And I can't promise you that you'll ever be perfect until you see Jesus, but I can promise you that no matter what is in your life, God can and will give you victory.

Amen? Amen. Let's pray. Lord, I know that you're not upset about our sin because you're holy.

You're upset about our sin because you love us. You are holy. But I know you're upset about our sin because you love us and it's hurting us and hindering us and that breaks your heart.

So, Lord, I pray that you will take this truth from your word and seal it to every heart, even as you do mine. Even as you do mine. Do it for my brothers and sisters and may the result of this morning together be some new victories in the lives of your people.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to stand and sing a great old song, Trust and Obey.

Let's stand.

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