

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, August 23, 2020

Up and Sanctify the People

Joshua 7:13 *“Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.”*

I present this verse now, because it contains the particular message that I want to emphasize today: “up and sanctify the people”. However, in order to give appropriate context, we are first going to read through Joshua chapters 5 and 6. So, while we take the journey through the incredible events contained in those two chapters, please keep in mind that our destination is “up and sanctify the people”.

Let us begin with a quick review of the events that bring us to Joshua chapter 5:

- God delivered the Jews from 400 years of bondage in Egypt; leading them out with a high hand, including the devastating plagues of Egypt, the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, the spoiling of Egypt’s wealth, the parting of the Red Sea, and the utter destruction of the mighty Egyptian army.
- The Jews – thankless for those great deliverances, and the daily miracles that poured out upon them, murmured against God in the wilderness and provoked him to anger.
- When it was time to take the promised land, the Jews again showed themselves to be thankless and faithless, and so the Lord caused them to wander in the wilderness until all of those who were over 20 years old had died (save for Joshua and Caleb). Dear friends, this is a cautionary tale! These facts are easy to read and recount, with a detached, and condescending view of these hard and rebellious Jews. To be sure, those are the facts, and yet we must have meekness before God, knowing that WE are prone to that same kind of faithless thinking and acting, and that we must be watchful, and continually draw nigh unto God, lest we provoke Him with this same kind of murmuring. Watch; consider; exhort one another daily; provoke to love and to good works.
- After the 40 years of wandering and death, it was now time to conquer and inherit the land of Canaan that God had promised to Abraham nearly 500 years prior. Moses was unable to lead the children of Israel into that promised land, as an illustration of how we are all sinful creatures that fail to fulfil God’s holy law – no sinful human can conquer that dreadful law. However, God rose up Joshua - a “savior” – a “captain” – to lead His children to glory, thereby representing our hope in Christ. God Almighty parted the waters of the Jordan River, and sent Joshua to

lead the people across on dry ground. In death, Jesus went into the belly of the earth, so that the resurrected Christ could arise from the earth, and conquer death on behalf of His chosen people. Likewise, the Ark of the Covenant went down first into the river, so that all of the people could follow, and arise to newness of life, and to their inheritance, on the other side of the Jordan. What blessed hope! These events are eternally important to us, and are to be rehearsed over and over again. The Lord commanded Joshua to take 12 stones from the midst of the Jordan, and stack them up as a memorial, so that this event would ALWAYS be spoken of amongst the Jews; so that they would teach it to their children, as a part of preserving the heritage of God in the earth. (Joshua 4:6,7) Why? Because it directly points to Jesus Christ, the Messiah! It is the only hope for any of us – Jew or Gentile.

- After crossing the Jordan, the first major opponent in their path is this great walled city of Jericho. This is a crucial moment. These people were not soldiers in the first place, and they had spent the past 40 years wandering in the wilderness, watching their relatives die, according to the chastening of the Lord. Now they are up against a great stronghold, the likes of which had terrified their fathers into a faithless retreat. As we read about the events at Jericho, please bear in mind that they directly foreshadow the following: (Sermon 9/3/17)
 - The **second coming** of Christ, and His glorious victory over Satan and the world at the battle of **Armageddon**.
 - The **Triumph** of Christ, the victorious King.
 - The **sanctification and sealing of the 144,000** elect Jews unto Jesus Christ, their Messiah.
 - The **preservation of these redeemed Jews** by the power of Christ, in the face of Satan's rage, until the Captain of the Host sets the captives free, at the great **Jubilee**, delivering the inheritance that He has prepared for them, including the **promised land**.

Joshua 5:1-15 “1 ¶And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

2 At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

3 And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.

4 *And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.*

5 *Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.*

6 *For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.*

7 *And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.*

8 *And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole.*

9 *And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.*

10 ¶ *And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.*

11 *And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.*

12 *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 any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.*

13 *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?*

14 *And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?*

15 *And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." (Sermon 3/22/2015)*

Joshua 6:1-27 ¶ *Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.*

2 *And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.*

3 *And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.*

4 *And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.*

5 *And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye 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.*

6 ¶ *And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.*

7 *And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD.*

8 *And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.*

9 *And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.*

10 *And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.*

11 *So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.*

12 *And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.*

13 *And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.*

14 *And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.*

15 *And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.*

16 *And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.*

17 ¶ *And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.*

18 *And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.*

19 *But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.*

20 So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

21 And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. 22 But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her.

23 And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.

24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.

27 So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country."

Joshua 7:1-9 "¶But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

3 And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

6 ¶ And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

7 *And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!*

8 *O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!*

9 *For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?"*

- Joshua's grief is thick. He is introspective – did we get in this trouble because we were prideful and discontent? At this point, there was no understanding as to why the Lord was afflicting them – the matter was hidden. Any soul who is tender toward God goes through this same distress of heart whenever they are afflicted. There is value in examining ourselves at an hour like this – we must! What have I done wrong? What have I failed to do? What thing have I done with a wrong spirit?
 - Sometimes there is no apparent answer, and we MUST take care that we don't try to force an answer to this question. Instead, we should focus on two things at that hour: 1) Double down on the things that we KNOW we are supposed to be doing, and 2) Seek the Lord for understanding, and / or deliverance. Ask for that help with specificity, and without wrath or doubting toward the God that appointed the affliction. Often, we are delivered from affliction, but don't have a clear answer about the Lord's purpose in the affliction. That's OK! It's presumptuous of us to think that we can always have a clean answer to that question, so that we can put our minds at ease. Sometimes the Lord is doing a deep work that we will never understand in this flesh, but it is part of the faithful work of a father who is preparing his children. Patiently submitting to God in these moments is of GREAT value to our souls. Instead of the utter destruction that we deserve, the Lord has intricately appointed instruction and chastening to prepare us for His kingdom.
 - At other times, the rod is upon us because of a specific sin. That can be the case for an individual, a house, or the whole church. Sometimes we see this clearly, and know what scriptural remedy to employ. Other times, the matter is hidden for a while, but is then revealed suddenly. That is one way by which the Lord teaches us patience and trust in Him. When we are in darkness on some matter, and brought to a place of heaviness, humility, and godly sorrow, then we are taught to earnestly seek and obey Him, rather than our resting upon our own wisdom. We have no way to understand the deep, rich work that He does in each of our hearts when we are afflicted in this way. Once He has accomplished His purpose, THEN He reveals the matter. Consider the parable that Jesus taught at Matthew 22. The king made a marriage for his son; many people rejected the call, and did violence to his messengers; but there were some that gladly entered into the wedding. With

no ill intent, those people completely missed the fact that there was a man who had entered with no wedding garment. It wasn't until the king came upon the scene and pointed it out, that it suddenly became clear that there was a major problem. And so I say to you friends that we need the king to come upon the scene and show us a thing! Thank God for that kind of help and discernment – without it, we will see nothing clearly.

Joshua 7:10-13 *“¶And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?*

11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.”

- Now the matter is clear – the King came upon the scene and showed it! Thank God when He gives us clarity on a matter that has been grieving and distressing us. We will still feel the weight and the pain, and the scars of the path, and the lesson, but we now have clarity; we now know how we can regain peace with our God!
- Prior to that clarity, we know that we need to have great patience, and not force an outcome; we spend a lot of time thinking, talking, praying, even weeping. But – once the Lord shows the matter, and we know the remedies that the scriptures provide us for that occasion, then it is time to get in motion – with great faith! First – understand and lay hold on the scriptural remedy; THEN – deal with the logistics of executing it. “Up” – stop analyzing, and get into motion; “Sanctify” – God is Holy, and His remedies are holy (separate, spiritual, precious, fruitful). If we do anything short of that, then we will find no peace with God; we will have no avenue of prayer left available to us; we will be asking amiss for deliverance, if we aren't willing to use the help that He has already given us.

Joshua 7:14-26 *“14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.*

15 And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

16 ¶ So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken:

17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

18 And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.”

- The Lord’s remedies can seem hard or harsh, when we bring fleshly reasoning into the picture. His remedies are flesh rending - whether we are talking about changing our own thinking / behavior, changing our behavior as a body, humbling ourselves and confessing our faults to one another, or removing someone from the body. Hard for our flesh, but life for our soul:
 - **Matthew 18:9** “And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”
- In recent weeks, we’ve experienced some things in this little flock that have caused us to use the words: “shocking”, “sudden”, and “stark” a lot. It certainly feels that way – just like it did for Joshua and the children of Israel; just like it did for Achan and his family. It is the promise of the scriptures that we will have these kinds of

experiences; we will have war with our own flesh; we will have enemies from our own house (Matthew 10:35,36); even from among the very elders of the church (Acts 20:29,30). All such relationships of our flesh must be forsaken if they come into conflict with our Beloved. So yes, shocking, sudden and stark, but not surprising from a scriptural perspective; in fact, it's expected, and should be no cause for despair. We have cause to lay hands on the beautiful remedies that the Lord has provided, and praise Him for giving us such fitting help. His remedies are true, just, and fruitful; we must rely upon them without wrath or doubting; without malice or self-righteousness. We must lay hold on them for dear life, and with great meekness and reverential fear of God. If we do that – in faith – then He will bless us, and we will be fruitful in His service.

Joshua 8:1 “And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land”

I love you all. Amen.