

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

I have always been a sucker for sports movies – especially sports stories that have a memorable inspirational message within them.

Movies like Rudy, where you have an undersized kid with no athletic talent – make the football program at Notre Dame.

or Hoosiers – where you have a small Indiana High School program that makes it all the way to the state title game while battling adversity on the court and off the court.

The early Rocky movies: a washed up bum getting a title shot and winning it all.

I can just sit on my couch and watch them over and over again – much to the chagrin of my wife and kids.

And there are other many other movies as well.

I remember the first time I watched the movie Braveheart with Mel Gibson –he plays the role of William Wallace, and during the movie, he delivers a very memorable motivational speech to a bunch of men as they prepare to do battle.

And many of them were unsure whether they should fight the English or not.

They see that the odds are heavily against them.

So Mel Gibson’s character delivers this two minute speech, in a Scottish accent – even though he is Australian and the speech finishes with,

“They may take away our lives, but they'll never take our freedom!”

That scene alone, would motivate me to paint my face blue and put on a kilt.

This morning, Joshua is going to play the role of William Wallace.

It is his responsibility as the one who is leading the Children of Israel – to motivate and prepare them to go into the Promised Land.

We saw last week, in the first nine verses, God encouraging Joshua over and over again.

God gave Joshua the blueprint to conquering the land.

- Trusting in the promises of God – God had already told them that the entire land was theirs. God had told Joshua that no one would be able to stand against them.
- Walking in faith – every place that the sole of their feet touched, it was theirs. One cannot conquer land that one doesn't possess.
- Obedience to His every word – It had to be done God's way.

No short cuts. And the reason is because this would demonstrate if they really trust Him.

- Meditating in His word day/night – In order to be obedient to His word – one needs to know His word.

And if the children of Israel followed this blueprint – they would be prosperous.

It is Joshua's job to convey this to the Children of Israel.

And as their leader, there is no way Joshua is going to get them to buy into it if he doesn't buy into it himself.

So how will the Children of Israel respond?

Will they come out wearing kilts with their faces painted blue? Or will they respond like the previous generation who wandered the wilderness for forty years because of their disobedience?

That is the question we will find out this morning in our text.

Let's pray...

[Jos 1:10-18 NKJV] 10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.' " 12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, 13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' 14 "Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, 15 "until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He [gave] you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to

the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise." 16 So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 "Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. 18 "Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."

Once again, Joshua finds himself along the same shores that he stood before 40 years earlier.

Forty years earlier, he, along with Caleb were the only two spies that gave a good report.

The other 10 spies said that there were giants in the land. Men much stronger than they were. They would be like grasshoppers in their fight against the inhabitants of Canaan.

It's a suicide mission –

However, they forgot that God was on their side.

Many people upon hearing the bad report wished they were back in Egypt – forgetting that they had been in bondage to slavery for all those years.

And that bad report - led to the Children of Israel refusing to enter the Promised Land.

[Num 14:5-10 NKJV] 5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. 6 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, [who were] among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the

congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out [is] an exceedingly good land. 8 "If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' 9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they [are] our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD [is] with us. Do not fear them." 10 And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.

So we see here in Numbers, that a younger Joshua – attempted to convince the children of Israel to enter the Promised Land.

That generations response to Joshua almost resulted in him being stoned to death.

Now he has to do it all over again with the descendants of that generation.

So the first thing that we see in our study is Joshua's response.

Remember, our text last week in the first nine verses was the Lord instructing Joshua.

And here we see Joshua responds in two messages.

The first message is addressed to the 9.5 tribes.

And we see this message delivered in verses 10 and 11.

[Jos 1:10-11 NKJV] 10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.' "

Joshua wants to make sure that everyone knows the plan.

So he makes sure that the plan is communicated through the officers.

Preparing provisions does not mean that they were simply supposed to pack a light lunch or put some sunblock on.

They are supposed to make preparations because once they set foot on the other side of the Jordan; there will be battles that await them.

The same giants that were there 40 years prior – guess what? they are still there.

However, we also see Joshua reassure the people by reminding them of the promises of God.

The land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess.

Get up boys, it's time to conquer the land that has been given to us by God – that was the message.

Get ready! It's time.

Church, this same message is proclaimed throughout the New Testament to you and me.

In our case the 'territory' isn't a piece of land or physical geography; it is a spiritual one.

Our 'territories' are all the various aspects of our lives: marriage, family, church, employment, and anything and everything we think, we do, or we say.

Spiritual success is promised to us if we will tread forward by faith and overcome the

opponents and obstacles in those territories.

And how do we do that???

Paul tells us in Ephesians 6 -

[Eph 6:10-18 NKJV] 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Notice that Paul, being guided by the Holy Spirit as he writes this to the church in Ephesus, encourages us with the same encouragement that the Lord gave Joshua.

Remember, God tells Joshua over and over again – be strong and courageous.

And I mentioned last week that this wasn't about building Joshua's self-confidence but his God-confidence.

That is what Paul is telling the believer – be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against

powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenly [places].

For Joshua and the Children of Israel – the battles that await them were eliminating all of the Canaanites that were in the land.

Our battle is a spiritual battle and our preparation begins by taking up the whole armor of God.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and

supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

Our spiritual battles are won and lost based upon our preparation.

We can't go into battle without the shield of faith or without the sword of the Spirit or any of the other items.

I asked you to underline or highlight every time the word stand is used here – you see, God is the One fighting our battles. And we will see this throughout the book of Joshua.

Our job – is to simply stand.

Notice that we are to put on the breastplate of righteousness and a shield – everything is there to protect our front side but there is nothing to cover our backside.

The reason – we don't turn our backs to the enemy.

So these first two verses, as I mentioned earlier, were addressed to 9.5 of the tribes.

The rest of chapter one is addressed to 2.5 of the tribes.

[Jos 1:12-13 NKJV] 12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, 13

"Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.'

In the book of Numbers 32 – you guys can read it for homework, about 38 years into their 40 year death march in the wilderness, these two and a half tribes that are listed here in verse 12.

They come up to Moses and they tell him that they don't want to go into the Promised Land anymore.

The reason: they like the land on east of the Jordan River because it was good land for all of their livestock.

Now, keep in mind that none of them had ever crossed over to the Promised Land – they couldn't whether or not the land was good for their grazing.

They liked what they saw on the east side of the Jordan and passed on the Promised Land.

They passed on the land of milk and honey, the land the God had promised them because they were more concerned about of what they might have lost – instead of focusing on what had already been promised to them by God.

These two and a half tribes are a picture of the believer that refuses to cross the Jordan and enter into the abundant life that we as believers are promised.

This is the believer who chooses to settle.

The reasons that many settle –

- Comfort –

- Reluctance to leave the world behind –
- Other priorities that they value more – time, money, sin

In the same way that these 2.5 tribes have already been delivered from the bondage of slavery, these believers that choose to settle have also been freed from the bondage of sin.

And both have decided on second best.

So when these tribes come to Moses, Moses was angry at them because he didn't want them to discourage the other tribes from crossing over into the Promised Land.

And they come up with an agreement.

[Jos 1:14-15 NKJV] 14 "Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, 15 "until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He [gave]

you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

So the agreement that they came up with is that these two and a half tribes – when the other tribes finally cross over the Jordan, these two and a half tribes are supposed to join in the fight and help them conquer the land that was promised to them.

After the 9.5 tribes have taken possession of their land, these two and a half tribes could return to their land on the opposite side of the Jordan River.

So, what's the big deal with these two and a half tribes settling on the eastern side of the Jordan.

- First of all, it wasn't the will of God. God wanted them to enter into the Promised Land.
- By settling on the east side of the Jordan, they were more susceptible in adopting the pagan customs / gods from the neighboring countries. That is what happened to Lot in the book of Genesis. He first pitches his tent toward Sodom and a few chapters we find Lot fully immersed within the city and culture.

We just finished the gospel of Mark, and there was the story of Jesus crossing the Sea of Galilee and encountering the demon possessed man named Legion who the people couldn't control. He spent his time in tombs crying and cutting himself. Jesus casts out the demons into a herd of swine – and the people of the region immediately tell Jesus to leave.

These people had turned to pig farming for their livelihood when pigs have always been considered an unclean animal.

The region where this happened was occupied by the descendants of the tribe of Gad. One of the two and a half tribes.

- Toward the end of the book of Joshua, we will see that these two and half tribes, because they are separated from the rest of the tribes and because the tabernacle will be on the west side of the Jordan – they build an altar on the other side of the Jordan and this almost leads to civil war among the tribes of Israel. You can read about that in chapter 22.
- By choosing to live in the eastern side of the Jordan, these two and a half tribes were the first ones that were attacked by invading armies.

So let's see the response of the two and half tribes.

[Jos 1:16-17 NKJV] 16 So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 "Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses.

Now, this sounds good.

We see the confirmation that they have accepted Joshua as their new leader.

It does appear that they are fully committed to honor the agreement that they made with Moses.

They will help the other 9.5 tribes possess their inheritance.

They too will have to take the necessary steps of faith as well.

However, Joshua made it clear to them that they were supposed to send all their mighty men of valor – and we will learn that they only

send a portion of their fighting men because they leave some behind to protect the women and children and their livestock.

They even had the audacity to make the claim that they heeded Moses in all things, when the scriptures tell us in Numbers 32 – that they continued to argue with Moses until he accepted their compromise.

Church, a believer who settles is one who will always be looking for a way to compromise on the word of God.

I know what the word of God says but...

The fact that they are settling is a clear indication that they are compromising His word.

[Jos 1:18 NKJV] 18 "Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."

The tribes are fully committed to follow Joshua into wherever God leads him even unto death.

And we will see this in the later chapters as Achan chooses to not heed the words of Joshua and is put to death.

Notice the tribes response final response as they tell Joshua, Be strong and of good courage.

These are the same words that God had spoken to Joshua.

It was confirmation that he was on the right path.

The question for us this morning is, where do we stand this morning – what group of tribes do we associate ourselves with.

The 9.5 tribes or the 2.5 tribes that choose to settle.

Always remember that God will allow us to take second best if we are not willing to take His best.

However, by taking 2nd best we lose our opportunity to live the abundant life that we have been promised.

Amen...

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

