

Joshua 07-04-06a

This is Friday, the 6th of April, 2007. We continue tonight our study in the book of Joshua. We're in chapter 6 at the conquest of Jericho.

Let's take a moment as we begin to ensure that God the Holy Spirit will find us teachable and susceptible to His ministry. It's an opportunity to reflect on the grace of God through Jesus Christ in cleansing us from both our known and our unknown sins and to focus our attention on the essential truths of God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, we are always aware that it is not by our own strength or our own power that we live the life that you have called us to.

It is through the power of your Spirit and the guidance and the life that comes to us through your Word. We thank you for those gifts, for the Lord Jesus Christ who gave them to us through His perfect obedience, His faithfulness to your plan, His expression of love toward you and toward us in accomplishing the work that we remember and commemorate in this week. We thank you for the truth that even as He died, was buried, and has risen again, we too will be raised to be like Him and to be with Him at the time of your choosing.

We thank you for this time that remains to us where we have the opportunity to prepare for the eternal future. We have the challenge of growing in grace and in knowledge so that we can be useful, so that our lives can reflect your glory. We know that there is no better preparation for that than to be in a sinful world, battling our corrupt and fallen nature, and pushing against the resistance that is afforded to us by the world, the flesh, and the devil.

We know that although our trials seem difficult and sometimes insurmountable, it is all a part of your plan and purpose, and all things do work together for good when we are pursuing the calling that is ours in Christ. We thank you for this passage of Scripture and the truths that are contained within it, and we ask your blessing on us as we seek to understand them and store them in our souls so that they will guide us and give us light on our path in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Joshua chapter 6. We know where we are. The Israelites have been marching around the city for six days.

It comes on the seventh day, and they are about to charge in, but they have very specific instructions about how to charge in. This is the hardest thing in the world for us to do. When there is confusion, when there is challenge, when there is hustle and bustle, there is noise, there are trumpets, there is shouting, there are rocks falling, rubble and debris.

You have seen these knockdown things they put on television where they are going to

demolish a building. They blow up the charges. The smoke from the charges is virtually indistinguishable.

When that building starts to fall, there is this enormous mushroom cloud of dust and debris. You can just imagine the chaos and confusion when the priests blow the trumpets, the people give out with a mighty shout, and the walls come tumbling down. It is not just rocks rolling gently down the slopes.

This is a huge event. It is chaotic, and everybody is still yelling at the top of their lungs, and every man rushes forward toward the center of the town. Through the dust, through the debris, it is chaos.

This reminds me of about every other day in my own life, where it just becomes chaos. You are trying to pursue an objective, you are trying to accomplish a goal, and there is dust in the air, there is yelling, there is distraction, there is people. It is just very hard to stay focused, and to see clearly, and to accomplish the objective.

But it is critical that we do so. The quality that is required is listed in the Fruit of the Spirit passage in the New Testament. The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

Long-suffering means you have to be able to put up with. What is long-suffering? Long-suffering is always toward people in the Bible. It is not long-suffering in the face of financial trouble.

It is not long-suffering in the face of natural disasters. It is not long-suffering in the face of a hose coming off the back of your washing machine, flooding your house or something. Long-suffering is always bearing with others.

The Bible says that God is long-suffering toward us. So, this is part of the Fruit of the Spirit. Long-suffering.

Gentleness. It is the antithesis, especially for those of us who are of the male persuasion, to be gentle. It is a lot easier to be brusque, and to be hard-edged, and to be about as opposite gentle as you can get.

But we are to be gentle. Gentleman is a mark of refinement, a mark of culture, a mark of intelligence. It requires a lot of other qualities to be a gentle man.

One of the things that we had to learn at school, it is not enough that an officer in the naval service be a capable mariner. He must be that, of course, but also a great deal more. He should be, as well, a gentleman of refined manners, punctilious courtesy, and the nicest sense of personal honor.

Just those qualities. You look around today. What has happened to courtesy? What has happened to manners? Manners in the theater.

I haven't gone to the theater in a long time. It just puts me out of my spiritual orbit for hours, because you can't sit and concentrate on the film. Somebody behind you is going to be laughing and joking, or carrying on a conversation, talking on their cell phone.

Courtesy, public speakers. If you go to an event, and there is a public display of verbiage, you can't hear it, because people all around you are talking. The only place I've gone recently and had absolute audience quiet was at a vocal majority concert.

Why? Because the people who go to vocal majority concerts are from a previous generation. They like a previous generation's music, and they operate on a previous generation's sense of manners and courtesy. You can absolutely hear a pin drop in the quiet sections, and I'm sure it's probably that way in other things.

You go to an orchestra performance or something, but it's becoming more and more rare. What is my point? Fruit of the Spirit requires, most of those require, the last one, which is self-control. What do these individuals in the army under Joshua need when all about them is utter, complete chaos? Can you imagine a greater chaos in the ancient world than the walls of a large, walled city crumbling into dust before your very eyes, trumpets blaring, men shouting at the top of their lungs, waving their swords, rushing in to kill or be killed, hand-to-hand combat.

What does it require? You've got to keep your head. You've got to remember the mission. You've got to focus and be disciplined.

It's a quality that that second generation in Israel has developed that their parents did not have. One of the reasons their parents weren't let into the land, if they had gone in, they would have been defeated. They would have been destroyed in the first couple of battles because they did not have these qualities.

Where did these qualities come from? You know, by the way, that these men succeed. These warriors go in and do exactly what they were told to do. All but one.

Why? They are ready. It seems arbitrary. People who are malcontents and ne'er-do-well atheists, secular humanists, godless communists, quote-unquote Bible scholars who go in and talk about the Old Testament and they say the God of the Bible, the Old Testament especially, is just arbitrary.

He's mean. He says, well, this group can go in and this group can't. He made that first generation drop in the wilderness and didn't let them go in the land.

Listen, at least they lived for up to 40 years in relative peace and relative safety and they had provision and they were able to raise their families. If he had let them into the land, they would have been slaughtered, massacred, embarrassed, humiliated, defamed because they did not have the qualities that this second generation has. There's a reason why God selects whom he selects.

There is a reason for God allowing some into the millennial kingdom and not others. There's a reason why some will rule and reign with Christ and others won't. Can you imagine a hand-waving, Holy Spirit-oriented, cheese-eating, immature believer now ruling with Christ in the millennium with no qualification, with no self-discipline, without an understanding of the plan, given ruling authority? Look at what happens when you have nabobs given ruling authority now.

You've got people running off to foreign lands and talking to dignitaries, embarrassing their native country and so on. It is a dangerous thing to put power in the hands of those who are not qualified to exercise it, who do not have self-discipline, who do not have an understanding of larger issues, right? We've seen this in just the past week in our own nation. Well, there's a reason why God is not going to give the overcomer gifts to immature believers.

It is handing them the gun to shoot themselves and others. Same thing here. It takes great skill, great self-discipline, great self-control, authority orientation to do the marching that these guys have done.

You know what the previous six days have demonstrated? Discipline. We march out. We keep quiet.

We march back. And we do it day after day. We don't question.

We don't grumble. We don't complain. We don't fall out of ranks.

Can you imagine teenagers from our modern culture take a typical sampling from the mall or a high school and say, go march. Can you imagine the grumbling and complaining and the, well, I'm falling out of ranks and throwing stuff and waving and, you know, spitting and hurling insults at the general and the platoon leaders and so on. I mean, can you imagine the chaos if you tried to do this with a group of typical American youth today? It would be impossible.

It would never happen. On the sixth day, these guys are just as disciplined, just as rank and file, just as dressed and covered, just as silent as they were on the first day. Do they understand what's going on? Probably not, but they have discipline.

They have integrity. They have pledged themselves to follow the orders of those over them, and that's exactly what they do. That's exactly what they do.

This is a biblical principle, and people who do not recognize it are running afoul of a divine establishment, and the consequences, whether or not they have a spiritual life, are going to follow. So, one of the instructions that they have to keep in mind as they rush through and go into the city is verse 17 of chapter 6. The city is doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. You can't hesitate.

You can't draw back. You can't start making command presence decisions on your own. Well, look at this cute little child.

It looks like a commercial for the Christian Children's Fund or something, little tear-stained cheeks and holding its little veil doll or something. You look at it and say, oh, it's so harmless. What did God say? They are doomed to destruction, the city and all who are in it.

Only Rahab the harlot shall live. You can't lose your head and go and start slaughtering Rahab's family. You've got to distinguish.

You've got to mark that scarlet cord. You've got to pay attention to the men who have been detailed to protect that family, who are going to escort them out, and who are going to fend off any Israelites who don't know them by sight. The two spies were detailed to go specifically to Rahab, her family, her household, and escort them.

Any other Israelite that comes running up, they've got to listen to those two men. You have to know who they are. How can you tell who's friend and who's foe? There's noise, there's rubble, there's shouting, there's screaming, there's bleeding and dying.

There's all kinds of habit going on. You've got to keep your head. Here's the point.

You cannot accomplish great things for God. The fall of Jericho is one of the most well-remembered miracles in the entire Bible, and the Israelites are an integral part of it. It won't happen if they're not there.

It won't happen if they're not obedient. But the reason it happens, and the reason they're a part of it, is because they have got the necessary character to fulfill it, to do it, and to do it right. We have to be people of character.

We have to be people of integrity, or God cannot use us. Where does that integrity come from? Where does the character come from? It comes from 40 years of learning obedience. 20 years of learning obedience.

10 years of learning obedience. However old these individuals are, they have been in the wilderness, watching the faithfulness of God, learning in that boring, quiet time of marching hither and yon in the desert, learning to trust God, learning to obey, learning to develop these qualities. And now it is the day of crisis.

We can't wait until the crisis and then say, I need God to drop the walls of Jericho for me, but I don't have the discipline to march, I don't have the discipline to remain quiet, I don't have the discipline to wait for the trumpet, I don't have the discipline to march in and do exactly what I'm told, but I want God to conquer the city for me and knock the walls down. God is going to work in extraordinary ways for those who are prepared to receive those blessings, who are prepared to participate in those great things. One

doesn't come without the other.

You cannot get extraordinary, miraculous intervention from God if you're not qualified to operate in that context, in that environment. It's a match-up. Now we're going to see this in a very specific way.

Joshua 6, verse 18. We've already covered, the city is doomed to destruction, everyone that's in it, only Rahab the harlot, she and all who were with her in her house because she hid the messengers that we sent. Verse 18, And you, by all means, abstain from the accursed things.

The word for accursed here is kerem. C-H-E-R-E-M Keep from, keep here is shamar, it's one of the most common verbs in the Old Testament. Shamar means to keep or to guard.

Then you have the word from, men. Keep from the kerem. Kerem actually doesn't mean accursed.

It means devoted. It means especially designated. Keep away from the kerem, the consecrated, the devoted things.

In this case, they are devoted to destruction. Lest you become kerem, and make the camp of Israel kerem. There are things that are specially designated for destruction in Jericho.

Be especially mindful that you stay away from them. Now, it's one thing to say be mindful. It's something else to be mindful in the dust and confusion of this great battle, slaughter, chaos, destruction.

It's just mind-blowingly different than what they're used to. But they've got to keep their head. If they don't, if they get confused and partake, say, look at these gold bars, look at this gold jewelry.

Oh, wow. Grab that stuff, stick it in a, not a pocket, but, you know, they're little places they secreted things, and bring it back. If you touch what is devoted to destruction, you will be destroyed, and you will bring destruction on the camp of Israel.

It's a very severe warning. There is no higher category of devotion, as we're about to see, than kerem. Kerem is like radioactive in terms of accursed things.

There's something that is hot, there is something that is really, really hot, boiling hot, and then there is radioactive hot. There's three different levels of devoted things in Israel, and this is radioactive. The silver and the gold, the vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord.

The silver, the gold, and the bronze are, notice it says consecrated, this is a different

word. This is kadosh. Kadosh means holy, and this is the low level, this is the hot.

If you're hot, boiling, and radioactive, well, this is the lowest level, but the gold and silver and bronze are kadosh, holy to the Lord. There's three categories, holy, most holy, and kerem. Those are your three classifications, as we will soon see.

So, and they go to the Lord. So, what is on the line here? To understand this, we have to go to Leviticus chapter 27. So turn with me to Leviticus chapter 27, third book of the law, last chapter.

The Lord spoke to Moses saying, Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When a man consecrates by a vow certain persons to the Lord, according to your valuation, and then it goes on to give some specifics. You consecrate something to the Lord. Now, consecrate here is the word kadosh, to declare holy to the Lord.

You declare something holy to the Lord. That is the first level, and it's by way of a vow. What's the deal on vows? Should you make a vow to God or not? You have the option under the law.

We're talking Old Testament Israelites now. Israelites were not required to take any vows whatsoever. If they made a vow, however, there were regulations that covered it.

So it's optional, but if you choose that option, there are rules. So the question is now, do we need to make vows? Why would they even make vows? Because if you read down through Leviticus 27, and we don't have time to cover this in great detail, but I just want to point out a few highlights. It puts you under a great obligation, and it can be very expensive.

A man consecrates by vow certain persons to the Lord. So you could consecrate people. You could consecrate a child, like Hannah did with Samuel.

In verse 9, if it is an animal that men bring as an offering to the Lord, all that are given to the Lord shall be holy. If it is an unclean animal, and so on. Look at verse 14, a man can dedicate his house to be holy to the Lord.

Kodesh. Why would you do this? Well, let me just summarize what's going on in Leviticus 27. You are going to go into battle, or you're going to plant a crop, or you're going to engage in a business.

You're going to go make a trip and try to buy goods, or negotiate for animals. You're going to do something, and you want God's blessing on that. You're going to get married, and you want your marriage to prosper.

You want to have a lot of sons, and so on. Whatever it might be. So, you are really, really anxious for this to succeed.

Jephthah comes to mind. He's going to go to battle, and he says, Lord, if you give me victory in this battle, this is what I will do. So, you think, I want God as a part of this.

I want God to take an interest in my endeavor, and to ensure its success. So, I will make a vow, and I will dedicate something to God, on the condition that He blesses this endeavor. Now, basically, there are two reasons you would do this.

There are two motivations of the heart. Can you think of what they would be? Imagine that you were going to embark on a business. Let's say we were going to do an investment.

Somebody comes and says, hey, I've got a deal for you. Give me \$5,000, and I will turn it into \$15,000. And you say, boy, I would really like God to bless this.

That would be a wonderful thing. Why would you want to ensure success with divine help? Why would you do that? Well, you either want that success for yourself, and you want God to be the genie of the lamp and make it happen, right? You want God on your side, mainly because you are self-interested. Or, what's the other possibility? I think this would be something that would glorify God.

I am going to dedicate some portion of the proceeds of this to God because I really want God to be pleased. I want everyone to know that God is a part of this. And when I make this public dedication of a person, of my house, of an animal, or whatever it might be, everyone is going to know that this whole endeavor is dedicated to God.

I'll give you an example. There's a businessman here in Dallas, my acquaintance. And he saw a piece of property that he was going to invest in.

And he thought, you know, this property is going to increase in value. And I am going to, ahead of time, decide that the whole reason for investing in this property, I'm going to set the proceeds aside. Whatever is gained on this property, this is earmarked for Christian ministry.

I'm not doing this for myself. I'm going to take this particular business transaction, this particular investment, and whatever it makes, I'm going to divide it amongst three or four Christian ministries. It's dedicated to God.

Other people are aware of this. And he can pray and say, God, I hope that you'll bless this investment because this is where the proceeds are going to go. Maybe it will fund a chair of evangelism at a Bible college.

Or it will go into the Lord's work. It will support missionaries. Whatever it might do.

And that's the purpose of it. Now, somebody else might say, Oh, Lord, I'm going to invest in a house. I'm going to invest in a property.

And if you'll bless that and make it multiply, then I'll tithe 10% of whatever it makes. I'll send it to you. But what you really want is that other 90%.

You say, you know, if God will come in on this deal, I'll give him 10%. Then I'll get 90%. And it's a matter of attitude of the heart.

It all boils down. Two different people could make the same basic vow with two different attitudes of heart. Right? That's common in the ancient world.

Across religions. You remember the king who saw the Israelite army surrounding his nation and he sacrificed his firstborn up on the city wall? Dedicated him to his God. And the Israelites were so horrified, they just said, Fine, keep your city.

And they marched away. And the guy could say, Well, I dedicated my son. I made my son Karim to my God.

And I got a good result. And in his mind, Hey, I saved the city. It cost me dearly.

But there you go. It was a common practice. It was ubiquitous throughout the ancient world.

And God said, Look, you serve me. But if you want to do the vow thing, you can do it. If you do it, here are the rules.

And that's what Leviticus 27 is. So, he starts out talking about kadosh, the lowest level. You're going to dedicate a thing.

And most things that are dedicated to God, they are holy to the Lord. They are kadosh to the Lord. Can be redeemed.

What this means is, you say, Lord, if my crop comes in, if my flocks and herds multiply, then I will dedicate this many animals to you, beyond the firstborn that are already gods. And then you come in and it's so prosperous, and you say, well, you know what? Some of these are really good. I'd like to take those animals back.

Well, you could pay their price plus 20% to the tabernacle and redeem them. And you might have had such a prosperous year that even buying those back plus 20%, you come out ahead. That's a boil down of Leviticus 27.

How does this bear on Joshua 6, and what difference does it make to us? That is the challenge of our first lesson, and perhaps both of them, is to answer those two questions. First of all, how does it relate to Joshua 6? First of all, Joshua did not make a vow over Jericho, did he? God declared it to be His. There is an analogy to this in Leviticus 27, because there are animals that belong to God.

Look at verse 26 of Leviticus 27. The firstborn of animals, which should be the Lord's

firstborn, no man shall dedicate, whether an ox or a sheep, it is the Lord's. Now, what does this mean? You can't make a vow and say, Lord, I'll give you the firstborn of all of my cattle if you'll bless this deal.

Why? They already belong to God. You're giving Him something that's already His. That's not going to work.

You're giving Him something that's already His. Now, how would that apply in our modern day? We're not under the law, we're under grace, but guess what? Vows were not under the law. Let me show you something here in Leviticus.

If you look at the last verse of chapter 26, there was a great summary given in the whole chapter there. A summary of all of the statutes and commandments that precede in Leviticus is given in chapter 26. You don't make idols, you don't make carved images, keep my Sabbaths.

If you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments and perform them, verse 4, I will give you rain in its season. Verse 5, your threshing will last. I will give peace in the land.

Verse 6, you will chase your enemies. Verse 7, five of you will chase a hundred. I will look on you favorably.

In verse 9, you will eat the old harvest, clear out the old because of the new. Verse 11, I will set my tabernacle. All of these blessings, this is a summary.

If you keep the covenant of the law, I will bless you, God says. Starting in verse 14, if you do not obey, if you are not faithful, I will do this to you. Verse 16, I will appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever, which consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart.

You'll sow your seed in vain, your enemies will eat it, all the way down, right? This is a summary of the entire law. And it comes down to the end, and what is the last verse of chapter 26? These are the statutes and the judgments and the laws which the Lord made between himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses. The end.

That's the end of the law. The law is over with. Those are the statutes, those are the laws, those are the commandments.

That's the coda, that's the big the end coming up on the screen at the end of chapter 26. Now, why do you have chapter 27 after that? The Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel and say, when a man consecrates by a vow, this is completely voluntary. Voluntary vows are not a part of the law, but there is guidance from God when someone does it.

It is optional. The law does not require vows of anybody. But if you make one, there are

regulations that cover it.

So what about us? Do we have anything in the New Testament, anything under grace, anything as a part of the truths, of the epistles of the New Testament that tell us be sure and make a vow, promise a thing to God? No. In fact, both the Old Testament and the New say you're really better off to let your yea be yea and your nay be nay. Don't make promises.

But if you do, you'd better keep it. That's the guidance of Scripture. So, do we bargain with God? Well, let me phrase that question in a different way.

What kind of believer would feel the need to bargain with God for blessing, or bargain with God for prosperity, to bargain with God to assure a favorable outcome? Would that be your mature believers or your immature believers, do you think? An immature believer would say, I really, really, really, really need this crop to come in a hundredfold. I can see all kinds of bad consequences if things don't go the way I foresee. So God, please make it come in according to the plan of Sam, right? That's what an immature believer is going to say.

What is an immature believer going to say? Well, what did Jesus say in the garden? Lord, if it's your will, I would really like this outcome. However, not My will, but Thine be done. Did Jesus make a vow in the garden? Did He say, Lord, if You will do this, I will do that? If this cup will pass from Me, I will evangelize the known world in the next ten years.

By 40 A.D., I will win the world for You, O God. Is that what Jesus did? Did He make a vow? The only vow recorded in the New Testament is one made by the Apostle Paul, and it was a disaster. It was an unmitigated disaster.

You remember when Paul goes to the temple? Shaved his head, made a vow, couldn't shake some of that Old Testament thinking. And it was a bad deal. Well, we'll study that sometime.

However, my point here is vows are allowed, but they are not recommended. Why would God allow a vow but not recommend it? Not require it? Because in taking vows and in keeping them, you will learn something so that by the time you grow and become mature, you won't be making those vows anymore. Vows were typically made in haste.

They were often made rashly. And so if you dedicated a thing, and then you changed your mind and said, well, you know, I dedicated this big bull. I said, if God would bless this and let me get the bull from Hiram over here, then I would have this wonderful increase in my flocks and herds.

Well, my herds. And so I got it and it worked out, but I don't want to give the bull up. I said, God, if you let me have that bull for a year, I'll dedicate it to You.

Well, I've had it for a year, and things went so well, I want to keep him for a few more years, but I dedicated him. God, now what am I going to do? Well, there was provision. You can redeem the bull, but it's going to cost you the price of the bull plus 20%.

There's 20% interest on all vows that you redeem. That's pretty steep. I've got a lot of high credit cards, I can point to that don't have that high an interest.

Of course, there's a few you can point to that do. But 20% is considered pretty exorbitant, right? You wouldn't want your house mortgage sitting at 20%. Would you? God said, look, you want to make this vow thing, go ahead.

But it's going to be a learning process, because you're going to lose that thing. You're going to spend some time. You're going to have to redeem it.

Someday if we do Leviticus, we'll go through all the details of this. I don't have time to do it tonight. But that's the idea.

So point one, those who speak rashly, who act rashly, there is a mechanism to teach them not to do that. And it's called the vow system. Make a vow, go ahead.

But you're going to learn over the course of time, next time you start to say, by heaven, if I get this deal, I will dedicate this thing to God. Do you think Jephthah ever made any more vows after the daughter episode? What do you think he thought the next time he went to make a vow? Oh Lord, if you... never mind. And how many vows do you think were made in Israel in the years right after Jephthah? Very few.

It's a learning experience. It's a teaching tool. Learn to discipline your tongue.

Learn to rely on God's existing promises instead of trying to get Him to make new ones. The mature believer will go to the existing promises of God and if things are not in accord with God's will and plan and purpose, we don't really want them to happen. Right? I would love for this school to accept me.

I would love to get this job. I would love to make this change. I would love to have this happen in the perfect plan.

I would love for this sick relative to get well. Nevertheless, I'm not going to make a vow and say, oh Lord, if you'll heal this person, why, I'll do the following. I'm going to let God choose.

I'm going to let God decide. So, in a nutshell, without doing an exhaustive study, that's the vow system. And if you read and understand Leviticus 27, you'll see that that's exactly what's going on.

There's a penalty in the vow system. There's no brownie points for it. It doesn't say, if you take a vow and fulfill it, God will bless you a hundredfold.

Jesus didn't tell the disciples, if you take a vow, it'll be restored to you a hundredfold. Vows are a wonderful thing. Vows are for the mature.

Vows are for the advanced. It's just the opposite. You take a vow, you're lucky to get out of that thing in one piece.

And if you decide to make any changes, it's going to cost you 20% every time. Well, we can learn, by looking at that system, to be careful in how we pray. Because we essentially make vows when we pray for a specific outcome.

We go to God and we say, Lord, how many times, even in the entertainment industry, people say, oh Lord, if you get me out of this situation, I'll never take another drink. I'll go to church every Sunday. I'll do this.

I'll do that. And then when a favorable outcome happens, people renege. And they say, well, I didn't say when, or I didn't say how much.

And they start falling back. And look at the Old Testament penalty. There are severe penalties for failing to keep a vow.

It's bad enough if you keep the thing and try to redeem your way out of it. But if you just flat fail the vow, there are penalties up to and including death in Israel for not keeping a vow. So this is why the psalmist and others say, if you make a vow, keep it.

But better not to make a vow. Well, this is the changeover. The two reasons for making a vow.

Your self-interest, you're going to quickly discover that that's costly. It's better to dedicate yourself to God's will. Dedicate yourself to God's plan.

Let Him decide what's going to prosper and what isn't. And go from there. So back in Joshua chapter 6, the whole point here is, God says, I'm not even giving you the option.

He doesn't line up the army and say, as many people who want to dedicate themselves to the Lord and take a vow, they can go forward and seize the land, seize the city. Not at all. God says, these spoils are Charim.

The city is Charim. Its inhabitants are Charim. They belong to God.

God gets to decide what happens to them. Because they are devoted to Him. And God says, kill them, kill them all.

Except for Rahab. She is excluded from the Charim because she is dedicated to God in a different way. So, the upshot of this is, no one can go back on this high dedication, this high devotion that God has imposed.

It's not optional. It is a divine command. So, what do you think is going to happen to someone, what happened to someone in Leviticus 27, if they devoted a thing and then went back on it? They become subject to that devotion.

If they declare a thing devoted to the Lord and then they don't fulfill it, they are on the hook for it. They are a substitute. If you dedicated an animal and then you tried to swap it out because it turned out to be a really good animal, well, you owe God that animal and the substitute.

It costs you double, essentially. So, this is the explanation for what is about to take place. They burned the city, in verse 24, all that was in it with fire, only the silver and gold and the vessels of bronze and iron.

They put in the treasury of the house of the Lord. Joshua spared Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all that she had. She dwells in Israel to this day because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy on Jericho.

It tells you that the original of this account is very old. We have another reminder. Joshua charged them, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho.

He shall lay its foundation with his firstborn and with his youngest. He shall set up its gates. The word there, once again, for cursed, is not kerem, devoted to the Lord, dedicated for destruction.

This is arur. This is negative curse. The Lord is with Joshua.

His fame spreads throughout all the country. But, in chapter 7, the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the kerem. The whole country is guilty.

Remember what it said? Any man who touches the accursed things, he is accursed, and the camp is accursed. You can bring defamation on everyone if you mess with these kerem things. You touch something that's kerem, you are kerem, and the camp is kerem.

And that's exactly what happened. Let's pause here and take our break. I think when we come back, we'll look at the details of this and see exactly why God prescribes the penalty that He prescribes and does that make a difference to us.

Let's pause here and take our break.