

## **Joshua 07-06-01a**

This is Friday, the 1st of June, 2007. We continue tonight after a special interlude last week, our study in the book of Joshua. We pick up in chapter 8, verse 30.

Let's take a moment as we begin to exercise our privilege, our priesthood, to go before God's throne, ask His blessing on our study and our fellowship, and ensure that we are susceptible to the ministry of His Spirit. Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is, and one that we do not take for granted, to come before You with our requests, with our gratitude, with our acknowledgment of the wonderful grace that You have bestowed on us, including us in Your plan and purpose, and sending the Lord Jesus Christ to die for us and to provide for us a life that has meaning and purpose and a future. We thank You for Your Word, its preservation, its clarity, its power, and the influence that it exerts as nothing else can over our thoughts and the resources that it provides for us to navigate the challenges and the circumstances that we face week by week.

We ask Your blessing on us now as we study this portion of Your Word. May each of us find in it those truths that will thoroughly equip us for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. We have seen in the first portion of Joshua chapter 8 the successful attack and rout of the armies of Ai and Bethel, the fate of the king of Ai. He was executed, he was hung on a tree, he was taken down from the tree, and he was buried under a big monumental pile of rocks.

And that's where we ended up last time in chapter 8 verse 29. Let's read now verse 30 and following and see what happens next. Then Joshua built an altar for the Lord God of Israel on Mount Ebal, just as Moses the Lord's servant had commanded the Israelites.

As described in the Law Scroll of Moses, and I give you that phrase from the New English Translation, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron tool. They offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord, sacrificed peace offerings. There, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the Law of Moses which he had written.

Then all Israel, with the elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the strangers, as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim, and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the Law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law.

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded, which Joshua did not read

before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them. Well, we know about this from the Book of Deuteronomy. You have some cross-references given for you there in the text notes of your New King James Bible, the first one occurring in verse 30.

If yours is like mine, it is note S, and it leads you to Deuteronomy 27, 4-8. We are not going to go back in detail, because it basically says the same thing. What I do want to pose as a question for us tonight is, why this rigmarole? Why these mountains? Why this location? Because, if you look on a map, from where Jericho and Ai are, and we have established that beyond all shadow of a doubt through the studies and the maps and so on, do you know where Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim are? They are about 30 miles away to the north.

And there have been no battles fought up there. There has been no military path cleared to go up to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. There is a town up there.

Do you know the name of the town? Shechem. We will see this as we look at some of our previous references to these places. And they march all the way up there, unopposed, stand in the valley with mountain on one side, mountain on the other side, split up the people, put the ark in the middle, have the priests, Joshua does his thing with the whitewashed stones, writes down the law, reads the law, everybody says Amen.

It is all taking place just the way Moses instructed them, and it is way up there. Why don't they do this between Jericho and Ai? Why don't they do it at Gilgal? It is a very strange juxtaposition here. Well, first of all, this is mysterious, because you have the location offset.

Secondly, you would think, well, they could do this as soon as they cross the Jordan. If you go back and read Deuteronomy, Moses says, in the day that you cross over to the land, you shall do these things. Well, it has been more than a day.

It has been several days. They had the circumcision thing, they waited, they marched around Jericho for seven days, they went and attacked Ai the following day, and then they had a bad news thing, they had to get up early the next day to the ambush. It has been many, many days.

So, are they disobedient? Well, we do need to take a quick look at Deuteronomy 27, because I want to make a point here about the timing. Chapter 27 of Deuteronomy, Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you today, and it shall be on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones and whitewash them with lime. Write on them all the words of the law when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the Lord has given you, flowing with milk and honey, just as he promised, etc., etc.

It goes on to say, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. Build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones, no iron tool. Build the altar, offer burnt offerings, peace offerings, eat there, rejoice before the Lord, write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law.

So, that's the instruction. Deuteronomy 27, 1-8. That's the impetus for this action.

But, it says, on the day. They didn't do this on the day, did they? A couple of weeks later at a minimum. Right? So, what's going on here? I ask myself, does the place make a difference? Why couldn't they set up stones right there on the bank of the Jordan as soon as they get across and the water starts flowing? Why didn't they set them up there? Gateway to the land.

They have a memorial pile of stones there already. Why didn't they do a whitewash in the law and all of that there? And say, you know, as soon as we set foot in the land on the day, here's the law, we agreed to it, we affirmed the covenant, then we went on to Jericho. No.

They come in and they do Jericho and they do Ai. Now they do the whitewashed stones in the law. And I ask myself, why this timing and why this place? So, I hope tonight in this first session to answer those two questions.

Why this time? Why this place? Because they both seem to be important. Well, first of all, while you're still looking at Deuteronomy 27, and you're looking at verse 2 there, in Hebrew, it says, and it will be. V'hayah.

It will be. This root is evidently the same root from which God's name comes, Yahweh, the One who is, the I Am. Well, it will be.

This is the future, and it will be. And of course, to communicate this, you have a, you've got a Kel stem, which is normally the past, but you've got a WoW conversive in front of it, which puts it into the future. It's a Hebrew thing.

So it says, it will be. It shall be. This is what's supposed to happen.

B'yom. B'yom. In.

B'yom. Day. In the day.

Which. Asher. Ha'avru.

When you cross over. In the day that you all cross over. This is the third masculine plural.

Into. The. You cross the Jordan to the land.

Ha'aretz. Okay? Ha'aretz Yisrael. You hear that a lot of times.

Ha'aretz is the land. This is the land of promise. You cross the Jordan into the land.

B'yom. Why am I belaboring this? How does the Bible start? What happens in the first chapter of Genesis? And the evening and the morning were yom echad. First day.

Second day. And we say, literal 24 hour day. Can't be anything else.

Yes it can. I'm sorry. But right here, Joshua is obedient.

He's not in trouble. God didn't say, how come you haven't whitewashed the stones yet? If God had wanted them to do this on the literal 24 hour day in which they crossed the Jordan, where would they have crossed the Jordan? 30 miles upstream. Right? It's, with this much people, it's an all day march.

From where they crossed. To get up there. Now there's a guy, named Robinson.

You learn a lot from these guys who went to the Holy Land back in the 1800s and wrote about their travels and their adventures. And the Holy Land was much unchanged for centuries. Things had been the same.

A guy named Robinson went there in the 1800s. And he started down very near Jericho. And went all the way up to Shechem.

And with donkeys, not taking the most direct route, he made it in 11 and a half hours. So it's doable in a day. Easy.

An easy day. Start at 5 or 6 in the morning, you can get there by 5 or 6 at night. Even if you don't take the most direct route.

And even if you've got pack animals, he made it in daylight hours. So it's a day trip up there. Spend the time.

It's a day trip back. But if God had wanted them to do it in the day, they would have had to cross up there right next to Ebal and Gerizim to make it. So God obviously didn't expect them to do it in a literal yom.

This is more like the day of the Lord. On the occasion of your crossing, you need to do this pretty quick. This is one of the first things you do.

In the day means at that time. At the time that you cross. And day has some flexibility to it.

The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. Well, what part? A literal 24 hour day? No. So I just point that out.

More importantly, however, is the place. Joshua and the people of Israel are in perfect compliance. And they're doing this at the right time.

And it is after the victory of Jericho. It is after the victory of Ai. Because they have the luxury of going up there undisturbed because of these victories.

These victories have put the people into fear. They do not dare attack singly now. They're going to have to confederate.

That's what we're going to see in the next chapter. These people are going to have to mass larger armies before they dare attack Israel. So they can pretty well go where they want to go with impunity at this point.

But what interests me more than this is the place. Because in Deuteronomy 27, and you actually have an earlier reference to these places. So if you go back to Deuteronomy chapter 11, flip back to Deuteronomy chapter 11, and this is going to give us the key for the place.

You shall love the Lord your God, keep His charge, His statutes, His commandments. You can read all the beginning of that. It rehearses what God has done to Egypt.

What He's done during the Korah, Dathan, Abiram rebellion. Look at verse 8. Therefore, your eyes have seen every great act which the Lord has done since you left Egypt. Right? And in Egypt and everything since.

Therefore. That's what the therefore is. Therefore.

Looking back at everything God has done. Therefore, you shall keep every commandment which I command you today. So that you may be strong.

So that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers, to them and to their descendants. Very important phrase. They're getting this land because God promised it to their forefathers.

Land flung with milk and honey. The land which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. Where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot as a vegetable garden.

But, verse 11, the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys which drinks water from the rain of heaven. A land for which the Lord your God cares. The eyes of the Lord your God are always on it from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.

Isn't that interesting? The land of promise is not like the land of Egypt. It's a different kind of land. In Egypt, you plant a little garden and you walk around and water it.

You carry a can. It's like those little things you get at Walmart. Have you ever seen those little watering cans? You walk around your garden.

Go back. Why do you do that in Egypt? There's only one source of water and that's the Nile. They don't depend on rain.

They don't depend on anything but the Nile. It's all the Nile. The Nile is associated with the gods of Egypt.

And so you've got to go get their water. And you've got to sprinkle it on your stuff. That's why when God turned the Nile to blood, everybody was in a panic because you can't even... Any groundwater you get is really part of the water table that's spreading out from the Nile.

So, the land which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot like a vegetable garden. This is a land of hills and valleys. Think about it.

Egypt is the land of unbelief. The land of unbelievers. The domain of unbelievers where their fate is controlled by gods of their own making.

Gods of their own devising. That's what the unbelieving world around us is like. That's what our secularistic, humanistic, materialistic, evolutionistic, paganistic, atheistic culture is like.

Gods of our own making will have programs, will have plans, will have schemes, will have get-over networks. We'll figure it out. That's how that land works.

You sow your seed. You water it. You get the fruit of it.

You say, you know why this grew? Because I walked around and I watered it. It's a garden of my own making. The land that you're going into is not the same.

The land that you're going into, God waters it. It's a land of rain. It's a land of hills and valleys.

The rain hits the hills and flows down the valleys at God's behest. You know what they call them today? They call them wadis. And when you look at them on a map, they've got a dotted blue line.

Because sometimes there's water in them and sometimes there's not. This land that you're going to, you've got to depend on God for the rain. You can't just go fill your watering can at the Nile and walk out there and water what you want.

You have to wait for God to water it. It's a land of hills and it's a land of valleys. It's not a flat basin like the Nile flows through where challenges are not an issue.

Sometimes you've got to climb a hill. Sometimes you've got to go down in a valley. There's going to be peaks.

There's going to be highs. There's going to be lows. There's going to be challenges where you have to climb.

And there's going to be descents where you have to go down. Water is going to be down in the valleys. The challenges are going to be up in the mountains.

It's a different kind of land. And this is what our Christian life is like. We don't have this flat level land where it's all up to me.

I'll decide what I'm going to do. It's our land, our land of inheritance, our land of promise, our land of opportunity that's got hills and valleys. Sometimes you need to be on a hill and sometimes you need to be in a valley.

And God takes us to those places. And there are different kinds of challenges in the valleys and different kinds of challenges in the hills. You can see this.

It doesn't take me to tell you this. There's a lot of symbolism in this statement. Isn't there? Especially for us.

Because as it goes for national Israel, so it goes for us as individuals now. A land for which the Lord your God cares. God doesn't care about the land of Egypt like He cares for the land of promise.

His eye is on it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. He's watching over the whole thing. He knows exactly when He wants it to rain there and when He's going to shut up the heavens and it's not going to rain.

He knows when He's going to send a famine and drive Abraham or drive Jacob down to Egypt. He knows when He's going to water it and replenish it and refurbish it and draw His people back up in. He knows when He's going to let the Amorites overrun it and the Canaanites.

And He knows when He's going to drive them out because their iniquity is full. God's eyes are on it. Even though God's people have not occupied that land God's eyes have never left it.

And when the Canaanites and the Amorites and all of these otherites have filled that land and polluted it with their iniquity God's eyes have never been on it. And He's biding His time. He's patient.

He's waiting and He's waiting. Now He's bringing the people in with Joshua to purge and cleanse and sanctify that land once again. A land for which the Lord your God cares.

The eyes of the Lord your God are always on it. The landscape of your life, the landscape of my life is always under God's watchful eye. You can go up in the hills.

God is there. You can descend down into the valleys. God is there.

First of the year. Last of the year. Growing season.

Harvesting season. Fallow season. Planting season.

Whatever time of year. Whatever place. God's eyes are on it.

Always. Without fail. You and I live in the land of promise.

We are in the land of the kingdom. In a spiritual sense. What had been promised to Israel.

You'll go into the kingdom. You'll have the millennium. They missed it.

We Gentiles scattered over the face of the earth live a kingdom life. In the sense that we have the outpouring of the Spirit. We are taking possession of our inheritance which is now heavenly.

The eyes of the Lord are always on it from beginning to the end. Look at verse 13. It shall be that if you earnestly obey my commandments which I command you today to love the Lord your God and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul I will give you the rain for your land in its season.

It's not an inscrutable, unfathomable, mysterious, unpredictable factor of whether or not the rain is going to come on the hills and flow down into the valleys. What determines whether the rain is going to fall? Obedience. Always and without fail.

Obedience is the key. This is why you've had Jericho and you've had Ai. How did things go at Jericho? For 99.99% of the people it went great.

They marched the six days one time around the city. They marched on the seventh day seven times around the city. Every man ran up the rubble into the city.

Every man did what he was supposed to do except one. One guy screwed up. Sin in the camp.

One area. One transgression desanctifies, pollutes, defiles, renders ritually unclean the entire nation. It just takes one.

They go to Ai and because of disobedience three dozen men lose their lives. There is a defeat. There is a setback.

There has to be sanctification. The people sanctify themselves. They root out the evil.

They identify it. They expunge it. They are cleansed from it.

They go back and now there is victory. So, here's the point. What does Israel learn in these first couple of weeks in the land? Yes, they have the God of Israel on their side.

He is their Redeemer. He is their Deliverer. He has taken them out of bondage and brought them over the course of a generation to the Promised Land and it is theirs by divine promise.

God has promised them victory. He has promised them land. He has promised them a heritage, fruitfulness and so on but it is contingent on obedience.

Now that they have that stinging lesson well in hand, fresh in their minds, this is the time to rehearse the law that defines that obedience. If they had done it right after they got over the Jordan, they are going to keep looking over their shoulders saying, look at that water. Can you believe we just crossed over that dam? And it would quickly be forgotten.

They would get into the heat of battle. They would look at Jericho. They could get into the grasshopper syndrome.

They would look at the giants. Look at the scope of the land. Look at the confederation.

God says, no. Let's do Jericho. We will do Ai.

Now that you've got that experience that has wrapped you hard on the knuckles and you still feel the pain. Remember, there are a couple dozen families in Israel who have still lost a brother, a father, a son at Ai. They didn't lose a man at Jericho.

Can you believe it? Not a man. But the little podunk that was next, they lost. And it is a reprimand.

It's a rebuke. And it hurts. But now, with that chastening, they are ready to be serious and to pay close attention because they know now it isn't going to be a walk in the park.

Just because the God of Israel has promised us the land doesn't mean there are no conditions. Possession of the land is conditioned upon obedience. They've been told that from the beginning.

Their fathers were told that. Their fathers didn't pay attention and dropped in the wilderness. Now, God has provided them the set of experiences to make them receptive.

And why will they stand there all day long at the foot of the slopes of these mountains and listen to Joshua read every word of the law? Because of Jericho. Because of Ai. And it's the perfect provision of God.

You think, well, you know, what an awful thing that we had that set back and so on. God

worked it together for good. Now they are really going to pay attention because they know.

We've got to mind our P's and Q's here, our P's and our K's, or whatever you want to call it. We've got to pay attention here. We've got to mind our Yods and Tiddles here because God isn't going to unstintingly just grant us victory no matter what.

We have to be obedient. That's what's going on here. So that tells us a little bit about the timing.

And also in this chapter we get the location because look at verse 13 and following. If you earnestly obey, I will give you the rain that you can gather your grain, your new wine, and your oil. I will send grass in your fields for your livestock that you may eat and be filled.

Take heed to yourselves. Verse 16 of Deuteronomy 11. Take heed to yourselves.

We could stop right here and I could just preach the rest of the night on take heed. We've got a special somewhere in the archives on watch and pray. Be alert.

Be cautious. Keep your eyes open. Don't get apathetic.

Don't take things for granted. Don't go cruising along. I hesitate to use my family members as an example.

There's a privacy issue there, but I'm going to draw on the experience of one of my new drivers in the family. Very diligent. Very careful.

Model has done so well and I'm so proud of her. But she's been driving for several months. Been driving for about a year now.

Starting to kind of settle in. You don't get quite that adrenaline pump every time you put the key in the ignition and put your foot on the pedal. And going to piano lessons.

Done it week by week by week by week. Same old, same old. Same street.

Same place. And one moment of distraction and she rolled into the back of the car in front of her at a stoplight. Just a little distraction.

A little less attention. Because all of us do it. You just get a little complacency.

I've done this a million times. I'm habituated. Your mind starts to wander.

You think I've got this down. Well, she just rolled. Just bumped.

If you're going to have an accident, this is the kind to have. No damage to our car. A little rub of the paint on the back of the other one.

But enough to file an insurance claim and so on. And now, if you want to talk about a careful driver. She was careful before, but boy, you can't let your guard down.

And it's a great experience. I'm glad it happened. I thank God for it.

Because she's that much more careful now. Because she realizes you can't let your guard down no matter how long you've been driving. Weird stuff can happen.

You just have to be alert. Watch. Be careful.

Take heed to yourselves. And see, Israel has got the AI experience. They only lost 36 men.

If you're going to have a lesson, at least have it not be an expensive lesson. Of course, for those families, it's expensive. Take heed to yourselves.

Let your heart be deceived. And you turn aside to serve other gods and worship them. Let the Lord's anger be aroused against you.

And he shut up the heavens so that there be no rain. Now, observation, interpretation, application. Our weather, rainy as it has been, and a godsend though it has been to get us out from under water restrictions here, we don't think about literal rain now, do we? So, pot quiz for you.

If you were preparing this lesson, and you were looking at Deuteronomy 11, you were saying observation, interpretation, application. What is the equivalent of rain for us as individual church-age believers? What did rain do for them? What is the analog that does it for us? Everything by way of logistical provision depends on the rain, doesn't it? Your economic well-being as an Israelite, whether you grow crops or manage flocks and herds, all depends on the rain. This is your provision.

You will either have grain in your barn or you won't. You will either have sheep to shear and goats to milk and cattle to drive and offer sacrifices or you won't. All based on the rain.

The rain drives the entire agricultural train, right? So, will God get our attention by the loss of provision as what we used to call in the military an attention-getting device? Yes. Now, it does not always mean that if you've got tight financial times that God is getting your attention, but it's a good thing to check. It is a good first place to look if you find my grace is sufficient for thee, you have faith and do what you're supposed to do and contributions should be made and my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus.

By the way, be sure and look at the context of that promise. When Paul is talking to those people, these are people who have taken out of painfully short funds to contribute

to the needs of saints. And at a time when they could barely cover their own needs, they were trying to cover the needs of someone else.

And that generous spirit and that expression of faith, God will not let me go hungry because I'm trying to look out for a fellow believer. Paul says, you know what, you've got that attitude, my God is going to supply your needs. That's the promise.

So look at it in context. But God can certainly use it as an attention-getting device. It's one thing to check.

But don't look at somebody who's got tight finances and say, ha ha, God's dried up your rain, you're not being obedient, not at all. One of the maturity tests for believers who are doing exactly what they're supposed to do is having to head down to Egypt because of a drought. So, this is for personal application, not for look-over-the-fence application.

We look at ourselves. There's no verse in the Bible that says, examine your brother to see if he's in the faith. Is there? Examine one another to see if you'd be in the faith.

No. Examine yourself to see if you're in the faith. This is a strictly personal application principle.

So don't be quoting me out of context or quoting the Word of God out of context. Take heed to yourselves, lest the Lord's anger be aroused, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the Lord has given you. You can lose promised blessing, promised inheritance, promised prosperity by forgetting about the Lord and just letting your attention wander for a moment in one area.

You can be doing 90% good. It only takes one aching to send the whole nation of Israel into defeat. We have to examine ourselves.

Find the leaven and purge it out. Touch not the unclean thing. Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Contact with other people that can taint you and get your dander up and get your attitude bad and spark a mental attitude sin, spark a sin of the tongue, spark an overt sin. You've got to control what you think about. We have to control what we think about.

In the same way that rain drives everything, our thought life drives everything. Stop it at the point of thought. What we do is stoke our minds with the Word of God.

We were talking about this earlier this week with somebody. You can have a besetting sin. I was plagued, I am plagued, we're all plagued.

We generally have one particular area of weakness and we just have a besetting sin. If you say, you know, the sin I commit the most is right here. I've got a besetting sin in the

area of impatience.

I struggle my life with just being impatient. And impatience makes you hypercritical. And hypercritical makes you want to say a bunch of hurtful things.

You know, why did you do that? And it's a great offensive weapon to put people on the defense so that they don't come back and start poking holes in all of my weak areas. You put people on the defense. It's a horrible thing.

And, you know, that little song, you always hurt the one you love. Well, that's what happens. Well, besetting sin.

And you say, how can I stop that impatience? How can I stop that sharp tongue thing? You fail, you're wasting your time if you try to stop it at that point. You know what the problem is? The problem is not saying the wrong thing and expressing the impatience and doing all of that damage. It's too late.

If you think about your besetting sin and you think about why is it that I always realize that I just committed my besetting sin right there. And I never think of it right before I commit it. It's always right after I commit it.

And we say, you know, the trick is I've got to think of it right before. No, that's not the trick. If you try that trick, you're never going to lick your besetting sin.

I'll tell you what the secret is. Don't even address your besetting sin. I used to think, you know, I'm going to read every verse in the Bible on impatience.

Forget it. You're wasting your time. You know what you have to do? Go back.

Go 17 miles upstream and dam up the water. And you know what 17 miles upstream is in our hearts? If you put the perspective of God in your soul, if you think on these things, you remember our memory verse, all of those things that are good, honest and true, those things that are of good report. At some other time, not at the point where you're tempted to be impatient, not at the point where you're tempted to jab and needle and poke and hurt people.

No, no, no, no, no. Forget about that. At calm times, fill the barn, fill the larder with these wonderful thoughts.

Look at what God has done for me. Look at the place God has put me. Look at the prosperity.

Look at this wide open land before me. He's brought me across the Jordan and the land is mine for the taking. If I'm obedient, look at the promises of God.

Look at the bright hope of the future in heaven. Think about the new Jerusalem. Wouldn't

it be great to be a citizen and have a gate card where I can go to the gate angel and say, Sam Hall.

And he says, come right in Mr. Hall. You live right inside the gate here in the gate sweeper hut. But hey, I'm in.

I'm in. I get in. Look at the hordes that didn't smell the coffee and didn't care anything about the things of God and can't even get in.

I'm in. Wouldn't it be wonderful? Wouldn't it be great to have neighbors that you can talk about Old Testament history? Caleb, tell me about that mountain. What happened when you went up there and climbed it? Who was up there? I was telling Ken earlier this week, I picture Caleb looking like Danny DeVito.

I think Caleb, I think he might have been the shortest man in Israel. People looked at him and said, this guy ain't getting nowhere. And he is the greatest, mightiest warrior, oldest man in Israel, still looking for the hill to go clean the guys out.

Not by might nor by power. It's by God's Spirit. And Caleb had that figured out.

But you think about these things and you stoke your soul with them. You think about the blessings of God at quiet times, at non-stress times. And you become an appreciative person.

You become a grace-oriented person. You're thinking about what a great God, what a great life, what a great opportunity. And you know what? When those times come, when the pressure comes, somebody has done the thing for the umpteenth time, and that's the time when I get impatient.

That's the time when I'm hypercritical. That's the time when I shoot my mouth off. You know what? When that pressure comes, what it squeezes out of me is not impatience.

And what it squeezes out of me is not sins of the tongue. What it squeezes out of me is, you know what? I bet that's just what God thinks when He looks at me. I am a short-sighted, short-term memory person.

And look at what God has done for me. I fill my soul at quiet times with the good that God has put in His Word, with the good that God has done for me. And when pressure comes, that's what gets squeezed out of me.

It's just like squeezing an orange. You squeeze an orange, you get orange juice. You squeeze a lemon, you get bitter lemon juice.

What's inside? What do you fill yourself with? This is why we are enjoined. This is why we are instructed and commanded. Take every thought captive for Christ.

Don't wait until the pressure thing and say, Oh, wait a minute. I know you've just said a mean thing to me. Now, hold on.

Let me run six verses through my mind, and I'm going to come back with a soft answer that turns away wrath. You can't do that. This is advanced preparation.

This is getting circumcised three days before you even start marching around the city. This is thinking about the things of God in advance, and you will find that you pass your tests because you have become the kind of person that passes tests, not the kind of person that magically thinks of what he's supposed to do right before the temptation. Your nature has changed.

The nature of these people in Israel, by virtue of being circumcised and defeating Jericho and ultimately defeating Ai, their nature has changed. They've got a different perspective. They've got an appreciation for obedience.

Now God can take them up to Ebal and Gerizim and read them the law, and they're going to appreciate it, and they're going to imbibe it. They're going to take it into their souls, and it's going to make a difference. God gave them that preparation.

God let them fail, and God worked that failure together for good. All of us have failures, and sometimes we think, I am never going to catch up. I've got too many failures.

I've got too much baggage. I've got stuff. Not at all.

This is the very thing that God will work together for good. Now Paul says, well, shall we sin that grace may abound? Heaven forbid. We don't say, well, I'm going to go fail a bunch more so that God can really make me appreciative.

But don't let failure discourage us. We shouldn't look and say, well, everybody's ahead of me. I'm bringing up the rear.

Not at all. Look at what God did for Israel. You and I, right now, this day, this hour, we are prime.

We are ready for the truths of this passage. We are ready for the truths of God's plan and purpose. We are ready to receive God's Word and see what obedience is and take advantage of it.

This is the key to seizing and holding the land of promise. Right here, right now. This is the time.

Now is the appointed hour. Now is the day of deliverance. This is it.

This is it. We are ready. You and I have everything right now in our souls to meditate on, to think about, like the tree planted by the rivers of water.

We are ready to bring forth our fruit in our season, just like these people are. That's why we're in this passage right now. That's why we're seeing what we're seeing right now.

So look at verse 18. Therefore, lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul. Bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

What a tragedy that they came up with the phylacteries and the weird stuff to strap onto their head and their hand. No! Think about it. Make it a part of your daily routine to stop and think, I am a child of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ spilled His blood for me so that I could live this life, this hour, this day, and lay hold of the inheritance. That's why I'm here. That's why I'm breathing air.

And I'm not dead. I'm not gone. I am saved.

I'm redeemed. And I'm still in the game. God has not pulled me out and put me on the bench.

So I haven't screwed up bad enough that there's no potential, that there's no hope. I'm still here. Bind these things on the hand.

When you do something, what do you see? I'm a believer. As I do this, I should do it as a child of God, as redeemed by Christ. When I look at things, when I view something, I've got something that hits me first.

Wait a minute. I'm a child of God. I ought to do this as a believer.

How can I do this in a way that's honoring to God? When I look at things, when I do things, the first thing I think of is the Word of God. That's the idea. You shall teach them to your children.

Speak of them coming and going. Write them on the doorposts of your house and so on. If you carefully do these things, the Lord will drive out all of the nations from before you.

He will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves. You will succeed in situations where it looks like you can do nothing but fail. No man shall be able to stand against you.

The Lord will put dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread. You will succeed and you will achieve exactly what God wants you to achieve. You will succeed and accomplish exactly what God wants you to accomplish.

You can't ask for more than that in life. We have a little bit more to cover here in Deuteronomy 11. We'll pause and take our break.

We'll come back and pick up at verse 26 when we return.