

Joshua 07-07-06a

This is Friday, the 6th of July, 2007. We continue tonight our study in the book of Joshua. We will finish chapter 10 and move into chapter 11.

Let's take a moment as we begin, as is our custom to go before the Lord in prayer, focus our concentration, ensure that we are in a suitable condition spiritually for God the Holy Spirit to do his transcendent work. As is so often the case with the things that we do, it is not by might nor by power. It is by God's Spirit that useful and meaningful things are actually accomplished.

It is important that I prepare and that I present, but the main work of teaching is done by God the Holy Spirit. All of us, of course, need to recognize that it is his work on which we depend every time that we assemble to study God's word. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for another opportunity to spend time together in fellowship and in the study of your word.

We thank you for the gifts that you have distributed to each one of us and the opportunity that we have to receive and give blessing as we spend time together in encouragement and in the up-building that takes place when we are assembled together. We know that where two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, he is in our midst, and it gives us a sense of responsibility and a sense of enthusiasm and excitement to know that as we look into the truth of your word, we will find there those things that will draw us closer to you through him. We ask your blessing on us.

Give us insight and understanding and a perception of the personal application for the truth that we will see this evening. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, this has been quite a new set of experiences for Joshua and the armies of Israel. They had a pitched battle with the Amalekites on their way out of Egypt. They've had some skirmishes on the east side of the Jordan, but now that they have come across the Jordan and Moses is no longer with them, to inspire confidence, to stand on the pinnacle with his arm and the rod outstretched, stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord, and here comes the parting of the sea, you could well imagine there would be a sense of uncertainty and some concern about whether or not Joshua is going to be up to the task to invade this hostile country, to lead the armies against vastly superior numbers in an entrenched and well-fortified series of positions all through the land.

They have lived a nomadic life for 40 years, an entire generation. These soldiers who are coming across the Jordan to take the land have never had a settled home. They don't know what it's like to live in a city.

They have dwelt in tents. They know what it's like to pull up and move. Now, this has advantages and disadvantages.

The disadvantage is that they don't know what it's like to be in a city and be attacked. They don't know what it's like to go forth from a fixed base of logistics where you've got supplies and you've got barns and you've got resources that can resupply lines of supply. They have been nomadic.

They're like the Bedouin in that sense. However, it also gives them a great advantage because they know how to live on the move, don't they? They know how to pack and bring everything they need for a journey. They know how to subsist off the land.

They know how to find water. They know every form of plant life in that land. What leaves are good to make a salve or to make a tea or to make an herbal medicine of some sort.

They know all about the flora and the fauna of that region because they have grown up living there. And in this sense, the people who have grown fat and grown civilized and grown civilized, if you will, in the land of Canaan don't have those advantages. They don't realize how rapidly the Israelites can move.

They don't realize how well adapted they are to the land. And this has come at a price. It's no fun to wander for 40 years, but there is a principle and there is an application when you think about that.

Many times you can read in Exodus and in Numbers and in Deuteronomy about the Israelites complaining. Where is the comfort? Even as slaves, we had comforts. We had leeks and garlics and we had this and we had that when we lived in the land of Egypt.

We had security. We didn't have any real responsibility. We didn't have to take initiative.

We didn't have to fend for ourselves. We were cared for. We were like cattle in a stall.

And that was kind of a nice, safe life, even though it was slavery. And, of course, you look back with kind of rose-colored glasses. Ah, those were the days.

Back when I was a slave, wasn't it fun? And you tend to forget the taskmaster's whip and the people who died under that hard bondage. The attempt to slay the firstborn infants. All of this sort of conveniently drops away.

And they look back and they say, oh, but remember the food. Wasn't the food great? And you think about that. It's a strange perspective where you could forget the murder of infants and remember that you had some spices for your food.

But that's what those in the wilderness journeyings look back on. They complained. It was a hard life.

This is a hard life. We are described in the New Testament as being sojourners. We are strangers and pilgrims.

We are in the world but not of the world. And there are aspects of our life, even though we live in America and we have great prosperity and so forth, spiritually speaking, we wrestle against principalities and powers. There are forces at work in the government, in the media, on the Internet.

In every form of communication, there are active efforts to deprive us of our faith, to talk us out of it, to convince us that it's primitive, that it is out of date, that it is ignorant. People love to quote to me studies that show that the more college education someone has, the less likely they are to be a fundamental believing Christian, that the Word of God is inerrant and infallible and inspired. More education, evidently people lose their faith.

There was a very interesting study recently published that explains that this is not actually a cause and effect. Have you ever heard somebody say this? This is a little bit off the subject, but in another way it's not. Correlation does not equal causation.

Do you know what it means when something correlates? I saw, for example, a magazine article years ago. It was actually at Patty's folks house. Her dad got these magazines that were all about health and how to become more healthy and so on.

They were talking about how people who drink a lot of orange juice are much, much healthier than everyone else. So you would say, ah, so if I drink a lot of orange juice, I'll be healthy. Drinking orange juice causes better health.

But as you read on down through the article, what you found is that that's not actually how it works. People who drink a lot of orange juice are health conscious people. They do a lot of things to preserve their health.

They work out more. They watch what they eat. They know that orange juice is healthy.

They know a lot of other things are healthy as well. So it is their lifestyle, which includes orange juice, that makes them healthier than the average person. You might find out that they're less prone to heart disease.

And somebody could say, well, drink lots of orange juice and you won't get a heart attack. And that's not cause and effect. That is one part of a much larger set of factors that lead to better health.

Same thing here. They do a survey and they say, well, how much education do you have? Oh, well, I've got a postgraduate degree. I've got a graduate degree.

Well, are you an atheist or an agnostic or are you a Christian? Well, I'm an atheist. I'm an agnostic. And so they compile these numbers and they say, look, the more college education you have, the more you're likely to be an atheist or an agnostic.

So does education educate you out of your faith? Well, they did a very intensive study. They followed thousands of college students they've interviewed. And what they discovered is that what you decide as a youth, how you are brought up and what you are exposed to, your decision for or against God and His Word is usually made before you get to college.

Not always. There are people who kind of wake up and smell the coffee later on. But many, many people, the majority of people, have already pretty well determined their attitude toward the Word of God, toward their Christianity, toward their Christian faith, their belief in God in their teenage years.

When they get to college, their church attendance typically falls off. It's a big new world, lots of social activities. It's all different and it typically falls off.

But their fundamental attitude toward God does not change. And after college, when they start getting married and start getting into jobs, they will return to the pattern that they already established when they were a teenager. And it's interesting for organizations like Campus Crusade who feel like they want to go and convert and change people's minds on the college campus.

And what they have discovered is what they mainly do is reawaken a dormant faith that is already developed, that has already formed. They don't have near as many conversions, if you will, as they have rededications, people who come back to the faith of their earlier years. And so the upshot of this is don't let anyone tell you that, well, if you had more education, you would know better than to be a Christian.

What happens is people who come to God and come to faith and come to an understanding of the Scripture have found their truth. It gives us our focus and our worldview. We know what is true and what is false.

We know what is real and what is not real. And we are satisfied. People who reject God and reject His Word have a vacuum, have a hunger in their soul that is not yet filled.

And so where are they going to look for that? Well, they are going to look for it in secular education. They are going to continue on their quest to find fulfillment and to find an achievement and to find something that will kind of fill this vacuum. And so as you get into the upper echelons of education, these are people who have staked their ground out in the world of secular ideas, of humanist philosophy and so forth.

So higher education is dominated by people who don't really have a strong faith. And so to succeed and to move up into that, to become a college professor, to become a physicist in one thing or another, you typically have to kind of go down that road. So the fork in the road, this is my point, the fork in the road is what do you decide when you are still young and you are trying to figure out what is going to happen.

And a lot of you in this room are younger. And now is the time that your decisions and your thoughts are really important because you are charting your future course. Statistically speaking, scientifically speaking, you are determining now.

Your concrete is kind of setting in your soul on what your priorities are going to be. And so it is a great thing that you choose to prioritize the things of God, that you make the effort to concentrate, that you incorporate those truths into your soul because that is going to be the structure. You are sort of building the arc that is going to carry you through the flood of your early adult years.

And so it is important to build it right. And I commend you for your attention and for your concentration and for your recognition that these things really are important. And even secular scientific studies show that this is really the case.

It is not just the preacher saying, pay attention now while I am talking. It is really a fact that the things you learn now are going to carry you through as you go off to college and beyond. Well, back to Joshua.

They had a mindset from living in the wilderness. Well, we are sort of nomadic. We work our way through the valleys.

We know how to live. We know how to survive. We know how to get what we need from the land and so on.

But here are these greatly civilized, more advanced cultures. They have got walled cities. They have got horses.

They have got chariots. They have got weapons. They have got seasoned warriors.

They have got history on their side. They have been living there while we were slaves and then we were nomads. These people were learning how to take and hold on to their land.

Now we are going to go into their territory. We are going to take their stuff away from them. Put yourself in their shoes.

I mean, this is kind of a psychological and spiritual challenge to their faith. God says, you can do it. God says, I will be with you.

I will make it happen for you if you will trust me. But think about it. There is a lot of human viewpoint speaking.

There is a lot of odds stacked against them. So they come into the land. And as you look at Joshua, he has a lot of pressure on him, doesn't he? He has received a mantle, if you will, from Moses.

And has to take charge of the civil government. He has to take charge of the military aspects of this. And he does a great, great job.

We saw at the end of chapter 10 that the priorities that he sets. He has the kings bottled up in a cave. And he could have stopped the battle and said, well, let's sever the head of the serpent here and all will be well.

But he knows that it is most important to pursue the troops, extend the day, sun stand thou still, so that we can slaughter these troops, any of them that escape the hail, before they get back to their walled cities. And they largely accomplish this task. The way the text stands, it says that they pursued them until the stragglers made it back to the walled cities.

And then he comes back and deals with the kings. The ceremonial placing of the foot on the neck takes place when the battle is truly won. How many times have you seen a sports contest or something where people think it's all in the bag and they start celebrating, but it's premature, and while they're celebrating, defeat is snatched from the jaws of victory, and they lose.

I saw a guy intercept a pass one time in a football game and run way down, and he was going to make the winning touchdown. It was in the closing seconds of the game. But he was so happy, and he started waving to the crowd and dancing around, and a guy, a very speedy guy from the other team, overtook him from behind and tackled him and dropped him short of the goal line, and the time ran out, and they lost.

And can you imagine for the rest of your life thinking, well, we could have gone on to the division playoffs, but I was dancing when I should have been running. Well, Joshua understands this. And he says, let's win the battle.

Then we'll celebrate the capture of the kings. And it's an important principle for us to remember what's important. Don't lose sight of what's important.

What's important for us? If you were going to make application of this idea, here's the kings, but there's the fleeing troops. Which thing should I do? What's most important? How do you figure out what's most important? Well, we have a good injunction in the New Testament. Jesus says, do not lay up for yourself treasure on earth where moths and rust corrupt and thieves break in and steal.

Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. What are the things that count in an eternal sense? And sometimes you have a big list of things that need to be done. Usually someone else hands you this list.

Big things that need to be done, right? And you say, well, I can get all these things done, and I will have wonderful sense of accomplishment. Whoever handed me the list will be happy. But in the doing of those things, if we don't recognize it's not just what I do, but

how I do it.

Moses provided water for the people. Remember he stood up there, must we bring water forth for you from this rock? And then he reached around, and he whacked the rock with a stick, and water came out. He provided water for the people, but how did he do it? Was he obedient to God or disobedient? That second time.

God said, speak to the rock. And Moses kind of forgot his instructions. He did the right thing in a wrong way, and that was the reason he did not enter the land.

He suffered a heavy penalty there, because he should have known better. From those to whom much is given, much is required. The more we know, the more we are responsible to learn and apply.

So, it's important for us to remember as we go through each and every day. A lot of times in the summer we have visits, we have social life, we have a lot of interaction. We've had big Fourth of July festivities and so on.

But it's important as we do those things to remember we are representatives of the Lord God. We are members of the royal family. We are to treat each other with respect.

We are to remember to set a watch on our lips, to watch our mental attitude, to ensure that as we do the things that we must do, many of the things which any unbeliever can do, unbelievers have parties, unbelievers get together, unbelievers have tasks and lists to check off. But we have the opportunity to do those things in a way that pleases God. That's our priority.

Joshua knows that God's not going to be pleased if he goes down there and makes a big ceremony out of hacking up the kings and all of the troops get away. God went to great trouble to draw those troops out of their fortified cities so Joshua could kill them. And time is of the essence.

He doesn't have time to go alert the press, get the TV cameras in, and make a big production out of the kings. He's got to pursue. Some of them went up north.

Beth Horon, you remember that city? Beth Horon that's mentioned in this context? There are two of those cities. And they're about a mile and a half apart. There's Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon.

And those are northwest of Gibeon. Now think about my map in the air. I'm going to draw it backwards for myself and right for you.

Here's the Mediterranean Sea. Here's the coast. Here's the land which will be the land of the Philistines, the big plain, the coastal plain.

And then you get into what they call the hill country of Samaria. It's kind of up north,

north of Jerusalem, north of the northern edge of the Dead Sea. That's your hill country of Samaria.

Then you've got the gradual flattening out and then you've got the sea. And then south of that is what's going to be known as the hill country of Judah. Once they take the land, it's going to be the hill country of Samaria, hill country of Judah.

Well, right in the middle of that, not far from Jerusalem, is Gibeon. We had the Gibeonites come and make the treaty. Joshua now says, here comes the coalition of kings coming up to attack you.

They're attacking us. You're our friend. This is our opportunity.

So as they attack, and God rains down the hail, and they start to flee, some of them go northwest and head up toward Beth-Horon, upper Beth-Horon and lower Beth-Horon. And so some of the Israelite army has gone up this way. The rest of them are fleeing south, back to their cities, their walled cities, from which they came.

All the way down to Makeda is way down south. Beth-Horon is up here. So these enemies are scattering and running and the Israelite army, in pursuing them and slaughtering them, is scattered and running.

So Joshua could go way down to Makeda and say, look, here's the five kings. These guys up here didn't see it. They'll have to hear about it.

The commanders are going to miss the opportunity to put their foot on the neck. Joshua says, not now, not now. Put some rocks on the cave.

We'll get them later. After the victory, these people have all been eliminated. These people down south have all been eliminated.

The army of Israel has marched back. It's possible that those kings were in the cave at Makeda for a couple of days. Even after the long day, think how long it's going to take for everybody to reassemble.

Joshua waits until the entire army of Israel is reassembled. Then he says, roll away the rocks and bring out those kings. Then they do the foot on the neck.

They're all assembled. Remember when we went through the Revelation study and we saw that there were the 24 elders before the throne and they sang a song of praise to God? And after that, there was an innumerable company of people from every tribe and kindred and language who sang a song of praise. Remember that? That is a victory song.

That is a celebration song. And everyone is assembled to sing it. That's what is happening when Joshua makes sure that everyone is there to see the victory.

And he makes a big deal out of it, doesn't he? He says, do not be afraid in verse 25. Nor be dismayed. He says, make an application from what you see.

Draw a conclusion from this. Look at this. These are the five kings who confederated themselves.

These are the five most powerful men in the southern part of the land. And you are standing on their necks. You have subjugated them.

You have defeated them. God has delivered them into your hands. Thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.

Is there a condition on this promise? What enemies are going to be delivered into their hands? What enemies are they going to put their foot on their neck? What is the condition on that promise? Do you see the condition? All of the enemies will be defeated. The Lord will do this to all of the enemies. With what condition? Against whom you fight.

You have to fight them. You can't walk up to their city and say, Lord, it sure would be nice to see a big bolt of lightning come down here and incinerate this town. It's in my way.

Oh Lord, I don't want to have to worry about my flanks. Could you send death and disease and dismemberment and jackals and things to go and chew up all of these enemies for me? What do they have to do to achieve victory over these enemies? Could God just say a word and they would all just fall over of heart failure? God says, I am not going to hand you the land on a plate. I will deliver the enemies into your hands, all whom you fight.

Now, spiritually speaking, by way of analogy, by way of metaphor, by way of spiritual application, what does the land of Canaan represent for you? I'll give you a clue. The nation of Israel in the Old Testament stands for the individual believer in the church age. So, there is a land of Canaan.

And what does it represent? It is the promised land, right? It is the inheritance God promised to the fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are to go in and take it. This is their inheritance.

Do we have an inheritance? Are we looking forward to something similar? Yes, we are. How do you attain, how do you take possession of the inheritance? This life is short. I have lived in a lot of places in my life.

I live in one right now. I've lived in many in the past. All those places I've lived in the past, I have no possession of them whatsoever.

I had a 24 foot travel trailer. First domicile that I ever owned of my very own. It was

mine, all mine, all mine.

And I lived there. I loved it. I was one guy.

It was perfect. I don't have it anymore. I don't think I would want it anymore.

Then I lived in a mobile home. Nice, 72 foot, 14 foot wide, solid 2 by 4 walls. Thing had 7 axles underneath.

It was so heavy. Shingle roof. Beautiful real wood paneling.

Oak cabinets. Beautiful thing. I possessed it.

I owned it. And now it's gone. I did a lot of work for a lot of clients.

Maintaining their computer systems. I installed ArcNet all over Dallas. Coaxial cable.

Ran at 2.5 megabits a second. You've got 10100 Ethernet now. This was 2.5. I helped people configure their 300 baud modems so that they could talk to bulletin boards because there was no internet.

But they would dial up. There were law firms that needed to access big law databases. What's the name? Westlaw.

Legal database. So they would dial up on their 300. Then when we got 1200 baud modems, oh my goodness, that was so fast.

Now you've got 56,000. Well, these were 1200 and 300. All of that work that I did is gone.

Nobody's on ArcNet. Nobody's using 300 baud modems. Everything I did in the human realm has disappeared.

My houses are gone. My work is gone. The only thing you can carry forward is what you lay up in heaven.

How did I do that work? Did I do it in a way that was pleasing to the Lord? Did I do it with integrity? Did I do it prayerfully? Did I do it in the interest of others rather than in my own interest? Did I maintain a good attitude? Did I look up once in a while and try to make sure that God would be pleased with the way I was doing those things? If I did, if you did, in the places you've lived, in the tasks that you have performed, guess what? There is treasure in heaven. Every day that we spend self-interested, my entertainment, my stimulation, my gratification, my task list, my plan, the plan of Sam, every day that we spend that way, it just is gone. That is time that God gave us.

Time is capital. Time is purchasing power. And the Bible says, redeem the time.

Take the time and purchase something with it that will last for eternity. That requires obedience. This is the picture.

Why are we studying the book of Joshua? Why has it been written down and preserved? All these things were written for our instruction. The book of Joshua is written down for you and for me. That's why God put it in the Bible.

What are we supposed to learn from it? There is an inheritance. There is a land of promise. And it is the eternal future.

It is that heavenly domain, that heavenly kingdom, heavenly treasure, heavenly place of occupation. Now, are Joshua and the people of Israel going into the land because they are land-grubbing people who want to get something for themselves and they will slay everybody to get it? What is God's goal in sending the people into the land? It accomplishes a lot of things. These Canaanites have reached the limits of human iniquity.

They are baby-sacrificing, cannibalistic, blood-drinking, horribly amoral, immoral. Every form of vice, every form of perversion, every form of despicable evil behavior is taking place in the land. God says the iniquity of these Amorites is full.

They are as wicked as you can get. They must be destroyed. This is along the lines of what happened in Noah's day, where God came down from heaven and looked around and said, the imagination of men's hearts is only evil all the day.

There is no looking up toward God. There is no appreciation for God. They worship the creature rather than the Creator.

They have exchanged the glory of God, just like it says in Romans 1. So, what is God's purpose? Instead of sending a flood of water into the land to wash these evil people away, He is sending a flood of His own people. They are the cleansing tide. They are the righteous.

They are the faithful. They are those who have trusted God to come across the Jordan and come into the land and purge it and cleanse it and lay hold of it to reflect God's glory. This is going to be the place of God's name.

God's presence is going to be in this place and it has to be purged. It has to be cleansed. This is not a selfish mission that the Israelites are going in.

A lot of atheists and unbelievers look at the Bible and say, you worship a horrible God and these Israelites were awful people. They just went in raping and pillaging and plundering and slaying the women and children and killing animals. How cruel and brutal.

What kind of an Old Testament God is this? People do not understand that this is the execution of a divine sentence. This isn't any different than capital punishment for murder. A murderer, a serial murderer, a horrible, abusive, evil person who has brought the death penalty down on themselves.

Someone has got to pull the switch. Someone has got to string them up. Someone has got to inject them or electrocute them or whatever it is you are going to do to execute them.

That is what the Israelites are doing. They are fulfilling the sentence that God has passed on the land. In so doing, they glorify God.

In so doing, they lay hold of an inheritance for themselves. What are we supposed to do in our day? Day by day by day, we have enemies in our land. Who is our opposition? Who are our Canaanite kings who confederate themselves together? We have internal enemies like Achan who try to defile us.

We have to find that defilement and expunge it. We have to purge it. We have to cleanse ourselves of it.

We have faithlessness like that first generation of Israelites who didn't have the faith to go in and fulfill God's command. We have to rid ourselves of that. We have to grow out of that and learn to be a people who trust God.

We have exterior enemies who confederate themselves. They are more numerous and more powerful than us. How many times have we looked at that memory verse? Our warfare is not against flesh and blood.

It's principalities, powers, rulers. And that unseen forces of darkness is just like the Canaanites. We have to resist.

Now, how do they actually do this? Are you going along through your day and all of a sudden a dark foreboding presence comes and overshadows you and you're trying to cheerfully wash the dishes and you're trying to cheerfully run the vacuum cleaner and all of a sudden this principality or power or force of darkness comes down and says, Oh, have a bad attitude. Be angry. Look for somebody to blame.

Have a bitterness. Find somebody to be mad at because you're trying to run the sweeper and here's a dirty sock or whatever it may be. I'm serious now.

How do the principalities and powers do this warfare? How do they do it? This warfare is in the realm of ideas. It is in culture pressure. This is how we face it today.

Very few of us, especially if you are doing what you're supposed to, if your life is characterized by prayer, if your life is characterized by spending some time in meditation

on God's word, you are not going to be subject to demon oppression. You're not going to be having demonic influence coming into your soul. You have got to consciously or unconsciously move in the direction of darkness.

You've got to head away from God, walk out of the light, but that does take place and there are people who are under serious demonic oppression. There are real demons and they really do dark evil things in the minds of people who walk away from God who say, I'm going to go see what's out there in the dark. That's not you.

That's not us. And yet, Paul says, our warfare, and he includes himself, is against these principalities and powers. So, where is this wrestling? Where is the point of engagement against it? Well, think about attitudes.

Think about our current culture. Attitudes of acceptance towards certain evil practices, towards certain lifestyles, certain forms of perversion, and there is this constant salesmanship. It's in the comedies on television.

It's in the propaganda that gets pushed. It's in opinions. And this constant pressure, there is something the matter with you if you don't accept these evil things.

The driving of God out of education, out of the courtroom, as well as the classroom, out of public life. Why acknowledge God at any public function? Why have a prayer? Isn't it great? I smile every time I think about the fact that Congress still opens in prayer. Now, every once in a while, they have strange forms of priests and Buddhists and what not stand up and give prayers.

But generally speaking, the chaplain stands up and offers at least a prayer in the upward direction to the God of the Bible. And I think it's great. We still have, In God We Trust, on all our money.

And I think it's great. They're trying to creep it around onto the edge on some of those new coins, but it's still there. And as long as it's there, our nation has a chance of continuing.

But look at the hearts and minds of people. Look at the increasing levels of resistance, at the animosity that is growing. That is cultured.

That is nurtured. That is encouraged and fed by the demonic influence that exists in people who are not doing what you're doing, who are not people of prayer, who are not people of faith, who are not people of the Word. Even Christians become enemies of the cross when they fall for the lie.

How did we get into this sinful mess to begin with? Who messed up? A believer or an unbeliever? Who messed up in the Garden of Eden? Were Adam and Eve ignorant and unknowing of God? Or did they believe in Him and know Him? They knew Him, and they

messed up. How did it happen? It was an idea. It was planted in the mind.

It appealed to the intellect. It appealed to the pride. Eve looked at the fruit.

It was desirable to make one wise. This is what our culture does. So here's my suggestion in terms of application for Joshua and the people going in the land, taking these cities, slaughtering these people.

It's an ugly business. Can you imagine what the film would look like? Going into these cities, all of the people, five and six year old kids. I'm not saying that this is a pretty sight.

I'm not saying that it was easy for the Israelites to do. These men have got children of their own back home. They're going in and here's these... But these people seem so nice.

They're just living in their town. They didn't do anything. And God says, kill them all.

And it's counterintuitive. It doesn't seem politically correct. It doesn't seem very nice.

It doesn't seem very Christian. What kind of a Christian are you? What kind of a God do you serve that would say come in and kill all of these people? Now I want you to look at something. Look at this next section.

On the day Joshua took Makeda and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword, he utterly destroyed them, all the people who were in it. All the people who were in it. You know what the word is there, translated people? Netesh.

Do you recognize it? N-E-P-H-E-S-H Netesh. How do we normally translate netesh? Soul or spirit. Netesh.

God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living netesh. Living soul. You cannot interpret this as Joshua destroyed their militia.

God killed all of their men 21 years and older who were bearing arms. They wiped out these towns. Wiped them out.

He utterly destroyed all, every netesh, every soul. Now this isn't easy. It's not pretty.

It's kind of hard when you think about it. It reminds me of Jesus. We've been looking at him and John talking about you've got to eat my flesh and drink my blood.

He said, Whoa, Lord, couldn't you have found something? How about lambs and gentle pastures and still waters and something beatific and gentle and sweet and attractive? Dr. Quiswell preached a sermon one time called The Attractive Christ. He taught that very same sermon another time who called it The Magnetic Christ. And talking about all the wonderful attributes of Jesus and how he is attractive and he's magnetic and all of

the wonderful things.

But, reality is spiritual life requires some hard choices. There are some difficult things and they go against what humanity might define as goodness. You have to be careful with this idea because there are some truly bad things that we have overcome.

We had racism in this country and that was a bad thing. To denigrate someone because of their racial background, that's a bad thing. And a lot of Christians did it and tried to justify it from the Bible and that was wrong.

Now we have people associating perversions and lifestyles that are labeled an abomination in Scripture. Does Scripture ever label someone with dark skin as an abomination? Did the Bible ever tell the Israelites to mistreat their slaves? Did the Israelites in the Old Testament, were they given any permission to mistreat slaves? They were not. It is a fact that there are going to be people who sort into... There are forms of slavery now.

There are people who are de facto slaves in their job or in their situation in life. You don't have to call it slavery. If you are chained to your job and you're chained to something awful and you can't get out of it and it's oppressive and you are being abused by someone who is an evil boss, that's like slavery.

The circumstances are not nearly as material as the experience. And God said, you are not to do that. You are not to oppress.

You are not to abuse. You are to provide and care. You are to treat others as you would like to be treated.

Eye for an eye, tooth for tooth works in the positive as well as the negative. And Jesus summed that up. And he said, he expressed it as the golden rule.

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. If you were a slave, would you want to be maltreated or well treated? Look at the way Abraham treated his servants. The way Isaac and Jacob treated their servants.

They were like family members. And this is the way believers should have behaved in the last 150 years of our societal experience with those who came over from Africa. And we didn't do that.

I say we in the historical sense. So, look at this. They are going in and every nephesh is being wiped out.

It's a hard thing. So how do you determine? Do you just let your instincts say, well, this is just terrible. I can't go in and look at, here's a family and there's five or six little kids running around.

I can't. This is just morally wrong. What determines morality? What determines what is righteous? You've got to have a little bit bigger picture.

You've got to have some context, right? There is a time to preserve life and there is a time to kill. This season in the history of Israel is the one time that God sent them in to exterminate a population. They didn't do it before and they never do it again.

It's not encoded in the law of Moses. Whenever you come across a town and there are idol worshippers going in and exterminate every nephesh. Does the law say that? No.

This is a one-time thing. These people represent for us the principalities and the powers and the forces of darkness that oppose us that prevent us from laying hold of our inheritance. That is the value that they hold for us in terms of application.

So I ask again, how do we fight this battle? How do we engage in this wrestling match with the forces of darkness? Watch for the insidious infiltration of human ideas, human traditions, human morality, human standards as a substitute for what Scripture teaches. Don't be wheedled. Don't be cajoled.

Don't be pressured. Don't be suckered into taking human standards of what is right and what is wrong instead of what the Bible says. Homosexuality is evil.

It is perverse. It is an abomination. We have no commission to persecute, to oppress, or to punish in any way, shape, or form someone who comes out and says, hi there, I'm a homosexual.

If you encounter a homosexual at your beauty salon or across the counter at a store, do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Be polite. Smile.

Be friendly. It is the lifestyle that we hate. It is the lifestyle that we eschew.

It is laws that are going to try to promote and make this something normal that we oppose. Not the people who are trapped in it. Those are people to whom we can shine like a light in a dark place.

If that person had any desire to get out of that lifestyle, would they want to come to you? They ought to. Who better than you and me to show them the way to the light, to the same deliverance that we have all enjoyed, the forgiveness and the cleansing and the power that comes from God. Don't be a person from whom they are going to run away and say, well, whatever I go to, I'm not going to become a Christian.

Look at those Christians. They are abusive and ugly. You see what I mean? This is what Joshua and the people... Look at the Gibeonites.

When they come in the direction of Joshua, they absolutely honor them. Well, we have to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll finish up this conquest of the

Southland.

I kind of hate to say that, being down here in Dixie, but conquest of the Southland.