

Joshua 07-11-09a

This is Friday the 9th of November 2007, the evening before the Marine Corps birthday. And it is the night on which we resume our study in the book of Joshua. We're starting chapter 23 this evening, the penultimate chapter.

If you don't want to look that up, it's the second to last chapter. It contains Joshua's farewell address. Let's take a moment as we anticipate looking at this passage of scripture together to go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, it is a humbling perspective to realize how distant we are from everything that is heavenly, everything that is sanctified, everything that partakes of your nature and your righteousness. And yet you have bridged that great gulf through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our mediator and our savior and our redeemer. And through his work we have been brought near even though we were so far away.

And we have been given many great and precious gifts. We have standing, we have the privilege of representing ourselves before you, before your throne. We thank you for the resources that you have given to us to sustain us through the remainder of this life and to prepare us for the next.

We thank you especially for the ministry of your Holy Spirit, who dwells with us. And I often think that that can't be a fun job, but yet he indwells us, he fills us, he guides us and sustains us. He translates our prayers with sounds that cannot be uttered.

And he seals us unto the day of redemption. And it is he who ministers your word to our hearts. And we ask your blessing on us as we look into this portion of the book of Joshua, that God the Holy Spirit will find us impressionable and ready pupils and that we will each find in these passages the truth that will edify us and thoroughly equip us for every good work.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Joshua chapter 23 comes again in this final section of the book.

We saw the first section, which is the conquest of the land. The second section is the division of the land. This third section is how to dwell in the land.

We have the cities of refuge. We have the cities of the Levites. And now we come in chapter 23 to the farewell address of Joshua.

This follows in a tradition. There are three great farewells in the scripture that come to my mind. In the historic books of the Old Testament, there are three great farewells.

Now, there are a couple of others that you'll find later on in the prophets in the New Testament that we could point to. But did Adam leave behind any great final thoughts?

Does anybody know the last words of Adam? Eve, I think I... I don't know. They're not recorded.

It doesn't say, you know, I knew I shouldn't have eaten that fruit or any such thing. His last words are not recorded. Enoch walked with God and nobody set down his last words.

Noah lived to be a ripe old age. Nobody knows what his last words were. Shem, we don't know what his last words were.

Abraham, does anybody know what Abraham's last words were? He didn't leave behind a great testament or blessing. His 19 different sons that we have recorded in scripture doesn't say. How about Isaac? Did Isaac leave behind any great farewell? Well, Jacob, I really wish you'd get along with your brother.

None of that. What's the first great farewell in the scripture? Genesis chapter 49. Jacob to his 12 sons, including Joseph who brings the grandsons Manasseh and Ephraim to be blessed by Jacob.

Jacob has a chapter-long farewell where he makes a prophetic utterance about each of his sons. And that's a first. It's quite a signal, quite a preeminent passage.

And it is a harbinger, it portends, it foretells things to come that will affect not just those individuals, but the tribes that will descend from them. There is a second great farewell. And it's over in Deuteronomy, toward the end of Deuteronomy.

And this is Moses, the song of Moses and the farewell where he also makes predictions about those tribes. And you will remember, I hope, when we finished the book of Genesis and got to chapter 49, we looked at both the predictions of Jacob and the predictions of Moses as they pertain to each of the tribes. Now, in chapter 23 of Joshua, we encounter a third great farewell address.

There are common themes in each of these farewell addresses. We're going to read through this address and kind of get an overview of this chapter. And then we'll see how, in particular, it relates and compares to the one by Moses.

So, Joshua chapter 23. Now, it came to pass, a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. Does this ring a bell with anyone? Joshua was old, advanced in age? Keep your finger here and turn back to Joshua chapter 13.

You remember, the first 12 chapters of Joshua, that was the conquest phase, right? Southern campaign, northern campaign, battles, hailstones, cities falling, and all of that. Remember that? And then, beginning in 13 and going through 19, we had the settlement phase. And at the beginning of that second section, chapter 13, what did it say? Now Joshua was old, advanced in years, and the Lord said to him, You are old, advanced in

years.

Not the most uplifting greeting, necessarily. Joshua probably got up one morning and was feeling that arthritis in his shoulder from swinging the sword. Arthritis in his hips and his knees and his ankles from traipsing all up and down the land and countless battles and campaigns.

Probably had some wounds, might have had a few dings and bangs and injuries from being in all of these battles. Joshua was old, advanced in years. The Lord said, Joshua, you are old, advanced in years.

There remains very much land yet to be possessed. Remember, Joshua was close to 80 when they started this campaign. And it took seven years to conquer the land.

And there is still very much land yet to be possessed. This is the land that yet remains. And so then the distribution began.

And we went through all of those chapters. Chapter 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. That was the division of the land.

You tribes go and finish this mopping up. Take possession of your inheritance. So now they have done so and we are in chapter 23.

And after all of this, Joshua didn't get any younger. And so a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was even older and even more advanced in age. This time instead of God speaking to Joshua, Joshua speaks to the people.

Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers. Four different kinds of authority. Some of this is legal authority.

Some of this is civic authority. Some of this is tribal and clan authority. These are the elders, the elders are the senior men in each tribe.

The heads, the Roshim, literally from Rosh, which means head. These are the clan heads. This would be the difference between, say, senators, where you just have two from each state, and congressmen, where you have many more representing districts.

Well, in the tribes, you would have one or two senior, senior men in the tribe who are the elders, and then beneath them you would have all of these clan members. Some of the tribes had seven clans, some of them had ten or twelve clans, and there would be a representative from each one of those. Then you have the judges, and you remember there were judges appointed who were supposed to be impartial and were able to adjudicate.

This goes all the way back to Jephthah's advice to Moses in the wilderness. You've got to

delegate authority for settling these squabbles and disputes. Then there are officers, and these are the military commanders, the militia leaders.

Each of the tribes has a militia, and they rotate through. It's kind of like being in the reserve. They stand guard, and they are on duty for a certain period of time, then they go off duty, and others rotate in that way.

Everybody stays fresh and stays trained and is ready to go. So all of these are called together. Joshua says, Men, I am old, advanced in years.

You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all of these nations because of you. For the Lord your God is he who has fought for you. Look, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes from the Jordan with all the nations I have cut off as far as the great sea westward.

And the Lord your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land as the Lord your God promised you. Therefore, be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, unless you go among these nations, these who remain among you.

You shall not make mention of the name of their gods nor cause anyone to swear by them. You shall not serve them nor bow down to them, but you shall hold fast to the Lord your God as you have done to this day. For the Lord has driven out from before you great and strong nations, but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day.

One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is he who fights for you as he promised you. Therefore, take careful heed to yourselves that you love the Lord your God, or else, if indeed you do go back and cling to the remnant of these nations, these that remain among you, and make marriages with them and go into them and they to you, know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you, but they shall be snares and traps to you and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you.

All have come to pass for you, not one word of them has failed. Therefore it shall come to pass that as all the good things have come upon you which the Lord your God promised you, so the Lord will bring upon you all harmful things, until he has destroyed you from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. When you have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods and bowed down to them, then the anger of the Lord will

burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which he has given you." Well, very emphatic, very clear, very unambiguous statement from Joshua.

What is Joshua's expectation? Does Joshua say, you know, man, we've fought long and hard together, and I know you well, and I know your personal integrity, and I've seen your long record of service, and I am sure that you're going to continue in the same vein, and you and your sons are going to train grandsons and great-grandsons to the fourth generation to walk in the ways of the Lord, and I have nothing but confidence that all is going to be well, and you're going to live long in the land which the Lord your God has given you, because I've seen your steadfastness, and I've seen your integrity. This isn't really the feeling you get from Joshua's farewell address. Normally, when someone says farewell, you know, what's too painful to remember we choose to forget.

It's all the good times, and, well, a lot of hard-fought battles, and we may have had a few disagreements, but, you know, generally speaking, you all supported me, and I was proud to lead you, and you've been a wonderful army, and I'm having to scroll off the page now and shuffle off the coil, etc., but, you know, I can't think of another group that I would rather have led than you, and you've been so wonderful, and remember that battle down there at Beth Shemesh? Remember when we stood in the Valley of Eglon? Oh, weren't those some times, and the like of which... He doesn't do any of that. He says, look, you people had better obey. You've done well up to this point, but you have got to continue, because if you don't, the same faithful God that has fulfilled all of the good promises will be just as faithful to fulfill all of the curses.

He essentially says, remember when we stood between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal? Half of what God said were blessings, and half of what He said were curses. Remember when we whitewashed that cliff and wrote them up there for everyone who speaks a Semitic language to read and to see? I cannot give you a better farewell than to remind you. It's like a great inclusio.

It's like a great chiasm. The first thing Joshua did with them once they got into the land was march up between those mountains and fulfill the word of the Lord, and say, look, it's blessings, but it's also curses. It's a covenant, and it's a conditional covenant.

If you fulfill the positive side, if you are obedient, if you are faithful, if you adhere to the statutes and the commandments and the judgments and the emtole in Hebrew of the Lord, He will fight for you. He will drive out your enemies from before you and so on. If you do not, stand by, because He will do to you what He promised to do to these nations.

And just as He promised to drive those nations out for disobedience and apathy and indifference and immorality, He will do the same to you. The more you look like those nations, the more you are going to share their fate. It's an entire chapter.

It's repetitious. It is emphatic. It is a ringing bell.

It is a thudding hammer on the heads of these leaders in Israel. There is great precedent here. Joshua starts out by reminding them of their history.

He says, the God who drove out these nations, in verse 3, you have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you. The Lord your God is He who has fought for you. Now, this ought to stir some memories for these leaders, because way back in Exodus chapter 14, Moses heard from God and communicated to the people.

Remember Exodus chapter 10 and chapter 11? They come out under the blood of the Passover lamb and they get backed up against the Red Sea and the Egyptians are coming. Moses says to the people, do not be afraid, in Exodus 14 verse 13, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today. Here come the chariots and horsemen of the Egyptians.

He says, stand still. Don't run. Don't panic.

Don't drown yourselves. Don't throw yourselves off the cliff. Stand still.

The Lord will fight for you and you will hold your peace. Now, hold your peace sounds like, you know, if any man knows a reason why these two should not be joined together, let him speak now or forever, hold his peace. But, hold your peace, in Hebrew here, is a great phrase.

Because, he says, be still. This is the Hebrew verb karash, C-H-A-R-A-S-H. And, it is a hyphial, which is the causative stem.

Cause yourself to be still. It is something that has to be consciously done. Be still, the Lord, Yahweh, will fight for you.

And, you shall be still. You shall be caused to have peace. Stand still, watch the deliverance of the Lord, and you will be caused to have peace.

The Lord will fight for you. That's the main idea there in Exodus 14, 14. Later on, on the same page, you go down to verse 24.

In the morning watch, the Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and he troubled the army of the Egyptians. Troubling them, this is the opposite of peace. You either have peace or you have trouble.

You know that old gospel song, tempted and tried, we are oft made to wonder why it should be thus all the day long, while there are others living about us, never molested, though in the wrong. Farther along, we'll know all about it. Farther along, we'll understand why.

Look up, my brother, live in the sunshine, we'll understand it all by and by. We look

around and it seems like those who are in the wrong are in peace and we are troubled, but there's a day coming, the Bible is full of those promises, where God says, I will trouble those who trouble you, and you will be caused to have peace. So God looked down and he troubled the army of the Egyptians.

He took off their chariot wheels so that they drove them with difficulty, and the Egyptians said, let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians. Their God is fighting for them. Even the Egyptians could see it.

Deuteronomy chapter 1 and verse 30, Moses is recounting to the Israelites how he sent the spies into the land, and they brought back the fruit saying, it is a good land, but you would not go up. In Deuteronomy 1.26, you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God, and you complained in your tents and said, because the Lord hates us, he has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us. Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, the people are greater and taller than we, cities are great and fortified up to heaven.

Moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there. The threat, the prospect, the reconnaissance report from the ten spies, it disheartened them. Their hearts melted like water.

What did Moses say in verse 29? I said to you, do not be terrified or afraid of them. The Lord your God who goes before you, he will fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes. And in the wilderness, where you saw how the Lord your God carried you as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place, yet for all that you did not believe the Lord your God.

Moses pleaded with them, the Lord your God will fight for you. Do not be afraid. Look at what he has done in the past.

He fought for you in Egypt. He has carried you like a man carries his son in the wilderness. Trust him.

He will fight for you. You can go in. But they would not.

And that's why they ended up wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. So Moses reminds them of that in Deuteronomy 1 verse 30. A few pages later in Deuteronomy 3.22, he is reminding them and he says, I commanded Joshua at that time saying, your eyes have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings.

So will the Lord do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. You must not fear them, for the Lord your God himself fights for you. This of course is the fate of Og, king of Bashan and Sihon.

This is where Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh are going to dwell on the east side of the

Jordan. They are defeated. Sihon and Og are defeated.

And Moses says to Joshua, look, you see what God did to these kings? He is going to do that to all of those kings. Do not be afraid. The Lord your God fights for you.

The Lord your God himself fights for you. Now, think about it. Is there a different God in the Old Testament than there is in the New Testament? Is the God that was with Moses and Joshua different than the God that you and I pray to? The God who sent the Lord Jesus.

The God who sent Moses. God the Father who creates the plan and purpose for our lives. Who orchestrates the details of all of human history.

Who synchronizes the movement of everything from galaxies to individual atoms. It's the same God. The same promise pertains.

We, as the hymn says, we are God's people. God does the fighting. We wrestle against principalities and powers, rulers, but the battle is the Lord's.

He fights for us. It doesn't mean we don't have to go in like Joshua and the armies and swing a sword and grapple with the enemy and do the infantry contact thing. But God fights for us.

God is with us. God assures victory for those who live by faith. For those who are obedient.

And what it really boils down to, if you think about this principle, Israel has a history now, ever since God brought them out of the land of Egypt. He sustained them even when they were disobedient in the wilderness for 40 years. He has brought this next generation across the Jordan and into the land.

He gave them a taste of things to come by letting them defeat the kings in Bashan and Gilead. And then they came across and Moses says, you see those victories? It's going to be the same when you cross over. Moses has victories against these kings.

And he says to Joshua, look back on these. God is going to do the same thing. We look back at the Old Testament saints and the victories and the provision that God made.

We are with Yeshua. We are in fighting this battle. We are the next generation, as it were, in the land and we look back to the days under the law and the sustaining grace of God and the victory that He gave those who were faithful and those who were obedient.

And it's the very same principle. That is our interpretation and application. But, what is the great danger? Over and over and over again in Scripture we see people who have such a history to look back on, just as we have the biblical history in 66 books to look back on.

And we forget. We get mixed up in the challenge of the moment and we forget who it is that has promised us victory, who has promised to be with us. Remember Moses at Sinai after the incident of the golden calf and God said, well, I'm not going to go with you into this land.

These people are too disobedient. They're too apathetic. They're down there worshipping.

We haven't even left the mountain. I'm trying to give you the law and they've already departed from it. And Moses pleads for them and God says, well, alright, I won't destroy them.

I'll send them into the land. I'll send my angel and he'll go. But I'm not going to go.

And Moses understood that there is a difference between the angel of the Lord going and God Himself going. And Moses said, Lord, if you're not going, we're not going. We don't want the angel, we want you.

Remember that? It's a powerful, powerful confrontation. And if you want to understand why Moses is the great man that he is, look at what he understood. He did not settle for a proxy.

He said, we must have the presence of God because God has got to be with us. I don't want somebody else, some angel going and just clearing out the land. It's meaningless if God is not with us.

This is what Moses reminds Joshua of in these passages. So, even in Deuteronomy chapter 20 and verse 4, when you go out to battle against your enemies, this is Deuteronomy 20 verse 1, this is what's happening now, right? These tribes are going in. There's still land to be conquered.

There's still enemies to be driven out. When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them. For the Lord your God sent His angel before you to clear out these enemies.

Is that what it says? For the Lord your God is with you. The same God that brought you up from the land of Egypt is with you. So it shall be when you are on the verge of battle that the priest shall approach and speak to the people.

And he shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint. Do not be afraid.

And do not tremble or be terrified because of them. Now, remember, this is when they're outnumbered. This is when they're outgunned.

This is when they're out-speared, out-shielded, out-charioted, out-everything. They are an inferior military force. They have every expectation from a human point of view of

being annihilated.

The priest is to go and address. He says, Don't. When you look over, your reconnaissance reports come back and they say, It's a big force.

They've got battalion upon battalion upon battalion. They've got horses. They've got chariots.

We don't. They've got armor. And we don't.

They've got mobility. And we don't. They outnumber us.

We are small. They are great. It's the same kind of thing that happened when the spies came back at Heshbon.

Remember, they went into the land and they looked around at Eshkol, rather, and brought back the grapes and everything, but they said, We're like grasshoppers. They're the sons of the Anakim. And the people's hearts melted.

And Moses said, Look, God is with us. Joshua and Caleb said, God will fight for us. God will be with us.

And they just couldn't see it. They couldn't overcome the reconnaissance report with faith. They couldn't do it.

They couldn't enter the land. They didn't have the faith. So now, in Deuteronomy 20, they are told, Any time you go into battle and it looks like you're going to lose, do we ever have this experience? Do we go into a situation and it just looks like there is no way out? We are not going to survive financially.

We are not going to survive and keep our job. We are not going to survive and keep our grade in school. We are not going to survive this encounter or this situation or this challenge without some horrible consequence.

Our family is going to be fractured. Our relationships with others are going to be fractured. Our reputation is going to be lost.

I just don't see any way out of this. It's dark. It's dismal.

It's hopeless. There is no way I can come out of this without pain and suffering and heartache and loss. All of us face this.

And to varying degrees, on an objective scale, some of these things might seem small. Some of you all are in school. You look and you say, I was doing what I was supposed to do.

I had chores. I had responsibilities. I had family obligations.

And here I am up against a test and there's no way I can pass it. I'm going to fail this course. I'm going to lose my grade point average.

I'm going to wreck my prospects for the future. And it's not my fault. I don't know what else I could have done.

I've done my best and here I am. I'm outmanned. I'm outgunned.

There's horses and chariots on the other side that I can't overcome. My daughters go to school and other kids are not playing by the rules. There's a situation this week where the teacher inadvertently handed out the answer key to some students and then left the room.

The students copied the answer key. The teacher came back. They turned in the answer key.

And my child is doing it the hard way and half the class has got all of the answers off of the key. And this is competition. She'll get some wrong and the rest of them won't.

And what do you do? It's not fair. They've got horses and chariots that you don't have. They're going to set the curve.

They're going to do well. You're going to fall behind. And what do you do? Trust God.

Do not faint. Do not let your heart melt. Do not be discouraged.

God is with you. If you're a faithful believer, if you love God, if you pay attention to His Word, if you cultivate your prayer life, if you cultivate your time of meditation on God's Word, spend a few minutes. It doesn't have to be anything particularly deep or profound.

Run through your memory verses. See if you can acquire a new thought about an old passage. Think about any verse.

Think about John 3.16. Think about 1 John 1.9. Think about Genesis 1.1. Think about any verse you can. And meditate on it. Ask God to give you an insight and an understanding and an application from that verse for the present day.

You'll be amazed at the things that will flood into your soul and into your heart and into your mind and the encouragement that you receive just from sitting still, holding your peace, and watching the deliverance of the Lord. And you gain perspective. You realize that some things are important and some things are not.

And everything is in God's hand. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved. You will see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you.

Do not be afraid of them. For the Lord your God is with you. He's the one who delivered

you, brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

For us, this is a reflection on our salvation. So it shall be, when you're on the verge of battle, the priest will come and approach and speak to the people. He shall say to them, Listen up, O Israel.

Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint. This is an active thing we have to do.

If you just stand around gazing at things, your heart is going to faint. You have to take an active role in not letting your heart faint. When you feel panic, when you feel fear, when you feel depression, when you feel apathy and indifference setting in, and hopelessness, take steps.

It's a command from the Word of God. Do not let your heart faint. Do not let your heart be afraid.

Do not tremble. Do not be terrified. This is a command.

When we feel these spiritual darkneses creeping into our soul, we have to take steps. What are the steps? I will tell you right now, 99 out of 100 Christians in the modern world have no idea what to do when fear and depression and worry and these other horses and chariots come into view. Most Christians today do not know what to do.

Do you know what to do? What do you do when your heart is in the grip of worry, fear, depression, anxiety, uncertainty, that just dark feeling that's foreboding? What do you do? You don't just pray, Oh God, I'm afraid, please help me. That's not the drill. What was Israel supposed to do? Send in the priest.

Tell the priest to get in front of the people and say, Hear, O Israel. Stop it. The priest comes first.

It's a fascinating passage in Deuteronomy. The priest comes first. Who's our priest? Well, who's my priest? That would be me.

I have to exercise the function of my priesthood. What is the function of my priesthood for myself? I go before the throne of God. What does a priest do? A priest bridges the gap between man and God.

I have to exercise my priesthood. What does that involve? The function of my priesthood is atonement, sacrifice, application of the blood. So, if I find myself discouraged, defeated, dismayed, anxious, depressed, what do I do? Function as a priest.

Go before God. Do I have unconfessed sin? Have I been fooling around? Have I let stuff get the better of me? Go before God and confess it and acknowledge it. Exercise my priesthood and fulfill the other role of priest which is to remind.

Sacrifices are a reminder. For Israel, they were in prospect. For us, they are a retrospective.

What did Christ do on the cross? Grace greater than all our sins. What man could not do, what the law could not do, because it was weak in the flesh, Christ accomplished. He is the victor.

He is the author and finisher of our faith. Fix your eyes on Christ. What did the priest do? Every action of the priest focused on the work of Jesus Christ in prospect.

Every application of the blood, every disposition of the parts of the animal, every ritual activity, the construction of the tabernacle, the elements of the tabernacle and the temple, the altars and the coverings, and every different component, the table of showbread, the veil, the brass laver, the altar itself, the altar of incense, the Ark of the Covenant, all of these different things represented different aspects of the work of Christ. What does a priest do? Brings you to God. And what is the way to God? Jesus Christ.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. When we find ourselves getting knocked out of the box spiritually, mentally, attitude-wise, priesthood is first.

Get the priest out there. Hear, O Israel. Do not be fainting, terrified, afraid.

The Lord your God is with you. Our priesthood reminds us that we have a great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who indwells, who abides with us, stands at the door and knocks, comes in when we open the door, shares a fellowship meal. He will fight for you against your enemies to deliver you.

Then in verse 5, what comes next? Then the officers shall speak to the people. What man is there who has built a new house and not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house. What man has planted a vineyard? Go home.

You know what this is saying? We're outnumbered, we're outmanned, we're outgunned. More horses, more chariots. But you know what? All you people who have a reason for not fighting, we don't need you.

Go home. If you just got married, go home. We don't need you.

If you just planted a vineyard and you need to harvest it, go home. We don't need you. When God is with us, we are not depending on numbers and we are not depending on physical strength.

And we can afford to give people leave. You know, in time of war, leaves are cancelled, everybody comes back to the base. Oh my goodness, everybody's got to be there.

Not in the army of Israel. Look over the ridge, horses and chariots, valley full of battalions of enemies. The officers stand up and say, hey, anybody have an excuse why they don't need to fight? Go home.

We don't need you. The Lord fights for us. It is an expression of confidence.

If God be for us, who can be against us? We don't need every spare man. People that need to be somewhere else, go ahead. We can do without you.

We've got the Lord. Confidence. Perspective.

Divine power is in view. We can win this battle. One of us can put to flight a thousand because we are obedient, we are faithful, the priest has spoken, and we have heeded.

It's confidence. When we follow this procedure ourselves, we are the nation of Israel. We are priests.

We are officers. We are the army fighting with Joshua in the land. This is for us.

These things were written for our instruction. You can't just be disconcerted and unglued and unraveled and say, Oh God, I'm just so discouraged. I don't know what I'm going to do.

Whining and mealy mouthing around. There is a procedure. We have been given resources.

We have been given a set of steps to follow. Follow the steps. This reminds me, Lori knows about this.

You go to Pensacola and they put you in the Dilbert Dunker. It's like when you're in an airplane thing and they say, Well, you could ditch. You could crash into the water.

Your plane is going to turn upside down. So they strap you into a cockpit thing and you've got a flight suit and a helmet and all this stuff on. And they put you at the top of a rail and it crashes down into the water.

And it goes pretty fast. And you smack into the water and then the thing goes down underwater and turns upside down. Well, you don't have any breathing apparatus or anything and you are strapped in and if you don't get out, you will ostensibly drown.

Now, they've got a couple of divers sitting there to keep your lame, soggy self from actually perishing. But it can be very disorienting because you hit the water hard and you smack against the straps and you immediately turn upside down and they show you, before you get in, here's the procedure. Here's the steps.

You've got to find this buckle and you've got to find this release. You've got to turn it.

You've got to get the chest thing off.

You've got to get your arms out of the harness. You've got to swim down, not up, so that you can get clear of the cockpit then go up. They give you three or four simple steps and you think, come on, how hard can that be? I was standing there at the side of the thing thinking, this is so absurdly simple.

Why would anybody have trouble with it? Well, there was a long line and they did it alphabetically. I was halfway back in the H's and so guys started going in and they put on the thing, strap in, go to the top of the rail, smack, big splash like a cannonball, go underneath and bubbles are coming up and you could see down through there guys struggling around trying to get the stuff out and some of them took a long time. The divers had to go in and help a couple of guys who couldn't get loose and they suddenly started panicking and just wildly struggling and so my turn came and I got in the thing and I strapped it on and I just kept thinking to myself over and over, okay, there's only like three steps to this.

Find the release, turn it, get your shoulders out, swim down, swim up. How hard can it be? And that's exactly what it was and it was actually a lot of fun because I realized by watching others that if you just follow the steps, there's nothing to worry about. It's a gas.

It's like a ride. It's like being at the amusement park. So calm down.

But I felt sorry for the first few guys because everybody else got to watch them. They didn't have anything to go by and as more people did it, there were fewer and fewer failures because everybody realizes, you know, you're not going to die. Follow the steps.

How hard can it be? But the first few guys and that's sort of like Israel. I have sympathy for Israel because they're the nation, they're the first nation God ever brought out of Egypt. They're the first ones to ever go in the wilderness.

The first ones that ever had to face the giants and they didn't have that much to go by. They were supposed to follow the promises of God and they forgot. Well look, we've got lots of people ahead of us in line.

Remember in Hebrews, so great a cloud of witnesses, so great a cloud of examples. Don't make the same mistake. The book of Hebrews is all about don't make the mistake.

Look, you've seen it over and over and over and over. Here's the procedure. Look at Deuteronomy chapter 20.

When you're dismayed, when you're disheartened, when stuff is going wrong, when the darkness and the principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age are surrounding you, look, follow the drill. Get the priest out. Let him do his thing.

The priest is going to speak. The priest is going to be the priest. He's going to remind you of everything priestly.

Get the priest thing done. Then get the officers out and say look, the battle is the Lord's. We don't need all of this human strength.

If you've got some human strength you don't need, send it home. The battle is the Lord's. This is for us.

It's written for us. Joshua is trying to remind these people in his farewell address of these principles. God is with us.

God fights for us. Don't forget it. And we shouldn't forget it either.

We'll pause here and take a break. We'll come back and continue with this great chapter 23 in the book of Joshua.