

Rossville Church of Christ Doorpost Devo



December 10, 2022



Encouragement from God's Word

Joshua: Whose Side are You On?

Do the circumstances of your life ever loom over you so much that you feel like you are facing insurmountable obstacles? The enemy before you is too great, and the wall to climb is too high. It's at times like these that we are often reminded of our need for God because we know and remember that God has the power to knock down walls, and we know the Lord is strong enough to defeat vast armies. Because of this, it can be tempting to treat God as an on-demand source of victory and triumph. If I can get God on my side, he will do what I need him to do. He will fight for me.

Cont. on pg. 3 and 4

Scripture Plan: Read

Sermon on the Mount

Mon, Tues, Wed.:

Matt. 7:15-23 Each Night

Thurs., Fri., Sat.:

Matt. 7:24-29 Each Night

Devo Plan

1. Mon.--Read and Pray Together
2. Tues.--Read, Pray, Ask Questions, and Discuss
3. Wed.--Read, Pray, and Think about how to Apply
4. Thurs.-Sat.--Repeat steps 1-3 with New Passage
5. Sunday--Pray and Reflect on What was Learned in Worship and Class

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Discussion Questions

Matthew 7:15-23

Discussion Question #1: How do we recognize false teachers? Why is this so important?

Discussion #2: What does it mean to call Jesus Lord? How does this impact our lives? Is it okay to call Jesus Lord if we do not love and obey Him?

Discussion #3: What is Jesus' response to people who call Him Lord but do not obey His teachings?

Matthew 7:24-29

Discussion #1: How does this section connect to verses 15-23? What are some ways that we can practically be more obedient to Jesus and His teachings from the Sermon on the Mount?

Discussion #2: What things in our lives are temporary and what things are eternal? Reflect on which things you spend most of your time on.

Discussion #3: What will happen to our lives if we build them on the words of Jesus and put His teachings into action? What will happen if we don't?

Apply and Obey

To obey what Jesus says in Matt. 7:15-29, this upcoming week I will...

I will share what I learned with...

Prayer Points

- Lord, Thank You--For giving us your Word so we can have a solid foundation for our lives
- Lord, We Praise You--For being the trustworthy Lord of our lives
- Lord, Help Us--To really make you Lord of our lives. Help us to obey you in action and in truth so we can bear fruit for your glory

In him, I can claim my victory. While this is not an entirely untrue perspective, it misses the key aspect of a healthy attitude toward a relationship with God. Consider the book of Joshua. Israel is finally ready to enter the land of promise; they are destined to conquer Canaan at last. Yet, there are difficulties on the horizon: impenetrable city walls, impending battles, and towering armies of wicked Canaanites. Israel must certainly rely on the Lord's help in order to receive and inherit the promise. And as we read the book of Joshua, in the beginning chapters, we clearly see the provision of God. He appoints a new leader in Joshua, he parts the Jordan River, he gives instructions and encouragement, and makes sure physical needs are met. God is clearly gracious and good to his people; yet, he is not their personal servant or their butler or their secret weapon in battle. This is illustrated in Joshua 5:13-15:

"When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" 15 And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so."

So an impressive man appears before Joshua, the leader of Israel, and he has a sword drawn in his hand. Naturally, Joshua wonders if this is a friend or foe, so he poses that simple question: are you for us or for our adversaries? In perplexing fashion, the man answers by saying "no." He chose neither option, as if to say that Joshua was asking the wrong question altogether. The text tells us that this is no mere man. This is the commander of the army of the Lord, and we can safely assume that this is God himself because this figure accepts worship from Joshua. What's the purpose of this encounter? God shows up with sword in hand to visibly demonstrate who is really in charge of this Canaanite conquest operation. As they are about to enter the land, the Lord reminds Joshua who is the true leader and whose purposes are going to be accomplished. The real question is not "Is God on our side?" but "Are we on God's side?" God does indeed fight for his people, but we must always remember that God is the true commander and ruler over our lives. We don't command God to do anything for us. He is not at our beck and call. God is worthy of worship and total devotion, which Joshua demonstrates here as he bows and removes his sandals. When we need God, when we come to him in prayer, we ought not ask him to bend to our needs and our will. We must humbly submit and align to his will and ask for his help according to his purposes.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9

We can see this dynamic play out in the story of Joshua. In the very next chapter, God wins a decisive victory by his great power over Jericho. He knocks down the fortified wall of the city with his great might, and Israel barely has to lift a finger. All they do is obey God's instructions by walking around the walls and allowing God to do what he promised. Yet, one chapter later, Israel suffers an embarrassing defeat at the hands of Ai. After their triumph at Jericho, confident Israel is brought to its knees and sent on the run. What happened? Why didn't God fight for them? Why didn't he fulfill his promise? Why didn't God do what Israel wanted him to do? It's revealed to us that Israel loses the battle of Ai because they had disobeyed God's command by taking of the spoils of Jericho. It is only when the sin is purged from their midst and when they conform to God's will that they are able to be victorious once again. It is an unfathomable blessing to have the power of God in our lives. He enables us to endure every trial and press on to every promise in his power. As Paul says in Romans 8:31, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" That ought to encourage us greatly. We do not have to fear anything if we are one of God's people. However, in the wider context of Romans, we see that God is for us because of the work of Christ on the cross, and it is only by submission to God's will in Jesus that we can be assured of that wonderful blessing of relationship with God. Not only that, but it's better for us that God is in control. If God was submitted to my will, and I had access to his power to get whatever I wanted, that would only lead to destruction and pain. But, because God is for us in Christ Jesus, I can be assured of obtaining every victory and every good gift that God promises, which is better than anything I could ever imagine or want.

So the choice falls to us. Will we be on God's side? Will we submit to him as the commander of our lives? That choice is set before us just as it was for Israel at the end of Joshua. In his final days, Joshua says this to the people of Israel:

"Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:14-15).

Who will we serve? Which side are we on? The only safe place to be is on the side of the sovereign Lord who will win the ultimate victory in the end and who will provide for his people entry into the promised land.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9