

The Lord Fights for His People

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[0 : 00] Open up those Bibles again, Joshua chapter 10. We're going to read the whole thing again. No, I'm just kidding. Alright, thank you choir, thank you Jim and Sandra again for all your leadership, especially today.

! As we turn our attention here to Joshua chapter 10, I want you to see a few things here. We just read through this entire chapter. It's gory, there's a lot of detail of these battles, and it goes over how they accomplish certain things.

But I want you to understand that what the people of Israel were doing was living out obediently the call that God had put on their lives, on them as a nation. They were living out obediently.

And when God's people act in faith, obediently to Him, and with integrity, doing the right thing, God will provide victory in battles.

And there's this prayer in Joshua chapter 10. This prayer for the Sun to stand still. And we're going to get there. And I want you to understand that this prayer about the Sun to stand still, and it's a massive prayer.

[1 : 26] It's a spectacular prayer. It's a big ask. Joshua made a huge request for God to lengthen the day so that they could have a longer time to accomplish what God had called them to accomplish.

And this is one of those passages that it's important to understand. Before we get into all that, I want to set this up on the front end. It is important to understand that the Bible is not, this is not a science textbook.

Did you know that? This isn't a science book. Okay? There are scientific realities talked about, phenomenons talked about in Scripture. But this is not a science book. And the purpose of this passage is not to explain to us how God views the solar system.

Because I talked about this on Wednesday night with our Wednesday night class. The Bible uses phenomenological language from the perspective of people.

Right? God condescends to us. He reaches us on our level. We can't reach him on his. And so we know when Joshua asked for the sun to stand still, does the sun rotate around the earth?

[2 : 40] Or does the earth rotate? The earth rotates, right? We know when it says the sun stood still, this is a matter of perspective. For the people of Israel, from their perspective, when they cried out, when Joshua cried out to God and made this huge request, and the day lengthened, from their perspective, the sun stood still.

And this is how God treats us. He treats us in ways that we can understand. He didn't say to Joshua, actually, Joshua, you know, that's a good, that's a solid request.

And I understand what you want here. But let me explain. Really, the earth is what's rotating, you know? And the sun is, it is still. So, if you could restate your question.

No, God didn't do that. He met Joshua and the people of Israel where they were. And I want you to understand as we get into this, God meets us where we are. God meets us where we are. As we look at this, he also desires to hear from us.

He desires for us to cry out to him in the middle of the battle and make big requests. This is the God that we serve. He desires to hear from us. He desires to know what we need.

[3 : 48] Even though he already knows, he desires to hear what we need from our lips to him. And he responds favorably. This passage is, in large part, it's about the power of prayer.

The power of prayer. And also about the way that the Lord fights for his people. This power of prayer, though, I want you to understand when God hears our prayers, we are not changing God's mind.

If God answers a prayer in a certain way, we are not making him do something that he wouldn't otherwise do. I read it this week from a gentleman named Robert Smith, Jr.

In a commentary on Joshua. He said, I thought it was really powerful.

Laying hold of God's willingness. God was willing to extend the day for the people of Israel. And still, Joshua had to ask. Right? Joshua had to ask.

[4 : 48] He didn't change God's mind. He didn't make God do something. He requested and God delivered. Prayer is a powerful thing. And for me, it's easy, it's helpful to think about how prayer works from the perspective of a parent to a child.

Okay? So I'll give a personal example. Because everyone in this room who's a parent or a child, you would be able to, which that's all of us, actually. We all fit in one of those.

Some of us both. Here's the thing. You can understand this perspective in this way. So Jack, two-year-old, he loves, Audrey, probably more than most things in life, flipping light switches on and off.

Right? Like that's, maybe it's all two-year-olds. I don't know. Maybe it's just Jack. Hopefully he'll be an engineer or something. He's like interested in the science. That'd be great. But anyways, he loves flipping light switches on and off.

And so at our house, for him to flip light switches on and off, please don't call us bad parents. What he has to do is stand in one of the kitchen chairs to flip the light on and off. And we let him do it.

Okay? He's pretty solid.

[5 : 57] You know, he's got a sturdy base. And we feel okay about it. So we're all so close by. He doesn't do it without us. All that kind of stuff. But Jack loves to climb up in the kitchen chair and flip the light switch on and off.

Sometimes when we come inside after we've been in the car, we'll bring Lydia in in her car seat. And we'll set her car seat on the chair because it's a good place to get her out of the car seat. You know, nice height. And then we'll leave the car seat in the chair before we move it back somewhere. And that chair that we use typically is the one that Jack has to use to turn the light switch on and off. So it's in his way. All right? And we're trying to teach Jack to ask for mom or dad to move the car seat instead of taking his normal approach, which is to just shove that thing, you know, and jack it up.

You know what I mean? Like he just shoves it out of the chair and it crashes to the ground. And we're like, hey, hey, hey. So here's the deal. So if Jack were to ask me, Daddy, will you move the car seat?

The answer is yes. Nine times out of ten, the answer is yes. That one time we have something else we need to do so the answer would be no. But the answer is yes. I want him to enjoy what he enjoys doing, right?

[7 : 03] I want him to have fun flipping the light switch on and off. So if you ever drive past our house and you see the light switch is going crazy, we're not having a party. And it's also not an SOS. It's Jack.

He's just having himself a good time. So nine times out of ten, the answer is yes. Right? He didn't change my mind. I was willing and ready to move the car seat when he asked.

But he had to ask. And then likewise, if he goes outside of, let's say, my will for the illustration and shoves the car seat on the ground, well, then he's in trouble.

He has to face the consequences and sit in time out. And so what we have here is an example in this passage of Joshua crying out to his heavenly father and witnessing God being willing to bless his people by performing this astronomical cosmic miracle.

It's a powerful, powerful prayer. But I want you to also see that in this powerful prayer, what we really can identify is that the Lord is fighting for his people.

[8 : 11] Why did God answer the prayer favorably for Joshua? Well, because the Lord was already fighting for his people. Joshua prayed a prayer within the will of God.

It wasn't a prayer that was outside of God's will. It was a prayer within God's will. He's already fighting. He's already thrown hailstones. God's already doing this. He's already winning the fight for the people of Israel.

And so he is fighting for his people. And Joshua cried out to him in the middle of that. And Joshua and the people of Israel had to obey the Lord throughout the battle.

They had to be obedient to him to accomplish what he had called them to accomplish. And in the same way that the people of Israel had to be faithful and obedient, trust the Lord, and really call out to him within his will, we are expected and called as Christ followers to do the same.

So how do we, as God's people, live in this reality of the Lord fighting for his people? For example, this passage shows us three key truths that I want to point out to you.

[9 : 22] Number one, the Lord fights so we don't have to fear. Can I get an amen on that one, by the way? We don't have to fear. We don't have to live in fear. That's so refreshing to think about because I think sometimes we're so overcome with the fears, the fear of man, just daily anxieties and worries and doubts and all those things.

We don't have to fear. And why don't we have to fear? Well, because since the Lord fights for us, we're fighting against an enemy. He's fighting against an enemy that's already been defeated. I want you to see here in this passage, the reason that the Israelites have nothing to worry about is because they're fighting a terrified enemy. All right? They're fighting this Adonai Zedek in Jerusalem.

He's terrified. It says in verse 2, let's see, So, you know, a couple weeks ago, we talked about Joshua chapter 9 and, you know, how Gibeon came to make this deal with the people of Israel. Well, this was not some measly small nation. You know, it was small, but not quite as small as I. And they were filled with warriors. And still they thought it was better for them instead of with all these great warriors to fight against Israel.

[10 : 42] They thought it was better for them to go and find a way to submit to Israel's sovereignty in that region. But Adonai Zedek saw what happened and he was freaked out.

He feared. So he called together all these different kings and he asked them, come with me and help me. We'll attack Gibeon because they've made peace with Joshua and the Israelites. You know, when we're scared, this is true, there's like a fight or flight response, right?

You know, like you get really, really freaked out or you have a phobia of some sort and you see that thing and it's fight or flight. So for me, a lot of times I'll fight.

But when I see a snake, let me tell you something. Who thinks they're faster than me? You probably are normally, but if I see a snake, hey, I'll outrun you.

If I see a snake, I'm telling you, man, I'll outrun you. You can ask Audrey. We were on a hike and we saw a snake once and I left her in the dust. I mean, like, and I love her. I love her. She can probably fight a snake better than me.

[11 : 43] We have this fight or flight response. And these Amorite kings, they decided they were scared, you know, like an animal who's been cornered. They're scared.

They see what's coming. They see whether they, you know, consciously were aware of it or not. They see the divine judgment of God being poured out on these other nations. And they know what's coming for them. They stand in opposition to God.

So they're scared. And what's their response? Well, their response, instead of fleeing, was to fight. They tried to fight against Joshua and the people of Israel. Here's the thing.

They could try to run from the judgment of the Lord or they could try to stand in opposition to the Lord. Or the third option was they could submit to the Lord. We've already seen that Rahab submitted to the Lord.

We've already seen that the people of Gibeon submitted to the Lord. So these kings had an option, had the third option. It wasn't just fight or flight. They had the third option. And they chose, instead, to fight, to live in opposition.

[12 : 40] And I want you to understand, this reality of people who recognize the coming judgment of the Lord and respond with anger and opposition is not uncommon.

Right? It's actually still happening today. There are people whose entire life mission is to destroy the faith of people. Right? To give you all the reasons why you shouldn't believe in the truth of Scripture.

Why you shouldn't believe in Jesus Christ being the Son of God. There's people who are committed to living in direct opposition to the Lord. Adonai Zedek and the five kings here, which I guess that could be a band name.

They were not unique in their opposition to the Lord. But they responded the way they did, out of fear. They recognized that the Lord was the one who was fighting for the people.

And they knew what was going to come. And they thought their best chance was to fight back. But I want you to see, a terrified enemy is no threat. They're no threat because they know that they can't win. Adonai Zedek knew on his own there was nothing they could do.

[13:39] And also, you can see, they knew they couldn't win because they didn't attack Israel directly. They got together and attacked Gibeon, this proxy state. They didn't even go for Israel together.

And I want you to also see that they know that they stand under divine judgment. If you go back to Genesis chapter 15, I've gone here a couple times in this study. But Genesis chapter 15, when the Lord is calling Abraham to be a great nation and making the covenant with Abraham.

He tells him that the Lord said to Abraham, Know this for certain, your offspring will be resident aliens for 400 years in a land that does not belong to them and will be enslaved and oppressed. However, I will judge the nation they serve. Afterward, they will go out with many possessions. And then so on. In the fourth generation, they will return here. That's the promised land. This is what we're reading about with the people of Joshua.

For the iniquity of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure. So the Lord told Abraham that when they come back in the land, They will be bringing about divine judgment on the Amorites.

[14:50] That's on the people of Canaan. And so while they're here in Canaan fighting against the Amorites, Everyone knew, the Israelites and the Amorites, Everyone knew that this was God's hand of divine judgment.

That he was sending Israel to accomplish his will. This terrified enemy was no threat. They knew that they were under divine judgment. And I want you to see too that when we stand, When people stand in opposition to the church, When people stand in opposition to us as Christ followers, When people stand in opposition to God directly, That our struggle, our fight, our battle is not against them.

Right? It's not against flesh and blood. Ephesians 6, 12 says, Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, But against the rulers, against the authorities, Against the cosmic powers of this darkness, Against evil spiritual forces in the heavens.

Listen, we fight against a very real enemy, But he's also a very defeated enemy. Right? This is the concept of already not yet. God has already accomplished great victory Through the death and resurrection of Christ.

And it's not yet complete in the sense that We haven't seen Christ return and bring his church home to him. But we fight against a real enemy, But he's a defeated enemy.

[16:06] And he poses no threat because we serve a God Who gives victory, Who fights for his people. And that takes us to the next point here, Which is the Lord fights so we can trust him.

We trust him. Look at what happened here, verses 6 and 7. The men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, Don't give up on your servants. Come quickly and save us. Help us, for all the Amorite kings living in the hill country Have joined forces against us. So Joshua and all his troops, Including all his best soldiers, Came from Gilgal.

See, the Lord fights so we can trust him. And here's the thing. That gives us the freedom to live with integrity. We can trust that the Lord has given victory. We can trust that the Lord is fighting for us. So we can live with integrity. We can do the right thing. We can live the way that God calls us to live. And here's the thing. The deal with the Gibeonites, We talked about this a couple weeks ago. But it was a bad deal. They were deceived.

[17:02] The people of Israel didn't go to the Lord And seek the Lord before they made this deal. They were tricked. Bamboozled. Hoodwinked. Right? They were tricked. And so they had this opportunity here, Where they could have ignored the request from Gibeon.

Right? Like, I want you to think. This doesn't have to be recorded in Scripture. Right? They could have ignored the request And said, Well, there goes our Gibeon problem. We don't have to worry about them anymore.

But instead, Joshua and the men of Israel Made the right decision To uphold their word And by doing so, Protect the honor of the name of the Lord.

Okay? And as Christ followers, I want you to understand, We have an obligation to be trustworthy people. If you're in business, And people know that you're a slimy person to work with, That does not reflect the love of Christ.

That does not reflect a holy God. We have an obligation, As Christ followers, To live with integrity. To back up deals that we've made, Even if they were bad deals.

[18:08] Not find ways to get out of them. We have an obligation, To honor the word, The name, The glory of the Lord, By being men and women, Of integrity.

But I also want you to see that, Because the Lord fights for us, We can trust Him. We can also, Be strengthened and encouraged, From His word. Joshua 10.8 Says, The Lord said to Joshua, Do not be afraid of them, For I have handed them over to you.

Not one of them will be able to stand against you. And by the way, Doesn't that sound familiar? Sounds like something, God's already told Joshua. And I want you to think about this, I read this in a commentary this week, It's really, really good. We, In most situations, We don't need a fresh, New revelation, New word from the Lord.

Right? We sometimes do that, Like, God, Just give me a sign, Just show me, Just tell me, I need to hear it from you. Right? Like, I won't do that, Unless I see the writing on the wall. You know, Like, We say those types of things. Here's the thing, We don't need a new, Fresh revelation from the Lord.

What we need, Is God's eternal, Holy word, Applied freshly, To the situation that we're facing. And that's what happened here with Joshua. If you look back at Joshua chapter 1, Joshua 1, 5 says, No one will be able to stand against you, As long as you live.

[19:21] I will be with you, Just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you, Or abandon you. He says in verse 6, Be strong and courageous, For you will distribute the land, I swear to their ancestors.

Verse 7, Above all, Be strong and very courageous, To observe carefully. Verse 9, Haven't I commanded you? Be strong and courageous, Don't be afraid or discouraged, For the Lord your God, Is with you wherever you go.

The word of the Lord, Applied to our lives, Is life giving. It's encouraging. It's strengthening. It provides the endurance that we need, To live faithfully, In the battles that we face.

Now the other thing, That we see here, Because of the victory of the Lord, Or the fighting of the Lord, And how we can trust him, Is that we can also pray, Powerful prayers.

Okay, I mean like, Am I the only one in this room, Who, Sometimes I fall into a habit, I'm confessing, I'm confessing sin, I fall into a habit, Of praying, Routine prayers, Sometimes, Anybody else do that?

[20:29] If you want to confess with me, This is a time you can do it. I pray routine prayers, Right? Where we, Where we, Just pray the same things, Lord, Thank you for this day, Thank you for the family, Please keep the kids safe, While we sleep tonight, Those types of routine prayers, And, And I'll be honest with you, I'm guilty, Of not praying, Powerful enough, Prayers sometimes, We serve a, Powerful, All powerful, God, Who can answer, Powerful, Powerful, Prayers, Verse, Verse 10 and 11, Look at him fighting for the people, The Lord threw them into confusion, Before Israel, He defeated them, In a great slaughter at Gibeon, Chased them, Through the ascent of Beth Horan, And struck them down, As far as, Azekah and Makeda, As they fled before Israel, The Lord threw large hailstones, On them from the sky, Along the descent of Beth Horan, All the way to Azekah, And they died, More of them died from the hail, Than the Israelites killed with the sword, Listen, Joshua and the people of Israel, Were witnessing God do amazing,

Powerful things, They knew that the Lord, Was giving them victory, He was actively fighting their enemies, He was actively fighting their battle, So the Lord was working, And from this place of seeing God at work, Joshua cried out to the Lord, With this bold prayer, Joshua spoke to the Lord, In the presence of Israel, Sun stand still over Gibeon, And moon over the valley of Ajalon, And then look what God did, He answered the prayer, He answered his prayer, And the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Until the nation took vengeance, On its enemies, Listen, Joshua prayed a bold prayer, In front of everyone, He didn't pray, You've noticed too, He prayed to God, By talking directly to things, That were in God's control, The sun, And the moon, The cosmos, God is over all of these things, And in faith, Joshua cried out, Joshua cried out, When we are in battles, When we are facing the muck of life,

Right, The hard times, Experiencing suffering, Pain, All of those things, Right, Even just like, The boring moments of life, The things that just seem like they never end, And here's the thing, We can pray bold prayers, Trusting that God wants what's best for His people, I think, And I'm not, This is not a health and wealth, Like, You know, Speak healing over yourself, And you'll, You know, You'll experience healing on earth, That's not what I'm saying at all, What I'm saying is, Cry out to the

Lord in faith, And watch the way that He responds faithfully Himself, God is faithful, We're not trying to get Him to do things, That He wouldn't otherwise do, We're asking Him to do things, That He's willing to do, We're asking within God's will, We're asking for Him to do amazing things, We can pray good prayers, And there is good reason, By the way, Beyond the Old Testament here, To expect that God will answer our bold prayers, Matthew 17, 20 says, Because of your little faith, He told them, This is Jesus speaking, For truly I tell you, If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, You will tell this mountain, Move from here to there, And it will move, Nothing will be impossible for you, Jesus told His disciples, To have the faith to pray bold prayers, Hebrews 4, 16 says, Therefore let us approach the throne of grace, With boldness, So that we may receive mercy, And find grace to help us, In our time of need, The Lord Jesus sits on the throne of mercy, And we can approach Him with boldness, With our petitions, Right, And here's the thing, Joshua wasn't praying a selfish prayer, Not only do we pray routine prayers sometimes, Or we get caught up in just saying the same things, Sometimes we pray selfish prayers, Focused only on ourselves, Not focused on what really would be, Within the will of God, And best for His kingdom, But God stands ready to answer our prayers, And pave the way toward victory, We're called to pray powerful prayers, And trust the Lord to act, And that's what Joshua did, He knew that the Lord fought for him, And so he had the confidence, The boldness, The faith, To pray bold prayers, The last thing I want you to see is, The Lord fights, So we participate in victory, Look, The Lord could have taken out the Amorites, Completely alone, Without the people of Israel, Drawing their sword a single time, But he called his people to participate, In his work of judgment, In his work of displacement, Of the people of the land, In his work of giving the land, To the people of Israel, They knew that the Lord would provide, And they lived obediently, And they participated in his work, We will, As Christ followers, We can trust that we will see great victory, In battles that we face, I'm using the language battles, [25 : 35] Because that's what we see here in the text, But you know what I mean, Like the challenges, The suffering, All those things that we face in life, We can see and experience victory, And by the way, Sometimes that doesn't mean, Freedom from the suffering, And the pain on this side of heaven, In fact, If you look at James chapter 1, We see that, The suffering produces endurance, And so in some sense, And only, In the, And by the, Only when we have the right perspective, About suffering, Only when we have true faith in God, To experience suffering the right way, In that sense, Endurance is a blessing, And it's strengthening, It's an endurance giving thing, Even in and of itself, So the Lord will give victory, But it may not be the victory that we expect, Alright, Like it may not be exactly, Like even Joshua, When he cried out for the sun to stand still, That means, I think, That the Lord kept the earth still, Right, So like God answered the prayer, Right, It just wasn't maybe in the exact way, That Joshua thought of it, Thought of it in his own mind, But when we participate,

There's a few things that we'll see, That lead to the victory, Number one, I want you to see that God's leaders, Have to be faithful, God's leaders have to be faithful, If you look at verse 24, And 25, So from 26, Or I'm sorry, From verse 16, Through verse 43, This is kind of a huge recap section, Of the battles that actually took place, Okay, And so here in verse 24 and 25, They've gone now to this cave, Where the kings are hiding out, And Joshua says, Bring those kings out to me, Okay, And when they had brought the kings to him, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel, And said to the military commanders, Who had accompanied him, Come here, And put your feet on the necks of these kings, So the commanders came forward, And put their feet on their necks, And Joshua said to them, Do not be afraid or discouraged, Be strong and courageous, For the Lord will do this to all the enemies you fight, This was not, This was not like a showing of toxic masculinity, Okay, This wasn't Joshua like, Man, Doesn't that feel good?

Like that power over them? Doesn't that feel good? No, Joshua, What he's doing here, Is he's giving the leaders of Israel, He's giving the commanders of the army, He's giving them a tangible sign, Something that they can feel and experience, That shows them the reality of God's victory, That is for them, And we still use signs, That God has given us today, For encouragement and strengthening, And for us, That looks like the Lord's supper, The taking from the cup, And eating the bread, Right, This is an act of remembrance, But it's also a physical sign, For us to acknowledge, And recall, And be thankful, For the death of Christ, His suffering for our sins, We also have baptism, In baptism, We, As a physical sign, Going under the water, We, We actually experience, In some sense, The, Being buried with Christ, Dying to self,

And then, The resurrection of Christ, Coming out of the water, It's a physical sign, And it's encouraging, And it's strengthening for us, By the way, That's why the Bible, Calls us to be baptized, Is one, It's a sign, Two, It's the entrance into the church, And then three, It's an encouragement, Like the strength, The endurance that you gain, From joining Christ, In believers baptism, It's a powerful thing, So, This is a sign, Joshua, As a leader of God's people, Gave them a sign, To remember, That God will give them victory, The other thing, That we see here, Is that the people of God, Have to be unified, I'm going to point out, A few things here, Verses, In verses 29, Through 43, Verse 29, Joshua and all Israel with him, Crossed from Makeda to Libna, And fought against Libna, Joshua and all Israel with him, From Libna, Joshua and all Israel with him, Crossed to Lachish, Verse 34, Then Joshua crossed from Lachish to Eglon, And all Israel with him, Verse 36, Next Joshua and all Israel with him,

Went up from Eglon to Hebron, Hebron and attacked it, Verse 38, Finally Joshua turned towards Deber, And attacked it, And all Israel was with him, Listen, The people of God have to be unified, The people of God have to be unified, And that's not just unified in purpose, Though we should be unified in purpose, In the fight that we're facing, But it's also a unity of coming alongside each other, Encouraging one another, Building each other up, Galatians 6, 1 and 2 says, Brothers and sisters, If someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, You who are spiritual, Restore such a person with a gentle spirit, Watching out for yourselves, So that you won't also be tempted, Verse 2, Carry one another's burden, In this way you will fulfill the law of Christ, We're called as Christ followers to be unified, To carry one another's burdens, To come alongside and help the straggler, Imagine the people of Israel in battle against these Amorite kings, And there's a soldier by himself, Taking this guy on, And maybe he's beginning to be overcome in the battle,

[30 : 41] The guy is stronger than him, Whatever, One of the people of Israel sees that person, Beginning to be overtaken, And comes alongside him, Suddenly two swords against one, They have an advantage, Then another Israelite, Saul, And they come in, And now three against, I mean, Pretty soon, You have enough people, That you're able to overcome, The struggle of one, With the group of many, As the church of Jesus Christ, We have to be unified, Building each other up, Encouraging the saints, Walking alongside each other, Maintaining obedience together, Being faithful to the word of the Lord, Together, Coming alongside each other, As the community of God, Provides the strength, And encouragement needed, In the battle, And the last thing is, God's people have to be obedient, God's people have to be obedient, We, As the church of Jesus Christ, Have a responsibility, To live obediently to his word, Privately, In our own lives, And corporately, As a church, And as one of those things goes,

So does the other come along, Right? As we as a church, Walk faithfully with the Lord, And encourage one another, In accountability, In Bible study, In teaching, And all those things, To walk faithfully with the Lord, Then in our private lives, We have the encouragement, Strength, Reminder, Accountability, To walk faithfully with the Lord, As well, God's people have to be obedient, Read verses 40 through 43, Joshua and the people, Obediently, Conquered this whole southern kingdom, They conquered all the way, From Kadesh Barnea, To Gaza, Right? Like they were obedient, All the way through, So I'm going to wrap up here, I am, I really am, I really am,