

Joshua the Second Half

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Preacher: Matthew Garrett

[0 : 00] So good to see everybody here today. Welcome. Britain, mighty nice of you to bring your people to fill the church.

From near and far and wide. Hello, buyers. Good to see you guys again. It's been a while. Wow, what a joy, what a pleasure. We've been preaching through the book of Joshua.

Yes, what's wrong, Mr. Mark? Let's try that. Thank you. And if you would go ahead and put my first slide up too.

He's reminding me of stuff and I'm reminding him of stuff. We've been preaching through the book of Joshua. It begins in the first chapter with four times in the first chapter.

It says, be strong, be courageous, because God is with you. And it begins with that wonderful note. And then as we've been going through this book, we're actually halfway through it today.

[1 : 08] And so we're going to take a moment to kind of review a little bit where we've been and talk about where we're headed in this book and see what God has for us. Let's take a moment to turn to the Lord in prayer.

Lord, we've just rejoiced in your presence, giving you the glory. It's all yours. Now, Lord, if you will, let us have a fresh meeting with you.

Because we need you. We can only be strong. We can only be courageous. The fact is, we can only live a halfway decent life if you are with us.

And we want to go beyond that and walk in victory because Jesus is in us. Hallelujah. So now, Lord, speak to us through your word. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Well, next slide. Joshua is kind of broken into four sections. The first section of that is chapters one through five.

[2 : 12] And it begins with the story of them crossing the Jordan River to enter the promised land. So it begins on this great hallelujah moment, mountaintop experience. Everything's wonderful.

Nothing but victory everywhere they turn. And God is on their side and nothing's ever going to go wrong. That's what it feels like. Then it moves on into chapter, or the second section.

Next slide. Please. And this is chapters six through 12. And in this part, the Israelites are coming in from the wilderness, having come up from Egypt and spent 40 years wandering.

And now this is time for them to be taking the land that God had promised to their forefather Abraham. And so they come in and they have victories like Jericho.

And they have some terrible defeats like Ai. And then a victory at Ai. And then a disappointment when they meet with the Gibeonites. And anyway, there's ups and downs all through this part.

[3 : 15] Sometimes they're just so excited and walking in victory. And God makes the sun stand still. How in the world he did that? The Lord knows.

And then there's other times when that same Joshua is lying on his face, tearing his clothes. He's so upset. Everything's gone wrong. It's the end of the world.

And so that's what the second section is like. A very exciting group of scriptures. And today we actually would be getting to chapter 13.

But we're just going to pause here and review. So the third section, which begins with chapter 13. Next slide, please. Chapters 13 through 21.

Now that they have possessed the land, it's time to divide it up. And to tell you the truth, I was reading a commentary that said, if you were having trouble sleeping, you might want to start reading in Joshua chapter 13 and just keep reading through these chapters.

[4 : 20] These are land deeds. What kind of person? You'd have to be some kind of a real estate attorney or something to enjoy reading. So you start at the old oak tree and you go down to the river and you go over to the such and such a mountain.

And I mean, that is the way all these chapters read. And that land belongs to Manasseh or to Judah. And it goes on and on and on. And so these chapters, frankly, are quite tedious.

And if we were to go through these chapters, as we've done with the first chapters, with a whole sermon on each chapter, you would be saying, didn't we wade through this last week?

And so we're going to kind of clump some of those chapters together as we preach those in the coming weeks. And then finally, the book will close in chapter 4.

Next slide. The final or section for chapters 22 to 24. And these are final pledges that the people make to be faithful.

[5 : 25] And while the first chapter began with those great words, be strong in the Lord, the last chapter ends with these great words. Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve.

But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Can you say that today? I look around here and I see some family groups.

And I praise God that I don't know all of you, but you're here today. And I would suspect that you have declared that as for you and your household, you will serve the Lord.

And that's the way this book ends. It begins on a high note. It has all kinds of ups and downs.

There's some real tedious, boring parts. And then it ends on a great high mountaintop again.

We will be faithful. We will serve the Lord. Next slide, please. To back up just a little bit and talk some more about section 3, although we're going to kind of just skim through this more quickly when we get to these chapters, there really are some wonderful tidbits of God's story in there.

[6 : 35] There are stories of great faith. There are stories of great failure, human failure, usually based on the failure of the people to believe. We see that they will not even receive all that God promised.

They never actually take all of the land that is shown in that map that was supposed to be theirs because they couldn't believe his promise. They couldn't believe it was possible.

And so they failed to step in. And because God had said, everywhere your feet trod, I'm going to give that to you. And unbelief kept them from going there. So, you know, we're a lot like that.

But sometimes our unbelief, our faith, keeps us from receiving what God has for us. Next slide. I couldn't help but think this third section is often like our own lives.

I found this website, myboringlife.org. I don't recommend it. But, you know, a lot of life is just helium. A whole lot of life.

[7 : 40] You just get up and you shower again and you eat a little breakfast and drink a cup of coffee and brush your teeth and you go to work or you go to school or you get home.

A lot of life is you're changing diapers. And you're thinking, why am I doing this? I'm going to have to do it again an hour from now. A lot of life is, do we have to cook again?

Do we have to do the dishes again? Do we have to go get groceries? Why should I make the bed? I'm just going to mess it up tonight. I mean, a whole lot of life. I never expected to get an amen on that one, but okay.

A whole lot of life is just some kind of tedious, same old, same old. And, you know, it's interesting that a big part of this book is kind of like that.

And I think what God is trying to say to us is, it was his design that there would also be some tedious boredom in your life. It was his design to see, could we be faithful when nothing exciting is happening?

[8 : 51] I mean, it's easy to be faithful on the mountaintop. Hallelujah. God's on my side. I just got a new job. We just had a new victory of whatever kind.

My ball team won the championship. Hallelujah. I threw the touchdown pass, and then I ran down the field and caught the touchdown pass. I mean, I love the mountaintops.

And then it is interesting. It's in the valleys. I hate to say it. That's when we learn to pray. It's in the valleys that we say, Oh, God, where are you?

God, you didn't ever let me think I was going to be in this shape. I'm broke, and my car is broken down, and my family's falling apart, and where are you?

But we begin, we really learn to pray in those times. But most of the time, life is just kind of same old, same old. And can we be faithful?

[9 : 49] And this is true not only in the book of Joshua, but this is repeated all through the Bible. Let me take one chapter from the life of Jesus to show you this in the New Testament. Next slide.

Let's look at Matthew chapter 17. It begins with the story we call the Mount of Transfiguration. Read that, or you can follow along as I'm going to read an excerpt here.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John, the brother of James, with him and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. Literally a mountaintop experience.

There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun. His clothes became white as light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.

Now, if you're not a Bible scholar, and you don't have to be a Bible scholar to know this, but if you're not sure about Moses and Elijah and who they are, Moses has been dead already for about 1,500 years before this moment.

[10 : 55] And Elijah's been dead for about 700 years before this moment. And here they are appearing with Jesus. The part I've always wondered is, how did Peter and those guys know who they were?

Do you wear name tags in heaven? I've always wondered about that. But at any rate, they knew who they were. And so then, what does Peter say? Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it's good for us to be here.

If you wish, I will put up three shelters. One for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah. So here we are on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the disciples react just like us.

God, things are going good in my life right now. Don't ever let it change. Let's stay right here. Let's build a worship center. And let's just stay here from now on and have nothing but glory and hallelujah and good times.

And don't let me ever get sick again. And don't let me ever get behind on my bills again. And don't ever let me get angry with my family again. And God, let's just live here from now on.

[12 : 01] I love the mountain, God. But if you keep reading that, before that chapter's over, exactly immediately, when they wanted to stay on the mountain, Jesus says, time to go back down.

Let's look at the next slide. What we see happening immediately in chapter 17, starting with verse 14, when they came down out of the mountain to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him.

Lord, have mercy on my son, he said. He has seizures. He's suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water.

I brought him to your disciples, your lousy, good-for-nothing disciples. But they couldn't help him. Jesus rebuked the demon, and he came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.

They wanted to stay up on the mountain. And Jesus says, no, there's work to be done in this world. And he led his disciples back down where it was ugly, where the crowd was hostile, where the disciples were experiencing failure, where things were going wrong, where people were crazy, where people were sick, where people were suffering and in need.

[13 : 17] And it was just as important for them to be in that valley with Jesus as it was for them to be on the mountaintop with Jesus. It was another important part of their walk with the Lord.

And then, from a mountaintop to a valley, and before the chapter is over, next slide, Jesus went and paid his taxes.

Now, how boring and tedious is that? I mean, think about it. You've all got to pay your taxes. It's certain. You've got to pay tax. Even Jesus. Nothing exciting about paying taxes.

But that was the life Jesus lived. It's the life that we're living. So, through ups and downs, and through every day, same old, same old, God is at work in our lives.

And He is teaching us to walk with Him and to trust Him in every kind of situation. And in doing that, He's preparing us for heaven. Now, if you don't hear anything else I'm saying today, I'm going to come down here and make sure you hear this one part.

[14 : 27] If you don't hear anything else, God had promised, and Phil, our brother Phil, who knelt with us this morning, he preached this so wonderfully last week, that the book of Joshua shows how completely God fulfilled every promise He made to Abraham.

God has made many promises to you and me, and the greatest one is, if you will follow Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are guaranteed and promised that you will be with Him forever in eternity in heaven.

That's the great promise of the New Testament and of the life of Christ. And if you haven't heard anything else today, receive that. We may not agree, I mean, I don't know what kind of churches y'all go to.

God's got a lot of flavors of churches because He's got a lot of kinds of people in the world. You know, He didn't just grow up trees, He grew up a lot of different trees. So I don't know what flavor of Christian faith you're in, but one thing we all agree on, Jesus Christ is coming back someday. And if you die before that, He promised you, He's going to take you to be with Him forever and ever. And if He would keep all these promises for Abraham, would He not keep promises for you? [15 : 52] Amen. Well, let's look at the next slide.

The book of Joshua then is kind of like our lives. A lot of tedium, boredom, everydayness. This even makes me think about the life of a church.

A lot of people are church hoppers. You know, they're always looking for another church. Why? They just, if it's not exciting, if there's not some mountaintop thing happening, well, they must be in the wrong church.

And they won't deal with that, you know, sometimes you just need to be in church and just serve the Lord where you are. And that might mean taking the trash out and helping mow the grass and go visit grandma somebody in a nursing home.

And yeah, but I wanted to go hear the great evangelist. You know, well, God will bring the great evangelist around when it's time. But our lives are a lot like this.

[16 : 54] And we've got a couple of young ladies getting baptized today. And some people have compared the book of Joshua to the whole Christian life. And they say, well, that crossing the Jordan is symbolic of baptism as you enter into the promised life that God has for us.

And then as you go into the promised land, you at first, oh, it's so wonderful. I'm a new Christian. Jericho's falling down. Woo. Everything we do is wonderful.

Remember when you were a brand new believer, how you were just every day, you were just, wow, God's with me. Hallelujah. And then as you grow in your Christian life, it gets to be a little more like sections two and three.

There's victories, but there's failures. There's times your prayers are answered and God always answers prayers, but sometimes they're not answered the way you want them to be.

And you're disappointed. And so you're going through your ups and downs in the Christian life and God is preparing you for eternity. And then finally, as you deal with things like bad habits and bad attitudes and anger and discouragements and whatever else, idols in your life that God has to remove them and you're walking through this and he's preparing you for eternity with him.

[18 : 23] It's like the book of Joshua. And then finally will come the promised land of heaven itself. And my last slide, I'm just going to use the same slide and add a note to it and that is, you know, when you're up, you're up.

So go ahead and rejoice. And today's an up day. Hallelujah. We're getting to baptize two young ladies. I love them both. I've got to hang out with both of them and they're wonderful young ladies. And so we're going to have a baptism and we're going to celebrate and the members of their family are going to kind of have a buyer's family reunion and the fellowship all just afterwards and have a meal together and we're just going to have a good time.

Praise the Lord. But then there will be times when there's the downs in your life and you two young folks getting baptized today, there will be some times when you'll say, has he forsaken me?

Where is the Lord? But he's still with you because he promised he would never forsake you. And you will walk on in those things and then finally, whatever happens through it all, ups or downs, make it in your, a pledge in your heart like the book of Joshua ends as for me and my house.

[19 : 47] We will serve the Lord. So whatever comes, good or bad, up or down, expected, unexpected, victory, failure, let it be your promise to God and in your heart sealed forever that you will follow the path of Jesus Christ right on into eternity and victory will be yours.

now I'm going to ask these two young ladies to come and go with me and we're going to go get ready in the baptismal area while our musicians come and lead us in.

noon. Thank you for listening. hrrond, you,