

Entering The Promised Land

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 January 2025

Preacher: BK Smith

[0 : 00] Well, good morning and happy new year. All right, you guys don't seem very excited for 2025. Nick is giving me a wave.

I'm getting hands up, thumbs up. All right. Let's try that again. Good morning and happy new year. There we go. God's got some things in store for us 2025?

I think so. I think so. All right, I want you to turn your Bibles to the book of Joshua. The book of Joshua. If you're new, just visiting, my name is BK.

I have the pleasure of serving here as one of the pastors. And as you know, just as I've stated, it is a new year. So most of you are all excited to get that it's a new year, new you type of sermon. But I'm going to disappoint you and say that's not the way I'm going to roll this morning. If you are setting up some new year's resolutions and one of those resolutions is, hey, I want to read my Old Testament.

[1 : 02] I want to understand my Old Testament better. Then this is the series for you. So what we've been doing, just to let some of you visitors know, for the last, since September, we've been kind of going through the Old Testament, explaining the books and how they fit into God's plan and what it means in regards to the Savior Jesus Christ.

So we've entitled this series called The Story of the Old Testament. In case you did not know, the Old Testament is actually divided into three separate acts.

And if you look at Matthew 1, 17, we'll have that up here on the screen. Matthew actually divides up our Old Testament for us. The first one, he essentially divides it.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations. That's act one of the story of the Bible. From David to the deportation to Babylon, another 14 generations.

That's act two of the Bible. And from the deportation of Babylon to Jesus Christ is another 14 generations, which is act three.

[2 : 12] Now, why is this important? Because a lot of people, we get in the Bible, let's be honest, it's intimidating. There's over 600,000 words. It's written over a period of 1,500 years.

There's 40 different authors. And a lot of times we struggle. What does this mean when I dig into this book? How does this, like, what could this possibly matter to my life?

A story that I'm reading that's over 3,000 years old. It's a good question. It's a logical question. And that's what we've been going through is explaining to you why these books matter and where they fit in.

So obviously, we are still in Acts 1. Acts 1, very important. It really outlines for us the reason for the Old Testament and why we need the New Testament.

In Acts 1, we learn about the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants. These are the key covenants which drive everything else that is finalized in Jesus Christ.

[3 : 14] In Acts 2, we learn with much sadness what it looks like when man turns his back on God, turns his back on the covenants, does not trust that God is going to answer what he has said he's going to do.

In Acts 3, it's the story of God rebuilding the nation of Israel. It is God revealing the new covenant that will come in Jesus Christ.

So when we start to understand the Acts, we start to understand how these books of the Bible fit in. Acts 1, the goal of Acts 1 is God building a nation from whom the Redeemer will come from.

This nation that God has chosen is Israel. And there's three aspects that identify what a nation is. They have to have a people, which we know come from Abraham.

They need a law or a government, which they get from Moses in the law. And then the final one is they have to have a land that they control. Those are actually the same rules today that exist.

[4 : 28] If something is going to be a nation, these are the three identifying characteristics that they need to have. And that third element happens under King David.

Just before Christmas, we found that God had brought his people to the entrance to the promised land.

Moses had led them. They had been in the desert for a couple of years. And now they were ready to take this land that God had prepared and had given them.

Let me just read for you from Numbers 13, verse 30. So what they did is they sent in spies who spied out the land. And this was the result.

Then the men, that's the other spies.

[5 : 31] And earlier, the text actually tells us the spies were made up of the chiefs of the tribes. So this is the best of the best. This isn't kind of the low-level, riffraff, non-committal people that are found in each tribe.

These are the strongest, the best, the chiefs that went in. But the men who had gone up with them said, We are not able to go against the people, for they are stronger than we are.

So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, The land through which we have gone to spy out is a land that devours its inhabitants.

And all the people that we saw in it of great height. And there we saw the Nephilim. That means the son of Anak, who come from the Nephilim. And we seemed ourselves like grasshoppers.

And so we seemed to them. So here we have this. There was so much fear and contempt that when Caleb and Joshua suggested that they go, they tried to overthrow Moses in the leadership, saying it can't be done.

[6 : 40] And it was only by a work of God. And it says that God's glory shined out, which stopped the people in their tracks. Psalm 106 tells us what happened or how God felt towards those people who rejected the land that God had brought.

Psalm 106 says, Then they despised the promised land, having no faith in His, that is God's promise. They murmured in their tents and did not obey the voice of the Lord.

Therefore God raised His hand and swore to them that He would make them fall in the wilderness and would make their offspring fall among the nations, scattering them among the lands.

God was mad. Scripture tells us that God's anger burned for 40 years against the people for rejecting His good gift.

So that's the scenario we now find ourselves in. It's now been 40 years. Those people who rejected the land of milk and honey that God had prepared for them.

[7 : 53] And don't forget, these are people that saw God daily. By day there was a pillar of cloud over the tabernacle. By night, a pillar of fire.

God brought food through the quail. He gave them water supernaturally. Their clothes did not even disintegrate while they were in the wilderness. These were people who had first-hand knowledge of God.

Yet they reject. They chose to disbelieve. It's now 40 years in the future. And the people of Israel are once again at the river, the Jordan River's edge, poised to take the promised land.

Moses no longer leads. It's Joshua. Joshua, like Moses, sends in spies into the land. Let's read what the text says in Joshua 2.23.

It says, What a contrast.

[9 : 15] These people are who have no memory of what life was like in Egypt under the slavery and yoke of Egypt. So this morning, what I want to do is I want to take a look at both the book of Joshua and the book of Judges.

And I want to look at some of the comparisons and contrasts that exist between the books.

Because in one book, we're going to see God being faithful to people that obey him.

And then we're going to look at the book of Judges very briefly. And we're going to look at the consequences of those who disobey God. And what God literally has to do to continue in his redemption of them.

So Joshua is essentially a book about entrance and trusting God, moving into the land. The book of Joshua tells us how the land was divided amongst the tribes.

The book of Judges tells us the story of what it was like to live in a land which they did not get rid of everybody else.

[10 : 21] They thought, these are people we can live with. These are gods we can live with. But the one thing that we need to know as far as God's plan is, Israel still is without a king.

They are not considered a nation. It's my opinion that Joshua and Judges has some of the most interesting stories in the Old Testament. Some of these stories seem incredible.

But yet some of the contrast between them are worth taking note here. So the book of Joshua begins with a statement made by the Lord.

Verse 8, this is Joshua 1, it says, This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth. For you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.

For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Yes. The book of Joshua is an example of what happens when people follow after him.

[11 : 32] The book of Judges begins in a much different way. Starting in Judges 2, it says, Verse 10, And there arose another generation after them, who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.

And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals, who were the false gods, the gods of the Canaanites. And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt.

They went after other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger.

There's a couple of themes that exist in both books. In Joshua, we see the theme of conquest and fulfillment.

When you read the book of Judges, you will see the theme of cycle of apostasy. In the book of Joshua, you see the theme of obedience and victory.

[13 : 00] The book of Judges, we read about failure and chaos. In the book of Judges, or the book of Joshua, we see the theme of unity when we come around God's word.

The book of Judges, a story of tribal fragmentation. It is what happens when we do not follow under our leadership. The leadership, Joshua, is defined by a centralized leadership under the Lord. In Judges, the decentralized leadership is through a series of Judges. Joshua is seen as a model of faith and obedience.

In Judges, it simply says, In those days, there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes, which underscores the lack of stable leadership.

What's interesting, in both books, God has a different role. In the book of Joshua, God is portrayed as the divine warrior who ensures victory as long as Israel remains obedient.

[14 : 09] God's faithfulness to his covenant is evident in the conquest and how the land is divided. The book of Judges, God's role shifts to that of a disciplinarian.

Disciplinarian. Delivering Israel into the hands of their enemies when they sin, but also raising these deliverers, these judges, when they repent.

God's mercy and patience is emphasized, repeatedly delivering a rebellious people. We are to give an overall understanding of the book.

Of the books, Joshua is a story of triumph. Unity and divine fulfillment of promises, emphasizing obedience in God's faithfulness. Judges is a narrative of decline, disobedience, but God's mercy amidst human failure, emphasizing the need for a savior or king to bring stability to the land.

Joshua begins with an excellent example that Chris read to us this morning. Joshua 2 tells us that when they crossed the land, they had the Ark of the Covenant go before them, and that when it entered into the river, the river dried up, and God's people were able to walk.

[15 : 38] The people were to follow this Ark, and the Ark represented the presence of God in their midst. And God's power is seen quite clearly in Joshua 5.1, as it said, as soon as all the kings of the Amorites and were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for their people of Israel until they had crossed over.

Their hearts melted, and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of God. What a wonderful way that God demonstrates to them.

Those enemies that you fear, if you place me before you, those concerns will melt away. Now what's interesting is that God does something even more crazy when they go into the land.

Oh yeah, guys, we forgot. I've got to circumcise you. You know, it's like preparing for the big Super Bowl. You know, you're going to have the battle of your life. And just before, hey, it's a week out. I know it's press week, but you've got to be circumcised.

So God kind of always does these things, which seems to minimize our power, our abilities, which God uses to magnify His. Amen? God is about His glory, not our glory.

[16:59] One of the greatest ways that we do this is removing the sin that we have in our life.

1 Corinthians 5.8 tells us that there's this leaven of sin, this sin that spreads, this sin that infects, and it affects relationships, communities. If we do not deal with it, we will struggle to move forward. So God always has ones of two requirements. One, to pursue purity. Without purity, victory is impossible. And two, we see, as Chris read today, they celebrated the Passover.

What this is is a covenantal act reminded the Israelites of God's deliverance and the ultimate victory that comes through Him. For us as believers in the New Testament, that is what communion is.

It's a reminder that God has won the victory. And we long for the day when He returns, when we do not need to celebrate communion, for we will be with the Lamb that died for us.

[18:10] The lesson is clear for Joshua and his people. If you find yourselves struggling to live this Christian life, if you understand that God has called you to a purpose, and there is, every single Christian, someone who has been born again in the faith, in the Spirit, has a purpose, has a calling.

But if you know that calling and you're struggling, it could be because one of those two things. One, a lack of purification symbolized by the circumcision of the heart that needs to happen.

That means dealing with the sin in our lives. Or two, it's the neglected relationship that we have from God which is symbolized in the community. Those are the two things that God requires of us to fulfill His will.

That we seek the purity, the relationship that we have with Him. That is the vertical. And the sanctity of our relationships with one another which is the horizontal.

You've heard me preach on this many times. Here we are. We're seeing it worked out in Joshua 5 almost perfectly. When we reflect the life of Christ, when we walk in His victory, and we therefore bring glory to God.

[19:27] Joshua has taught it to borrow on a modern nomenclator, this is the way. There is no other. This is how we follow the God.

So that's what we have in the book of Joshua. We see them following after Him, experiencing this obedience through success. Joshua 13 and 21, Joshua divides the land.

Joshua 24 ends with a covenant renewal. Then we turn to the book of Judges and it's a book of failure. The book of Judges is a repeated cycle of worshipping false gods.

God's people become slaves to the foreigners. They become slaves to their sin. The people of God cry out for help. God raises a judge. He delivers them.

They forget and the same cycle happens over and over. The book of Judges is an exciting book to read if it wasn't so heartbreaking. There's some great characters that we read about.

[20:32] We heard about Ehud, the left-handed judge. We learn about Deborah, who is both prophetess and judge. And of course, we learn about Samson and Gideon.

But this is the question I think most Christians ask or if they're honest enough, we'll ask, how do these stories relate to me?

How do these stories make sense in my life? How do these stories speak to my life and to my heart? Well, this morning, that was kind of an introduction for you.

We're going to look at probably three of the greatest chapters that I would say is the greatest microcosm of the human life. And that is Joshua 6, 7, and 8.

It's an incredible trilogy. And God, in His absolute foreknowledge, doesn't leave out the details. It's the story of the conquering and the fall of Jericho.

[21:38] It is the story of the falling to the city of Ai. And it's the story of how Israel deals with sin. So Joshua 6, as many of us know from the children's stories, includes the fall of Jericho.

The Israelites confront Jericho, which is a heavily, if not the most heavily fortified city in the Promised Land. The walls were so great that archaeology say that we can still see them today. And then God gives the most incredible specific instructions for conquering the city. He doesn't teach them how to build catapults or treble shaves. He says, I want you to get the ark and I want you to get the priests and I want you to march around the city once per day proclaiming God.

Needless to say, this strategy is somewhat unconventional. The Israelites are to march silently around the city once per day with the ark of the covenant accompanied by priests blowing trumpets. On the seventh day, they are to march around the city seven times and after a long blast from the trumpets, the people are to shout. And as the song says, and the walls came tumbling down.

[22 : 54] The walls of Jericho collapse allowing the Israelites to capture the city. They dedicate everything in Jericho to the Lord destroying all living things except Rahab, if you remember, the prostitute who hid the spies in her home.

Rahab is now seen as being spared for the reward for her faith and obedience. The city is burned and Joshua curses anyone who attempts to rebuild it.

This is God once again proving that his words are true. Put ourselves in that position. God does something miraculous for us.

We don't do anything except do what he tells us what to do. It's not dependent on our strength, it's solely dependent upon his nature. Praise be to God.

He delivers the city. And we turn to chapter 7. There's this other city named Ai, A-I. It is a less impressive city. It's not a big city.

[24 : 01] And so arrogant that the men perceive this, say, you know what? This city's going to be such a cakewalk, we don't even need all our men. Let's just take a couple of thousand, let the others rest.

We're going to go in. Joshua 7.2 says, Go up and spy out the land. And the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai.

Do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are few. They just overcame Jericho, the greatest city in the land.

Ai, no problem. It's smaller, it's less fortified, we won't even break a sweat. We know what happens. They face absolute failure. Verse 4, So about three thousand men went up from there, from the people, and they fled before the men of Ai.

And the men of Ai killed about 36 of their men and chased them before the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them at the descent. And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

[25 : 17] Joshua's response, we read in verse 6, Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening. He and the elders of Israel, and they put dust on their heads.

And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, why have you brought this people over the Jordan at all? To give us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us?

Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan? O Lord, what can I say when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies?

For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. Notice the statement that he makes.

And what will you do for your great name? That's an incredible verse because it demonstrates where is Joshua's heart? Is he concerned about how he looks or how it reflects on God?

[26 : 24] It's God. How often when we face our own sin, our own challenges, we worry, how does this reflect on me? If only people knew, what would they think of me?

Rather, it has more to do with how do we think God responds to us? Verse 11, the Lord responds. It says, Israel has sinned and they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded.

They have taken some of the devoted things. They have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. Therefore, the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies.

They turn their backs before their enemies because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.

The cause of their failure is hidden sin within the camp. Achan, an Israelite, disobeyed God's command for taking the plunder from Jericho and hiding in his tent.

[27 : 28] The Israelites then conduct a process to identify the guilty party and eventually Achan confess. And notice what he says or what happens here.

Achan admits to seeing, he admits to coveting, he admits to taking, and he admits to hiding forbidden items, a progression that mirrors the destructive nature of sin.

The story is seen by some as somewhat cruel that Achan and his family are taken to the valley of Achor and they are stoned to death.

A lot of critics of the Bible say how cruel that is, but they don't comment about the 35 men who died, 35 families who lost a father, a brother, an uncle, the disarray that would have created within the camp.

God is making sure that people understand the gravity of not obeying my word. Joshua 8, it brings us to the victory that they have over I.

[28 : 44] So now I want to talk about us. When we read this text, we see it as a story, but it's so much more than that. It's our story.

Here in these three chapters is pretty much the life of every believer who's walked the face of the earth. When we are saved or we experience the victory of the joy of the Lord, God grants his blessing, we see spiritual fruit and we are happy.

Then, at a certain point, we like Achan, we see, we covet, we take, and we hide. let's not lie to ourselves and think these are just physical items.

These are spiritual items as well, ideas that form in our minds, that form in our hearts, and often because we cannot control a situation or when we do not get our way, we start to create all sorts of idols in our hearts to get our way.

So this morning, there's essentially four ways we deal with sin in our heart. The first way we tend to deal with when we see the sin that is apparent in our lives, and usually we see sin in a whole bunch of ways.

[30 : 15] Broken relationships, right? It's usually a broken horizontal movement everywhere, could be at work, could be in the home, could be with our friends, our family.

Things just aren't working the way we think they should work because one time we knew when God walked before us, these things were accomplished, now they're not. But the first things we tend to do is we excuse sin.

We remember the first story, Adam and Eve, it all began with doubting what God say. And what did they do? They blamed. Hey God, it's not my fault, it's the woman you put me here with.

Hey God, it's not my fault, it's the serpent you let crawl in the garden. Sound familiar? Have you ever been confronted with your own sin?

Well, they provoked me to anger. They wound me up, they started that fight. Come on, anybody with a sibling has heard that story, right? Then the other one is I was afraid of what they would say or think.

[31 : 26] We blame people or we blame circumstances. Man, he made me so mad, it was so unfair, you'd have done the same thing if you were in my shoes. Or are you here?

You'd be angry too if you'd just gone through what I've gone through. Or the simple one, it's just the way I am. Let's be honest, external factors are going to be one of Satan's greatest tools to wear us down.

You know who we used them against? Jesus Christ. In the wilderness, he brought these exterior factors trying to tempt the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'll give you one of my besetting sins, you ready? I'm not a mourning person. I'm not. I purposely don't wake my wife up in the morning. Because if I don't, I'm not irritable, right?

I'm not angry, I'm not short-tempered. I'm perfect when I'm up early in the morning and I get to do what I want. But all of a sudden if I hear other mood, other noises, and I got a rush, and someone's using the Vitamix or any of those kind of things, you know, you start to get a little bit wound up.

[32 : 39] You see, the fact of the matter is external factors are never excuse or reason to blame others for our own sin. oftentimes, though, God uses those external factors to reveal our hearts to ourselves so we know what to take to the Lord.

You see, when we buy into the idea that external factors causes us to sin, our sinful hearts will always portray our actions as inevitable. They're unavoidable.

They're even appropriate given our circumstances, right? Many of you will know the name Jerry Bridges, who was one of my favorite authors when I grew up.

He wrote many books called The Pursuit of Holiness, Practice of Godliness, Transforming Grace, but he makes a statement. He says that we need to see our sin as being disobedient rather than having it something outside of ourselves that defeated us.

You with me on that? We are to see the sins coming from the inside rather than the outside. If you do any amount of counseling with Dave, Dave's going to talk about agency. We always have agency.

[33 : 50] We always have the ability to respond one way or the other. Bridges writes, when I say I am defeated by my sin, I'm unconsciously slipping out from under my responsibility.

I am saying something outside of me has defeated me. But when I say I am disappointed, that places the responsibility for my sin squarely on me, we may in fact be defeated.

But the reason we are defeated is because we have chosen to disobey. You with me? When we accept that, we're just simply saying we made the choice to disobey. When we blame shift, at the heart of the matter, Tim Chester says, we are actually holding God accountable for our sin.

You with me on that? When I blame others, I blame the circumstances, I blame the situation of my life on my sin. I am holding the creator of this universe who has only ever revealed himself as being holy, good, and pure, accountable for my sin.

If that isn't a heart check, I don't know what is. The second way we often deal with our sin is we tend to minimize it, don't we, right? It's not that bad.

[35 : 16] It's only a small thing. It was only a slip, a blip. It was only a mistake. At least I'm not like that person. Overall, I'm not that bad.

Let me tell you about all the good things I do. I help people. You don't know my heart. Right? How many times do we hear that? Is sin really that serious?

Well, the fact is, so serious is our sin that it demanded the eternal hell or the death of God's eternal son. Yes, it is that serious. Achan's sin doomed 35 families.

Was he thinking about that at the moment of his sin? Probably not. He was thinking of himself. See, when we're confronted with our sin, we don't minimize it, but true repentance grieves over our sin.

Isaiah 66.2 says, All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. For this is the one to whom I will look, he who is humble and contrite in heart and trembles at my word.

[36 : 29] See, the humble tremble before the Lord is one who does not minimize their sin. They tremble before the Lord God who is almighty. Pride makes us deaf to God's word.

Pride makes us offended with the accusation that we even might have sin. If you are here and you're listening to me and you're offended that you may be a sinner, what's telling you that is called pride.

It's pride that says, I know better than God. I know better than his word. Sadly, I see people all the time when confronted with their own sin or their issues and they do not want to deal with them, they try to work harder at other things, right?

I'm going to pay off my sin. If I dedicate to myself over here more, I cannot deal with this sin. I can ignore it. What they are essentially doing is admitting that they do not want a savior.

When you try to work off your sin or to pay off what you're doing, you're trying to say, hey God, give me an atta girl today or an atta boy because I'm going to make up for my sin.

[37 : 44] I actually don't need you, Jesus. Too bad you died on the cross. That was for them, not me. You see, but when we talk about our sin and we're honest about our sin and we admit our sin, we're actually stepping on the road to freedom and forgiveness.

We're stepping onto the road that is a right relationship before God. And that road has to begin with repentance. It begins with owning it all.

Not part of it, not the most of it, all of it. It's called complete surrender. So that's one of the ways we deal with it.

And the third way we tend to deal with our sin is we hide it. We hide it. We know it's there, but we hide it. Proverbs 28, 13 says, whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

As crazy as the people of God are in the book of Judges, they all eventually move to repentance. You know that?

[38 : 54] God at no time says, nope, not coming. Nope, not coming. Twelve times they cry out and twelve times God rescues them.

It's the same with us. We're living with the consequences of our sin, our rebellion, doing things our way. We're living in that. It hurts, but God says he will hear us.

He is a deliverer. But we hide it. Why? Because we want a good reputation. We hide. We pretend. We don't seek help.

Hey, I can manage this on my own. Even though I haven't been able to manage it for the last five years, now that you've confronted it, hey, I've got it. Hey, porn? Porn's got, you know, it's had me for

five, ten years.

I can get over it. Just tell me a book. No, you need to be working under with someone under the word of God to be rescued from that sin. It doesn't begin with, I'm just going to stop gossiping.

[39 : 58] It starts, it begins with working with people who love you and that you can be honest with. The fact is, we all say we want to stop sinning, but we don't want to lose our place in life.

Repentance sometimes means making a plan with someone to avoid the issue in the future. True repentance lets nothing get in the way of the change, not even our reputation.

The question is, do we have trusted believers in our life? Do we have someone that we can even be accountable to? If not, we need to develop a better type of friend.

We need to develop people that we know that love God and will love us and want the very best for us. Not someone that's going to empower us to continue in our sin.

Oh, don't worry, Jesus forgives you. And you just keep going back day in, day out, day in, day out. That is the first road to depression. Sometimes we need to go to those we've sinned against, even though they don't even know it, and seek forgiveness.

[41 : 12] See, the idea is repentance makes God central and accepts His declaration that you are righteous in Christ. Amen? When you seek repentance, when you confess, you're redeemed.

You are now clean. You don't have to make up for it. You just say, thank you, God. The reason we tend to hide our sin from people is because we think God is like us, selfish, loveless, disappointed, angry, demands justice.

We assume that God is so displeased with us so we determine again to be more loving to try to get in His good graces. Lord, what work can I do?

I will serve in Sunday school. I will serve with the youth ministry. I will serve in the welcome community. If I can just do it, Lord, everything will be good. The problem is that shifts the focus from ourselves onto us and not God.

But we learn from Joshua quite clearly. Joshua is concerned for God's glory and not ours. You see, Satan gets us to buy into the ideas.

[42 : 34] We see the law, we see how we sin, and we struggle to believe that He continues to love us with such great love that we just don't comprehend it.

Ephesians 2 tells us specifically that we are saved not because we were absolutely lovable, but we are saved by God's great love for us.

Do you understand that? It's because God is so loving that we are loved. Everything is on God. It's not on us. And the fourth way we deal with our sin is that we tend to hate the consequences and not the sin.

See, the problem is hating the consequences of sin is not the sin itself. Often we don't change because we really don't want to, but we're afraid of what it's going to do to us.

You might say, BK, you must be crazy to think I want to do this sin, but the truth of the matter is you want to be free of actually the consequences of the sin, but not the sin itself.

[43 : 45] You want to be free of the guilt, the fear, the damaged relationships, how it makes you feel inside, how it makes you think. One of the key reasons I look at a person, if they think negatively of everybody else, it's because they believe people are thinking negatively about them, and it's usually because there's an unconfessed sin that they just don't want to deal with.

See, consequences can be a strong motive for seeking help, but we have to determine in our heart of hearts that we hate sin itself. Amen? Is that we have to hate sin itself.

Amen? Amen. Moments of temptation, we need to think of others more than God or more than ourselves. We need to think of what God offers, not the sin.

Hey, this is the new year. How many people are working on a budget? Right? We hate being in debt, but we still shop without a budget. We hate being overweight, but we don't change our eating habits.

We hate that our friendships are stale and shallow, but we're not willing to actually put the time into making new friends. John Owen wrote in his book, *The Mortification of Sin*, and he says, a man who only opposes the sin in his heart for fear of shame among men or eternal punishment from God would rather practice the sin if there was no punishment attending it.

[45 : 22] What's interesting that when it comes to sin, the Bible's pretty graphic about what we're to deal with it. We're to amputate it, murder it, starve it, bite it, in fact, every aspect or the majority of the qualifications is that we need to be violent with sin.

And if we hold back, it's almost certainly because we don't want to be violent towards something we love. If you're not willing to cut off that sin, it could be because you love that sin more than you love God.

here's the thing about Achan. Achan was honest with his sin. Joshua 7.19 says, Then Joshua said to Achan, My son, give glory to Yahweh, God of Israel, and give praise to Him and tell me now what you have done.

Do not hide it from me. And Achan answered Joshua, Truly I have sinned against the Lord, God of Israel, and this is what I did. When I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar and 200 shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them and see they're hidden in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath.

My friends, we now live in what is known as a period of grace where God no longer requires our stoning or our burning.

[47 : 04] But God does make a promise to those who repent that they will have a new heart, a new mind, and they will have the strength to fight in this world.

So when we talk about ultimately what a new year brings about, I pray that it brings about a resolution that we would be like Achan. I would hope to think that we will see Achan in glory. He sinned, and although he faced the earthly consequences, there's nothing to believe that he would not have been redeemed by the eventual blood of Christ, which was shed almost 1,500 years later.

Let me just pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, just as we look at these stories of Joshua and Judges and we just step back from them, there's this incredible contrast, between obedience and trust in God and a disobedience which begins by not knowing you, God.

Even as I joked about a new year and a new you, some of us do need to make the decision that we need to spend time in his word and just to rely on a Sunday morning message really isn't enough for us to make it in this world.

[48 : 35] we do indeed live in what Amos called a dry and weary land. We do not live in a culture, whether it be at Whistler or here in Squamish, of cities which are known for their great affinity for you.

You don't see a lot of Christian stickers on cars. We don't see monumental churches built within the neighborhoods. We live within a people that seek after their own self-glory.

And they may not be mean about it. They may not be destructive about it or try to hurt us. But it is certainly a lifestyle that is counter to you and it works against us when we do seek and long for the fellowship which our souls certainly crave for.

Father, I pray that we would not be fearful of admitting our sin.

You did not die to condemn us. You died to save us. Father, I even ask that you would forgive our own hearts when we demand justice for people who've hurt us when we really need to demand mercy.

[49 : 53] That we ask and pray that God would be merciful to them who have wronged us. Father, I am astounded at just this New Year's Eve or this Christmas Eve over 300 souls came to this church.

Many of them we've never seen before. Some of them obviously invited by friends and family. You are making, you are stirring within the nations a desire and longing for you.

I pray that when people are looking for God they can look to us and see us a holy people, a people that are set aside for your purposes and not our own.

We're not trying to prove to people we're just like them, but we are a different people because we've been born again and we serve a just and holy God. a God who has great love for us and died for them as well and they can experience that great love simply by confessing and repenting and determining that you, Jesus Christ, are the one true God who sits at the right hand of the Father. Lord, we live in deceptive times and I pray that you would give us wise ways. I just look at this sermon and I pray that we would just do a heart check in this new season.

[51 : 31] Are we blaming others or situations for a sin or are we willing to take responsibility for ourselves? you're a just God and a loving God and we thank you for these stories that even though they were written thousands of years before, simply speak to us today who we are.

In one sense, we do live in the promised land. We live in a land where you are king and ruling from above, but there's going to be a coming a time where you will rule from this earth and all, every

single knee will bow to you.

I pray that our hearts are ready and all of God's people said, Amen.