

Bigger Than | God Is Bigger Than Our Past | Notes - Joshua 5-6

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Joshua chapters five and six give us a record of the Fall of Jericho. The name Joshua is the Hebrew form of the Greek name Jesus. We could draw a number of parallels between Joshua's victories in Canaan and the ministry of Jesus. There is also a great deal to be learned from the generation of Israelites who would conquer the land of Canaan in Joshua's story.

The Joshua generation entered the Promised Land in the same way the nation of Israel exited Egypt, through a miraculous parting of the waters. Once In The Promised Land, they affirmed their Covenant with God through circumcision and then celebrated the Passover. In **Joshua 5:9**, the Lord told them that the shame of Egypt was finally rolled away. Their parents' generation were born in slavery but they had never been slaves. They were ready to be Warriors.

The story of the Joshua generation teaches us that it is not enough to leave something behind but we must also enter into God's promise. This is a key change of thinking in our Biblical Christian worldview.

God is Good, We have the problem.

God is good. Just think how good God was to Israel. He searched them out when he found Abram in the wilderness. He saved them by sending them to Egypt. Then he saves them again by getting them out of Egypt. He used plagues to free them and a pillar of fire to lead them. He parted the Red Sea, gave them water from a rock, Manna to eat, and the law to help govern their community. The strange thing is the generation that was about to take Canaan did not see most of that, yet believed it more than the generation who witnessed it with their own eyes.

Consider what God has done for us. He sent Jesus from the glory of Heaven, who somehow limited is God-ness in order to show us a better way to live. He showed us a way to live with God rather than against Him. He then suffered, was condemned and crucified. But, He rose from the dead. Often we ignore all of this goodness and complain that because God did not spare us from the consequences of our own decisions, He must not be good. If we are ever to find real life we must eventually admit that God is not the problem.

2 Peter 2:14 (NLT) *They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God's curse.*

We are the ones under a curse. Our fundamental problem is corruption and condemnation caused by sin. God has prepared a way out of that bondage and into a life of promise. The beginning of real life is acknowledging the simple truth that God is not the problem. I am the one with the problem. When we choose to do that, God moves us from under the curse into His blessing.

We Can Be Blessed or Stay Cursed

Galatians 3:13 (NLT) *But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

We can be blessed. We can change sides, just like Rahab did. We can move from our side to God's side. In order to do that, we will have to abandon our "Jericho". We must place our Faith in Jesus.

We can celebrate the Passover. When we release our trust in the wrong things, we are free to embrace real hope. The cross, the resurrection, and the Church are then able to become very significant to us. The Lord's Supper is the Passover of the New Testament. When shared in Christian community it connects us with the pain and sorrow Jesus suffered on our behalf. It also becomes a celebration of freedom and victory to us.

The Problem Isn't Our Past, It's Our Pride.

Isaiah 30:15 (NLT) *This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: "Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it."*

Change your mind. In the scripture above we see God calling his people to rest in Him but they would not do it. They insisted on doing things their own way. Only by changing our minds about doing things our own way and receiving Jesus Christ as Lord are we able to live out our true purpose.

Start a new journey. Israel walked out of Egypt, then walked around the desert for 40 years. They then walked into the Promised Land. The Christian life is all about walking with God and often it is Walking with God into some kind of battle. However, battles with God are experienced in peace and concluded in victory.

Hebrews 4:7 (NLT) *So God set another time for entering his rest, and that time is today. God announced this through David much later in the words already quoted: "Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts."*

God is Good. In His goodness, He invites us into a life founded upon promises. So many try to leave an "old" life behind and continually struggle. They struggle much like Israel in the wilderness. They were out of "Egypt" but had not entered the Promised Land. We are called to leave the old and enter the New.

Such a view of God's goodness and our situation could be the dawning of a new day.

Talk About It...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- Israel spent 40 years stuck in the wilderness. What are some ways that we end up stuck?
- Discuss some of the differences between the generation of Israelites that wandered the wilderness and the generation that claimed the Promised Land.
- Discuss some of the good things that God did for Israel. Share some of the good things God has done for you. Why do we struggle with God's Goodness?
- Are there "old" things in life you have released? What are some "new" things you have embraced? Did embracing the "new" help finally let go of the "old"?
- Discuss Isaiah 30:15. Do we ever refuse God's "returning, resting, quietness, and confidence"? Why?
- Has God ever led you into a battle? Have you ever experienced peace and victory that was surprising to you while in a battle?
- *Is there anything in today's topic that you would be excited to share with a friend?*