

2025/09/07

SERMON: DON'T GIVE UP!

GOOD Morning OIC AND WELCOME TO FATHER'S HOUSE

In this Message I will be continuing in the book of Joshua with the title “DON'T GIVE UP!”

I closed my last Message titled **CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?** With: What about us, His Chosen People in Christ? Do we make a point of sharing with others the things God does to support us? God helps us daily in so many small and great ways. But every day is continuing **the Greatest Way God helped us.** Much greater than God's simply stopping the Sun. Is not stopping the sun but a small thing compared with raising Jesus from the dead?

Today we will review how Joshua went from town to town through Canaan to exterminate the sinful Canaanites. God kept encouraging and strengthening Joshua with Promised Victories. God was saying to Joshua: **DON'T GIVE UP!** God's omnipotent, all powerful hand was with him and the Israelites. I will not detail each town for they are each very like the other. The Bible summarizes Joshua's conquests reading **(Joshua 11.16-23) 16** *So Joshua conquered the entire region—the hill country, the entire Negev, the whole area around the town of Goshen, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley, the mountains of Israel, and the Galilean foothills. 17 The Israelite territory now extended all the way from Mount Halak, which leads up to Seir in the south, as far north as Baalgad at the foot of Mount Hermon in the valley of Lebanon. Joshua killed all the kings of those territories, 18 waging war for a long time{seven years/TLB} to accomplish this. 19 No one in this region made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites of Gibeon. All the others were defeated. 20 For the LORD hardened their hearts and caused them to fight the Israelites. So they were completely destroyed without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.*

EVEN THE GIANTS FELL BELOW GOD'S POWERFUL ARMY

21 *During this period Joshua destroyed all the descendants of Anak{Giants}, who lived in the hill country of Hebron, Debir, Anab, and the entire hill country of Judah and Israel. He killed them all and completely destroyed their towns. 22 None of the descendants of Anak were left in all the land of Israel, though some still remained in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.*

23 So Joshua took control of the entire land, just as the LORD had instructed Moses. He gave it to the people of Israel as their special possession, dividing the land among the tribes. So the land finally had rest from war.

The descendants of Anak are giants. The only ones surviving were in a few towns in the land of the Philistines. About three hundred years after Joshua's conquests the Philistines attacked Israel with such a descendant of Anak leading the attack. . This is written in **(1 Samuel 17.4)**

Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came out of the Philistine ranks to face the forces of Israel. He was over nine feet tall!

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY AND GOD'S WAYS IN THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE

We note in **(Joshua 11.17b-19)** *Joshua killed all the kings of those territories, 18 waging war for a long time{seven years/TLB} to accomplish this. 19 No one in this region made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites of Gibeon. All the others were defeated.*

Like Joshua, Born-Again Christians have had many victories. The most important was in total, a Gift. The Gift for their Beginnings with Jesus: Repentance & Re-birth by faith. But before repentance, Holy Spirit had convicted us all of the rightful ***guilt as sinners and enemies of God.*** On the night that He was betrayed, Jesus told His Disciples this in **(John 16.7-8 /NASB1995)**
7 But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper {Holy Spirit} will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 And He, when He comes, will convict the world {sinners} concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

(John 16.8/NASB1995) *will convict the world {sinners} concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;* Don't ever think that sinners who are enemies of God should not have a deep feeling of guilt. A Christian's compassion and emotionalism, and not love, may mislead a sinner under such a burden of their sin! Sinners stand before the Supreme Judge in God's Courtroom. **Condemned!** Love offers the Truth of Jesus' death to forgive our sins 2000 years ago.

The time may vary from this gift of conviction, that is, to understand your position as condemned justly by God; until the gift of Repentance. This is God's patient work to save us! The Same Spirit accomplished both, guilt and repentance, in our hearts to become Christians. **(Romans 8.23/NASB1995)** declares this wonder : *23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit,*

THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT – A STRING OF PRECIOUS GEMS – Repentance, Faith, Hope

- Repentance – that gem of the first water of the Spirit's flow upon us while yet sinners and enemies of God. It is a glorious gift to know that you must turn from your sin, and you must get God's Help. You know that you stand condemned and helpless.
- Faith – a precious pearl as the sinner comes to believe that Jesus died for him, in a personal way. Jesus' death taking away the sins that were an infinite burden of guilt.
- Hope – the heavenly emerald of the reborn Believer who has a new purpose in life. He for the first time ever, has “Life” itself for he has Jesus! He knows he is free from Judgment for his sins! On His Cross Jesus snapped all the arrows of guilt that Satan might shoot at a Born-Again Christian. In the Courtroom of Heaven, unlike in life before Rebirth, there is no guilt in God's eyes for there are no longer any sins counted against the Believer. For faith in Jesus causes the Judge, God, to declare the one who was once a sinner who now believes “**not guilty**” As in **(Romans 8.1/AMP)**: *Therefore there is now no condemnation [no guilty verdict, no punishment] for those who are in Christ Jesus [who believe in Him as personal Lord and Savior].*

You may ask, “Pastor Bruce, what has this to do with Joshua killing pagan sinners 3,500 years ago?” We see that we can read Joshua's victorious campaigns, in the book of Joshua Chapters #5-12, in a few hours. But **(Joshua 11.18)** *waging war for a long time {seven years/TLB} to accomplish this {Victorious campaign in the Promised Lands}.* Old Testament ancient times regarding time is nothing like in our modern world. Maybe a Spanish or another warm climate culture with very loose appointment expectations reflects this somewhat. The words *a long time*, or, *many days* in **(Joshua 11.18/The Greek Septuagint)** means *years*. The Living Bible scholars assigned it to mean *seven years*. **It was long enough that Joshua's faith to endure was severely tested. Dear Friends, your faith to endure is often tested as Joshua's was. DON'T GIVE UP!**

So, as faith is often tested, I place our Christian experiences next to, or parallel to, Joshua with, **(Romans 8.23/NASB1995) : 23** *And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit,*

THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT – A STRING OF PRECIOUS GEMS – are Repentance, Faith, and Hope.

Are you a Seeker – Here is the TEST---- You are tired of this burden of guilt. You do not yet realize it is God's Love for you that you feel this way. Keep Seeking God. For Jesus said in **(Luke 11.9/AMPC)** *So I say to you, Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; **seek and keep on seeking and you shall find**; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you.* God is working in you to prepare your heart to receive the *Fruit of the Spirit of Repentance!*
DON'T GIVE UP!

The new or recently Born-Again Christian - the TEST ---You are so glad to be SAVED from your sins. The Cross of Jesus brings you a reverent **joy, with no guilt. Jesus is your Lord and God. But you are clueless and confused about next steps in life?** **(Luke 11.9/AMPC)** *knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you.* You have the *Fruit of the Spirit of Faith*; but your faith seems too small to go anywhere in life with it. Persevere, **Do Not Give Up.**

The Christian Worker – the TEST---- You have blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! You have true joy to witness your Lord Jesus to sinners. But, everyone turns away from you! You feel discouraged in your work for God. Two truths come to my mind:

1. Jesus said in **(Luke 10.16/AMP)** *“The one who listens to you listens to Me; and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and the one who rejects Me rejects Him [My heavenly Father] who sent Me.* **DON'T GIVE UP!**
2. The Apostle Paul, who knew great discouragements in his Apostolic Ministry said in **(1Corinthians 15.58)** *So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.*

As a Missionary-Pastor I will share a major event for Dorothy and my personal following Jesus to our Mission Field in, Japan. In our early years believing God's call to Missions, many leaders in the Church discouraged us for our fruit seemed inconsistent with the challenges of Overseas Missions. They said if you are not doing much **here**, you won't do much **there!** We often attended a church outside the city when our ministries in Boston allowed time. I remember clearly one Sunday morning in that Sunday School with the lesson on Missions. The teacher said: “Today we have a couples' story who had almost nothing succeed in Christian Work until they landed in their Mission Field. Dorothy and I KNEW...the Spirit whispered: **This is for you!** Now many years later being in Osaka, JAPAN for just two years, I must quote **(1 Corinthians 15.10)** for this Pastor and his wife: *yet it was not {us} but God who was working through {us} by his grace-----*

5 Water Baptisms (I baptized two in America in 25 years, but in Japan I have baptized five Believers) ; *Spirit blessed--- Bible Studies, Women's Meetings in the Church* (Dorothy never had never led one outside our home in America), and *anointed Flute Music* (In America there were often worship leaders who wanted no classical music sounds), and now making friends in our neighborhood who come to our home.... **DON'T GIVE UP!**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at OIC...You might never know how much of God's plan you are missing because you do not attend Sunday School. Also, if your ministry seems weak, maybe you have yet followed Jesus to where He wants you to be. Dorothy & my discouragements in America were our preparation for the Calling we had in Christ before the Foundation of the Earth....DON'T GIVE UP!

AREAS IN CANAAN NOT YET CONQUERED AND OCCUPIED

As we read these next verses let us think of our Christian life and ministry.

(Joshua 13.1-7) *1 When Joshua was an old man, the LORD said to him, "You are growing old, and much land remains to be conquered. 2 This is the territory that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and the Geshurites, 3 and the larger territory of the Canaanites, extending from the stream of Shihor on the border of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron. It includes the territory of the five Philistine rulers of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The land of the Avvites 4 in the south also remains to be conquered. In the north, the following area has not yet been conquered: all the land of the Canaanites, including Mearah (which belongs to the Sidonians), stretching northward to Aphek on the border of the Amorites; 5 the land of the Gebalites and all of the Lebanon mountain area to the east, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath; 6 and all the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, including all the land of the Sidonians.*

God was not blaming Joshua as if he had failed. A major victory, but not total extermination of pagan sinners in Canaan in one war! As He had told Moses years before in **(Exodus 23.29-30)**
29 But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals would multiply and threaten you. 30 I will drive them out a little at a time until your population has increased enough to take possession of the land. Here God is telling Moses that the

individual tribes of Israel must finish the war of Joshua. These clans of tribes of Israelites must completely destroy pagan sinners in each of their own clan's territory.

So, God says in **(Joshua 13.6b-7)**: *“I myself will drive these people out of the land ahead of the Israelites. So be sure to give this land to Israel as a special possession, just as I have commanded you. 7 Include all this territory as Israel’s possession when you divide this land among the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh.”*

Some clans had their land territory allotted by Moses. God through Joshua will finish the division of land in the Promised Land, Canaan.

Note that God is promising to supernaturally enable them to do this: *“I myself will drive these people out.* **But, they must decide to try! The burden is no longer on Joshua.**

Some TAKEAWAYS from these verses and our Christian living:

1. God, not man, decided Joshua had reached “retirement age!” Reading (Joshua 13.1-2)

1 When Joshua was an old man, the LORD said to him, “You are growing old, and much land remains to be conquered. 2 This is the territory that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and the Geshurites, {and many more areas}.

2. Believers in God, and now in God by faith in Christ, must try to build up the Church.

They must ask God, and not tell God, “How do you want me to be a Kingdom Worker Lord?” As God told the Israelites, Jesus has told us: **(Matthew 16.18/AMPC- with Greek)** *And I tell you, you are Peter [Greek, Petros—a large piece of rock], and on this rock [Greek, petra—a huge rock like Gibraltar] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it [or be strong to its detriment or hold out against it]. **Petra is Peter’s declaration in (Matthew 16.16) 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, {or Christ}, the Son of the living God.”***

Keep on sharing to your friends and neighbors this Rock like the mountain Gibraltar statement by Peter: ***“You are the Messiah, {or Christ}, the Son of the living God.”***

DON'T GIVE UP!

3. HERO WORSHIP! The Old Testament Israelite had seen God's hand in supernatural revelations many, many times. But, in my opinion, they had more of an excuse to focus too much on the Leader, rather than on God. This was no excuse in God's thinking. Each clan had enough faith from sight, to obey God's Command to finish the extermination of the Canaanites in the current time of Peace. The Canaanites were no longer organized. The opposition would no longer be entire armies against the Israelites. It would no longer be War, but local skirmish fighting. We will find out in the following years in history in the Book of Judges, that the clans failed their Mission terribly! They even took up Pagan Religions and did not fight!

New Testament Christians often deify and almost worship the Apostles, especially Paul and Peter. This is **sin**. It is usually not willful. When faced with huge obstacles to bring Jesus' Gospel forward, they assume God made a mistake in putting them in that place. How dare we tell God He is not allowed to anoint us and empower us as much as He decides? **We should not tell Him that He can not do great and marvelous things in our lives, as He has done by grace in the in Believers in the Bible!**

A Pastor Bruce quote or saying: "There are no great men of God. There are only men who have a larger view on how Great God is! DON'T GIVE UP!"

4. God had planned great patience for the Isrealite clans to multiply and grow in strength in this time of **peace**. As written in (**Joshua 11.23**) *So Joshua took control of the entire land, just as the LORD had instructed Moses. He gave it to the people of Israel as their special possession, dividing the land among the tribes. So the land finally had rest from war.* God always asks His people to remember His Word! Directly or through His Appointed Leaders. They conveniently forgot (**Exodus 23.29-30**): **29 But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals would multiply and threaten you. 30 I will drive them out a little at a time until your population has increased enough to take possession of the land.** We Christians sadly follow this bad example.

When God gives us much peace, we too often find much laziness and sloth in our Kingdom Work for our King Jesus. The answer is not guilt, but a simple daily prayer without choosing my own cross. Pastor Bruce almost every day prays before I am fully awake: “Dear God I pray against **sloth.**”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: do not be discouraged. Also, do not try to be anxious or tense and replace Holy Spirit help by over discipline. He knows how to make our Kingdom Work be filled with singing as in *The Joy of the Lord is my strength.*”

Maybe you are here as a Seeker today. You are not sure of where you stand in God's eyes...in God's Courtroom. You are tired of trying to understand and believe the Bible. Surrender to Jesus! Trust His sacrifice on the Cross. **DO GIVE UP ON YOUR OWN GOODNESS. Trust His Alone! If you pray this to God when I pray, please take a few steps and go to the *Lift sign*.** Or you may be a Christian who is weary of well doing. You are weary of the forces of evil against you. You feel your heart is falling. Pray when I pray that Jesus catches your *falling heart*. You are God's Child. *You are loved with an everlasting love and underneath are the Everlasting Arms.* **You also should take a few steps to the *Lift Sign*.**

Whatever your need, Jesus will see your steps toward Him.

Let Us Pray,

HOLY COMMUNION ...

REFERENCES

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