

SERMON: Legacy of Faithfulness, Part 1

GOOD Morning OIC AND WELCOME TO FATHER'S HOUSE

In this Message I will be continuing in the book of Joshua with the title “ Legacy of Faithfulness, Part 1.” My last Message included how Joshua assigned the areas in Canaan, the Promised Land, to the twelve tribes or clans of the Israelites; and God's mercy shown by His defining of *Cities of Refuge*. Since God is still offering mercy for sinners to find refuge in Jesus, I titled my last Message : **“JESUS, OUR REFUGE.”** And I invited sinners to find that refuge with my closing statements : **If you feel God moving deep inside of you to run to Jesus' Cross... simply walk over to the Lift Sign after the Lord's Supper time. Someone will meet you there to pray for you! Let me repeat this offer for God's Grace : after this message do not ignore the Spirit's move in your heart. Meet with a prayer partner at the *Lift Sign* after the service.**

Today we will review the events leading to Joshua's death at the age of 110. The tenor or trend and drama of these events is much less intense than Joshua's Calling by God; the Entrance of Joshua into the Promised Land by Crossing Uncross-able Rivers; Knocking down Immovable Walls, and Defeating Un-defeatable Vast Armies.

JOSHUA'S LEGACY AT THIS POINT IN TIME OF PEACE IN CANAAN

I will summarize the 4 main themes of Joshua's calling:

- 1.** Joshua's Calling – my Message - *Life Expands with Courage*, 2025.2.9
- 2.** Crossing Uncross-able Rivers - my Message - *Uncrossable Rivers*, 2025.3.30
- 3.** Knocking down Jericho's Immovable Walls - my Message-*Our Walls Come Tumbling Down*, 2025.4.27
- 4.** Defeating Undefeatable Vast Armies- my Message - *Fighting The Giants*, 2025.5.11

We will see that in many ways Joshua had gained wisdom as he *preached his last sermon to the Israelites*. This was most important for their future and hope with God!

LEVITE PRIESTS GET PASTURE LANDS TO LIVE IN

Reading (**Joshua 21.1-2**) *The family leaders of the Levites approached Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the family leaders of the Israelite tribes. 2 At Shiloh in the land of Canaan they said to them, “Through Moses the LORD commanded that we be given cities in which to live and grazing lands for our livestock.”* So, by Joshua, God gives many cities throughout Canaan to the tribe of Levite Priests. Some cities were also *Cities of Refuge*, but many were not. Thus God's mercy to His people needing to seek out a priest without long distance travel. This would be travel to the movable Tabernacle, and years later, to the Temple in Jerusalem.

THE EASTERN TRIBES BUILD AN ALTAR – SIN OR WORSHIP?

Reading (**Joshua 22.1-5**) *Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. 2 He said to them, “You have done everything that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you and have obeyed me in everything that I have commanded you. 3 You have not left your brothers these many days down to this day, and you have observed the obligations of the commandment of the LORD your God. 4 Now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers, as He had said to them. So now, turn and go to your homes, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. 5 Only carefully obey the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to obey His commandments, to cling to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and soul.”*

Thus these Israelites had left their families and livestock on the East side of the Jordan River. They had joined the other Tribes in the Wars against the Canaanites. Now, with Peace ruling despite Canaanite survivors, they are released from duty to join their families across the Jordan River. Joshua does not fail his duty as a Prophet Leader, not just a Military Leader, as he exhorts and encourages them in (**Joshua 22.5**) *Only carefully obey the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to obey His commandments, to cling to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and soul.”*

But, a new problem arises as we see in (**Joshua 22.10-14**) *10 The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh came near the Jordan in the land of Canaan and built a very large altar by the Jordan. 11 The children of Israel heard someone say, “The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built an altar by the land of Canaan by the Jordan on the Israelite side.” 12 When the children of Israel heard this, they assembled the whole congregation of the children of*

Israel at Shiloh to go up against them in war. 13 Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest, to the sons of Reuben, to the sons of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, 14 and with him ten chiefs, one chief each for each father's household of every tribe of Israel; and each one of them was the head of his father's house among the thousands of Israel.

This act to build an altar was first seen as an act against the Lord their God! Reading further in **(Joshua 22.15-20)** *15 They came to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in the land of Gilead and said to them, 16 "The whole congregation of the LORD says, 'What is this trespass you have committed against the God of Israel? Today you have turned from following the LORD by building yourselves an altar to rebel against Him! 17 Is the sin of Peor, from which we have still not purified ourselves even today, not enough for us, which brought a plague upon the congregation of the LORD 18 that today you have turned away from following the LORD?*

" 'If today you are rebelling against the LORD, then tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel! 19 If indeed your own land is unclean, then cross over to the land of the LORD where the tabernacle of the LORD stands and take land among us. Yet do not rebel against the LORD or rebel against us by building an altar other than the altar of the LORD our God. 20 Did not Achan son of Zerah commit a trespass in the things under the ban, and wrath fall on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.' "

It is important to note that God's anger would be upon **all the tribes** if even one man rebelled in such sin as that *the sin of Peor*, or of *Achan son of Zerah* . *The sin of Peor* by the Israelites is described in **(Numbers 25.1-4)** *While Israel dwelt in Shittim, the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They called the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 Israel joined himself to the Baal of Peor; and the anger of the LORD was inflamed against Israel. 4 The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them before the LORD in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD turn from Israel."*

Also, Achan's disobedience to take spoils during the Battle at Jericho caused God's wrath to fall on Israel. In both cases , God would stay His wrath on the **whole community** only after those responsible for the sin were *killed and hung on a tree, or stoned to Death.*

GOD'S WRATH IN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES?

Somehow modern Believers in Jesus forget God's character is not changed and it demands wrath against sin! This is truly the Age of Grace, with mercy and grace for sinners to be kept alive to find Jesus! So, because of the grace available through Jesus, God constrains {holds back} His wrath by **not counting their sins against them**, The Bible makes it clear that He is storing up His wrath against sinners if they reject grace. Thus the Bible says in **(2 Corinthians 5.19)** *that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them, and has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation.*

Also, God's actions towards His Children, true Christians, is filled with His undeserved favor as in **(2 Corinthians 9.14-15/AMP)** *14 and they {the brothers in Christ sent by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians} also long for you while they pray on your behalf, because of the surpassing measure of God's grace [His undeserved favor, mercy, and blessing which is revealed] in you. 15 Now thanks be to God for His indescribable gift [which is precious beyond words]!*

Nevertheless, grace does not mean sin has no effect on the Church! Any sin in a Christian's life affects the whole Church. As Jesus said in **(Matthew 16.11-12)** *11 How is it that you do not understand that I spoke to you not concerning bread, but that you should beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees?" 12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.* The Pharisees taught bondage to the Law and rules without Love. And the Apostle Paul quoted Moses' attempt to bring peace between fellow Israelites in **(Acts 7.26)** *On the next day he appeared to them as they fought and tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?'*

In the Church of Jesus Christ, grace abounds and Jesus does not abandon His People. But when there are unconfessed sins, especially against fellow Christians in any church, the Holy Spirit is grieved. He still is Present but not with the power that God wants to pour on Jesus' Sheep. As Jesus said in **(Matthew 5.23-24)** *23 "Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go on your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. The famous Bible writer and teacher in the United Kingdom, Neil T. Anderson, said: "The greatest problem in the evangelical churches is unforgiveness." Part of this problem is a pride in the Christian who sinned against or harmed a brother, but does not humble himself to ask for forgiveness by that brother. Thus not to obey Jesus as in First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. No, we do not stone our sinning Christians in the street, but, a*

grieved Holy Spirit affects the whole church, and our Heavenly Father will eventually apply discipline to all His Children! As the Bible says in **(Galatians 6.7)** *Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.*

ISREALITE LEADERS SEE THE HEART OF WORSHIP IN THE EASTERN TRIBES

(Reading Joshua 22.21-27, 30-31) *21 Then the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the Israelite clans, 22 “The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He knows, and may Israel know—if we have acted in rebellion or disloyalty against the LORD, do not spare us today. 23 If we have built an altar to turn away from following the LORD, to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings or make peace offerings upon it, may the LORD Himself demand an account. 24 “We did this deed because we were worried that in the future your descendants might say, ‘What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel? 25 The LORD made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, the descendants of Reuben and Gad. You have no share in the LORD!’ In this way your descendants might make our descendants to stop worshipping the LORD. 26 “So we said to each other, ‘Let us build this altar, not for burnt offering or sacrifice, 27 but as a witness for us, for you, and for the generations after us, that we may perform the service of the LORD before Him with our burnt offerings, sacrifices, and peace offerings, and in the future your descendants will not be able to say to our descendants, “You have no share in the LORD!” ’... 30 When Phinehas the priest, the leaders of the congregation, and the heads of the Israelite clans who were with him heard what the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh said, it pleased them. 31 Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest said to the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, “Today we know that the LORD is in our midst because you did not violate your obligations to the LORD in this matter. Indeed, you have delivered the children of Israel from the judgment of the LORD.”*

JESUS' FOLLOWERS TODAY AND THE EASTERN TRIBES

The brave and courageous actions of the Eastern Tribes risked being misunderstood in the Family of Israel! But this action showed that they had been trained by Joshua not just for military but also for spiritual battles. This was setting up or making a permanent history of a **Legacy for future generations in their families.** This is shown in **(Joshua 22.26-27)** *26 “So we said to each other, ‘Let us build this altar, not for burnt offering or sacrifice, 27 but as a witness for us, for you, and for the generations after us, that we may perform the service of the LORD before Him with our burnt offerings, sacrifices, and peace offerings, and in the future your descendants will not be able to say to our descendants, “You have no share in the LORD!” ’...*

The definition of Legacy in *Oxford Languages Dictionary (OLD)*: the long-lasting impact of particular events, actions, etc. that took place in the past, or of a person's life. Another meaning is financial inheritance, but this context in the Book of Joshua, as in most of the Bible, is a *spiritual legacy*.

Our Legacy will be the result, of our good or of our evil actions, that remains on Earth after our life is over. For the Christian who walks close to Jesus, it will be a good *Legacy* left on earth after he departs or *graduates* into Jesus' Presence in Heaven. However, there is a possible stumbling point if a Christian over focuses or thinks only of his *Legacy*. For he can easily focus on his own works, even those good works that are God's grace on him, and not focusing on seeing Jesus "face to face."

As we are told in **(Hebrews 12.2)** *Let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* Jesus gave us His good teaching on our focus. He did so when He said in **(Matthew 6.20-21)** *20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy and where thieves do not break in nor steal, 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

JOSHUA'S LAST MESSAGE

(Joshua 23.1-5) *1 A long time later, after the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua was old and advanced in years. 2 Joshua called for all Israel, their elders, clan heads, judges, and officials, and said to them, "I am old and advanced in years. 3 You have seen all that the LORD your God did to all these peoples before you, for it is the LORD your God who has waged war for you. 4 See, I have allotted to you as an inheritance the land of these peoples who remain, along with the land of the peoples whom I defeated, from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. 5 The LORD your God will drive them out and dispossess them from before you, and you will inherit their land, as the LORD your God told you.*

In our modern societies expressions like *A long time later* do not exist. We measure time in years, months, days, hours, seconds and micro-seconds, etc. We can only guess, as the Bible scholars admit, that if it took about 7 years to establish the general peace in the Promised Land, this *long time later* was likely many decades later as Joshua had settled into his own territory in Ephraim's hills. He was approaching his 110th year!

A MAN'S CONFIDENCE- *Strategic Self-Importance*

Joshua knew how he depended on God for all victories. But, he also knew that God's command back in his calling required a confidence in his giftings, and all his God given abilities.

Joshua kept in mind God's command in (**Joshua 1.6-7**) **6** *“Be strong and courageous, for you shall provide the land that I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance for this people. 7 Be strong and very courageous, in order to act carefully in accordance with all the law that My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn aside from it to the right or the left, so that you may succeed wherever you go.* This allowed Joshua's Confidence to be not just a spiritual idea, but strength for each day and each battle and each Victory. God only promised Victory!

Many Christians called to full-time Ministry, have a fear of pride. This is because God wants His leaders to have great expectations and expanding visions of courage. **But, fearing sin, pride or lust or greed or any sin, does not keep sin out! It is the Fear and Reverence for the Lord that keeps sin out of ruling in any Christian's heart.**

About 10 years ago I read a sermon by a Lutheran Minister. He titled it *My Strategic Self Importance*. The Lord Jesus had showed him of his false humility which was a fear of pride. This actually became a fear of success. His sermon changed his own life. He started to bear more fruit as a pastor and preacher after this revelation, so to speak. He humbled his plans to *always seek* God's “strategy” but, began to be confident: thus **A MAN'S CONFIDENCE**. This **Strategic Self-Importance** is truly a *godly man's confidence*. It depends on God's, not man's, strategy! But God does not deny our being human and holy. We can meditate on (**Psalms 139.14/KJ21**) *I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well*. Then we can get this Lutheran Minister's point that all Christians, including called Ministers, need a *Strategic Self Importance*. **Every Child of God, not just those called to The Ministry, has a purpose in life.**

God calls each to fulfill their high calling here on earth. We are all very *important* in God's magnificent plan which continues in The Church until we see Jesus.

We see Joshua knew his *Strategic Self Importance*. God had commanded and promised Joshua in (**Joshua 1.6**) *you shall provide the land that I swore to their fathers to give them....* So he was not proud when he similarly said *whom I defeated* in (**Joshua 23.3-4**) **3** *You have seen all that the LORD your God did to all these peoples before you, for it is the LORD your God who has waged war for you. 4 See, I have allotted to you as an inheritance the land of these peoples who remain, along with the land of the peoples whom I defeated, from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.*

God kept His Promise through Joshua, and He will through you and me as well!

LEGACY OF FAITHFULNESS-GOD IS FAITHFUL

Every Legacy or “lasting impact for good and not evil” begins with..is continued by....and is concluded by God. Joshua's legacy teaches us this. This TRUTH carries over unchanged into the New Testament under Jesus Blood.

JESUS' *Strategic Self Importance* – DEATH ON THE CROSS

Even the LORD JESUS had a human nature but without sin to deal with. His *Legacy* to Mankind is the gift of His Death on the Cross to purchase both the forgiveness of sin with everlasting life and victory over mankind's strong enemy, the Devil.

The Apostle John clearly declared this in his letter, **(1John 3.4-8)** *4 Whoever practices sin breaks the law, for sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that He {Jesus} was revealed to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. 6 Whoever remains in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has not seen Him and does not know Him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. The one who does righteousness is righteous, just as Christ is righteous. 8 Whoever practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

To accomplish this twofold Mission, Jesus' *Strategic Self-Importance* was that He was born in order to die as the Passover Lamb. He was born to drink the full cup of God's Wrath against sin. In the Garden of Gethsemane we realize just how Jesus was 100% human and 100% God. He prayed about this cup of God's Wrath being mindful of His *Strategic Self-Importance*. Reading **(Matthew 26.39)** *He {Jesus} went a little farther, and falling on His face, He prayed, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”* **In other words, can Father's strategy be accomplished in another way?**

The Apostle Peter had just confessed Jesus' identity in **(Matthew 16.16)** *“The Christ of God.”* Then Jesus shared His *Strategic Self-Importance* only with His Apostles in **(Matthew 16.21)** *From that time on, Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised on the third day.*

God's strategy as planned by the Holy Trinity before the foundation of the world, was the Death of His Son. Thus as in **(Ephesians 1.3-4)** *3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love;* In the Garden of Gethsemane, **on the evening before Good Friday**, God the Father reconfirmed the final details of death on the Cross on the next day to His Beloved Son. The Son's *Strategic Self Importance* was His **sufficient obedience** to His Father, as we are told in **(Philippians 2.8)** *And*

being found in the form of a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

JESUS' *Strategic Self Importance* – MAKE DISCIPLES TO TEACH HIS GOOD NEWS

Reading (Acts 10. 36-38) *36 The word which He sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, 37 the word, which you know, that was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*

Jesus's *Strategic Self Importance* also included God's mercy and Compassion through His many miracles throughout Israel. Jesus glorification on His Cross would mean nothing to the whole world when that generation had passed away, after His Crucifixion-Resurrection and Ascension back to Heaven. God's strategy was: Jesus before your Cross, go and make disciples! He did! After receiving the Holy Spirit at the first Feast of Pentecost after Jesus return to Heaven, these disciples brought the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth. They were diligent to know and to obey with confidence their *Strategic Self Importance*. This was the Great Commission. Jesus' strategy for them is in it. Reading (Matthew 28.19) *Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* All Christians have a part to play in making disciples for Jesus. The primary job of the Pastors and Teachers is to equip the Believers to fulfill their part, their *Strategic Self Importance*, to the Glory of Jesus through His Church.

LEGACY OF FAITHFULNESS IS THE IMPACT AFTER WE LEAVE TO HEAVEN ONLY BY LIVING OUR *STRATEGIC SELF-IMPORTANCE* NOW

Every *Legacy* or “lasting impact for good and not evil” begins with..is continued by....and is concluded by God. Joshua's legacy teaches us this. This TRUTH carries over unchanged into the New Testament under Jesus' Blood. Joshua and Jesus both lived out their *Strategic Self-Importance* given by God. Jesus did it perfectly, yet the Bible reveals His real struggle with his humanity and God's strategy. You will too! But, prayer is the path to every Victory. It was for Him in *Gethsemane*. Jesus is your Gentle yet firm Shepherd. Knowing that you are really living your own personal *Strategic Self-Importance* **LIFTS YOUR FAITH DAY BY DAY!**

But , you may be feeling, “ Pastor Bruce, I do not know how to start to learn my *Strategic Self-Importance*; I have no confidence!”

The major roadblock to *Strategic Self Importance* and *Victorious Christian Living* is the *Fear of Death!* **Are you afraid of Death?** These 3 disciplines will help.

1.) Pray and Plead with God to cause you to believe firmly (2 Corinthians 5.5-8)

5 Now He who has created us for this very thing is God, who also has given to us the guarantee of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Instead, I say that we are confident and willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

2.) Memorize Prayerfully (Romans 14.8) *For if we live, we live for the Lord. And if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*

3.) Start to lean into walking by faith towards acts of confidence over fear *before* your feelings agree with these Bible Verses.

IF YOU NEED A LIFT FOR YOUR LEGACY, GO TO THE LIFT SIGN AFTER THE SERVICE. SOMEONE WILL PRAY FOR YOU!

Let Us Pray, Holy Communion

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