

JOSHUA TEACHING SERIES

It's Your Season To Be Blessed

"You Need The Lord's Help"

A few Sundays ago I was visiting the saints in Oklahoma City. I had gotten dressed for church service and was sitting in the lobby waiting for my turn to use a computer to print off my message for the morning service. As I was waiting I couldn't help but to notice that the man currently using the computer was printing out information about a James E. Stewart Golf Course. After printing a few copies, he handed it off to a few other guys in his party who had shown up with their golf clubs; smiling, laughing and with a joyful conversation they were off to play a few rounds of golf. Suddenly, I was keenly aware that I along with the few brothers who had accompanied me was the only people in the hotel lobby that appeared to

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be on their way the church. **QUESTION:** So I thought, with such limited time on the weekends, why do you use so much of it to go to church? I mean, given all that you could be doing with those hours, why use it getting dressed up, driving through Sunday traffic, looking for a place to park and then trying to find a seat in the church? The answer - at least for me is... "I need the Lord's help" For me, coming to church provides dedicated time for pray, praise and the proclaiming of God's word. My relationship with God is constantly under construction. Towards the end of Joshua chapter 5 and the greater majority of chapter 6, we can see that in spite of all of Joshua's previous accomplishments, his relationship with God was still being constructed. Like Joshua, there are some spiritual and emotional skills that we must hone in on before we attempt to confront the enemy standing between us and the promises of God in our life.

Recognizing God In Our Midst

Josh 5:13

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? KJV

Joshua, along with his army of well over 600,000 only a few days ago witnessed God holding back the flood waters of the Jordan River and affording them the opportunity to cross through a dry river bed into the shadows of the mighty walled city of Jericho. By now the adrenalin was pulsating through Joshua's body - he was psych up and ready to harness all of his military skill and launch an outright attack on the city of Jericho. As he we pondering his attack plan, the bible says he sees a man standing near him with his sword in his hand and immediately confronts the man; only to determine that this was Jehovah in human form. That is to say that this was one of those pre-Bethlehem appears of Christ. **QUESTION:** Why was Joshua so quick to rush up and confront this man in such a combative manner?

The answer may be hidden in these lines from the movie "*The Color Purple*" Sofia says: "All my life I had to fight, I had to fight my daddy, I had to fight my uncles, I had to fight my brothers, A girl child ain't safe in a family of mens- but I ain't never thought I'd have to fight in my own house!... I loves Harpo, God knows I do. But I'll kill him dead 'fo I let him beat me..." Like Joshua, we all have been guilty at some point of allowing our past experiences to shape our present responses. **QUESTIONS:** Why didn't Joshua recognize that this "man" was actually God? Why didn't Jesus' disciples recognize him in **Matthew 14:26**? In both cases these individuals had experienced God in the past but not in the manner in which he was now presenting himself. Had he come as a pillar of fire, or turning water into wine, these men would have recognized him immediately. **QUESTION:** Why is it potentially dangerous for us not to recognize God when he shows up? Well, if we don't recognize God when he shows up, we might end up

fighting the very person God sent to help you. You might end up swinging on the paramedic, or fighting your spouse or that person who is just trying to tell you the truth about your old hateful self!

We Can't Use God To Fight Our Battles

Josh 5:13-14

In his confrontation, Joshua demands that this man inform him exactly what "side" is he on? We are often consumed with the need to know who is really for us, or who is really on our side? So much so that we even want God to chose a side; preferably our side. So since you don't care for President Trump, you insist that God would have to be a Democrat. **QUESTION:** How did God respond to Joshua's interrogating question? God simply makes it clear, I'm not on either side; God is on God's side. **QUESTION:** Is it wrong to believe that you are more deserving of God's grace, mercy, love and protection more that some other person? What we really want is for God to fight our battles for us or least "with us." But it has never been about God fighting your battles – after all, I thought you said the "battle is not yours, it's the Lord's?" – if that be the case, you cannot use God to fight your battles, but God uses you to fight his battles. So then, it's not so much about God supporting your agenda, as it is about you supporting God's agenda. We need to be fighting the same thing God is warring against. **READ Ex. 17: 10 – 12.** Here we find Joshua along with Israel's armies fighting with the Amalekites. As long as Moses' arms were up Joshua and the Israelites were winning the battle, but whenever Moses' arm's lowered they would begin losing the battle. Aaron and Hur's solution was to put some stones under Moses' arms and prop them up – it worked! **QUESTION:** Not being knowledgeable of the situation with Moses' arms being held up, what might Joshua have been feeling about the victory he had gotten in the battle against the Amalekites? We have to be ever so careful not to take the glory to ourselves that rightfully belongs to God! Was it your resume or your interview skills that got you the position? Or was it the hand of God that moved in your favor?

Turn Your Situation Into A Sanctuary

READ: Josh 5:14-15

Immediately Joshua began to worship. The Lord declares to Joshua that this is "holy ground!" But I thought this was a battle ground? Wherever and whenever God shows up he provides us with the opportunity to worship. **READ Job 1:20** – after Job had gotten the word that all he ever loved and valued was dead, stolen or destroyed he told his robe, shaved his head and fell on his knees and worshipped God! **READ Psalms 22:3;** Our praise and worship it what draws God nearer to us. There Joshua is surrounded by blood thirsty enemies and facing an insurmountable challenges – and what do we find him doing? Worshipping God!

You Need Another Encounter With God

Hands down, Joshua was a master at the art of warfare and he had the reputation to prove it! But he had never encountered Jericho before? Before launching head-on into warring with Jericho, Joshua finds himself in conversations with God. Joshua needs a new strategy. He cannot rely on what worked for him in the past to give him the same victorious results in the present. He needed a new strategy for a new challenge and so do we! He discovers that this battle would not require swords and weapons; at least not at first. God just wanted them to take a walk around the city for a few days. **QUESTION:** How might these embattled warriors felt reduced to playing "follow-the-leader" for seven days? And then on the seven day the priests blew their horns and the people were told to shout. **QUESTION:** Why shout cries of victory while the wall is still standing? They learned that it's really okay to shout before the battle is over when you know you're going to win with God fighting with you.