

Remember God

BIBLE PASSAGE – Joshua 23

Joshua 23 has just 16 verses, so it's not a massive reading, don't worry!

After a long time had passed and the Lord had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then a very old man, summoned all Israel – their elders, leaders, judges and officials – and said to them: 'I am very old. You yourselves have seen everything the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the Lord your God who fought for you. Remember how I have allotted as an inheritance for your tribes all the land of the nations that remain – the nations I conquered – between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. The Lord your God himself will push them out for your sake. He will drive them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the Lord your God promised you.

'Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them. But you are to hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have until now.

'The Lord has driven out before you great and powerful nations; to this day no one has been able to withstand you. One of you routs a thousand, because the Lord your God fights for you, just as he promised. So be very careful to love the Lord your God.

'But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, ¹then you may be sure that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the Lord your God has given you.

'Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed. But just as all the good things the Lord your God has promised you have come to you, so he will bring on you all the evil things he has threatened, until the Lord your God has destroyed you from this good land he has

given you. If you violate the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, the Lord's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land he has given you.'

The context of this is that Joshua was 'old and well advanced in years.' He knew that his time to rest was near, and he wanted to pass on his wisdom, his heart and God's commands to the people.

Question – Who has made a difference in your life, in your Christian life. Why? How can you honour them, and develop / grow, perhaps even help others to grow and develop?

1. Read Verse 3:

Question – what was Joshua saying to these leaders. How can we learn from this in our daily lives?

(Help – it is the Lord who fights our battles, who helps us. He alone does this, although we can play our part. We can learn by putting everything into God's hands, all of our hopes, dreams, struggles etc.)

Read 1 Peter 5.7 out loud.

2. Read Verses 4-5:

Question – God is a faithful God. Do you know any Bible verses or stories that prove this? Share them with each other.

(Help – the Lord will do as he has promised. God is faithful – Malachi 3.6, James 1.15. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever – Hebrews 13.8).

Question – at the end of Verse 5, it ends by saying, 'as the Lord promised you.' Can you name any promises that God has made in his Word that apply to you? Write them down and then read them out loud, claiming those promises for your life. Speak out the Word of God in faith, not in a kind of 'magic' way, but genuinely believing that because God has said it, he will do what he has promised.

3. Read Verse 6:

Here we see the effect and necessity of God’s Word. Wherever we are, at work, college, Uni, we need God’s Word daily – to bring us God’s life, keep us close to him, and to keep our faith up. Don’t forget your daily quiet times / reading the Bible!

Question – Write down the effects of God’s Word according to these Bible verses:

Psalm 119.105: -----
—

Proverbs 4.20-22: -----
— —

Jeremiah 23.29: -----
—

John 10.35: -----

John 15.3: -----

John 17.17: -----

Acts 20.32: -----

2 Timothy 3.16-17: -----
— — —

1 John 2.5: -----

1 John 2:14: -----

2 Peter 1.4: -----

4. Read Verses 7-8:

Question – why did Joshua tell the Israelites to throw away their idols, not to worship foreign gods.

Question – which ‘gods’ do people worship in our nations today?

Question – what gets between you and God, doing God’s will? What can you do about this today?

5. Read Verses 9-13:

Question – from these verses, what does Joshua say are the consequences for disobeying God?

Question – from verses 12-13, what can we learn about getting too close to those who do not follow God? What can we learn about marriage?

Point – God has not just called you, if you are a Christian. He has called you to be set apart, to be one of his children, to obey him, to be pure, to be holy. We know how even a little yeast can make bread rise. We know how even a little infection (if left untreated) can spread. I know from where I live how a little slip meant petrol and not chlorine was put into a water supply, so for 2 weeks we had no tap water. Therefore, we must be sure to cut out everything in our life that doesn’t honour God, or that pollutes us.

Now, read 1 Corinthians 5.6-8 out loud.

6. Read Verses 14-16:

Summarise these 3 verses in 3 sentences:

- a. -----
- b. -----
- c. -----

Question – Today, since Jesus died and rose again, are these kinds of things really relevant? I mean, is God going to throw us out of the land if we don't obey him? What does that really mean for us as Christians?

Prayer – To End

Getting rid of idols in our lives – obeying God – thanking God – recognising God is faithful, true, trustworthy, holy.