

The Battle Still Belongs to the Lord

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Did you ever wonder if the Israelite army was growing tired of the battles? They had been fighting for quite a while. Except for the battle for the city of Ai, all the battles had been successful campaigns, yet battles can lead to serious fatigue.

This is the main thought: When we are following the God of angel armies, our lives can be filled with courage, confidence, and conviction.

It was time for Israel to take the Northern Kingdoms, but they had to trust in God in a big way.

(VV 1-5) Jabin, the king of Hazor, was afraid of the army of the nation of Israel, so he summoned several kings and almost all the tribes living in the northern part of the Promised Land. These kings and tribes responded to King Jabin by joining him and all the other kings and tribes outside the city of Merom.

“Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you (Joshua 10:8).”

We read, “When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, ‘Are you for us or for our adversaries? And he said, “No, but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped ...’

“Trust in the Lord with all our heart and not lean on our own understanding. In all our ways, let us show that we know God, and this all-knowing God will lead us in the path of His choice. Let us not be arrogantly wise in our own eyes. Rather, fear the Lord and turn away from evil.”

Not only was this experience in the life of Israel a time to learn deep trust, but it was also a time in which they had to follow through with long obedience in the same direction.

I have been surprised and, I must admit, discouraged at times, as I have seen ministry leaders whom many of us looked up to, people who started well and seemed to have accomplished great things for the kingdom of God, only to learn that they took their eyes off the prize and succumbed to one kind of temptation or another.

What about us? What about you and me?

1. Find a few friends who are also Jesus-followers to be accountable to. Find a few people with whom you can get very real with, people you can trust when you take off your mask and show your true colors, and they will still love you. They will stay with you. They will hold you accountable and walk with you down the path to restoration.
if you fall.
2. Be part of a growth group. Show up! A big part of the battle is just to show up.
3. Stay fresh! Be in God's word and in prayer daily. As we have heard Pastor Dave say many times, "Read the word and let the word read you."

The nation of Israel needed to keep in mind that their victory was God's purpose.

"For it was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the Lord commanded Moses (v. 20)."

, "... I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion (Exodus 33:19)." We only question this when we fail to understand the mercy of God. Mercy and grace are slightly different from each other. Grace is the goodness of God, though we are guilty. Mercy is the goodness of God toward us amidst our miserable state.

Who are we to measure out the grace or mercy of God? Are we wiser than God or more just than God? Are we more compassionate than God? Those who answer yes to any of these questions make themselves out to be gods in their sight.

The Lord accomplished His purpose, fulfilling his promise.

The Israelites were not just strong and determined because they saw the Lord of angel armies fighting for them; they also knew that they were receiving the land of promise.

They knew the Lord well enough to know that what He promises, He delivers. Yet, it required their obedience to continue to eliminate the other nations or people groups

"And all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua captured and struck them with the edge of the sword, devoting them to destruction, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded (v. 12)."

We go on to read, "Just as the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses (v. 15)."

The promise of God was this: “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses (Joshua 1:3).”

Chapter 11 ends with these words. “So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.”

The battles always belonged to the Lord. It was He who took down the nations that opposed Israel, but He still called Israel to fight in these battles. The nation of Israel did what they were called to do.

We are living amid many promises of God. Think about this for a minute. I ran across a list of 250 promises of God to His people in the New Testament.

- ✓ Sonship (Romans 8:14)
- ✓ Blessing even in the face of persecution (Matthew 5:11)
- ✓ Great rewards (Matthew 6:14; 18:35; Acts 10:43)
- ✓ Necessities of life (Matthew 6:30,33)
- ✓ Answers to prayer (Matthew 9:29; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:5-8)
- ✓ Soul rest (Matthew 11:28,30 Hebrews 4:9)
- ✓ Exaltation of the righteous (Matthew 13: 41-43, 49,50)
- ✓ Power to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8)
- ✓ Peace (Luke 1:79; John 14:27)
- ✓ Joy (Luke 2:10-11; 1 Peter 4:13,14)
- ✓ Wisdom (Luke 21:15; James 1:5)

Paul wrote, “... all the promises of God find their yes in Him (Jesus) ... (2 Corinthians 1:20).”

Yet, Paul warned us “... we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6: 12). So, we must keep the full armor of God on and stay in the battle until it is over.

Conclusion: I would like to conclude today with a few questions for us to ponder and challenges to consider.

Here are my questions:

1. How is your trust level? Are you trusting in the Lord amid life’s challenges?

2. Are you continuing to obey the Lord, doing what you know He has called you to do, and are you in a relationship with other believers who are also on the journey of long obedience in the same direction?
3. Are you resolute to live in the blessing of God's promises, knowing that they will all be fulfilled?
4. Are you keeping your eyes on the finish line, knowing that one day this battle will be over?