

Joshua Part 11 –God turns Defeat into Victory.

1. I wonder, just how many of us feel like giving up when we fail? It is a common temptation, to throw in the towel and feel like you have blown it and don't have any hope of getting back on track. We start believing the lie that we are "failures" and that we "are the way we are." And that we will never change.
 - a. That is the attitude of a defeated person. You often find it in the arguments of alcoholics, drug abusers and addicts. I would like to call that defeatism.
 - b. **Defeatism is the result of repeated failures and the loss of hope and vision of God.**
 - c. Perhaps you are struggling with that feeling today. Maybe you wonder if you can ever get your life together. (*failure only permanent if we give up*).
 - d. The answer is a resounding YES! How can I say that? Because there is no impossible case with God, because the word "impossible" doesn't exist in God's vocabulary – and neither should it exist in ours!
 - i. The devil wants to make you think you have to struggle to win. He doesn't want you to realize that Jesus has already won.
 - ii. The devil also wants us to play defense, but the problem with that is...we got the ball!
 1. We are on offense.
 2. We are taking back the ground that Jesus bought with His blood.
 3. Every time you pray for healing, salvation or deliverance for someone...you are giving Jesus possession of what He has already paid for.
 - iii. So rise up from your defeat and recognize you haven't lost! You fell down but you aren't beaten. The enemy is running from us! Amen.
2. Today, we are going to look at **how God turns defeat into victory**. Last week, Israel attacked the city of Ai, but they had "sin in the camp" (which is a biblical term for meaning "hidden sin" that they were knowingly concealing) which led to God not going out with their army. Consequently, they suffered a defeat at the hands of an inferior enemy. **This defeat was such an upset, it would be the equivalent of the Pittsburgh Steelers losing to the Cleveland Browns. (hey, nothings impossible, right?).**
 - a. Now the defeat of Israel was so humiliating, that they returned to their camp brokenhearted.
 - b. God speaks to them and shows they their sin, and instead of concealing it, they choose to confront it – and remove it from their camp.
 - i. Let me define sin –**Sin boils down to not letting God love you.**
 - ii. God has a wonderful plan for your life and mine...but we short circuit His plan and make our own paths, decide what is best for ourselves rather than listen to Him. As a consequence, we reject His love.
 - iii. **Like your parents, who love you, who tell you not to touch the hot wood stove because it will burn you. But you figure they don't know what they are talking about, and you lay hands on it and get burnt. You rejected your parents love (and advice) and chose your own way.**
 - iv. God isn't interested in torturing you with a bunch of rules to follow. He doesn't like to watch you ruin your life by going down the wrong path. He desires that you and I hear His voice and follow His way because they are the best for us.
 1. Because He made us, He knows what works best for us.
 2. And He sent His Son Jesus Christ to come and take the penalty for our sin – and to bear our penalty – so that we would enjoy the Father's love forever.
 - v. Reject God's love...that's not only painful but dumb!
3. Joshua 8:1-8¹ *Now the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear or be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land."*² *"You shall do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; you shall take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves. Set an ambush for the city behind it."*³ *So Joshua rose with all the people of war to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose 30,000 men, valiant warriors, and sent them out*

at night. ⁴ He commanded them, saying, "See, you are going to ambush the city from behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. ⁵ "Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And when they come out to meet us as at the first, we will flee before them. ⁶ "They will come out after us until we have drawn them away from the city, for they will say, 'They are fleeing before us as at the first.' So we will flee before them. ⁷ "And you shall rise from your ambush and take possession of the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. ⁸ "Then it will be when you have seized the city, that you shall set the city on fire. You shall do it according to the word of the LORD. See, I have commanded you."

- a. God gave them instructions on what to do next.
 - i. God cared enough about Joshua and the people that he gave them specific instructions on how to conquer the city.
 - ii. God cares enough about you that He has a specific word for your life, if you are willing to seek it.
 1. I had Richard share with me his journal this week. God spoke to him so clearly and precisely that you could feel the Presence of God in the room as he read it to me. God gave him a specific word and direction for a situation.
 - iii. God cares about the details of your life. He will speak to you.
 1. Melissa shared with me that she worries people will look at her funny because she hears God speak to her in her heart during her quiet time.
 2. I got news for you...Melissa is normal. (I know you find that hard to believe)
 3. **It is not hearing God is that not normal.**
 4. The bible is clear that God is always speaking, but we either aren't listening or we haven't developed our ability to hear clearly.
 5. In Mark 4:24-25, Jesus says, "*Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen the more understanding (revelation) you will be given –and you will receive even more. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken from them.*"
 - a. We are called to attentive listening to the voice of God. It is an ability that must be practiced and developed. The closer we listen, the more we will hear. And the more we hear, the easier it gets to hear more.
 - b. The New Living Translation says, "*Everything that is now hidden or secret will eventually be brought to light. Anyone who is willing to hear should listen and understand! And be sure to pay attention to what you hear. The more you do this, the more you will understand – and even more, besides. To those who are open to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But to those who are not listening, even what they have will be taken away from them.*"
 - c. Jesus tells us that those who aren't listening...they will be confounded by this teaching and will consider it to be nonsense that God would dare reveal His plans to them.
 - i. Maybe you are sitting here in this room and wondering how people can say that they can hear God?

APPLICATION: Are you struggling to hear God? How do you hear Him? First, start by paying attention. Read his word with a heart for a PERSONAL MESSAGE. Be watchful for how God confirms His word to you. Listen for the repeated message God gives through other sources. **Two weeks ago, you heard Jim Quiggle talk about getting confirmation 3 or 4 times before he was willing to move forward. But you know what...God wasn't displeased because Jim sought confirmation...God, I believe, was pleased that Jim was LISTENING!**

- b. Here is the pattern that Israel learned in the desert...**listen for God, watch for what God is doing, and do it.**

- i. If God moves, we move. If God stops, we stop.
 - ii. In this case of Joshua and the city of AI, God tells them what to do next.
 - iii. This is the pattern for the Christian life as well. What is God telling us to do next?
Ge...do you think this might have something to do with our time of fasting and prayer?
 - iv. Most of us think that God audibly talked to the people in the bible, and as a consequence, we will certainly never hear from God. Yes, God did occasionally speak audibly in the bible to people.
 - 1. But the bible doesn't generally specify HOW God spoke, but rather focuses on the fact that God did communicate with His people.
 - 2. God speaks to us. The bible calls it a "Revelation" or "Rhema" when God speaks to you and I.
 - a. It is a spiritual insight or understanding of God's will, ways or purposes. It can be as simple as a fresh understanding of a biblical truth to actually hearing God speak to your heart and mind about something you should do or say.
 - b. I feel like our church has pretty much understood this to be true, and often the testimonies many of you share bear witness to this truth.
 - v. In Joshua's case, God gave him a promise that the king, people, city and land was given into Joshua's hand. It was a forgone decision by God. Joshua would need only to walk in God's instructions and promise. This is key to understanding how we are to pursue the will of God.
- c. Here are a few other scriptures that talk about revelation:
- i. Ps. 119:18 "*Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.*"
 - 1. The psalmist asks that His eyes be opened to see the wonderful things in God's living word, the bible. If you are having a hard time seeing the wonderful things God desires to speak to you, ASK!. Can everyone here say "ASK." **Ask God to open your spiritual eyes.**
 - ii. Mt 16:16-17 "*Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.*"
 - 1. God is the revealer of truth. It doesn't originate in us. Peter blurted out this probably not even knowing what he was saying. That is the way it is with Divine Revelation.
 - 2. Revelation isn't given to us to make us smarter or to make us look better in other people's eyes. You might remember the next words out of Jesus were a rebuke to Peter who wanted to spare his version of the Messiah from the cross. Simon Peter's revelation didn't make him smarter...if anything, it brought him a sharp rebuke and a lot of humility.
 - a. Application: When (not if) God speaks to you and shows you something marvelous, He isn't giving it to you to make you look good. *We must treasure revelation in our hearts and ponder it and seek to understand it and unwrap it, like Mary did when the angel told her she would be the mother of the Messiah.*
 - 3. **Revelation is given to us to mold our lives.** God wants you to treasure His voice and to ponder its meaning and to act upon His words.
 - a. If He gives you a dream, don't write it off...write it down!
 - b. If He lines up a series of coincidences that show you His will in a matter, don't dismiss them, rather act upon them in faith.
 - c. Joshua didn't sit down and say, "Wow, God spoke to me today - woohoo, look at me! No, He acted upon the instructions of the Lord.
 - iii. Jeremiah 33:33 "*Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*"

1. God desires to show us incredible things we cannot even grasp or imagine. We think that this applies only to the world to come or to some holy monks somewhere. But it applies to all of us. God desires to speak to you and to lead you into all truth. (the Counselor will lead you into all truth).
2. **Truth is eternal and infinite.** That's what I get from the *unsearchable things* from this verse. Google can't find them all! And we can't know them all. We haven't even scratched the surface of God's infinite revelation of Himself to us – but we will have eternity to do so.
3. However...consider this...
 - a. You will not be able to thank God in the midst of your suffering in heaven. Because it is something you can only do here on earth.
 - b. You will not be able to praise God in the midst of your sorrow in heaven, because sorrow is limited to this earth.
 - c. There are some truths that will have meaning only upon this earth – and we must search them out
 - d. You won't be able to share the gospel with someone in heaven and experience the joy of watching a new birth...because only people who have believed the gospel and are born again will be in heaven.
 - e. In fact, this world is the only place where you can give God your life and receive Christ as your savior. It is the only place where you can be born again and experience the miracle of brand new life. If you haven't done it, God wants to make you his child today.
- d. Do you want victory in your life? Overcoming failure, pain, disease, sickness, sin? Draw near to God and ask Him to open your ears. Become an active listener!