

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Sun Standing Still

Joshua 9:1 – 10:43

Theme: *Focus*

Major Segments:

- The Gibeonites fool the Israelites into a peace treaty
- Five kings war against Gibeon, Joshua asks God for more time and the rout the attacking armies
- Joshua executes the five kings

Segment Questions:

- Read the reference scripture at the bottom of the story, Joshua 1:1-8. What do you notice about God's covenant with Joshua? What things are expected of God and what things are expected of Joshua? These verses set a wonderful tone for the book of Joshua.
- Word had gotten out about this people traveling up from Egypt. What are feelings you would have felt as a leader of one of the cities to be conquered? What feelings would you have as an Israelite?
- The Gibeonites decided to trick Joshua and the Israelites in a clever way. What options would they have had? What does the line, "The men of Israel looked at their provisions, but didn't seek guidance from the Lord," mean? What options did the men of Israel have? What were they supposed to do?
- What do we learn about Joshua from his reaction to finding out they were deceived by the Gibeonites? What would your reaction have been? Gibeon is then attacked by other kings. Why should Joshua help them?
- What do the hailstones and the miracle of the sun standing still tell us about the story? What does it reveal about God? What does it reveal about Joshua and the people of Israel?
- We see an echo of God's covenant with Joshua at the end of our story, "Be strong and courageous" being careful to be obedient to God's law. Was the execution of the 5 kings an act of obedience?

Action Questions:

- Joshua was chosen by God to lead His people into the Promised Land. What can we as men, (husbands, fathers, leaders) learn from Joshua about the importance of focus in our everyday lives? How is Joshua's focus different from your own?
- The words convicting the men of Israel that they "did not seek guidance from the Lord," are haunting. Is seeking guidance your first reaction to a new situation? What are some ways/disciplines/habits that we can move our focus from ourselves handling a situation to being responsive to God in our situations?
- Was God's goal accomplished in the absence of seeking guidance? God is faithful. That is the theme of Joshua. Can we focus on God's story and seek obedience in our lives?

Joshua 9:1 – 10:43

From: www.btstories.com

The news of the destruction of Jericho and Ai spread throughout Canaan. Most of the cities formed alliances in order to protect themselves from Israel. But one city decided to do something different.

A group of men from the city of Gibeon dressed up in old clothes and worn-out sandals. They put old sacks on their donkeys, packed stale dry bread, and carried old wineskins. They devised a story that they had been on a long journey and wanted to make a treaty with Israel. The men of Israel looked at their provisions, but didn't seek guidance from the Lord. So Joshua made a treaty with them. The elders of Israel vowed that the two nations would be allies.

Three days after the treaty, Israel found out that the Gibeonites lived in Canaan, close by. Joshua sent for them and said, "Why did you deceive us?" Even though deceived, Joshua honored his treaty and didn't kill them. They became slaves and were to cut wood and carry water and serve the House of the Lord."

The other kings of the land heard that the people of Gibeon had made peace with Israel. They joined together and marched against their city. The men of Gibeon sent word asking for his protection since they were now his slaves.

So Joshua marched his army through the night and surprised those fighting against Gibeon. They tried to fight back, but the Israelite army was too strong for them. The Lord also sent large hailstones on them, and more people were killed by hail than by the sword.

Joshua needed more time, so he looked up and said, "Sun, stand still over Gibeon!" The Lord heard his command and honored it. The sun stopped moving across the sky. Never in the past, nor since, has there been a day like that.

Five kings ran and hid in a cave, but someone told Joshua. He said, "Roll a stone across the entrance of the cave." He then stationed men to guard it. Once Israel had sealed their victory, Joshua brought the kings out of the cave. He told his commanders to put their feet on the necks of the kings. He said, "Be strong and courageous. The Lord will do this to all your enemies." He then executed the five kings. Joshua led his army from city to city, and the Lord gave him victory wherever he went.

REFERENCE: Joshua 1:1-8 – The LORD said to Joshua, Moses' assistant, "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.