

BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS (JOSHUA 1:9)

TEXTS: Joshua, Philippians and Sacramental Services

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

The people of Israel had been landless for nearly 500 years. Their fathers (Patriarchs); Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his 12 sons had been wanderers in the land of Canaan. That was followed by a long period of slavery in Egypt. A miraculous deliverance into freedom led by Moses and then forty years of testing and training by God for a people free and under God's guidance and blessing had occurred. The company camped at the Jordan on the day that opens the book of Joshua. The transition from being landless slaves to landholding free men and women was huge.

Joshua leads the transition, first in taking the land (chapters 1-12), then in distributing it among the twelve tribes (chapters 13-22), and concluding with a solemn covenant-witness (chapters 23-24) that bound the people to the gift of land and the worship of the God from whom they received it.

AN OVERVIEW ON THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. When we read the book of Philippians, we see something more like a Disciple-Master relationship. Like in apprenticeship, much is required of the Philippian Church who haven't been around Paul, who out of many years of devoted discipline and discipleship had shown the gospel of Christ and have seen how the church also showed great love for Christ Jesus and the ministry of Apostle Paul by their generosity in giving towards his work. In summary, the Philippian book exposes Paul's happy state with the church in Philippi.

STUDY ONE

TOPIC: CHRIST TO BE PREACHED COME-WHAT-MAY

TEXTS: Philippians 1:12-18, Mark 16: 15, Matt 10:7-8

MEMORY VERSE: Phil 1:18 –“What then, notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice”. **(KJV)**

AIM: To remind and encourage us on the most important assignment of every Christian.

INTRODUCTION

Paul in prison expressed his amazement to the church in Philippi of how the wonderful things God had done through his stay in Rome. Especially, on how the message of Christ could not be imprisoned although he was in prison. Paul shared testimony of how he preached the gospel in prison and how that through his sufferings, he succeeded in converting many to the faith.

However, Paul also noted that some of the believers who were there in Rome felt happy that he was in prison who thought it wise to seize the opportunity to come into spotlight to preach Christ for their selfish reasons perhaps to outshine Paul.

DISCUSSION

1. Highlight and discuss the attitude of the believers in Rome. Philippians 1: 7, 15-17
2. How does the attitude of the believers in Rome relate to our present-day realities?
3. How best should the gospel of Christ be preached? 1 Tim. 4:13, 2 Timothy 4:2

CONCLUSION: Despite the struggle for spotlight, Paul had a resolve of himself that as long as Christ was preached and people were saved he had no problem with them. However, this should be done with good motives, as our Lord Jesus Christ recommended.

STUDY TWO

TOPIC: HANDLING CHALLENGES

TEXTS: Philippians 1: 27-30

MEMORY VERSE: Phil 1:27 –“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ. That whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs; that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel”. **(KJV)**

AIM: To encourage the unity of the spirit.

INTRODUCTION

The church was still under intense persecution as we could see Paul going through one in Rome. In his opening speech to the Philippians, we could see Paul admonishing the church who were also experiencing similar situation. In Paul's remark, the response a Christian should display when in trials and temptation is one of deeper commitment to the gospel of Christ knowing fully well that when we accepted him, we accepted both his blessings and sufferings.

DISCUSSION

1. What are the challenges facing the church today that has increased disunity among believers? Acts 6:1-6
2. Discuss the cure for the problems highlighted in 1 above.
3. Using these scriptural passages as a guide, how should we as believers handle conflict:
 - I. Peacemakers – Matt. 5: 9
 - II. Wisdom -1 Kings 3:16-28

CONCLUSION

Meanwhile, we live in a more chaotic and perilous time, Paul gave a charge not to the church in Philippi alone, but what has come to be the general church; we should live in such a way that gives credit to the gospel of Christ. Stand united, singular in vision, contending for people's trust in the gospel of Christ (the Good news) not flinching or dodging in the slightest before the opposition.

STUDY THREE

TOPIC: THE MAN EPAPHRODITUS

TEXTS: Philippians 2: 25-30

MEMORY VERSE: Phil 2: 5 –“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”.
(KJV)

AIM: To remind us of the labour of Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone needs an Epaphroditus. Apostle Paul had one! The young man Epaphroditus was of the native of Philippi. He had been in active service to Paul throughout his ministry and served as a middle man between Paul and the church in Philippi. However, in his bid to carry out act of service, he fell ill, even unto death. And not regarding his life, he did the mission work all the same with oneness of heart so much so that Paul took out time to applaud his effort in the lines that preceded his charge to the church to bare a mindset that was of the exemplary life of Jesus.

DISCUSSION

1. From the life of Epaphroditus, what can we observe? (Practical discussion)
2. What other lessons can we learn from the lives of these persons:
 - i. Epaphras –Col 4:12

- ii. Timothy – 2 Tim 1:1-6, 13
 - iii. John Mark, Phygellus and Hermogenes- Acts 15:36-38; 2 Timothy 1: 15
3. What do we understand as “the mind of Christ”? Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Peter 4:1-2, 5:6

CONCLUSION: We are encouraged to do our work with the whole of our hearts fit into it and do it best. Knowing fully well that every service rendered is to God and not men. “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men”. Col 3:23

STUDY FOUR

TOPIC: GOAL SETTING; A MANDATE

TEXTS: Phil 3: 7-14; Ephesians 1:4-5

MEMORY VERSE: Phil 3: 13-14 –“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”. **(KJV)**

AIM: To help Christians remain on track

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where it is easier to be distracted by the noise of the world systems, then to consciously remain in faith. Paul to the Philippian church acknowledged the fact that there are many things in life outside the life of Christ that may seem interesting. These, Apostle Paul called “dung” as opposed to the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. To Paul, life is more about Jesus than any other thing. Such should become our disposition in response to the benevolence of God’s grace and mercies.

DISCUSSION

1. How does the zeal of Paul encourage us in our daily work with God? 1 Cor. 9: 26-27,
2. In what ways can a believer avoid and overcome distractions (practical discussion)
3. What lesson can we draw up from Acts 16:16-18 and Habakkuk 2:1-3 in relation to setting our priorities?

CONCLUSION

We’re citizens of high heaven! We’re waiting the arrival of the savior, the master, Jesus Christ; He will transform our earthy bodies into glorious bodies like his own. As he tarries, let us wait on him because he comes quickly.

STUDY FIVE

TOPIC: CONTENTMENT

TEXTS: Philippians 4:8-13

MEMORY VERSE: Phil 4:12 –“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need”. –**MSG (Contemporary language)**

AIM: To help us learn to manage whatever situation we find ourselves.

INTRODUCTION

Paul through the many events that had happened to him, as a faithful soldier, zealous only now to the pleasing of God had encountered diverse situations, good and bad and mixed. In this part of his letter to the Philippians, he tells them of how he managed through the situations around him. “I’ve learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances”. This part could well pose a challenge to a Christian today who may be finding it difficult to accept some situations.

DISCUSSION

1. Reflect on these scriptures and relate them to how we can handle situations (Matthew 17: 24-27; Luke 9: 12-17; Philippians 4: 6
2. What can be the possible breaking point of a Christian today? (Practical question)
3. What consolation can we find in these scriptures: Phil. 4: 2; Ps. 16:5; John 14: 27

CONCLUSION

God is interested in blessing you with everything you need. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD”. (Isaiah 55:8) The Psalmist would encourage us, “Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart”. (Ps 37:4)

STUDY SIX

TOPIC: THE TAKING OF THE LAND

TEXTS: Joshua 1:12-18

MEMORY VERSE: Josh 1:16 –“And they answered Joshua, saying, all that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go”. (**KJV**)

AIM: To show believers the oneness of heart and spirit.

INTRODUCTION

The tribe of Reuben, Gad and a half tribe of Manasseh were already land owners as they received their own portion of the promised land in a battle led by Moses against the Amorites before the crossing of the Jordan river. At this point, they had nothing to do with war or taking of any land again. But the other nine tribes were still yet to receive theirs and these 3 tribes happened to have a larger amount of warriors fit for battle.

Joshua Son of Nun approached them and said, “You will still go to war with your brothers and help them take their inheritance!” They did.

It is really amazing because they regarded not the fact that some of them already free could die in the battle trying to help others. They were later released to go back to their own inheritance after they had helped the nine tribes take their inheritance (Joshua 22:4)

DISCUSSION

1. What moral lessons can we gain from the 3 tribes (practical discussion)
2. From the lesson of the 3 tribes of Israel, what do you understand by the word “brother’s keeper”? Gen 4: 8-9
3. How can the lessons from the 3 tribes help us fight against terrorism that serves as a treat to the church today?

CONCLUSION: The selflessness of the Reubenites, Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh has again thrown a challenge to each and every one of us to help our neighbors. There is no doubt what we can achieve.

STUDY SEVEN

TOPIC: THE SCARLET ROPE 1

TEXTS: Joshua 2: 1-24

MEMORY VERSE: Ephesians 1:13 –“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise”. **(KJV)**

AIM: To recognize Christ as our Passover.

INTRODUCTION

The story of Ra'hab and the 2 spies sent from Joshua the son of Nun is one of true bravery. The children of Israel lay still in their tents awaiting the command to besiege Jericho and the master plan to take a city heavily built with great architectural skill is required of Joshua. However, for this study, we shall be focusing on the scarlet thread.

The spies must have remembered how God in his divine deliverance to the people of Israel from captivity used the blood of the Lamb slain on the night of Passover to mark their houses separate from that of the Egyptians and so when the angel of death came and moved throughout the land, all their first born were spared while the first born of the Egyptians were killed.

DISCUSSION

1. What is the blood of Jesus Christ? 1 John 1: 7

2. Using these scriptural verses, how does the scarlet rope relate to the Blood of Jesus Christ? Eph. 1:17
3. In spite of the great salvation God gave to us by the cross, why are so many still bound today and are dying under the tyranny of sin? Col. 1:20

CONCLUSION: God declared his displeasure with the acts of the children of Israel through His prophet Isaiah. Although pained, yet God was still ready to make his relationship with the people work, as He declared in Isaiah 1:16-18.

STUDY EIGHT

TOPIC: GILGAL

TEXTS: Joshua 5:2-9

MEMORY VERSE: Hebrews 12:2b –“Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us”. (**KJV**)

AIM: To remind us to set aside any thing that serves as weight in complete surrender to God.

INTRODUCTION

GILGAL: “I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt.”

The children of Israel had successfully crossed over the waters of Jordan to Jericho. And this was an event that showcased the magnificent hand of God. Now, however, in the demands that followed, God could no longer tolerate going into battle with the uncircumcised Israelites. And therefore, demanded that the men be circumcised.

All of these were in keeping with the covenant between Abraham and God. The Israelites that left Egypt were circumcised formerly in the wilderness but because of their much murmuring and lack of faith; that generation died out. It was their children who took over that made it across the Jordan River and since they had not been circumcised, it was required of them. After the circumcision was over, God declared “I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt”, In other words, now they were fit for conquering the land.

DISCUSSION

1. From the study, what can we say is circumcision?
2. What can we deduce are the plagues troubling the church today as a result of uncircumcision?
3. What solutions can be done to the problems as highlighted in 2 above?

CONCLUSION: Col 2:11-12 “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead”.

STUDY NINE

TOPIC: THE SCARLET ROPE 2

TEXTS: Joshua 6: 1-23

MEMORY VERSE: Ephesians 1: 13 –“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (**KJV**)

AIM: To remind us that the blood of Christ Jesus is our Passover.

INTRODUCTION

As a continuation of our study on the scarlet rope, the day of the total destruction of Jericho had befallen them. Nothing is to be taken either alive or dead. A city heavily fortified is on the verge of been broken to shambles. RAHAB and her household are on this day remembered. The red thread tied on the window of her house proved to be the only sign needed to save her and the entire family. Notice here that the oath included that anyone found outside the house under the scarlet rope is killed. Only those inside the covering of the scarlet are preserved.

DISCUSSION

1. How effective do we see the blood of Jesus Christ? Rev. 12: 11, Col. 2: 13-15; Heb. 9:22
2. With all the faith proclamations going out in the church and in the market place, why are believers still been plagued: is it a sign that the covering scarlet is not there or Christians have moved outside the house? (discuss)
3. Was there any other way Rahab and her household could have been saved aside from the red thread? Josh. 2:17-20

CONCLUSION

The blood of the paschal lamb was a type of the Lamb of God – Christ our Passover. The word "Paschal" means "to pass over; to spread the wings over, to spare; preserve; protecting." It refers to a specific time and place in the history of Israel when God's judgment passed over and the Lord stood guard protecting those who trusted in Him.

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Have you put your trust in Christ alone to save you for all eternity? It is God's free gift to all who will call upon His name.

STUDY TEN

TOPIC: THE ACCURSED THING 1

TEXTS: Joshua 7: 1-26; Genesis 2:16-17

MEMORY VERSE: Genesis 2:17 –“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”. (**KJV**)

AIM: To give us a charge of the things God has said “touch not”.

INTRODUCTION

Every child of God has been called to enjoy of the abundant benevolence of God. However, in keeping with this, there are things He may not want us to possess. In this case, Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah took an accursed thing. Like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. For the numerous atrocities in the land, God had given Joshua the son of Nun an undisputable strategy to bring down Jericho and among the instructions; nothing was to be taken to themselves. The children of Israel were preparing for their next mission not realizing that someone in the camp had violated God’s order.

DISCUSSION

1. Highlight the attitude of Achan? Josh. 7:1, 20-21
2. The attitude of ACHAN the son of Carmi can be related to certain behaviors in the churches today, can we identify them? (practical discussion)
3. What suitable solutions can we give to the issues highlighted in 2 above.
4. What lesson can we draw from these persons:
 - i. Adam – Gen. 3:23
 - ii. David -2 Sam. 12: 13-15

CONCLUSION

The story of Achan is one that Apostle Paul will stress in His letter to the Corinthians; 2 Corinth 6:14-18, where he emphasized that a Christian shouldn't be unequally yoked with unbelievers and flee idolatry. At various landmarks of our lives, let us do the needful and stay in God's business.

STUDY ELEVEN

TOPIC: THE ACCURSED THING 2

TEXTS: Joshua 8: 1-2

MEMORY VERSE: Joshua 8:2b –“only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves:” (KJV)

AIM: To help us obey God completely

INTRODUCTION

This may seem like a contrast to the first instruction of ‘Touch not!’ But God’s ways are different from man’s ways. As an act of tribute to God, the children of Israel were instructed not to take anything from the spoils of Jericho perhaps the first victory was an offering to God. Like a first fruit offering of the land as he commanded through Moses. Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zadbi, the son of Zerah from the tribe of Judah failed to follow instruction and was too fast to possessing things whereas there was still a provision for that in the agenda of God.

Sometimes we may want to be quicker than God in acquiring something which He has not approved that we forget to obey his last command. King Saul the son of Cush in 1 Samuel 15 did a similar thing by offering a sacrifice in place of Samuel the priest.

DISCUSSION

1. What lessons can we draw from this study and also in the case of Achan at Jericho?
Joshua 7
2. Highlight God’s desires for us with the following scriptures:
 - I. Prosperity – Deuteronomy 8:18; 3 John 2
 - II. Obedience – 1 Samuel 15:22-23
 - III. Eternal Life – Genesis 2: 16-17; John 3: 16

CONCLUSION: Whereas God said touch not, it is good to know that He has good things in store for us; and when He says, “don’t touch”, it could only be for our benefit.

STUDY TWELVE

TOPIC: LAND DISTRIBUTION

TEXTS: Joshua 18:10

MEMORY VERSE: Josh 24:29 –“And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the Son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old”. (**KJV**)

AIM: To remind believers of the passion to follow instructions completely

INTRODUCTION

Most important to Joshua’s fierce and devout determination to win land for his people was his extraordinary attention to getting all the tribes and their families name by name assigned to their own place. Joshua lays a firm foundation for a life that is grounded. The (chapters 13 to 22) book of Joshua is a huge account of how this event took place. Joshua the son of Nun gave all he had to ensure that the instructions given to him by Moses and God were carried out to completion. In Joshua 13:1 when he was old and well stricken in age, God came to him and acknowledged that he was old and physical strength was already failing him and also much land were still to be possessed. But this never made him relent. He divided appropriately the Promised inheritance of the children of Israel and charged them to go possess it. Interestingly also, the daughters of Zelophehad came to demand inheritance from their father’s portion as Zelophehad their father had no son, only daughters. Joshua gave them their inheritance among their kinsmen.

DISCUSSION

1. How do we see the faithfulness of God to the Israelites? Josh. 24: 2-13
2. The issue of land distribution has been a tug of war among families and communities for years, what lesson can we draw out from the case of Joshua the son of Nun on land disputes? (Practical discussion)
3. What lesson does the apportioned inheritance to Zelophehad daughters’ reflect? Josh. 17:3-4;

CONCLUSION: Joshua the son of Nun died at 110 years old. A life spent in service to his master Moses and to God. Joshua kept all that God instructed him to do through Moses his servant before his death and the young man carried out this instruction from the crossing of the Jordan to the conquering and effective distribution of the Promised Land to the children of Israel. He fulfilled purpose. Josh 21:43-45

STUDY THIRTEEN

TOPIC: THE BATTLE IN VICTORY

TEXTS: Joshua 1: 1-11, 21:43-45

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 8: 31 –“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? ”. (**KJV**)

AIM: To serve as a reminder to us that the battle is the LORD's

INTRODUCTION

God has already won a battle he proposes. We just need to key into the reality of God and the strategies He bring. Through the disobedience of one man (Adam) sin entered the world and death reigned; much more now is salvation and life through one man (Christ Jesus). Christ Jesus our LORD conquered death and so we were given a life of victory even before we started out on the journey of faith. Like the case of the children of Israel in the wilderness, God fought for them. Their enemies thought in their hearts that they were contending with just mere people seeking pastures, who came out of slavery from Egypt. In the agenda of God, However, the Land which they pursue had already been promised to their ancestors. They only now had need to follow due instructions to possess what is rightfully theirs.

DISCUSSION

1. How do we know God fights for us? Heb. 6:18; Tit. 1:2; Ps. 89: 35
2. Give Practical instances on how God's hand recorded victory to you. (Practical discussion)
3. With the scriptures provided, reflect on God's possibilities to us (Romans 8:31-39; Jer. 32:26-27; Num. 23 :19; Josh. 24:2-14)

CONCLUSION

Our victory through life's huddles is in God's Hand. Isaiah 46:9 "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me". If we can acknowledge Him in our battles, then we shall see His ultimate Hand.