

“Cry Out”

Joshua 9-10

8/29/10
Open House
9 & 10:45 amSeries, “*New Beginnings*”**INTRODUCTION**

For the last five weeks we have been looking at a new beginning for the people of Israel. They are following their **new leader**, Joshua, into a **new land** that God promised them, facing a **new challenge** unlike any they have faced before, taking the promised land from its current inhabitants.

And, overall things have been going well ...

- God promised to be with them, and He has,
- Joshua has trusted God to establish him as the new leader, and God has,
- They have learned to listen to the voice of God and trust Him,
- They have learned the importance of obeying God.

This morning we’re going to see the next key lesson God has for them:

When God leads in a New Beginning, make prayer a high priority.

OPEN to Joshua 9 (**PAGE** 343)

I. Make Prayer Your Priority (Joshua 9)

A. Joshua was a man of prayer (Exodus 33:7-11)

Throughout this book we have seen how he seeks God and how he hears God’s answers.

Joshua’s life of prayer was valued and cultivated when he was assistant to Moses. One of the especially insightful instances of this is recorded in Exodus 33:

Exodus 33:7-11 **“Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the ‘tent of meeting.’ Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. 8 **And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent.** 9 **As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses.** 10 **Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to his tent.** 11 **The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.”****

Joshua saw what meeting with God was like by being with Moses when he spoke with God.

And the point came when Joshua would stay in the tent of meeting after Moses left, talking to God, and listening.

It appears he didn’t want his relationship with God to be second-hand, through Moses, but first-hand and personal, 1-1.

But, in the situation we come to today ...

B. Joshua failed to seek God

READ Joshua 9:1-16

It wasn’t that Joshua was neglectful of prayer as a lifestyle, but *this time*, for whatever reasons, he didn’t stop to talk to God.

What he did do were some very good and important things:

C. Joshua and the leaders performed due-diligence
(*due diligence*: a careful process of inquiry/evaluation)

v. 7a **“But perhaps you live near us.”**

v. 8b **“But Joshua asked, ‘Who are you and where do you come from?’”**

These questions are very important because God had given them clear instructions before they entered the land regarding making treaties. He said that if the people lived inside the promised land, no treaties. But, if they lived outside the borders of the land, it was OK to make a treaty.

So, they're operating according to God's instructions.

Next ...

v. 14a **"The men of Israel sampled their provisions ..."**

They checked out the facts ... dried, crusty bread, cracked wineskins, worn-out clothes and sandals.

The evidence backs up what the newcomers are saying ...

v. 15: **"Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath."**

But, the second half of v. 14 tells us there was a problem:

Joshua 9:14 **"The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD."**

This is the statement that makes us realize that due diligence w/o seeking God is negligence ... Let me say that again, because it is vital:

due diligence without seeking God is negligence

Three days later they learned the Gibeonites were neighbors ... up the hill a few days away.

Sometimes what seems obvious is not true. And since the leaders didn't stop to ask God to make the situation clear, they were deceived. And they were responsible for their own deception.

They were deceived because they did not ask God for wisdom in dealing with this delegation of complete strangers ... and they made a treaty, in the name of the LORD, with people He had expressly told them not to make a treaty with.

Due diligence without seeking God is negligence

D. As a result of their oath, they had to keep their word

Today, we could say the contract was null and void because one party was guilty of misrepresentation, fraud.

In that day, when God's people made a treaty in God's name, it had to be kept (9:18). The burden was upon God's people to make sure the details were legitimate before they made an oath in God's name.

So, the treaty is binding on Israel. For them to knowingly break it would be to discredit and dishonor the name of the Lord; violating the second commandment (Exodus 20:7).

So, in v. 17-27 we find that Joshua and the people march to Gibeon, keep the treaty, but require the Gibeonites to become their slaves, cutting wood for all the people and for the sacrifices offered to God for all generations.

What keeps us from praying?

I thought the three stories presented on the screens revealed some pretty common reasons:

- wanting something so badly that we don't slow down to talk to God about it,
- fear of rejection, fear of God not responding,
- bitterness or resentment towards God,
- Sometimes we've made a big investment in a certain direction, and we're concerned that if we pray, it could mean God could send us in a different direction, so we don't ask Him.
- Sometimes we feel too busy to stop and pray,
- Sometimes it's that we've not cultivated a life of prayer, so it doesn't even cross our minds,
- Sometimes, unconsciously, not valuing God's direction, not feeling the need for God's wisdom. We know what we're doing, we know what we see, we know the facts, and that is enough.

When we fail to pray, we're neglecting, even refusing the mighty resources of God Himself.

I. Make Prayer Your Priority

II. When You Pray Expect God to Respond (Joshua 10)

In chapter 10 we see the exact opposite of what just happened. We see one of the most remarkable prayers in the entire Bible, and an unimaginable answer to that prayer.

In the first five verses we see that the five kings in the same region as the Gibeonites hear that the Gibeonites have made a treaty with Israel, and about the Israelite's military victories over Jericho and Ai. So, they join forces and attack the town of Gibeon.

READ Joshua 10:6-14

Joshua cries out to God and *the sun stops moving!*

This kind of prayer springs from the heart of someone practiced in prayer and someone who has seen the hand of God move amongst His people.

- Joshua experienced God providing manna in the desert for 40 years.
- He saw God bring streams of water out of rocks while in the desert.
- He had cultivated a life of prayer by watching Moses, and then lingering to pray in the tent of meeting.
- He had seen God part the Red Sea and stop the flow of the Jordan river.
- And that very day, in battle, he saw God bring a hail storm, huge rocks of hail upon the enemy.

And, so, in the midst of a battle, seeing that they are routing the enemy, seeing that God is fighting for them,

... and realizing that they aren't going to have enough daylight to finish the battle, his heart cries out to God:

**"O sun, stand still over Gibeon,
O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."**

He is at Gibeon and the sun is overhead. The Valley of Aijalon is to the east, where the moon will appear in the evening.

And God works a miracle that day. He stops the sun for almost a full day.

To make sure we get what was just written, the author goes on to say, **“There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a man [like this!]”** (v. 14)

This kind of prayer and this kind of response from God is unusual. But, God answering prayer is regular occurrence for those who pray!

Solomon’s prayer: 1 Kings 3

He asks God for wisdom- **“a wise and discerning heart to administer justice.”** God gave it!

Elisha’s prayer: 2 Kings 2

He asked for a double portion of the spirit that was upon Elijah, the prophet who trained him. That’s a big request! God gave it!

Hannah’s prayer: I Samuel 1 and 2

Hannah, who for years has been unable to conceive a child, asks God for a son and promises to give him back to God. God gave her a son! And Hannah gave him back to the Lord and he became Samuel, a great prophet of God.

Jabez’s prayer: 1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Bless me, use me, mark me, protect me. And God gave him his request.

James 1: God promises to give wisdom to those who ask and believe He will give it.

Philippians 4:6-7: When we are anxious, stress-filled, God tells us to take our needs and requests to Him. And when we do, He replaces our anxiety with His peace.

1 John 5:14-15 **“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.**

15 And if we know that He hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of Him.”

ILLUSTRATION

"In his book Beyond Jabez, Bruce Wilkinson shares the story of an old African woman who demonstrated faith in God's power to provide. Although she lived in a tiny mud hut, she had taken on the responsibility of caring for 56 orphans.

"A small group of Wilkinson's 'Dream for Africa' volunteers had arrived in this grandmother's native Swaziland to plant gardens. On the final day of their visit, they came upon her tiny home, surrounded by the many children in her care. A number of little gardens had been dug up all around the hut, but oddly, no plants were growing in any of them.

The volunteers learned that, earlier on the same day, the woman had told the children to dig lots of gardens. When the children asked her why — since they had neither seeds nor money — she responded, 'Last night I asked God to send someone to plant gardens for us. We must be ready for them when they come.'

Wilkinson's volunteers had come with hundreds of ready-to-plant seedlings. God sent them to the very place where one of His servants had begged for His intervening hand. The faithful grandmother and her children were ready when the answer came."

Bruce Wilkinson with Brian Smith, Beyond Jabez (Multnomah, 2005), pp. 147-148

There are also times when God says "no" to our requests. He says, "no," because, if He said "yes," it would not accomplish His perfect will—for Him or for us.

When we pray, a "no" is as good as a "yes," because both are the perfect will of God for our lives.

Do you know what may have been God's most difficult "no" to someone's prayer?

It was when He said "no," to His Son.

When Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, knowing that the next day would bring crucifixion and death, He asked His Father to change the plan but then He added, "**Yet not My will, but Yours be done.**" (Luke 22:42)

The Father said, "no." Jesus accepted that answer. And as a result Jesus was crucified. But, through His sacrifice, the sins of the entire world for all time for every person were paid. And the door to God's complete forgiveness and a relationship with Him was made available to every person.

That means that when you and I pray, asking God to forgive us based upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, He will do it.

CONCLUSION

Does hearing how God responds to people inspire you to take a step in cultivating a life of prayer?

Let me give you a few ideas on how to get started:

- Make a prayer list of your greatest concerns, greatest desires, greatest needs, and begin to regularly lay them before the Father with an open heart.
- Pray the Psalms (see how transparent you can be with God)
- Pray as you read the Bible. "What does that mean?" Or, "I'd like you to do that in me, Father!" Or, "Help me to put this verse into action."
- Pray through your schedule each day or at the beginning of each week.
- Begin each day giving yourself to God, end each day reflecting and thanking Him for what He has done.

Father in Heaven, thank You for answering Jesus' prayer with a "no" so that I could know You, talk with You, listen to You, be adopted as Your child forever. Please help me as I cultivate my relationship with You in prayer. In Jesus' name, Amen."