

By Faith...

Joshua 10

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Let's look at Joshua 10. This is a pretty unique Old Testament story and we'll see what we can learn from it. That song "We will walk by faith and not by sight" is a challenge for us in our walk with God literally that we would each embrace the calling that God puts before us and we would embrace that as a walk of faith. That's an uncomfortable and vulnerable walk but I think it's what God is calling us to do and teaching us to do. It serves as a great challenge for each and every one of us.

I need to give you a little bit of background of Joshua 9 to set up the story in Joshua 10. These two chapters together just create an incredible story. It's a wonderful story that ought to be told and taught and taught and taught because it's a unique story to show how God and man relate in terms of God calling man to perform His will and how we balance that with our responsibility of what God does and what each and every one of us do.

The Israelites are God's chosen people but they are now in slavery in Egypt due to disobedience so God raises up Moses to go get them out of slavery but he deals with Pharaoh and the ten plagues. They go through the encounter of "Let My people go" and they go back and forth and finally Pharaoh relents once the Lord allows Pharaoh to relent but that's a whole other sermon. Pharaoh relents and you have the exodus where they are leaving slavery, finally escaping the yoke of slavery. They head away from Egypt and they are pursued by the Egyptian army. They get to the Red Sea and it is parted. They go across the Red Sea on dry land and I love that picture. To me it's like walking through the Aquarium in Atlanta or Chattanooga. They make it through all of that and on the back side of that the Egyptian army comes after them and the Egyptian army is completely destroyed. I can't fathom experiencing that or seeing God do all of that but I certainly can't fathom what happened after that when they took the gold, silver and the good stuff that came from the Egyptians that threw it at them on their way out and they build a calf and say "this is who got us through the Red Sea."

Who buys that? Nobody believes that but that's how unfaithful they were. God deals with them in terms of their unfaithfulness and He begins to feed them and

take care of them. They make their way across the wilderness really in a fairly short period of time and they get to the edge of the Promised Land but they are unfaithful. They continue to wander around in the wilderness and they send spies into the Promised Land. The spies come back and most of them say "We're not going in there. The people are huge. We're going to die and there is no way we're going to survive." Joshua and Caleb look at them and say "If God told us we could have it then we can go in. We don't go in based upon who we are. We go in based upon who God is." They vote and get out voted and really one of the most awkward times in Scripture in the nation of Israel takes place. They just wait for old people to die. For the next forty years they wait for that generation of people to die out. They camp right there near the Jordan River and they are waiting for this generation to die. Once they die out God will then let Joshua and Caleb lead the people across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land.

Finally the last old person dies and they get excited about that. You need to understand who Joshua has now as he leads the people across the Jordan River. This army that Joshua now has, has never fought anybody. Their dads and uncles fought people but they haven't done anything. They were kids when all this stuff took place so they are called an army but they have done nothing. They are going to go across the river and take the Promised Land and take on all these different kings. By faith they make it across the river, by faith they march around Jericho, by faith the walls come falling down and they defeat Jericho which is amazing. It says that God put the fear of Himself into the nations of the Promised Land when that took place. After the walls fall they then deal with an issue of sin in the camp with Achan and his sin. They lose a battle at Ai and then they come back and win the battle at Ai, a very small place. Because of sin in the camp and that loss they renew the covenant. They are going to get their eyes fixed back on what God says and so they are going to take all the land in the Promised Land. God will deliver all the people in the Promised Land to our hands.

So they renew that and up come these people called the Gibeonites. I hope you're not a Gibeonite because I'm going to offend you if you are. They are in a very unique situation. They are desperate. They are stuck between the nations that are around them that all end in "ites." I call them the united 'ites' and it's the united 'ites' versus the God of Israel. They have concluded that they will not win either one of these. There is no way we can defeat all of our enemies. They established lines and kept fighting and fighting and they will go on fighting for this little patch of land and this little patch of land but that's just one nation fighting one nation. Now all of these nations are unified together and know they can't possibly survive in a war against them and there is no way we can possibly survive against this God of Israel. Look what He has done beyond the Jordan River and beyond.

So the Gibeonites find themselves in this dilemma and do the only thing they can think of. They bank on the character of God. They come up with a plan and the

Scripture says they were cunning which means they lied and were deceptive. They lied and deceived the nation of Israel to make a covenant with them. They were banking on the fact that if we don't do anything we'll die. If we take sides with all the united 'ites' then the God of Israel is going to destroy us but if we take sides with the God of Israel it's our only hope but in just a few days they're going to find out we're in the Promised Land and they'll have to kill us because their God said that they were supposed to do that. If we make a covenant with the Israelites then they can't kill us. They are banking on the character of God that God will not allow His people to violate His Word. That's an interesting part of the story that unfolds in Joshua 9. They believe God and decide to go and present themselves before the Israelites. They show up wearing old clothes and old sandals and have old wineskins and old food. They have this poor story and lie to them. They deceive them and say they are from a distant country but we've heard about your God and want to be apart of you all. Make a covenant with us, a treaty with us in a sense.

Joshua and the leaders of Israel make a fatal mistake. They do not inquire of the Lord. They don't pray through that decision. The story sounds right to them so they make an agreement with them. They make a covenant with these Gibeonites who deceive them. So in three days they find out that the Gibeonites are the next town. If they had taken a few days to come upon this they would have certainly realized this but they didn't think their way through that. The people are upset with Joshua. The Gibeonites say to Joshua "We want to set aside our royal city and we want to be servants of this little army that is making their way through the Promised Land." Joshua makes that covenant with them so in a sense they are punished by becoming servants literally at the altar. That's one of God's unique sovereign applications that He does to allow the people of the Gibeonite nation to learn of the Gospel, to learn of the altar and the blood sacrifice. Joshua and the leaders realize they have been deceived by making this covenant. They have placed them as servants as the altar and then we get to Joshua 10. Joshua 10:1-14 says

1 As soon as Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard how Joshua had captured Ai and had devoted it to destruction, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, 2 he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were warriors. 3 So Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, 4 "Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon. For it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel." 5 Then the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered their forces and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon and made war against it. 6 And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in

Gilgal, saying, "Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us." 7 So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. 8 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you." 9 So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. 10 And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. 11 And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword. 12 At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." 13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. 14 There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel.

It's an interesting story that plays out here. We sing this song that by faith this mountain will be moved and of course that reminds us of the passage in Scripture that says that if you have faith of just a grain of a mustard seed you can say to this mountain move from here to there and it will be moved. We read that and think could that happen in my life? Is He giving us an analogy or is He just trying to encourage us? Could that literally happen and if it really could I'll bet it's reserved for other special people or other circumstances in terms of how God would move or how God would act? I think throughout this story there is a great example of faith. It is about people embracing what God has put before them and we can learn lessons of faith from this. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

In other words, faith is the confidence, the assurance of those things hoped for, those things we desire to see play out and those things that God has said but has not yet happened. It's the assurance and confidence in that. God will do what He says He will do. It's the full belief of things not seen. We are convicted and fully believe that God exists although we've never seen God. So it's the conviction of those things which have not yet been seen.

There are five observations I want to put before us in this study to try help focus us. There's a lot we could learn but I want to focus mainly on these five things that relate to faith. The first observation is the foundation and that is we are saved by faith. God pours out His grace upon us and says "By grace you are

saved through faith.” We’re saved by grace through faith. This picture of the Gibeonites is unique to me because the Gibeonites were a people who were absolutely desperate. They found themselves in a very unique situation. They were stuck between two incredible forces far beyond what they could handle and either way they were going to fail. It wasn’t like they could do well and it wouldn’t work out. They were going to be crushed. There was no way the Gibeonites we’re going to be able to stand against the united armies that were around them. It would be like looking at a dot on a map and then see the rest of the map. In a sense you could say that Gibeon found themselves in between the world and God.

I believe that’s where God places each and every one of us. Each of us find ourselves in between a lost, angry and dying world that says ‘come make a treaty with us, unite with us because we’re taking on the holy God.’ You find yourself caught between this world and this world and a holy God. The Gibeonites had to make a choice. They made a choice about what they would do out of their complete desperation. They are saved by faith. They literally made a choice between embracing the world or embracing God. In an incredibly unique set of circumstances they end up being blessed by being included in and servants of the nation of Israel. They were servants at the altar of God. They were banking on the character of God. Their whole plan was that if God makes a covenant with us He’ll keep it because He is a God of His Word.

So many people have approached the Gospel like this. “My life is pretty good but it could be better. I have heard this deal about the Gospel and Jesus Christ and that wouldn’t be a bad thing to add to my life. I mean my life’s not terrible. It’s pretty good but this whole deal of putting my trust in Jesus would really make my life better. I believe in God and certainly believe He’s in control of everything. I believe in Jesus and certainly believe He died on the cross so I think I’m going to embrace this Gospel thing and that’s going to make my life better.” I don’t really believe that’s the essence of the Gospel. I think the essence of the Gospel is to first understand the extent of our depravity and sin, where we find ourselves in a dilemma, stuck between a rock and a hard place. We are either going to make a treaty with the world or we’re going to make a treaty with God. We will either surrender to the world or surrender to God.

Our problem is that we want to remain a royal city. We would like to be men of valor. We would like to have warriors among us. We would like to fight on our own and when we get in a tight spot we’d like for God to finish it out for us. I don’t believe that’s how God deals with us. He wants us to understand that we are dead in our trespasses and that we are absolutely incapable of saving ourselves. We have no hope whatsoever except to go and to do anything possible to get into a covenant with God.

I’m going to ask you a dangerous question and if this gets copied and misused I’ll be in a lot of trouble. Let’s say the Gospel wasn’t the Gospel. Let’s say the

Gospel is not about Jesus Christ and it's left up to you. Everything is the same but you just don't have the Gospel. When you came to the point of understanding your sin what would you have been willing to do to have a relationship with God? When you came to the point where you knew you couldn't save yourself, how far were you willing to go to establish some covenant, some relationship with God? I find no fault in the Gibeonites for deceiving. I find no fault in them for lying for doing whatever they could possibly do to somehow enter into a covenant with God.

The reason I find no fault is because to some degree I understand but a taste of my depravity but a dose of the extent of my sin and I am confident that there is absolutely nothing I could do to save myself. Praise the Lord for the Gospel. Praise the Lord that the Gospel is about Jesus Christ and He offers that to us. He shows that through Christ and only through Christ we can have a relationship with Him. Praise God that He is a God who makes covenants through His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. He makes a covenant with us. Praise the Lord that He allows us to embrace Him.

In Joshua 9:25 the Gibeonites say to the Israelites, "*Whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to us, do it.*" I think that is a surrender of one's life to the authority of another. Have you prayed that verse to God? Say, "God, *whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to (me) us, do it.*" I completely and absolutely give You my life. I give up the lordship of my life and surrender completely and unequivocally to You. The Gibeonites desire to be servants. Does that sound familiar? Do you remember the prodigal son, the son of the landowner that came back? He finally came to his senses and said "Just make me a servant in your field" but instead he was put back as a son. The fatted calf was killed and a banquet was thrown for him. So God does with us. God makes a covenant with us.

So not only are we saved by faith but we're sustained by faith. As the Gibeonites find themselves in this very unique dilemma in Joshua 10 where the armies around them are coming against them they quickly find themselves in trouble so they immediately send a message to Joshua. They say to him "Do not relax your hand from your servants." They understood their role. Now let me fill in how I might have heard that if I was Joshua. "You're telling me that those deceptive, lying, cheating Gibeonites, who deceived me and us are now in trouble several days away from here and they're asking for help? Okay we'll help them. Tell them we'll establish a committee and we'll look into the top ten ways we can extend help to the Gibeonites. We'll pray through it because we didn't pray last time and we'll let them know them know before summer whether or not we'll be able to respond to their request for help."

Joshua had made a mess of that deal so I'm not sure the Gibeonites knew how Israel would respond. Joshua, we need help. I know we have deceived you and been unfaithful. I know we're the epitome of lying but we need help. Joshua

would respond, "Based on what, are you asking for help?" Their reply, "Based on the covenant you made with us." That's what happens with us and God. I'm sure I'm probably not the only one in the room who didn't ask God for help because I felt like I didn't deserve it. It kind of reminds me of growing up when I haven't done anything my dad has told me to do but I'm in a really bad fix and I need his help. So I choose not to ask because I don't want to go through all those things that I haven't done. How many times have I done that with God? I have been unfaithful and haven't been doing the things God wants me to do. I don't feel like in a sense I "deserve" God's help so I fall into that catch 22 where I'll just fix this one on my own, somehow thinking that God will not see or know or perhaps He's busy and that somehow I don't deserve the help that God would extend.

God says that not only have I saved you by faith but I'm sustaining you by faith. I'm protecting you by faith and keeping you safe by faith, so if you're the least of the least and the Gibeonites were the least of the least, I'll sustain you. They are serving at the temple and they are providing the little stuff but they are apart now of the nation of Israel. If you're the least of the least God says "Call unto Me. Tell me when you need help and I will respond to you. I will keep My covenant with you. I will treat you as a son. I will treat you as one of My adopted children." Clearly we are servants but we call out for that help.

This reminds me when Jesus is doing ministry and the Centurion comes to him and he has a servant who is almost to the point of death and he wants Jesus to heal the servant. What is it that the Centurion says to Jesus? He says "I'm not worthy for You to come to my house. If You'll just say the word my servant will be healed." In other words he is saying I have absolute faith in Your power to heal. I feel unworthy to even ask but if you'll just say the word then I'm sure my servant will be healed and Jesus responds "I've not seen such greater faith in Israel." The person who has that faith to believe that God was a God of His covenant and that God not only saves us by faith but He sustains us by faith. He protects us by faith.

Thirdly, I think there is a picture here of being obedient by faith. I think it goes from what the Gibeonites did to what Joshua did. Joshua is a good leader but he's a growing leader. All he has is just one ole' buddy and that's Caleb. Then there is this huge generation gap of them trying to lead all these young people. This is a team with no returning starters. There is Joshua and Caleb and everyone else is a true freshman. They are trying to lead this nation and it doesn't have a great reputation of being led. He finally deals with the sin in the camp, he gets things straight and he's ready to do what God has called them to do but he blows his very next decision. He doesn't pray and seek the counsel of God yet makes this union with the Gibeonites so he completely messes this up. When Gibeon calls Joshua for help I think this is an integrity dilemma for Joshua. I think this is an opportunity for Joshua to show the leader he is to be in his response to the Gibeonite nation. To what degree is he really going to engage in helping them?

Joshua does what Joshua's God does. He immediately responds to help. As soon as Joshua hears that the people of Gibeon are in trouble he immediately puts his army together and they begin marching. They begin heading towards Israel. It's that immediate response to obedience that God puts before him. Joshua knew his God was a God of covenants. There is no question about that. Joshua was the one who actually entered into the covenant therefore he is the one who has to keep the covenant. He is not going to be allowed to rationalize himself out of this covenant that he has made with the Gibeon nation so he immediately begins marching the people.

As I was preparing for this the whole faith process was on my heart and mind as I was praying through this the last couple of weeks. This is just one example and there are many, but for me it's not that hard to know how to respond to the faith promise. I'm not talking about how much but just how to respond to the faith promise. Here's what I do know. I do know God has blessed me. I know that God wants the Gospel taken to the ends of the earth and I know it takes resources to do that which is crystal clear in my mind. So when my church comes along and says here's an opportunity to embrace Global Missions I can march immediately. It doesn't take me any time to know that I'm going to participate in that. Now how much? I don't know yet. Now what do I put down on the faith promise card? That's for God to do that work in me and take me through that process in my life as I try to trust Him, step out in faith and allow Him to use me in such a unique set of circumstances.

When God puts before us those things that are clearly in the midst of His will then we embrace those things and engage in those things. Once again, I'm not speaking about the particular amount or the way you go about approaching that. I'm just saying you don't have to pray about that one. Do I want to participate in the Gospel going to the ends of the earth? Yes, absolutely and why is that? It is because God has put that call before us. Why? It is because that's obedience. Now it could be done a hundred different ways but we're going to start marching on that one. Am I going to share the Gospel with the people that God places in my life that don't know Him? Absolutely, I don't have to pray about that. Am I the person that is going to lead them to the Lord? I have no idea but I'm going to start marching. I'm going to start figuring out if I'm the one the Lord is going to use in this particular situation. We don't minimally obey. We fully obey. It's by faith that we're able to obey the commands of God.

There are thousands of examples on this. I think daily God puts before us all kinds of opportunities where from a human speaking standard, it's hard to obey but from a faith in God point of view it's not hard. From a human standard you try to obey by sight you try to work out everything on your own to see what happens if you do this or that. From a faith perspective in obeying it's not that hard. God says "Do it" and we begin marching toward what God is doing and we let Him

play it out before us to show us the specifics of what He wants us to do which leads me to the fourth observation.

I'm amazed at how Joshua was engaged by faith. By this I mean he was fully committed. Joshua fully threw himself into what God put before him. As soon as he hears the word that they need help he begins marching the troops. Here is something very interesting that happens. It says that Joshua marched the troops and they came upon them suddenly having marched all night. That means if you take that literally and look back in Joshua 9 you will find out that Gibeon was a three day hike from Gilgal. So Joshua marched the troops what would typically take three days for probably a contingency of a small group of people and he took the entire army of the Israelite nation and he marched them through the night. He incredibly got them moving. We're going to respond. We're going to obey. Do you think there were any Israelite soldiers that complained? I do. Why? The response might be "We told you not to make a covenant with them. Why are we doing this? We'll be worn out and they'll kill us when we get there. This is no way to enter into a battle." Yet Joshua is leading by faith.

I'm going to suggest to you that Joshua had little to no plan and here's how I know that. When was the last time you read about Joshua checking out Gibeon? Where's the hill country? Where's the valley? Where's the high point? Where's the low point? I don't see how he would have much of an idea. Joshua has never been there. He has never seen this city and he is marching them through the night. He is stepping out by faith, leading them by faith and he gets this encouragement from the Lord. Joshua 10:8 says "*And the LORD said to Joshua, 'Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you.'*" I love it when Scripture is so candid and honest with us.

Here is what we tend to think. If I'm walking by faith, doing what God has called me to do there won't be an ounce of fear in me. That is not true at all. When you're stepping out in faith I promise you there is going to be that ounce of fear. I am embracing what God has called me to do and using all that the Holy Spirit has given me and I'm going to step right into this situation that God is putting before me. If there was no fear in doing that then you wouldn't need the faith. It's okay for there to be fear. If there was no fear in that situation then you would just do it. You don't need faith to march into that situation that you don't think you're afraid of. That's just boldness or pure arrogance but Joshua is leading them and by faith he is marching them. He goes into this situation by faith to engage in what God has put before him but he's afraid and God says "Joshua, don't be afraid. I've delivered them into your hand."

I don't think Joshua had a plan. I think Joshua's plan was I'm going to trust God and we're going to figure it out along the way. The biggest issue is that we trust God. The secondary issue is that we have a real good strategy or a good way to do this. You need to understand that there are times when God gives you a very specific strategy. There was no way that Joshua came up with the marching

around the city seven times and then blow a trumpet. So sometimes God will give a specific strategy and then sometimes He'll say "Here's the need. Now start marching. Step out in faith and allow Me to use you and engage in what I've called you to do." They are fully trusting God. This is an army that is marching by faith because of their leadership and they are not sure what God is going to do but they believe God is going to deliver this victory. God gives Joshua the promise and then I would put it this way.

God then allows the nation of Israel to participate in what He is doing. If you're not careful this is how we read what takes place. We get ourselves in different dilemmas and then we call God into it as if we are the beginning of it, the creator of it. I believe this is a picture of God doing a very unique thing. Instead of there being fifteen different battles, He unified the enemy. He put the enemy together and then He made them come to one place so that God could defeat the unified enemy which looks like a terrible plan if you're an Israelite. In God's economy it's pretty efficient. Based on their faith God allows them to participate in what He's doing. Look at the way it's worded. It's interesting to me how the recounting of the battle unfolds. Joshua 10:9-11 says,

9 So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. 10 And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. 11 And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon (a 700 foot drop), the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword.

Whose battle is this? This is God's battle. God throws them into a panic so they don't know how to fight which is important when you're fighting this young army because they can only beat people who don't know how to fight. God kills more with hailstones than the Israelite nation which is interesting to me.

Try to picture this in your mind. This would make a great movie. If you're killing people by the sword aren't you real close? So God was killing the enemy with hailstones while they were engaged in battle. Those are some accurate hailstones. There is no record of Israelites being killed by hailstones. God is delivering the victory right in front of them. It's not like God did this hidden thing that they would find out later. You're fighting and you see the enemy getting hit with hailstones. They are seeing God do this. They didn't plan this. They clearly see that God is the one providing the victory and they are being allowed to participate in what God is doing. It is a huge paradigm shift for us to understand when we engage in what God puts before us, it's Him allowing us to participate not getting Him to do what we want Him to do.

The final observation is this. This deal is working so well that I actually believe Joshua got consumed by this battle of faith. Here is why I say that. I really do believe that Joshua is doing the best he can and in a sense Joshua is just leading by faith. If I don't know to do anything else boy we are marching fast. I see that God is delivering us. Joshua is leading by faith and the enemy is falling by the sword. He sees more hailstones coming down. The armies are running away from him. They are running down this hill and God is killing the enemy as they are running down the hill. They are going through this whole battle just watching this thing unfold and it's unbelievable. He gets so excited. Look at what God is doing! He sees that the sun is about to set and the moon is coming up. He gets wrapped up in both of them. Hey God stop the moon and stop the sun and we'll finish this thing. What did you say? Can you do that? I know God can do that but are you allowed to pray that? In the midst aren't you supposed to stay practical? Can you really just throw out all the rules? If we could get an extra day we would whip every one of these 'ites.'

I think Joshua gets so wrapped up and so much full of faith where now his eyes are not on himself or his army and he clearly is seeing what God is doing. He gets so wrapped up in it that he just makes this declaration to God and God obeys the voice of man. The sun and moon stopped and the nation took vengeance on its enemies. That is unbelievable. How big is your view of God? I don't know what crisis you're in the middle of but I know if you're like me even when I think I'm really stepping out in faith I still have a very practical, believable way that God could fix it. Even when I think that I'm really praying asking God to do something unique I'm still in a sense putting God in a box. I'm still confining God to that which I can conceive of or that which He could possibly work out.

There's much debate in this particular passage of course as to whether or not this really happened. If you read the different scholars and commentaries you'll find a fair number of them that will say that this is somewhat of a historical and poetic book so they are saying it's a bit of a song and meant as an analogy. It's just trying to show Joshua's perspective about this. I come from a long line of Bible teachers that have taught me to believe that what the Bible says is the way the Bible says it unless you have a real good Bible reason that it tells you that it means something else. So I believe that the sun and the moon stood still and I believe that there was an extra day. I believe that God did that in response to the faith of Joshua.

I believe that God healed the prodigal son seeing the faith of the men that lowered him down. I believe that because He said He did. I believe that God healed the Centurion's son based upon the faith of the Centurion. I believe that God healed the woman who touched the hem of His garment because of her faith. I believe that God intends to do in your life and in my life that which we could conjure up by faith. I know that there is some part of us that would love to have "Can you really say to the mountain move from here to there and it will be

moved.” All things are possible with Christ. Can you really say that? We want to have that.

The problem I’m afraid for many of us is we’re sitting still hoping that somehow we can have that type of faith experience as opposed to being engaged by faith, as opposed to diving into the battle fully committing ourselves to what God has put before us by faith, as opposed to being consumed in a sense by faith. Being consumed by faith puts you in a very vulnerable position and it means you will be put farther and farther separate from this world. That’s an uncomfortable position for us. Would You allow me to participate in that? I’m willing to march all night and go in and engage in that marriage, that family, with my co-workers to get the Gospel put out before them. Would You allow me by faith to participate in what it is that You are doing? If you have faith like the grain of a mustard seed, you say to this mountain ‘be moved from here to there’ and it will be done because all things are possible for you in Christ.

Will He do it for you? I don’t know. I wish I could tell you. I don’t know if the possible equivalent of the sun stopping or the moon stopping or the mountain moving will be done for you. I do know that God wants you to walk by faith, obey Him by faith and to trust Him in faith. I do know that God desperately wants you to engage in the ministry and the opportunity that He puts before you by faith. I know most of all that God wants us as His children to be consumed by faith. We can’t get enough of walking by faith in God for when we do that we see the miraculous. Maybe that miraculous is that person that we didn’t think would ever come to know the Lord and they asked us something about God. Maybe the miraculous is that difficult relationship being healed. Maybe the miraculous is the sun stopping again. I don’t know but I do know that God desires for each and every one of His children to be consumed by a walk that is trusting and depending upon Him for absolutely everything in their life. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Most graciously heavenly Father, we thank You that You are a faithful God. We acknowledge to You that we are unfaithful people so we ask that You would strengthen us by Your Spirit. I pray that if there is someone reading this that has never gotten to the point of truly understanding the dilemma that they are in because of their sin, of truly understanding the desperate state of having sin in our lives that is unforgiven and being separated from You that You would allow them to know that today. Lord, I pray that You would allow their eyes, ears and heart to be open and give them insight and understanding that only through Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, can they be saved. Whatever seems right for You to do in their life, do it. Lord, I pray that each and every one of us that are Your children would walk by faith that we would look for opportunities to march, run and obey by faith. Lord, You know that’s a challenge for us but help us to obey Your Word by faith. Lord, help us to engage in ministry, the calling that You have put before us and allow us to participate as You defeat the enemies, as You build

Your Kingdom, as You send Your Gospel to the ends of the earth, as You reconcile people one to another – marriages and families – and allow us participate as ministers of reconciliation, sharing the Gospel with others. We want to be engaged to the point of being consumed by faith, not being able to imagine not living, not walking, not deciding, not communicating except by trust and dependence on You. Lord, thank You for Your grace in our life. Thank You for the faith that You grant to us. Build that faith within us, in Your Son's Name we pray, Amen.

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