

Study Guide



Joshua 23— May 28, 2017

Joshua's Charge to Israel's Leaders

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

As we walk through Joshua we are going to see how Joshua relates to our everyday battle of faithfulness. **Our aim and our prayer for this study is to gain the wisdom we need for the battle of faithfulness.** During our time in Joshua we will be adapting our study guide from [Crossway's book, Knowing the Bible: Joshua, A 12-Week Study](#) by Trent Hunter. We recommend you purchase this book and use it in your Community Groups and for personal study as we go through Joshua. We have copies of the book available in our bookstore.

For further study on this weeks study please check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

South Sudan & NOLA Baptist— For further information visit norriferrychurch.org or contact Jared Clary (clary@norriferrychurch.org)

Please see the list of local ministries under the "Walk" section below.

Calendar

May 26th-31st— [Student Life Camp](#)
May 29th-July 2nd— [Camp in the City](#)
June 10th— [Serve Shreveport](#)
June 11th— [Master Plan Meeting](#)
July 11th-16th— [Fort Worth Mission Trip](#)

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[Amazing Grace](#)":

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God, who called me here below
Will be forever mine
Will be forever mine
You are forever mine

Commentary

Chapter 23 begins with a parting speech from Joshua, who is now “old and well advanced in years” (23:1). This speech is to Israel’s leaders. While Joshua’s speech is optimistic in many ways, it also indicates much unfinished business and uncertainty concerning Israel’s future. This speech rehearses God’s glorious promises and charts the way forward for the nation.

In the first few verses Joshua underscores the confident assurance of the Lord’s help that Israel should have. He grounds them in the Lord’s faithfulness by appealing to God’s recent activity (vs. 3) and reminds them of his previous promise (vs. 5). Both of God’s action and his word should support Israel. Anyone who had seen the Lord in combat in Jericho, Ai, Beth-Horon, Merom, and Hazor should be able to trust him for the task that remains. In these verse Joshua expresses the Lord’s power, “the Lord your God, he is the one who has been fighting for you” (vs. 3), “he is the one who will thrust them out” (vs. 5). **Israel’s confidence and assurance spring from remembering the Lord’s faithfulness in his words and deeds in the past, and this God who acted is surely adequate for what comes next.** This is the same faithful reasoning that seems to be what Jesus expects of his disciples as well.

The bulk of chapter 23, however, concerns the careful obedience of the Israelites. In verse 6 he sets the standard of obedience. The standard of obedience is the Word of God. “Therefore stand firm to keep and fulfill all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, never turning from it to the right or left” (vs. 6). **This was not just a command to Joshua (1:7-8), but it is a standard of obedience for all the Lord’s people.** All the Lord’s people owe compliance to all the Lord’s law.

In verses 7-8 Joshua specifies the supreme obedience that the law of Moses requires. “You shall cling to the Lord your God just as you have done to this day” (vs. 8). Joshua speaks of a particular form of obedience and this obedience must take the form of separation from the Canaanites so their beliefs won’t corrupt the Israelites. Separation remains the form of obedience for us today. This may begin with the general demand to develop a Christian mind (Rom. 12:2), but also embraces specific acts and decisions on a daily basis. **We cannot be taken out of the world, but we must be kept from the evil one (John 17:15).**

In the remaining verses we see Joshua’s motives for obedience (vs. 9-16). Joshua seeks to move Israel by the grace of God, while appealing to the fear of God. Joshua reflects and summarizes what the Lord has done for Israel in the recent past (vs. 9-10), showing Israel’s response and motive for obedience should be faithful obedience out of gratitude for the Lord’s goodness. However, verses 11-16, are prospective and threatening. If Israel turns away and clings to the remaining nations, then the Lord will no longer enable Israel to complete the conquest. Rather, these nations will be “dangerous for you as a trap or a pit and as painful as a whip on your back of thorns in your eyes” (vs 13). And, at last, Israel would perish from the land. Just as Joshua argues from the memory of the Lord’s goodness, so he appeals to the threat of the Lord’s judgement. **Both the grace of God and the fear of God should move the people of God.**

The Lord’s faithfulness is a two-edged sword (vs. 15), that he is faithful both in grace and in judgement. The Lord’s faithfulness is not displayed just in covenant blessing but in covenant judgement as well, by which he testifies that he has not let go of his people but pursues them even in their sins. The Lord is faithful to heal and destroy. This must motivate us to obey his Word and live as his followers in this world.

Discussion

1. Looking at verses 1-13, who is Joshua addressing in these verses (vs. 2)?
2. Paying attention to the verbs in Joshua's speech, list what the Lord has done and will do for the tribes of Israel?
3. Mingled among these promises is a number of commands. List what Joshua commands the people to do.
4. Notice the stark contrast between verse 8 and verse 12. What kind of relationship are the people urged to exercise with God going forward into their future? What kind of relationship with the people around them are they warned against going forward?
5. What do you think are some of the things that might tempt the people of Israel to stop clinging to God? What kinds of things might tempt the people to cling to those wicked nations around and among them?
6. What negative consequences does God promise to the people if they begin to cling to the wicked nations among them (vs. 13)?

7. In verses 14-16 we have positive and negative promises from God to the people contingent upon their faithfulness to God? What are the positive promises and what are they contingent upon? What are the negative promises, and what are they contingent upon? Knowing the sinfulness of man which one of these possibilities do you think came to pass?

8. How does the inevitability of Israel's failure to remain faithful point to the necessity of the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and fulfilled by Jesus (Romans 8:1-4)?

Application

1. For Christians under the New Covenant what are some of the promises God has made in his Word regarding which we need to trust and take the necessary steps to "possess" (experience) the inheritance of those promises. For some examples of these promises look at Matthew 11:28-30, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 Corinthians 15:58, and 2 Peter 1:3-4.

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Joshua to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased
Young life
Heart of hope
First priority
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center
Community renewal
Grief counseling
Celebrate recovery
Samaritan counseling
Last call ministries
Golden age ministries
Rescue mission
Luke's lighthouse
FCA

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

Our Growing Ministry and Master Plan

At the last Members Meeting on May 7, 2017, Pastor Tracy gave the following report regarding our growing ministries and Master Plan.

God's Faithfulness

The Lord has been so incredibly gracious to bless our church with a sweet, loving spirit of unity as He continues to grow our church family both numerically and spiritually. As the Lord has grown our church He has also faithfully provided all the finances and facilities we've needed.

Our History

In the early days God enabled us to purchase our land with cash and to build our first building at a cost of approximately \$1,200,000 while borrowing only \$600,000 and paying it off in three years. In accordance with our Master Plan we built a 5,000sf education addition; we built a state of the art playground; we were given additional land on the north side of our property; we purchased the corner lot and built a new access road on the north side of our property; And on the south side of the property we purchased land with an existing house and metal building. God is faithful!

Our Need

We now have reached a point where every ministry needs more space to continue to minister to the people God is bringing to us. Our children's ministry needs more classrooms, Ascension Classical School (ACS) needs more classrooms, our student ministry needs more space, our adult education needs classrooms, our 10:30am worship service is over crowded, and our staff needs offices.

Ascension Classical School

What is Ascension Classical School (ACS)? ACS is a school that meets in our facilities. ACS uses a classical education model with a comprehensive Christian worldview curriculum. They are equipping the bright young minds of boys and girls who will be future Christian leaders in our community, our city and beyond. A large number of these beautiful students are the children and grandchildren of Norris Ferry Church members. Though it requires sacrifice by the staff and members of Norris Ferry Church we are thrilled to be able provide ACS classrooms for minimal rent. Through this wonderful partnership kingdom resources are being maximized so that virtually every square foot of our building is being used virtually every day of the week for God's glory! The space needs for ACS are very similar to the space needs of NFCC children's ministry. Both ACS and NFCC will use the last available space in 2017-2018 and will need two additional classrooms each year for several years beginning in August of 2018. We desperately need more children's classrooms by August of 2018.

The Master Plan

In order to continue accomplishing our calling we need to press on toward the completion of our Master Plan. Our Master Plan includes: remodeling the recently purchased house to provide staff offices, build a new worship center/ gymnasium, remodel current worship center for children's ministry, expand the children's facility, and provide adult education classrooms. The estimated cost to complete this Master Plan in today's dollars is approximately \$5,000,000. To see the most recent Master Plan go to (<http://norrisferrychurch.org/pledge/>).

Remaining Committed to Our Values

As we consider how to move forward to meet these needs we remain committed to the same mission and values upon which we have founded this church. We remain focused on our mission to love Christ, Christians, Neighbors and Nations. We remain focused on building God's kingdom and not ours. We remain committed to church planting and sending out rather becoming a mega-church with a mega-building. We remain focused on maximizing kingdom resources. We remain committed to very conservative use of debt, if any is necessary. We remain committed to these longstanding values that are in the very fabric of our DNA.

Pray and Pledge

With this in mind the elders are asking the church family to join us for a season of prayer between now and June 10, 2017. Please join us in asking the Lord to continue to protect the beautiful unity of our church and to provide for our growing ministry needs. Also, please ask the Lord to show you how much He would have you pledge toward the meeting of these ministry needs. Once you know the amount you would like to pledge please trust the Lord and make your pledge at (<http://norrisferrychurch.org/pledge/>).

Information Meeting

Please attend the information meeting on June 11th in the worship center immediately following the 10:30am worship service. At this meeting we will give a report on the amount pledged and make an elder recommendation as to how to move forward. In general, we anticipate making one of two recommendations. Either we will recommend moving forward with the completion of the entire Master Plan or we will recommend moving forward with the completion of a smaller phase of the Master Plan. The smaller phase of the Master Plan that would at least provide offices and additional children's ministry space by August of 2018. Once the church has had adequate time to prayerfully consider the recommendation it will be voted upon by the covenant members.

Please contact your elders/pastors with any questions or comments. We look forward to seeing what the Lord is going to do!

Serving the Lord together,
J. Tracy Graham, Elder/Pastor
Norris Ferry Community Church