PLEASANT SPRINGS CHURCH • SERMON • THE CONQUERING KING, PART THIRTEEN

Faithful Until the End

Cling to the LORD your God — an exploration of Joshua 23:1–11

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The Conquering King, Part Thirteen — Joshua 23:1–11

Preached Sunday, October 18, 2026 by Pastor Jeremy Arnold

Joshua 23:1–11 • John 15:4–10 • Joshua 23:11 • 1 John 4:19 • John 14:15 • Ephesians 2:8–9 • Hebrews 12:2 • Matthew 26:42 • Colossians 2:15

For twelve weeks the question has been how to win. This week it is what happens after you have. The wars are over, the land is quiet, Joshua is old — and the very first thing he does with the peace is warn them about it.

THE SERMON TEXT

Joshua 23:1–11 (ESV)

“A long time afterward, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies, and Joshua was old and well advanced in years, Joshua summoned all Israel, its elders and heads, its judges and officers, and said to them, “I am now old and well advanced in years. And you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the LORD your God who has fought for you. Behold, I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. The LORD your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight. And you shall possess their land, just as the LORD your God promised you. Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, but you shall cling to the LORD your God just as you have done to this day. For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day. One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God.”

OPENING THOUGHT

We have been looking at how God brought Israel across obstacles: the Jordan River, the walls of Jericho, the victory over Ai, and deception. We have looked at how God fights for His people, at conquering the flesh, and at choosing Christ over sin when temptation comes. We have talked about maintaining the unity of the Spirit and overcoming division. We have talked about conquering compromise, and last of all, fear.

This week I want us to look at what happens after we win the battle.

A QUESTION

> *What happens after God brings you through the storm?*

- What about after He answers your prayer?
- What happens after you go through a season of spiritual victory?
- Victory over temptation, or reconciliation in our relationships?
- Are we simply to celebrate and move on, or is there something else we should recognize?

Point

God had given Israel rest from its major military battles, but their responsibility to remain faithful had not ended. The battles for the land had brought them to this point; now they had to guard their covenant loyalty to the LORD.

Our victories are not about winning a battle today. They are about remaining faithful to the King — Jesus — throughout our lives.

APPLICATION — ABIDE

> **John 15:4–10 (ESV)**
> “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”

HOW DO WE ABIDE?

1. Remember what the King has done for you.

Look again at Joshua 23:1–5:

- God has given them rest from war.
- He pushes their enemies back.
- He gives them an inheritance.
- He reminds them how the LORD has fought for them.
- He has them take inventory as to Who it is that brought them this far.

Point

There are times we needed wisdom, direction, healing, provision and forgiveness — things we are not capable of providing for ourselves.

2. Cling to the LORD.

In verses 6–8 Joshua tells the people to cling to the LORD.

The greatest threat was spiritual drifting. If they were to get lax, they would assimilate to the culture around them.

Point

Their future success depended upon cultivating a faithful, close relationship with Yahweh.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Abiding or drifting?

Am I abiding in Christ, or am I drifting?

2. Shaped by the Word.

Am I allowing the Scriptures to shape my life and my decision making?

3. Deeper, or satisfied?

Do I have a desire to go deeper in my relationship with Christ and the study of His Word — or am I satisfied just being saved?

4. Closer than at first.

Am I closer in my relationship with Christ today than when I first trusted Him as my Savior?

5. A healthy prayer life.

Am I maintaining a healthy prayer life?

6. Willing to repent.

Am I willing — and do I repent — when the Holy Spirit reveals sin in my personal life?

7. Depending on Christ.

Am I depending on Christ daily, or have I begun to rely upon myself?

A WARNING — GUARD YOUR HEART

Joshua gives a warning in verse 11:

> **Joshua 23:11 (ESV)**
> "Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God."

Why does he say to be very careful? Because whatever captures our attention and our affections will eventually influence our allegiance.

RECAP

We looked at conquering the flesh, overcoming temptation, conquering divisions, overcoming compromise, and fear. What do all of these have in common?

> *Every one of them is in direct competition for — and a challenge to — our love and devotion for the King.*

Point

Anything we love, trust or obey in place of, or more than, Jesus becomes an idol in our hearts.

The question is not whether we believe in Jesus. The question is: is Jesus our Lord?

WHY IS OBEDIENCE IMPORTANT?

- **Obedience expresses gratitude.** We love because He first loved us.
- **Obedience expresses love.** If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

> **1 John 4:19 (ESV)**
> "We love because he first loved us."

> **John 14:15 (ESV)**
> "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

SALVATION IS NOT BY WORKS

> **Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)**
> "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Obedience is the fruit of grace, not the price of acceptance.

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

If we are to guard our love for the Lord, we must understand what love looks like in practice. Biblical love is more than a profession of faith; it expresses itself in faithful obedience.

> **Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)**
> "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

> **Matthew 26:42 (ESV)**
> "Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

> **Colossians 2:15 (ESV)**
> "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

JOSHUA AND JESUS

Just as Joshua led Israel against earthly kingdoms, Christ Jesus leads us victoriously against spiritual kingdoms.

IN CLOSING

Our hope and our rest are in Jesus, because He and He alone has paid for our sins.

- He has reconciled us to God.
- He has given us His Spirit.
- He has given us His Word.
- He has given us Himself, our example.
- He invites us to abide and to get to know Him.

> *That does not mean we will never struggle, stumble or need correction. It means that when we do, we return to Jesus in full assurance of faith and repentance, knowing that we are loved and accepted in and through Christ Jesus our Lord. — Pastor Jeremy Arnold*

GROW FURTHER

THE CONQUERING KING, PART TWELVE

Conquering Fear

Last week — God does not tell Joshua to feel brave, He tells him Who is going with him.

DISCIPLESHIP

Believing Loyalty

The covenant loyalty Joshua 23 is about, worked through at length — what clinging to God actually looks like.

DEEP RESEARCH

Joshua 23:1–24:33

Joshua's farewell and the covenant at Shechem, measured verse by verse in the Hebrew and the Septuagint.

"Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God."

Joshua 23:11 (ESV)