

# Joshua 23:11-16 | David Baumgartner

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[ 0 : 00 ] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. Good morning once again.

Good to see everybody here. Yeah, and you know what? Yesterday was a heat record. So I hope we get a little bit of a break today. But it is good to be here. Nice setting, air conditioning. So thankful for so many things, aren't we? We're continuing in Joshua's farewell address to Israel. So if you have your Bibles, please turn with me to Joshua chapter 23.

And you might want to turn to Proverbs chapter 3. And just put your hand there or a bookmark because we're going to be looking at that as well. But chapter 23, beginning in verse 12.

You've got to realize that by this time, Israel is the dominant force in the entire land. But we read that there's still much land that needed to be possessed.

[ 1 : 04 ] And we see that if we look in Joshua chapter 13. In other words, in every territory, if you will, there's pockets of these pagans. But mostly they're Canaanites who still need to be purged from the land.

And Joshua is old and he's about to pass on. But he recognizes that as time goes on, the temptation for Israel to forsake their God and to establish relationships with these Canaanites, even intermarrying with them, it's going to be strong.

That temptation will be. So Joshua is giving them a warning in our passage this morning. Our passage is really a continuation of last week's. And if you may, if you heard that message and you may remember it as being something like Joshua says, do this.

Well, if last week was do this, today's message is or else. So that's what we're going to see this morning. Please read with me Joshua 23, beginning in verse 12.

If you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you.

[ 2 : 23 ] Here we go. Know with certainty that the Lord your God will not continue to drive these nations from out before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap to you and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes until you perish off this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the Lord your God spoke concerning you has failed.

All have been fulfilled for you. Not one of them has failed. And it shall come about that just as all the good words which the Lord your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the threats until he has destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

When you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, bow down to them, then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and you shall perish from off the good land which he has given you.

Father, we thank you that we can come here today and look at these words. And Lord, we see them that there's truths in it, Lord. And Lord, just struck by how much we can glean from this today.

[ 4 : 02 ] Even though this was written thousands of years ago, we can see that there are truths that apply to us. And we thank you for that, Lord. Thank you for each person here.

We ask that through your grace that we would be able to understand this, and even more importantly, that we would be doers of your word, and not just hearers only. Thank you, Father.

In Jesus' name, I pray. So here we saw some warnings. I think everybody wants to be helpful issuing warnings, don't they? I have a list here of some warning labels that you might see on perhaps some articles that you buy.

For instance, here's a great warning. It's on a Sears hairdryer, and it says, Do not use while sleeping. It's pretty good. How about this one?

This is on a wheelbarrow tire. Wheelbarrow. It said, not for highway use. Or how about Nital, the sleep aid? It says warning. It may cause drowsiness.

[ 5 : 05 ] I agree there. Most of our Christmas lights, it might say for indoors or outdoor use only. I don't know what else that means.

How about this one? This is a child's Superman costume. Wearing this garment does not enable you to fly. How about on, this is on a blanket that was actually, it came from Taiwan.

It said, not to be used as protection from a tornado. I don't really understand that there. How about on the helmet that's mounted where there's a mirror on it, used for bicyclists.

It says, remember, objects in the mirror are actually behind you. In some countries, the bottom of Coke bottles will say open on the other end.

A Korean kitchen knife, warning, keep out of children. How did it get there? I like this one.

[ 6 : 09 ] This is from a chainsaw that you would purchase, and it actually came from Sweden. And it says, do not attempt to stop the chain with your hands. I guess some things just need to be explained.

Here's the last one. This is a hotel. It had a shower cap in a box, and it said, fits one head. So anyway, boy, those are some great warning passages here.

Everybody wants to be helpful. Well, Joshua does too. But I'll tell you what. His words of helpfulness are much greater than this. Let's go here and look at our text.

Look with me in verse 12 here. He says, if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations. He's talking about the nations that remain among you.

These are the pagan nations. And he says, and you intermarry with them so that you associate them and they with you. So here's what's going to happen.

[ 7 : 13 ] And I actually see five warnings from Joshua. He says, first of all, God will no longer fight for you. Look with me. Verse 13. Know with certainty that the Lord your God will not continue to drive out these nations from before you.

In other words, you're no longer going to experience my blessing. That's what God's saying.

Secondly, not only that, these people, they will cause you to stumble.

Verse 13. He goes on. So in other words, associating with these pagans, it may seem like a good idea.

I mean, think about it. You get to share resources. Maybe there's some cultural enrichment that can take place. But the thing is, you will be sorry.

And that's because they will, this is how you will end up worshiping their gods. That's how they'll demand. And not only that, they will demand hearty approval of their ways, of their debased and immoral ways.

[ 8 : 33 ] And either you'll do that or they will cause severe pain and turn on you. Thirdly, God will bring upon you all the threats.

Here, look with me. Verse 15. He says, and it shall come about just as all the good words of the Lord spoke to you have come upon you. So the Lord will bring upon you all the threats. That actual Hebrew word there is referring to unpleasant, painful discipline.

We'll look at that here in a little bit. But the Lord will bring upon you these threats, painful discipline, until he has destroyed you from off this good land, which he's given you.

In other words, if Israel decides to do what is right in their own eyes, then they should expect misery and troubles to follow them.

And notice that this is going to be from God himself. Why is that? Well, here's the fourth warning. God's anger will burn against you. Verse 16.

[ 9 : 39 ] When you transgress the covenant of the Lord, your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, then the anger of the Lord will burn against you.

The imagery of this verse is really quite startling. The word there is actually referring to the nose. There's a flaring of the nostrils when God is displeased.

And it's really talking about the fierceness of his anger will be visible by his nostrils flaring. Fifthly, and last, you will be removed from your land.

That's what it says here. Verse 16. You shall perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord has given you. So this final stroke of chastisement is going to be far worse than having to wander

40 years in the desert.

This punishment is going to call for Israel's removal from their land and taken to a land of exile. And that will not be pretty. Now we have to remember, this is not talking about a loss of salvation, okay? [10:53] You know, rather this is talking about God's discipline of his people. It's best to think of these people as, in a general sense, believers.

Did you notice that it says several times that the Lord, your God? It says that six times in just these five verses that we covered. So the Lord chastises his people.

You may remember this verse in Proverbs 3. My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe his reproof. For whom the Lord loves, he reproves. Even as a father in whom he delights. So that's what's going on here. And even when Israel is taken captive. Now I know I'm jumping ahead to the future here. But even when they do, God is not done with them.

We know that. But I want you to consider here just the loss, having to leave their land. Think about how grievous that would be. For them to lose the good land that they've been given by the Lord, they've waited for for so long, that they've fought for for so hard.

[12:06] And here they're going to end up having to leave it out of discipline. Well, how is Brother Joshua going to persuade his fellow Israelites to do the right thing?

Well, first of all, notice, he appeals to his knowledge and experience. Look with me, verse 14. He says, Now behold, today I am going all the way, I'm going the way of all the earth.

What does that mean? Well, he knows that very soon he's going to be dying. And this is the way that all people must go.

You and I. You and me too. If the Lord doesn't return first, we must go that path too. It's the path that we all take without exception. So, in other words, here are the final words of a guy who's been around the block a few times.

He's lived a long life. And he's seen many things. But I'd just add to it, because Joshua is not just any guy. Would you agree with that?

[13:16] He's not. He was a faithful helper of Moses. And then he took over where Moses left off. Right after Moses, right after his death, God spoke to Joshua.

If you want to look with me in Joshua 1, verse 5. Look at what the Lord said to Joshua. Chapter 1, verse 5. He says, No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life.

Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. And then he says this, I will not fail you or forsake you. Boy, I think that would make a guy feel pretty special, wouldn't it?

For the Lord to say that. But here's another thing. Consider this. Joshua knew the law. In Joshua 8, verse 32.

If you want to turn there with me. There's a victory after their conquest. The victory after Ai. The battle there. They held this ceremony at Mount Ebal.

[14:19] And it's kind of a rededication for Israel. Because you remember, Ai had some problems there with that battle. But look with me. Chapter 8, verse 32.

This is what Joshua did. And he wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. In the presence of the sons of Israel.

Then afterward, he read all the words of the law. The blessings and the curses according to all that is written in the book of the law. So I would say that Joshua is in a pretty good position to give some good advice.

Would you agree with that? He is. With age comes wisdom. And certainly Joshua is able to do that. So he appeals to just his own character.

His experience. His wisdom. But secondly, Joshua appealed to the certainty of God's word in the past. Look with me.

[15:20] Verse 14. He says, You know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the Lord spoke concerning you has failed.

All has been fulfilled for you. Not one of them has failed. When I think about here, our study in Joshua, I believe that this generation of Israelites had witnessed some of the most remarkable miracles in the Old Testament.

Would you agree with that? They have. I mean, consider these examples. Joshua says to the people, consecrate yourselves for tomorrow.

The Lord will do wonders among you. And guess what happened? Well, later in chapter 3, God enabled them to cross the Jordan River. You know, that was very similar to the crossing of the Red

Sea with Moses.

And that event was so special, they made a movie about it. So, that's pretty good. How about in chapter 6, the Battle of Jericho? That battle was so famous, they wrote songs about it.

[16:31] How about chapter 10, verse 11, when Israel fought against those five kings? It says that God sent these huge hailstorms, hailstones on them and killed many people.

How about chapter later on? In chapter 10, verse 13, God extended the daylight so that Israel could finish the job. That's some pretty big miracles, you guys.

In chapter 11, we find that these kings from the north came to fight against Israel. If you look in that chapter, the forces against Israel were formidable.

And then it says in verse 6, Then the Lord said to Joshua, do not be afraid because of them. For tomorrow at this time, I will deliver all of them slain before Israel.

And you'll hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire. That happened. So, how about last week's message? God's word tells us in chapter 23, verse 1, The Lord had given rest to Israel from all her enemies.

[17:41] Verse 3, You have seen all that the Lord God has done to these nations because of you. For the Lord God is He who has been fighting for you. Look with me, verse 9.

For the Lord God has driven out the strong nations before you. And as for you, no man has stood before you this day. Looking back, any reasonable Israelite could say, God's word does not fail. It never has. And it is for certain. But here's the third thing that Joshua does. Joshua appeals to the certainty of God's word for their future.

And this is really where we're at at this time here in Joshua. Verse 5 says that the Lord God, He shall thrust them out before you and drive them before you.

So, set your heart on doing what I say because I'm going to drive them out before you. Verse 10, One man, one man will put to flight a thousand for the Lord, your God.

[18:54] It is He who fights for you, just as He promised. So, if they obey the Lord and purge the pagans from their land, then their obedience will be rewarded.

God will bless them. That's because God's word is certain. It's true. Now, you know, many people, they may say, what's the big deal?

I mean, you know, think about it. I already talked about some of the cultural exchange that might be possible. You know, just let these pagans alone. Just ignore them.

Maybe they'll go away. I'd like to read it. If you want, turn with me to Deuteronomy 7. We're still going to get the Proverbs here. But this is the original command from the Lord to Moses.

I want you to listen to the wording here. This is verses 1 and 2 in Deuteronomy 7. When the Lord your God shall bring you into the land where you are entering to possess it and shall clear away many nations before you, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction.

[20:16] You shall make no covenant with them. You shall show no mercy to them. Boy, those are some pretty stark words.

How about putting that on your church marquee? Yeah. I know. You probably have some protesters out there because, you know, we live in an age of tolerance.

And so you have to wonder, this morning's topic here, these commands, they actually kind of bother you, don't they? Just deep down inside, don't they just kind of really bother you?

Well, I don't know. It depends on who you are. How can a loving God, I know it'll bother your neighbor. I know it'll bother your brothers and sisters, your parents perhaps.

And here's the question, how can a loving God say such a thing? Who would want innocent people killed? Who does he think he is? Certainly, a loving God would never do anything that I would disapprove of.

[21:26] Yeah. How do we respond to that? What do we say? Well, first, we need to be clear here. The Israelites did not have just blanket approval to kill anything and everything that walked on the earth that they didn't like.

No, they didn't. These commands, they're very specific. They're limited to only certain people groups and under specific conditions and only for one generation.

The second thing, those who are identified here for extermination, they're not innocent people. We read elsewhere about how the wickedness of the Canaanites, it says that it was great, unimaginable things that they were doing.

sacrificing their infants to false gods. And so, in a sense, Israel is just, you know, God is performing surgery, and Israel is just his scapel.

And God is removing cancer from a human society. Here's the third thing, though. We have to remember that Israel was commanded to be holy because God is holy.

[ 22 : 39 ] It says in Deuteronomy 20, you shall not leave anything alive that breathes. You shall utterly destroy them, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Pezzarites, the Hivites, the Jesubites, as the Lord your God has commanded you.

And here's why. In order that they may not teach you to do anything according to their detestable things which they have done for their gods, that would be a sin against the Lord your God.

So how do we apply this? How can we be representatives of God in this dispensation that we're in? Well, as believers, first of all, we must be fully persuaded of the certainty of God's word.

It is certain. As believers, we're not commanded to kill anybody. Not in this dispensation. But God does want us to obey.

It's part of what we were talking about in our men's Sunday school today. Obedience is what God is after. It's what we're called to do. And the question for Israel and the question for us today, do we want God's blessing or do we want his discipline?

[ 24 : 03 ] That's the question. Do we want to be part of his plan? Or do we, is it okay that we're just put on the sidelines because we're just like spoiled little children who can't get our way?

And so the Lord puts us on the side because we're so tied up with his discipline. If you would, turn with me to Proverbs chapter 3.

If you turn there, I'd like us to look at this verse because this is very simple. In verses 5 to 8, he says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your path straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

It will be healing to your body and refreshments to your bones. In these verses here, I see four things. There's three instructions and then there's a promise.

[ 25 : 12 ] The first thing, he says, Trust the Lord with your whole heart. And that's because he's trustworthy. If you want to know a time to apply that verse, think about now.

We're in extraordinary times. And it seems like there's this crescendo building and we're heading for a major crisis. That's how I feel.

But isn't it good to know that we have, that there is a God up there who looks upon you and me through the eyes of a father and he loves us and he promises to never forsake us?

Friends, that was given to us by the Lord Jesus. As we trust in him and the finished work of Christ, he will never leave us nor forsake us.

And we see this throughout this whole book of Joshua. God did not forsake Israel and he won't. The main point here in this is that we should not trust in ourselves.

[ 26 : 19 ] We should not lean on our own understanding. In fact, I would even say that it's not even necessary for us to understand everything. We don't need to solve every puzzle that's out there.

God understands everything and so we can just trust him. Secondly, we're to acknowledge him in all our ways. We must realize that God is allowing events such as we're experiencing now to go all around us.

He's crafting the present to create the future that he intends. And he has good purposes for us. Even in things that seem to us like tragedy.

You want a great example? Think of the cross. Just think about that. What a terrible thing for the Lamb of God who never had a harsh word for anyone who did good things.

He taught us things. But yet he was delivered into the hands of sinful men and they crucified him brutally. But that was because through the cross you and I could be saved.

[ 27 : 33 ] What a great thing that is. God is able to turn even tragedy into blessings for us. What a good thing that is. And as we trust and acknowledge him his promises that he will direct our paths.

And moving forward by faith and obedience to his word. That's the way that we show that we trust him. I tell you what I've been really struck lately by how many churches have excellent worship.

Have you ever seen that maybe on YouTube or something like that? Great worship. You know the technology out there to help facilitate a meeting like this is tremendous.

I'm not talking about zip lines, okay? I'm talking about just setting an atmosphere for people to worship. But here's the thing though. If you can have your worship match your obedience to God's

word.

If that could match somehow all of the wonderful worship services that are out there or you know just worshipping God and taking that time you know an hour maybe just in worship alone.

[ 28 : 52 ] It's a wonderful thing but it cannot lack obedience. It cannot miss being doers of the word. So you know we should depart from evil.

There's a verse in Proverbs also the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. that's talking about that humble reverence for God and we must depart from evil. Turn away from sins.

Walk in the newness of life as it was said before in our Sunday school that the Lord Jesus enables us to conquer sin. Unbelievers don't have that.

It's almost you could say that they cannot do anything except sin. but God allows us to conquer sin to walk in holiness to abstain from the things of the world and you know just think about how many people maybe you know personally Christians that have compromised their lives in somehow in some way.

I want to ask you if you look at their lives you know are they effective in their ministry? are they even distinguishable as Christians? Now I know that you know we talk about sometimes well we need to know who's a Christian or not.

[ 30 : 09 ] No we don't. That's for the Lord to decide. But you know we're here for a purpose to be distinguishable to be about his business. Before I look here those are the three blessings before I look at the promise here if I could invite our musician to come up.

here's a promise in Proverbs here as we turn to the Lord and as we turn away from evil notice it says we'll be strengthened we will be preserved it will be health to our flesh and strength to our bones.

What a blessing. Don't you want that? Who here doesn't want that? Yeah no hands we all want that. all of this will happen friends we saw these warnings here of what Israel you know what they will do and we're going to see that they're going to do it they're going to go through it they're going to forget the Lord all of history will happen just as God says in his word and so we need to believe his word and to set our faith fully upon the knowledge that everything he says in his word will be fulfilled and so no matter what the situation we may find ourselves God's word is true it'll help us and it'll guide us and that's because God's word is certain Amen Amen