

Joshua 22 | David Vinyard

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Any help from his wardrobe?

Many of you know I'm a planner, and I plan things well in advance. Picked out my outfit a couple months ago, and I figured we would still be in Zoom. So, nevertheless, I figured I'd go with it rather than try to change things up.

If you're a planner, you know it's hard to change on the fly. But it's also a picture. It's a painful visual representation, but it's a homage to our recent history.

It's good to remember where we've come from, a testament to what we've endured. Still enduring in a lot of ways. Not forgetting, not looking past or undoing the history, but kind of appreciating where we've been.

So, honestly, I didn't have a joke. I just had said, you know, again, figured I would break the ice with myself. But part of this is relevant to our study of Joshua as well.

[1 : 07] You know, looking at history, looking at people in the Bible, looking at why we study these things. And, you know, that's part of today. Declaring things for future generations.

Let me see if this goes up a little bit. So, anyway, welcome. Good to see everybody. Glad you made it out. Today we'll be in the second half of Joshua 22.

If you want to turn there. And for those of you wondering, I'm not changing back. So, this is going to be the entirety of the lesson. A little bit of context leading up to this point in where our study is.

You might remember the fighting has ceased at this point. There were pockets of people in Canaan that still remained to be driven out. But for the most part, the territory had been secured.

It says in Joshua 21, right before, kind of the very end of that chapter, it says, So the Lord gave to Israel all the land which he had sworn to give to their fathers. The Lord gave them rest all around.

[2 : 11] And not a man of all their enemies stood against him. Think about what we studied in the first 20 chapters. And just think about how that must have felt. After all that waiting and wandering and fighting and struggle to be in that point.

So the battles are won. If you remember a couple weeks back, maybe a couple months back now, but the territories have been divided.

Joshua and Eleazar cast lots and they sought God's direction on how to do this thing. And then last, two weeks ago when Dave shared, we saw that Joshua sent home the two and a half tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh back to the land on the east where they had settled.

I think Dave called it the commencement speech. Is that right? In Joshua's commencement speech to send these folks on. It says in verse 8 of chapter 22, So they departed with their warriors and with their war spoils.

So I just wanted to catch you up in case Father's Day and COVID and everything else kind of threw you for a loop. I think Dave mentioned this too. The question was asked, was this the right move for these folks?

[3 : 23] Because today we're going to look at how the story continued. But was it a good choice to settle in the east? Was it something God directed? We learned that it wasn't. Why did they pick this?

It says they preferred the land that was suitable for cattle. They approached Moses and said, you know, we'll take it. We're not necessarily going to wait. We're not going to go in. We're going to settle here.

Even though it's farther from the places of worship. Even though it's a little closer to the enemies and the outside. We're good. We're going to go with this. So there's the context in case you forgot what's been leading up to Joshua 22.

And if the first nine verses were the commencement, today's text is akin to more of a summer road trip. So anybody, show of hands, who's been on a road trip?

I feel like everybody, right? We live in the Midwest. Road trips are part of our go-to. Especially now. But, and you know, any form of road trip will count.

[4 : 25] But just to get us into the right frame of mind, think about the road trips you've taken in your life. You learn a lot about people on road trips. Learn a lot about yourself.

Some good things. Maybe some not so good things. They have bladder stamina that need to be entertained. Car sickness. Sometimes that comes by surprise. Traveling with kids adds a whole other element.

They often contain a fair dose of the unexpected. When you think about, you know, wrong turns, flat tires. Maybe you bump into a celebrity and that kind of makes your trip.

Maybe you, you know, eat some bad food at the rest stop. That defines your trip, unfortunately. But they're usually memorable in some ways, my point. So we're looking at a road trip here.

And that memorability, that event, that unexpected happening still occurs here in Joshua chapter 22. So I'm trying to get you to think about, you know, without reading the entirety of it, what's happening here in this text.

[5 : 27] A couple more stats and then we'll dive in. Thinking of road trips, what's important? You always got to know where you're going, how long it's going to take to get there, the distance, you know, what's involved. So for those keeping track, what's happening here in Joshua 22, Joshua sends these folks on and they're making their way home back to the east.

The distance is about 23 miles. So I was looking at maps in preparation for this and thinking about what does that equate to. If you're not good with numbers, that's starting in downtown St. Louis and making your way out to Byerly RVs.

For those that know we're Byerly RVs. In Eureka. But the difference is, that's on foot. Has anybody ever walked 23 miles, 25 miles?

One, two, yeah. Put me down for never. I've never done that. Sounds like quite a trip, though. And let's not forget, during this road trip, they're carrying the spoils of war.

So they've got quite a bit of stuff with them that they're taking. They've also been at war. Seven and a half years, right? And so they've got a heavy load of weapons and armory.

[6 : 34] So it's a little more complicated than just making the trek. I did a little bit of calculation and figuring for the burden of that and travel and terrain and all that.

It's about a two, two and a half days journey for these folks that are used to being on the go. So they've been gone for seven years. They've conquered some 15 people groups. They've fulfilled a promise that they had made 50 years earlier.

They've got their goods. Now they're going home. This is the home stretch, the road trip in Joshua 22. So it's with that setting. Let's open it up in prayer, and then we'll dive in. God, thank you for today.

Thank you that we're back in person. Thank you that you've blessed these peoples here, that we can come together and fellowship, and we can study your word. More importantly, that we can find truth, that we can find encouragement, that we can be challenged, and ultimately that we can mature in our thinking and our understanding of how you would have us to live here in the year 2020.

So I thank you for that. I thank you for the history that we can learn from in this text, and I just pray that you would open our hearts and minds to what you have for us today. Amen.

[7 : 44] All right, so we're going to pick this up in verse 10. And it is a bit narrative, but I think it's going to be helpful to see and read as we go through this.

So if you look at, starting in verse 10, it says, And when they came to the region of the Jordan River, which is in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and Gad and of the half-tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan.

A great, impressive altar. Now the children of Israel heard someone say, Behold, the children of Reuben and of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh had built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan in the region of the Jordan, on the children of Israel's side.

And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them. Pausing there for a minute.

So we've all been on those road trips where something goes wrong. These guys were almost home. This is what kills me. They were almost home. All they had to do was cross the river, make it into the territory that they had settled in.

[8 : 52] And they took a stop. And it wasn't a quick stop. It wasn't a gas and potty break, as many of us are used to. But they took time to build what they said is an impressive altar. Now, as any road tripper knows, there really are two types of leaders on any endeavor.

Think about it, right? Think about going on a trip. There are those who take time to enjoy the scene. The casual pacers. They usually take great photos and offer really good commentary.

Frequent stops. And then there is the second type of road trip leader. Those whose sole focus is to shave minutes, or if possible, hours, off the estimated time of arrival.

Thank you. Yeah. He said amen. If you fall into that second category with me, you know who you are. And it's safe to say that the caravan in Joshua 22 is not being piloted by group number two. In fact, they are being driven by those in the looky-roo camp, you know, the ambiguous Andes, the casual pacers who are just going about their way. And what do we come to find?

[10 : 03] They commit the cardinal sin of road driving. They had an unnecessary stop. And so it says they stopped to build an impressive altar, so impressive, that all the people in Canaan are concerned.

And it says in the text that they gathered for war. I just, I couldn't get over this when I was studying, like, seven years of fighting side by side, conquering people, watching God work, keeping this promise.

And just immediately, they leave town, not even more than a couple days' journey, and we're looking at Jewish civil war. And so, this is going to be hard to hear. I've entitled the message The Altercation.

I know it's hard to hear. It's hard to say. But I thought it was fitting because of the conflict that we're going to study about. So let's look at picking up in verse 13, read what happens next.

Remember, they stopped right before the Jordan. They built this altar. Everybody got word of it. And here it is. It says, So similar, if you remember studying when they were dividing the land, this is how they did it.

[11 : 22] Same deal. Skipping down, it says, Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord. What treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel to turn away this day from following the Lord, and that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day?

Is the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed still, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord? But that you must turn away from this following the Lord, and it shall be, if you rebel against the Lord, that tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.

Then it says, Nevertheless, if the land of your possession is unclean, cross over. In other words, come back where the Lord's tabernacle stands, and take possession with us. But do not rebel against the Lord, nor rebel against us by building yourselves an altar beside the altar of the Lord our God.

And so the tribes in Canaan, as I mentioned, they all come out. They talk to their eastern brothers, and they say, What on earth are you guys doing?

Have you already lost your way? It's been so little, and all that we've worked and waited for, here you are building an altar. And the funny thing is, is this land that we're talking about here is not that big geographically.

[12 : 40] So somewhere within about a five-mile span is that first altar that they built. I think you might have mentioned this, Dave, a couple weeks ago. The first altar they built when they crossed into the Jordan. Remember, they erected that altar as a memoir, as a reminder.

And so it got me thinking, like, what is this about altars? You know, what is the deal? This altercation. I'll stop saying it. What's so offensive, you know?

And so I did a little homework, did a little looking. And it turns out, just about every prominent person in the Old Testament had built an altar, or two, or three.

From Noah, Abraham, I think built four. Isaac built one. Jacob built two. Moses built two. Balak, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah. The Israelites together built a few.

Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon built three. Just go down the list. Their altars are pretty common. Even the bad guys, Jeroboam, Ahaz, they did altar building, too.

[13 : 45] So I'm not going to read you all those references. I just wanted to paint the picture that building an altar in itself is not good, uniquely. It's not bad, uniquely. It's not even uncommon.

So what's the problem? We don't read that God commanded them to build this altar. That's an important facet. But it's assumed that they were doing it out of a disobedience, out of a rebellion. So I think you guys probably picked up on that. And that's why they send in this guy named Phineas in the reference to Peor. Now, you can be honest here. I want to survey the group. Has anyone heard of Phineas before?

I think that's how you say his name. Or Peor. Any familiarity with that story at all? Kevin, again. Two for two today. And a 25-mile run, by the way, and Peor. Did you read this ahead of time?

I must have shared my Google file with you. So for those that aren't familiar, what happened in Peor in Numbers 25 is they disobeyed God. They intermarried, as they had often been known to do, mixing with the Moabites, which sounds a little bit like a reality TV show.

[14 : 54] But ultimately, they disregarded God, and they were unclean. And as a result, about 24,000 people died. So what happened in that story is they sent the same Phineas to cleanse.

Sorry, Phineas took it upon himself in that story to cleanse the people. Here's what he did. He picked up a spear. It's a little bit graphic. I won't share all the details. But he actually impales a man and a woman at the same time in the tent as a representation of how serious God feels about that sin and intermarried.

And so it's interesting. You look at that, and you look at the message they're sending by sending Phineas, you know, this Phineas the Punisher, so to speak, with this message saying, Listen, he's willing to do what needs to be done here.

So you get it. They're ready for war. And they say in verse 19, Do not rebel against the Lord, nor rebel against us by building yourselves an altar.

Here's what's interesting, too. I didn't know this beforehand, but actually Jewish law required that they do exactly this. If you look at Deuteronomy, God teaches them and says, If you hear someone in one of your cities, this is Deuteronomy 13 if you're writing down references.

[16 : 08] If you hear someone in one of your cities saying, Corrupt men have gone out from among you, saying, Let us go serve other gods, then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently.

And if it's true, you shall strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword and utterly destroy it. So they had a pretty clear idea of what to do.

And they had the guy to do it. So here they are. You've got the picture, the road trip home, unnecessary stop, Phineas the Punisher, ten princes.

And in studying this, you've got the history lesson, you've got what's going on, but I couldn't help but pause for a minute. And think about the tact, the response, the appropriate actions as we translate it to how we live today.

We have a little bit different set of guidelines today, right? But we still deal with things in the nature of confrontation or conflict resolution, maybe more appropriate.

[17 : 16] And so I was thinking about that. I was looking at what does the Bible offer us in terms of managing conflict? What does the Bible offer us in terms of dealing with a difficult situation or troubled people or a group that's in error?

Because these things are, unfortunately, now readily available all over our world constantly and every single day. At least I feel that way. And so I just did a little digging. I want to give you a couple of verses to write down and just hear and think about how it might challenge you.

Proverbs 18, 13 says, He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him. It's one of the verses that makes sense as soon as you read it, but it's very hard to call to mind when you're in that moment.

He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him. In the book of James, a fairly popular text reminds us to be slow to speak and quick to hear.

And so there's this element of appropriateness in how we manage confrontation. And I found it, you know, especially challenging.

[18 : 22] Galatians 6, verse 1 says, Paul says to the Corinthians, this is an interesting verse that I had to read a few times.

But in the topic of maturity and helping ourselves along in these difficult scenarios, Paul says, For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of men.

Think about how that reconciles. It's taking this element of discernment into our actions. Not just doing what God says.

Doing what God says, right? I'm not saying not to. But with this added discretion on timing and sensitivity. It's pretty challenging. Think about that. And ultimately for the benefit, not just to exercise patience, but for the benefit of our fellow man, I think is the example here on display.

So take that for what it is. I just wanted a quick aside there, an encouragement and a challenge on that topic. Getting back to chapter 22, obviously they have to give him a chance to respond, right?

[19 : 40] So look at verses 21 to 29. They come with this message. They say, what on earth are you doing? And it says, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh answer and say, The Lord God of gods, I'll say it again, the Lord God of gods, he knows, and he let Israel itself know.

If it is in rebellion, or if in treachery against the Lord, do not save us this day. If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following God, or to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings, or peace offerings, let the Lord himself inquire.

But in fact, we have done it for fear. A little mental note there, we're going to come back to this. For a reason, saying, in time to come, your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel?

For the Lord has made the Jordan a border between us. You have no part in the Lord. And they say it again. And they said, Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, that it may be a witness between you and us, and to our generations after, that we may perform the service of the Lord before him with our burnt offerings.

Pause there. It's an interesting plea. They said it was out of fear that their ancestors might forgive.

[21 : 04] And what's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear that? This actually happened before the Jews. You go all the way back to Joseph.

Remember that story, what happened? It says there arose a generation and a pharaoh who did not know Joseph or what happened. And the outcome of that was pretty grim. I mean, we've all seen the Charlton Heston movie, right?

I mean, the Jews were enslaved for generations and then forced to work, and they just made it harder and harder. And, you know, so anyway, it's not like it hasn't happened before is the point.

And also, it's not like the Israelites had this immaculate track record of consistency either.

Unfortunately, as we've read about in history here, they didn't have a memory bank that was just a vault of prudence.

You know, it had some challenges with some things. And so it begs the question, were these two and a half tribes right? Were they justified to build this altar?

[22 : 04] You have to ask that question. Was it a fair assessment of risk? I feel like that is the theme of 2020. Humanly speaking, it seems rational.

Can we agree with that? Yeah? Logically, they had good reason. Did God command it? He did not. It's an interesting middle ground where they're at today.

And, you know, without having the entirety of the transcript of history, what we see in the text leaves that sort of in the middle space. And if you skim the last couple verses, verses 30 to the end in Joshua 22, it says that this response pleased them.

Meaning, Phineas and the princes did them well. They said, this is good. They'll name the altar a witness. The land was happy not to have war, which I'm certain that was true.

And so it's kind of this question of it pleased men, but did it please God? And I'm going to leave you with that to chew on. But we're not done.

[23 : 18] Don't worry. We're going to use every bit of the next 10 minutes. You look at the text. And you look at what's happening here in this trip and this confrontation between these groups.

And you think, what's the point? You know, is it just a history lesson? Is it just a chance to remember where they've been? You know, what they've been through and where they've come from? Or is it just an example of de-escalation, conflict management?

Maybe. Maybe. Is it a model of keeping the purity of worship? I think that's in there. I think that's in there, too. Is it about finishing the race and the road trip home?

Maybe. How about this? The problems that come from not consulting God in the first place. All of the above, maybe. Let me share with you a point of conviction that really hit me from this story.

And it's none of those that I just talked about. Something different. Something I've been chewing on as I prepped for this. And something that I was just sitting there asking God, you know, what is the point of studying a text like this where it seems narrative in nature and it seems just documentary? [24 : 37] And I got this that just came out of the blue. I think I came in and told my wife when I was like, it's just like landed on me. I feel like it's really just ridiculous. It's a challenge. And so it goes to the entirety of the study of Joshua.

Follow me for a minute on this. Consider the God that they worship. The God who led them across the Jordan on dry land.

Who held the sun in the sky. Who rose up old men to conquer giants. We talked about that. Who rained down bread from heaven. Who defeated enemy after enemy.

Who preserved this special land. And has the control and engagement enough to carve out a generation of deceased and then put the next generation in.

I mean, we're talking about precise activity here, right? Surely that same God is capable of providing unity and peace for his people.

[25 : 41] Surely that same God is more powerful than time and generations. Certainly he's capable of overcoming a miss in memory or a lapse in judgment by a future Israelite.

Here's what I'm getting at. Here's what I'm getting at. I looked at this story and I was challenged by what I believe is just a widely applicable principle here.

And it's a hedging of faith. A hedging of faith. You follow me on that, what I'm getting at here? It started with a doubt. It started with a fear.

And a what if. And it led to a non-consultative of God human plan in response. You know, what if God doesn't protect us?

Or what if our covenants loosen? Or, you know, what if these guys forget? What if they don't let us in? What if something happens? It's a precaution against uncertainty.

[26 : 46] And again, this is a really convicting message personally. But I believe their words and their actions in Joshua 22 admit an absence of faith.

A void of real trust in the sustaining power of their creator. And the more I unpack this, because I wanted to make sure I felt like this was on point, it actually started to poke its way through all the way.

If you think about, right, where did these guys come from? I think these tribes have been in that place for a while, right? They doubted. They settled outside. They kind of have this habit of hedging. And so as I came upon that theme and I started to think about these people and think about the pattern, I thought, you know, okay, there's a challenge in my own life. There's a conviction of serving.

Where am I hedging my faith? And then the question popped up in a figurative sense. How many altars have I put on the shores of the Jordan in my life, you know, picturing that?

[27 : 57] Before I enter back home where I'm supposed to go, before I go into the next stage, how many backup plans do I have hanging out there? Just in case God doesn't do whatever it is I hope that he does.

Or in case I don't like the setup. Or in case there's a what if that I'm not really comfortable with. How many plan B's do you have that you've been leaning on?

Because it's a false sense of security. If it didn't come from God, if he didn't build it for you, you're not doing it in faith. It's not going to count for much.

And so that question came up as I was thinking about this story, and I've been chewing on it and just challenged by it. And here's another question directly from these two and a half tribes and what happened to Israel.

Where is there conflict in my life? Where is there conflict in your life that came as a result from not trusting God with an outcome? You think about what almost happened here.

[29 : 06] Unnecessary conflict, the delay, the confrontation. I mean, yes, it was avoided. That's what history shows us. Thanks to God's law. Thanks to God's providence back in Deuteronomy.

But it could have been really bad. It could have ended very poorly. Like my choice of outfit today. But think about that. I just, oh, I was definitely challenged of where are those altars that I've put up in my life.

And one example, I just, you know, making it realistic, thinking about the year that we're living and thinking about just kind of a wake-up call that we've had in society. And, you know, personally for

me, I've just been wrestling this.

Where do we choose to live? What do we choose to do? What does my life look like for the next relatively more uncertain set of years? Not that there's any certainty, right, other than trusting God. But I look around and I saw that mess and my first inclination is I want to get out. Amy will tell you I've been looking at houses. I've been looking at things to remove from the situation. Not asking God if he likes that idea.

[30 : 07] Just interested in doing it. You know, I see the mess that society is in. And just the flailing after truths and something and meaning and emotions and, you know, frantic and fear.

That fear just keeps coming up. Even in today's text it says it. And my challenge to myself, my hedge was to find a way to beat the world of your own way. I don't know if that message resonates with you, if you're anything like me or not.

But it's a hedge. I searched myself and I was convicted with this, that it was a hedge against my faith in God's sovereignty. To find a way to avoid, you know, to retreat, to watch, to remove myself from something.

And that's my latest what-if program to make sure that I'm okay with my own outcome. And, you know, here's the trick. If this encourages you at all, I've been thinking about how this is sneaky in our lives.

And just like Reuben, Ged, and Manasseh, on the surface it doesn't necessarily sound bad. You know, you think about these plan Bs that we have.

[31 : 14] If I told you I want to work hard, I want to save money, I want to plan ahead, I want to do something that's diligent and we can host things and we can be responsible, you're going to nod your head and say, that sounds great, David.

Or maybe you won't, you know. But maybe you will. The answer might seem noble. That's the thing. And there's a whole lot of these examples in my own life where it's shrouded in responsibility or prudence, but it might even be logic, right?

I want to get away from the godless hordes. That's just sensible. But, again, in studying this, in thinking about the text, in thinking about what these guys did, it matches the circumstance, but is it what God has?

Is it what God has for me and my family? Is it an opportunity for me to dismiss faith and trust in self, right? That's kind of what I was convicted by.

If that's not hard enough, you notice this text, right? What did they actually say in the reason they built the altar? They weren't worried about themselves.

[32 : 30] They were worried about their kids. Concerned about protecting future generations. And so now you put that one on. You know, you've got that on top of what we just talked about.

I'm probably speaking to all the moms in here more than the dads. How much harder is it to let go when it's not just you, but when it's those you care about most? And not that the dads don't care. I'm sorry, dads. That was not fair. But we care, too, just probably not as much as the moms at some point. When it's more than your own life, when it's more than your own safety, you know, when it's far beyond trying to avoid your own personal suffering, but those that you wouldn't give anything for, right?

So, do you fully trust God? Do you hedge? Do you trust him for what he's got for you?

That was the message today, and we're just about out of time. I want to differentiate, given our study in the morning, you know, I trust God for eternity. I trust God that he will save my soul from the pits of hell, and yet sometimes less so from the peace of mind in my daily day.

[33 : 46] Isn't that crazy? If you're here and you don't believe that Jesus' death paid the price for your sin, and that rising from the grave he offers you eternal life, that's a whole different issue altogether.

What I'm referring to in this conversation is not the decision for eternity, rather it's about following God tomorrow. It's about the faith for next week, and after the election, and when your kids are in school, and beyond, right?

And in scripture, in closing this up here, the musicians want to come up, we see guys like Joshua, we see guys like Caleb, we see guys like New Testament guys like Paul, they didn't really have plan B's, you know?

And the more I studied this text, the more convicting that was. They're vested. I mean, they don't. They're there. God tells them to do something insane, they're there. To live was Christ, and to die

was gain.

So I'm going to give you a couple references here, because I've done a lot of my own talking, but let's hear what God has given us in his word. In Proverbs 3, 5, it says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.

[34 : 57] 1 Corinthians 10, 13, it says, No temptation has overtaken you, that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but the temptation he will provide a way of escape that you can endure.

Romans 15, verse 13 says, May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope. 2 Timothy 2, 13, it says, If you're faithless, he does remain faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

And even in our weakness, in other words, we have that. So these worries, these ideas, these plans that we draft, I know this is so hard to hear, because I'm so guilty of this, but they often add needless conflict, stress points, faithless action.

I challenge you as we close, where are you headed? What are you doing? What are you hoping in? Is it in a tower of rocks? Or is it in El Salai?

I think I got that right. God, my rock. Tower of rocks versus the psalmist, God, my rock. The psalmist says in chapter 121, I lift my eyes unto the hills.

[36 : 18] I lift my eyes unto the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. Take that challenge.

Do a little introspection. Don't beat yourself up too bad. But just in pursuing that, in pursuing that example from Joshua, let us live fitting of what we are. We are a real, true minority on the planet. That's not a political statement. That's just those who are saved, those who believe. We are. We are those who trust in eternity and tomorrow.

And we have a name card. I like this picture. This place at the table for God's next party. You know, think about that. Do we live that way? Does our outlook, does our choices, does our faith reconcile that reality?

Let's see.