

Joshua 1-7

by Welcome Detweiler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of strength, obedience, and personal devotions in the Christian life as illustrated in the book of Joshua.

Duration: 37:00

Scripture: Joshua 1:7, Joshua 1:9, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Quiet Time", "Biblical Meditation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by encouraging listeners to approach their quiet time with God in a fresh and open-hearted manner. He suggests starting with adoration and thanksgiving, followed by confession. The speaker emphasizes the importance of having specific questions in mind while reading the Bible, such as identifying errors to avoid, commands to obey, sins to forsake, or promises to claim. He then references a tract titled 'Seven Minutes with God' that suggests starting with a short seven-minute quiet time, including a prayer of preparation. The sermon concludes with a reading from Joshua 1:7-9, highlighting the importance of meditating on God's word and being strong and courageous.

Transcript

I understand that our clock is sick, and your watch probably doesn't agree with it, so we're going to go by the wristwatch instead of by the thick clock. It loses about five minutes per week, so that's an excuse for me to go over time tonight. I want to mention that in your prayer sheet, one of the people on there that you can stop praying for now, Mr. Carl Jeans, who is Nancy Kern's brother, passed away this morning, maybe six o'clock or so, and he is now safe home in the glory lands, so you needn't pray for him anymore.

We have no scripture to tell us to pray for those who are at home with the Lord, so we can skip that one. I threaten tonight to bring the desk down somewhere near you and speak from the floor, but there's a possibility that some of you wouldn't hear, we wouldn't have the PA system down there, so I guess I'll have to speak from up here. While I was in Baltimore, on the Tuesday following, I was asked to speak in Oxford, Pennsylvania, and I sat on the front row while the people were coming in, and when I got up to speak, I was surprised.

I said, well, this can't be an assembly. They started on the second row, and they filled the place. I guess there was no one after the sixth row.

They started right there, and they had the crowd up front, so I said, well, this can't be an assembly, because I've never seen an assembly that starts to sit there for a ministry meeting, but that's just by way of explanation. Tonight I ask you to turn to Joshua chapter 1, the book of Joshua chapter 1, and I begin reading at verse 7. Joshua 1 and verse 7. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success. Have not I commanded thee, be strong, and of a good courage be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. One of the earliest lessons that probably many of us learned was that there is a wide difference between human reasoning and statements in the Bible.

And this was true perhaps before we came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior in our unsaved, confused condition. We had already listened to some of the human reasonings that we heard in our Sunday school classes and so on, and then we heard the word of God, and we found that there was a conflict between the two. In general, human reasoning believes that we have to earn our way to heaven.

If you want to get to heaven, you've got to meet God's standards, you've got to live right, you've got to do right, you've got to behave yourself, and the only way you can get to heaven is by doing right or earning it. And that seems very reasonable. There are many people who still want to believe that.

However, when we turn to the word of God, we are shocked to learn that God turns that down and says the only way you can ever be ready for heaven is to be saved by grace. You have to recognize that you're a lost sinner, and God has opened the door wide so that anyone can be saved if they want to. If it were a matter of behavior, then those who were raised in slum sections, who never heard of a Bible or never had any Christian training, would be unfortunate.

But God has opened the door wide so that no one can excuse themselves and say, I didn't have a background that enabled me to be eligible for heaven. So we are safe when we make the choice and say, I will no longer listen to human reasoning, but I want to listen to the word of God only. That's the only safe resort.

We have an example in Acts 17 regarding the Berean Christians, and it says they searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things were true. And I think they referred to the things that they heard Paul preach to them. They didn't take Paul's word for it.

We want to check the Bible and see if we are getting what the Bible says. And there are no doubt a number of places in the Bible. I'm thinking now of Psalm 40 where I read, He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. We learn that in receiving our salvation, we have the opportunity of having a new song and new joy that could remain with us the remainder of our days.

However, one of the questions that many of us ask later on is, how can I remain happy as I was right after the day that I was saved? How can I remain that happy? Is that possible? Or do I have to eventually lose

my joy and live a mediocre life? Is it possible to remain happy all the way along? We soon learn that after we are saved, our happiness depends upon our obedience to the word of God. Not only knowing the word of God, but our obedience to it. That may be best explained with one of the hymns that we sing, Trust and Obey.

For there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey. Trusting, trusting the Savior for salvation, and then, as we learn things from the word of God, our happiness depends upon whether we want to obey or whether we don't want to obey. And we are soon told that there are a number of things that we can now enjoy that we couldn't enjoy before, such as baptism.

That's not for unsaved people. I was not eligible for baptism before I was saved, but immediately after I was saved, I was eligible to be baptized. I could follow him, obey the word of God regarding that.

Also, the Lord's Supper. This is something that I could not enjoy and was not invited to until after I knew the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior. And then, too, very normally, the privilege of proclaiming the gospel to our friends and neighbors and relatives, that came almost natural, right from the day of our salvation.

Along the years when we've heard ministry from different of the Lord's servants, Now and then we heard some who put emphasis on the fact that if you want to have a happy family life, you must have a time of family devotions. And it meant that you read the Bible together and you pray together. There was a slogan that we used to see, families that pray together, stay together.

Now, that's not a verse in the Bible, but it's evidently very true. I can't imagine any two people who are ready to separate and are still reading the Bible and praying together each day. That doesn't happen.

I think you could almost say every person who has gone through family strife where the parents had to separate, they didn't obey the word of God and have family devotions. Now, there are many helps today that were not available 50 years ago. I heard very few sermons on the subject of family devotions.

However, I have heard a number of them since, and the Bible Broadcasting Network has in the pulpit ministry each night, many, many, many people who emphasize the fact of family devotions and relative to family staying together. I think this material that is available is so wide that it comes down to any age children that you may have. I think there are some abuses probably that can be made on this subject.

I remember a few years ago hearing of a man who had to be at work, I think, around 6.30 in the morning, and he got his two small boys, maybe 8 or 10, got them out of bed at 5.30 in the morning and said, You've got to sit down, we're going to have our family devotions. Well, over a period of time, it didn't work very well. They hated him because he was stirring them out of their nests at 5.30 in the morning just to read the Bible.

Maybe it wasn't too interesting, I don't know how long he kept it, but anyway, he discovered after a while that it was not profitable. An ideal situation would be that the father takes the responsibility of bringing the family together and reading a portion of the Word of God and also having prayer before the children leave. However, there are a number of family devotions, no doubt, who find it difficult to do that the first thing in the morning.

There are different activities. School appointments are different times, and they find it much better maybe at night at the dinner table, maybe coming together and reading the Scriptures. However, it has been tried and some have had very successful devotions with their family and some have had difficulty in maintaining

it.

I think that each one of us who have tried to have family devotions have discovered that it's very difficult to maintain. It may be because the devil knows the value of it and he is going to see to it that something has to come in to disrupt it. However, my subject tonight is not family devotions, but my subject tonight is personal devotions.

Many of us have discovered that whatever we do, bringing the family together and having some kind of reading and some comments and maybe a prayer is not sufficient to keep us in touch with the Lord. The personal devotions comes under different names. Some call it the quiet time or holy moment with God.

Different terms that are used to express this. Our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew's Gospel on his Sermon on the Mount gives us something regarding personal devotions and he contrasts it with public devotions or probably public prayers. In Matthew's Gospel, chapter 6, I read, And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogue and in the corners of the street, that there may be seen of men verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou shalt thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. He is contrasting and suggesting to us that we are going to have a time set aside when we will pray only with the Lord, two people present.

And I think the first thing that has to be settled if we do that, and I suggest that the closet suggests a place of least distraction. I don't know if you have a light in your closet. So don't go in a closed closet and say the Bible says we have to go in a closed closet but I think we can take from that that it means we should get some place with the least distraction.

And it's very important that we come there with the idea I have a meeting with God. There are only two people here, just myself and God. And we learn from John's Gospel, Chapter 4, The Father seeketh such to worship him.

God desires to meet with us. That should, first of all, be in our minds when we attempt a private devotion with the Lord. God is more anxious to meet with me than I am to meet with him.

And that will help us to elevate this wonderful privilege. God and myself are together and I can talk to him as a friend. And I hope before we get finished he will also speak to me.

It seems that in that prayer closet we are going to read a portion of the Word of God whatever length of time and we will also be speaking to the Lord in prayer. I'm sure that these are very difficult things if your family devotion is difficult to maintain. I would say that your private devotions is even more difficult to maintain.

The devil knows the importance of it and I'm sure that he will interfere. I would make a suggestion that you have to discipline yourself in order to maintain it. I'm sure that the suggestion that it should be in the morning works for some people.

Some people wake up slow. The first hour they are still in a daze. They drive to work in a daze and once they get to the machine or whatever it is they are awake.

And they can say, I am more alert at night and I have my private devotions at night. Many others say, I can do it best in the morning. When I first wake up that's the best time to do it.

Now, there's a lot of variety and I don't think the Lord wants us to get into any rut or any burden. But I think we should seek the Lord's guidance and find some place or some time every day to be quiet in the Lord's presence with an open Bible reading a portion from the word of God and offering prayer. I think perhaps the reason I turn to the book of Joshua is that I found out in this eighth verse this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.

What kind of book did Joshua have? If you will turn back to Exodus chapter 17 you will find in verse 13 Exodus chapter 17 and verse 13. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the years of Joshua for I will utterly put out of remembrance the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

Now in this chapter he says this book he is referring to that book that Moses was instructed to write. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth but thou shalt meditate therein day and night. The suggestion of meditation is probably something that we know very little about.

If you get your dictionary out you will find that there are some explanations such as muse upon fix one's attention upon dwelling in thought upon and the first time I heard someone talk on the subject of meditation he said the original language had the thought of chewing the cud. Not many of you have ever seen a cow chewing the cud but some of you have. They first of all gulp in the grass and swallow it whole.

And after they are filled they come back and they have more than one stomach. Some of you have ulcers you are glad that you have only one stomach to have ulcers but the cow just feels sorry for the cow because the cow has more than one and after the cow is satisfied they usually lie down and you'll see them chewing away chewing away and chewing away again. Now that perhaps is a good definition of the word meditate thereon.

What you have read and that's why there may be some advantage to reading in the morning you can meditate upon that all day long use that as your meditation for the entire day. Now so far as methods are concerned these vary tremendously we don't have any scripture to tell us how you should meditate on the word of God. How many verses you should read I know that some people have the idea I'm going to read the bible through in one year and that is easily done.

You have a number of suggestions made how you can read your bible through in one year's time. If your sight is bad and you have difficulty all you need to do is listen to the BBN station at 3 o'clock every afternoon and if you will follow the master reader you have read through the entire bible in one year. I have never done that never read the bible through in one year.

I've read the bible through but I didn't keep any record how long it took me to do it. I read maybe one book and then took another book in the Old Testament and then in the New Testament and back and forth and thus but I have never read it through in one year. I'm not sure if in our private devotions we can gulp that much down.

That's reading perhaps too fast so far as our devotions are concerned. I think that probably a better way would be to select a certain portion in your Sculpture of the Bible you will have some headings for instance in Joshua 1 in verse 2 I have Joshua commissioned. Now that takes us right down through 9 and that's a

section and that little section could be a nice reading and I think perhaps for me at least and it may vary with you to read it slowly think upon every word as you read it and meditate upon what you have read and I think if you read that and also before you read ask Lord let me see something in these verses that I never noticed before.

What is outstanding in this portion of the Word of God? It seems that in order to get some practical help from reading the Bible we should have a few questions in our mind. One is Do I see in this portion example to follow? Do I see in this portion a command to obey? Do I see in this portion an error to avoid? Have I found in this portion a sin to forsake? Or a promise to claim? If we have this in mind I would like to see something in this portion that I believe will help me to understand what the Bible has said. When I was in Colorado Springs I saw a tract in their tract tract and the title of it was Seven Minutes with God How to Plan a Daily Quiet Time and it attracted my attention and I stole it from the tract tract.

It's written especially to beginners and the suggestion is that to begin with if you want to have a successful quiet time you can't burden yourself down by saying I'm going to read a whole chapter every day. When you come to Psalm 119 you'll be late to work if you make that habit. However, Seven Minutes with God this particular man suggests and it's only a suggestion that you start out Seven Minutes with God.

And he breaks it down by saying maybe your first 30 seconds should be a prayer of preparation. Lord, I don't want to go through some routine I want this to be something fresh. And I ask that you will open my heart to see something in this portion that will be food for my soul today.

Then he suggests you might read about four minutes in the word of God and read it slowly and prayerfully and then turn to prayer. In your prayer no doubt most of us the first thing that comes to our minds when we begin to pray privately is the needs that are pressing upon us. And probably we go about it in a less profitable manner.

Perhaps our first thought should be adoration or thanksgiving. Thinking upon God, his greatness and his power and just meditate upon who this great God is the creator of the universe. Then we can probably follow that with confession.

Not many of us that can get through the quiet time without having something to confess. Something that I did yesterday that probably shouldn't have been done. Or maybe a sin of omission.

Something that I should have done yesterday that I didn't do. So there should be a time of confession. Without that confession we probably will punish ourselves unnecessarily for a long time not getting over those mistakes that we made.

Remember when the day that we were saved the Lord forgave us of all of our sins and promised that he would forgive all the sins that we commit after we are saved. To accept that forgiveness and believe God that he has forgiven us and that he in effect says like he said to the woman go and sin neither do I condemn thee go and sin no more. Then follow that with supplication.

And of course that's the big list. The prayer list that you get every Wednesday night I'm sure that those who have printed them did not mean that we should just use them in our prayer together here after the ministry but that we should use them during the week. Now that may be a problem to some of you because you have been under the impression that the only way you can pray to God is with your eyes closed.

And you will have difficulty in reading this list with your eyes closed. So you have a conflict there don't you? I'm not sure that it's necessary to have your eyes closed all the time. But you can go over that prayer list in your private devotions and mention.

Maybe you won't want to take them all. Maybe the second day you want to take the other list. But you can start praying.

Well we only have two and a half minutes left to pray and after we get through some of this prayer list our seven minutes are up. And I'm sure that this man who suggested this, this is for beginners. Some place you have to begin.

And if you want to set an example he suggested maybe five minutes is hardly enough to rush into his presence and rush out. With some people ten minutes might be too long. So he splits it in the middle and says try it first of all by seven minutes.

Reading the word and prayer. Also he suggests that probably there could be a few moments of absolute silence. The Lord speaks to us through his word.

There are not many of us that can say the Lord spoke to me in an audible voice. He did that to Moses in the burning bush. He heard the Lord's voice in audible voice.

And he spoke to Samuel when he was still a small child. Spoke with an audible voice. At the baptism of Jesus the heavens were opened and a voice from heaven.

This is my beloved son. Hear ye him. And there are many places in the word of God where God speaks through a voice that you can hear.

He had never done that to me. I've never heard God speak to me. He speaks through his word.

And there's a possibility there could be a time of absolute silence in those seven minutes when we just listen to what he has said in his word and go over it again. And I carry a red pencil with me. And whenever I read the word of God and I see something that I didn't notice before, I go over it with a red pencil.

Now some of you may want, don't want to mark your Bible. You want to keep it as new as possible. But mine looks terrible and it's red and white pretty well.

However, these things, the next time you read that portion, you will notice that and most likely you will find something that you overlooked the first time and you'll want to mark something else. Some keep a loose leaf notebook and jot down what I learned from my private devotions this morning and just a little note on it. And that's alright if you'd rather do that.

But it may be profitable to write down some of the things that we have learned while we are praying. Now, regarding this prayer list, if you don't have some list before you, for instance you have some unsaved people. You could pray for them hit or miss.

Whenever I think of them, I pray for them. It may be, it would be better at the beginning of a month to say, now I have four or five people that I'm really interested and concerned about their unsafe condition. Put them down and say, this month I will pray for them every day.

Then you may have a list of saved people, Christians, whom you know, who are going through difficult times, whatever the difficulty may be. But you will want to pray for them as well. Then you have the sick and the bereaved, and the government, the kings, and those who are in authority, our president.

You have family members, you have the choir, the Sunday school teachers, the owner workers, the elders, the deacons, the preachers, the missionaries. The list is endless. But if you don't keep some kind of a sketch before you, you will probably eventually lose interest and you'll have difficulty in keeping up with your daily devotions.

Now, this should not be a duty. While there is some discipline involved in it, it should never be I have to get down and make my quiet time. It should be something that we enjoy.

And I guess even if we carry it out, say, for a week, I get up one time and say, did I really enjoy my devotion with the Lord this morning? Well, really, not as much as yesterday. Now, yesterday I really enjoyed it. I can't say that I really, I wonder what's wrong.

I didn't enjoy it as much. You can expect that. You may not have the same thrill or the same enjoyment every time, but you can say it was something that I probably will find out will vary from day to day.

You will soon find out that seven minutes is not enough. That you are no longer a beginner. That you will need more time.

And I don't think you should set a time. You should say, from this week I'm going to do ten minutes. As the Lord leads, and as long as you enjoy it.

Be in his presence and enjoy the Lord speaking to you. Now, the purpose of this is, in the latter part of verse seven, in the book of Joshua, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. Then again, towards the end of the eighth verse, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

The end of verse nine, the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. To prosper and to have good success should be the main objective in our attempt to meet with the Lord day by day. I remember some time ago hearing a number on the radio program, are you living where God answers prayer? We're on a searching question.

If we ask ourselves, when is the last time that I can say the Lord very definitely answered a prayer? Is there a possibility that I am living in some kind of a mediocre condition spiritually, where I no longer have contact with him? I started out by saying that the question that is in our mind is can I remain happy all the days of my life? I'm sure that they will vary too. There will be some high spots, there will be some low spots, all along the way. However, to maintain some kind of stability, so that when difficulties come along, we can handle them.

It will mean that we must have our devotions with the Lord. When I think of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, there were certain nights that he spent the entire night in a quiet place, in the mountain perhaps, and he was in prayer. Why would he need to pray? He had no confession to make.

He had no reason for it, compared to the reasons that we have. But he sets an example for us. He is in touch with the Father, continually.

And I trust that our meditation on these words in Joshua meditates therein, day and night. Now, when I think of day and night, I think of Genesis 1, where we read the evening and the morning were the first day, the evening and the morning were the second day, and so on. The evening and the morning are 24 hours' time.

And this man who writes seven minutes with God says in effect, and I want to read this, Are you willing to take seven minutes every morning? Not five mornings out of the seven. Not six mornings out of the seven. But seven out of seven.

It's easy for us to start off and say, well, this is Sunday. I'll hear a sermon, and I can have my devotions while I listen to the preacher, or he will feed my soul. I think as soon as you break down and let one day off, you're going to have difficulty.

Now, that's awful hard to set down as a principle. If he didn't have a telephone, it might be a little easier. And Joshua probably didn't have a telephone.

He could have his devotion any time he wanted, any length he wanted. But there will be interruptions. And that's why I say we probably can't set a definite time.

But we can say sometime within these 24 hours I must have a quiet time with my Savior and with his book. I want to learn. I want to grow.

I want to mature. And I think while we are infants, we are spoon-fed from the ministry of the Word of God. But it should be our desire, just as in the natural realm, for the little child to be able to handle the spoon by themselves.

They don't have to be fed anymore. And this perhaps can be the greatest blessing in our assembly when each one of us can say, I enjoy getting alone with God once every day, whatever the length of time. If you can't handle seven minutes, don't worry about that.

But have a someplace to start. And you will enjoy it, and you will find that it will grow. And you will enjoy ministering to others the things that he has given to you.

Now, I went by the old time already. Let's close in prayer. We thank thee, our gracious Father, for thy Word to encourage us.

And we thank thee that it is our desire that we shall remain happy in spirit each day of our lives. And we pray, our Father, thou wilt help us to do this very difficult thing, to be alone with thee, and to be quiet in thy presence, and learn from thy Word. Help us to set aside a definite time when we shall listen to thy voice speaking to us.

Then we can bring our petitions to thee and find ourselves enjoying thy presence. We look to thee for thy blessing upon us as we go to prayer. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

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