



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

The Lord is a Warrior

September 4, 2021

Joshua 10:1-13

Clint Pressley

10 As soon as Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard how Joshua had captured Ai and had devoted it to destruction, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, ² he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were warriors. ³ So Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, ⁴ "Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon. For it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel." ⁵ Then the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered their forces and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon and made war against it.

⁶ And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, "Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us." ⁷ So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. ⁸ And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you." ⁹ So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. ¹⁰ And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹ And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword.

¹² At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

"Sun, stand still at Gibeon,
and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon."

¹³ And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,
until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. ¹⁴ There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel.

¹⁵ *So Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.*

(Pastor prays)

The Longest Day was a 1962 docudrama starring John Wayne, Richard Burton and Henry Fonda. It chronicled the 1944 allied invasion of Normandy and the monumental battle we know as D-day. It was the largest amphibious invasion in the history of warfare, forever memorialized in Ronald Reagan's speech about "the boys of Pointe du Hoc." And for the thousands who gave their lives and for those who lived to fight again, it was indeed the longest day. But as monumental as that day was, it pales in comparison to what our God does for His people.

The text before us is amazing. It even stretches the bounds of credibility, as God listened to the voice of His servant Joshua and stopped the earth rotating on its axis, thereby giving us *genuinely* the longest day. This is not the first time God has acted on behalf of His people here in the book of Joshua. Don't forget the miraculous crossing of the Jordan and then the demolition of the walls around Jericho. But this miracle is different. Those other two were initiated by God, but this time God acts in response to one man's prayers. God listened to one man's voice and fought for His people because of it!

Now what I want to do in the next few minutes we have together is to get your mind and heart off lesser things for a little while and talk about God and show you how our God fights for us. I want you to walk away today with your faith strengthened, your heart encouraged and your mind set on God.

Now there is a temptation to misuse this text— "sun stand still"—and make it about you. But this passage is all about God. In fact, Adrian Rogers, a great preacher from another age, said that no passage in the Bible is more abused than this one. We don't want to stand over it and abuse it. We want to stand under it and drink deep of its truth. I want you to see...

Our God Loves His People and Fights Their Battles

Today I want to give you two *absolutes* and two *promises* from the text about God.

God absolutely comforts His people

Now the punch is in verses 7-8, but we need to get the context, so let's walk through verses 1-6. Five kings coalesce to fight against Gibeon. Israel had made a deal with Gibeon, and now Gibeon is going to cash in. Israel goes to do the right, hard thing and look at the promise and comfort in verse 8. ⁸ *And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you."* This is not a new promise. God has said this to Joshua and Israel at least four other times. In Joshua 1:5, this is exactly what God said before the invasion of Canaan. Look, this is the way God comforts His people. It's not by unveiling to them some new truth that was previously unknown. But it's by reaffirming the promises He has already given in His word! Each old promise from God and the Bible takes on significant meaning based on the circumstances we are in. We don't need new truth; we need old truth that is freshly applied to our current need. It's why we approach the Bible and discipleship the way we do. Look, God's mercies are new every morning, but His promises are as old as God himself. That brings us great comfort.

A lot of you have had a hard week. I understand that. Connie and I have friends in Alabama from our old church, Dauphin Way, Daria and Stephen Wilson. Stephen was a healthy man but got a strain of COVID that first started with pneumonia but on Thursday Connie got a text that said "Stephen is with the Lord." So that's when faith is what actually brings comfort. That's when you learn to say to someone who is going through that, "the Lord is close to the broken-hearted." That's an old promise in the Bible. When we get pressed into those times of pain, where do we go to get comfort? It's in God's word. So I would just say to every grieving widow, worried parent, hurting mother, frustrated teacher, anxious brother: God absolutely comforts His people.

God is absolutely sovereign

Let's go back and read verse 8 again. ⁸ *And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you."* Who but God can speak like that? God speaks in the past tense about a future event! Now be careful when you talk about divine sovereignty, God being in absolute control. That doesn't negate our effort, it

just builds our confidence. God's sovereignty energizes our responsibility. Verse 8 says "I have given them." Then look at verse 9. ⁹ *So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal.* In verse 9 you see Joshua and the people take on a forced march at night. It's a monumental effort. They worked hard for the victory that God actually provides. In verse 8 God says He has already done it, and in verse 9, God's people work hard to actually do it.

Let me say that another way. We trust that we are saved by God's grace. Salvation is fully and only an act of God. We don't bring anything to the act of salvation, as the preacher said, but the sin that makes it necessary. God saves us at the cross of Jesus. That is the finished work of Jesus on the cross. That is salvation, but sanctification is through the growing disciplines, the hard work, knowing the Bible, spending time in prayer, sometimes fasting.

One of the great comforting truths of the Bible that we need to keep clinging to in the days ahead is the absolute good sovereignty of our gracious God. Now look, this is vitally important. I think R.C. Sproul said it best when he said, "If there is even one molecule in the universe running loose outside of the control of God's sovereignty, then there is no guarantee whatsoever that any future promise that God has made to His people will ever come to pass." God's sovereignty is the track on which the train of our efforts run. It's why we pray and endure and trust and hope. It's why broken-hearted Christians can rejoice because God is good and God is absolutely sovereign.

God fights for His people

I want to take you to verses 10-11 to the actual battle that takes place. Look how verse 10 has God as a warrior. ¹⁰ *And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah.* There is some of that language we need to re-introduce into our understanding of God. The Lord threw them into a panic in verse 10 and threw hailstones at them in verse 11. God threw, God struck, God chased, God struck and the writer tells us in verse 11 that the victory was won by God. ¹¹ *And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword.* This is a vision of God fighting for His people. We need the catechism of Psalm 24:7-8. *Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient*

doors, that the King of glory may come in.

⁸ *Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!* The battle is the Lord's. Remember Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and Peter in his anger cut off the ear of the soldier. Jesus healed him quickly and he looked at Peter and said, "Don't you know that if I wanted to, I could have 12 legions of angels here? The battle is mine." In Joshua 10, God has thrown the enemy into a panic and then destroyed them with giant hailstones. We are reminded of what the Psalmist said in Psalm 2:4. *He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.* This helps you not worry. It helps you to trust when there is anxiety and panic. It helps you endure. All of this reminds us that our God fights for us.

And at the end of the chapter, verse 12, Joshua has captured all those kings and their land at one time because the Lord of Israel fought for Israel. The battle is the Lord's. There is one more promise.

God hears His People

Let's finish by reading how the sun stood still. Let's look at the account and notice the editorializing at the end in verse 14. But we will start in verse 12 and read the poetic retelling of the battle. ¹² *At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,*

*"Sun, stand still at Gibeon,
and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon."*

¹³ *And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,
until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.*

Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. ¹⁴ *There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel.* ¹⁵ *So Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.* The writer in verse 14 isn't as amazed with the miracle. Frankly that's what he expected. The writer was more amazed that God listened to Joshua. You see that the power of prayer is the power of God. You've heard about prayer warriors but the truth is there is only *one* warrior and that is God.

How do we pray?

We pray in faith. The value of faith has to do with what the faith is in and not the level of intensity. It's by grace that we are saved and by faith is how we receive it.

We pray with people. We are told that Joshua prayed in the sight of Israel, the people heard and would be encouraged by his prayer.

We pray clearly and directly and outlandishly and beyond our ability. Verse 14 says the Lord heard.

Our God loves His people and He fights their battles.

As we close, I want us to reflect together with a couple of questions. What is your biggest battle? I want you to give it to the Lord. What is causing you the most heartache? I want you to give it to the Lord. What is the sin that keeps you from growing? I want you to give it to the Lord.

This is what we believe. God fought our worst battle at the cross of Jesus. There Jesus takes the wrath of God away from every person who will believe. If you will put your faith in what Jesus has done, that He died on the cross in your place. God raised Him from the dead, and if you will turn away from your sin and believe, God will save you.

This morning we are going to sing, and during that time the altar will be open for anyone who wants to come and pray.

(Pastor prays)