

The Discipleship Project-Summer 2021

Series 3: Victorious

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Sun, Stand Still

Series Big Idea

Because our battles belong to the Lord, we must trust God to bring victory.

Lesson Big Idea

Because our battles belong to the Lord, we must trust God to move Heaven and Earth to bring victory.

FOUNDATION

Scripture Focus: Joshua 10:8 (PPT)

Joshua knew it was serious when he saw the look on the face of the young messenger running toward him. The urgent message was from Gibeon. They needed help. Five kings were in the process of overtaking them, and their only hope was to appeal to the army of Israel for help. "Please come and rescue us. We are outnumbered. They have attacked us, and we are surrounded."

Joshua's strongest and bravest men marched all night from Gilgal to Gibeon. Joshua turned the facts over and over in his mind as he neared the city of Gibeon. Five Amorite kings had combined their armies and planned an attack on Gibeon. Why? Gibeon had not threatened them or done anything to provoke these kings. The only thing Joshua could think of was merely that Gibeon had made a peace treaty with Israel and was now their ally. Five against one—pulling all their strength together and ganging up on one city clearly indicated the Amorite kings were fearful. The treaty with Israel must have petrified them. A smile crossed his lips as Joshua sorted through the matter. Maybe the kings thought all their domains would end up like Jericho, completely overtaken by the Israelites. Joshua saw clearly that, in fear, the kings had ganged up on Gibeon. But they hadn't counted on reinforcements coming to Gibeon's side.

As the army of Israel approached Gibeon, suddenly Joshua was overcome with the mighty presence of God. His experience compelled him to stop and heed the voice speaking to his heart. He put up his arms and motioned for the company of warriors to come to a stop. Right there, in front of the whole army, Joshua fell on his knees and looked toward heaven, "Lord, I am here, speak to me." As clear as the blue sky, Joshua heard the voice of God. "Do not be afraid of them, . . . for I have given you victory over them. Not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you" (Joshua 10:8, NLT). Joshua shook his head up and down in comprehensive agreement; then he stood up and motioned for his men to follow. The Lord was going to fight the battle. They would just need to keep their heads up and follow God's lead.

FRAME

Joshua's infantry was mighty, but they were no match for five armies. God's promise came before Joshua encountered one enemy. Not one of his men would be hurt. God would see to it that Joshua prevailed and won this battle.

The promises of God are not only for a few people in the Bible. (PPT) Today even we have promises from God. We have the opportunity to search His Word for His commitments to us. He has promised never to leave us during rough times.

The psalmist wrote, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4, KJV).

God has promised to give us His Spirit (PPT) after we repent and take on the precious name of Jesus in baptism.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:38–39, KJV) (PPT)

- **What other promises in the Bible can we claim for ourselves?**

The Scriptures contain many more promises. **We can trust the promises are true because God’s Word is infallible or flawless. (PPT)** However, we also have the opportunity to listen to God’s voice. As He speaks to us, He will always speak in accordance or agreement with His Word. He will never contradict His written Word. This is how we know we are listening to His voice. Many times when we pray, our prayers are a one-way conversation. We may begin with praise and worship, move into requesting or petitioning God for our needs, and end up thanking Him for His powerful answer. When we finish, we stand up and walk away, often without giving God time to talk to us. How would our lives change if we gave God time to talk to us?

Joshua trusted God to keep His promise (PPT), so he led his infantry toward the enemy armies. As the army plunged into battle, the work of the Lord was apparent. It was quite a sight to see. As the army of Israel surprised the enemy, the enemy was discomfited and confused. They broke out in a run for their lives. Israel chased after them and cut many of them down with the sword. As they approached a hill, huge hail stones began to fall on the armies of the five kings. More men died from the hail stones than from Israel’s sword.

As the day progressed, a holy boldness came upon Joshua. (PPT) He could see that the brightest part of the day was passing. They would need more light if they were going to witness God finish the work. In the presence of all the people, Joshua asked God for another miracle. Joshua asked God to stop the sun, let it stand still over Gibeon, and at the same time halt the moon over the opposite valley (Joshua 10:12–13). God miraculously granted Joshua’s request; the sun stood still until Israel had completely defeated the enemy armies.

In the light of God’s promise, Israel was able to see the whole thing. God had done as He promised, and for the doubters, it was recorded in all the history books. Joshua and all the army of Gibeon were witnesses to the miracle God had performed for them that day. The sun halting its course and lingering in the sky the whole day was an amazing answer to prayer, leaving no doubt God had fought the battle that day.

When we surrender our lives to Christ, we experience benefits beyond our wildest dreams. Sometimes we may have to take a strong stand to be on the Lord’s side, but if we stand firm, God will fight for us. As Gibeon chose to join Israel as an ally, we must decide to take the Lord’s side.

At times we may feel weak in our faith, but if we will remember that God is on our side, He will help us through the most difficult times. (PPT) Some people encounter resistance from their family members when they repent and change their lifestyle to line up with biblical truths. These encounters can be similar to battles. The enemy can use the people we love the most to sabotage our resolve to walk with God. This does not necessarily mean they are driven by the devil. It is just the beginning of the battle between choosing God and surrendering to our own fleshly desires. Many times when we stand firm in our faith, it is a witness to those who fight us so fiercely. The victory comes when they seek out God for themselves after having witnessed a transformation in our lives.

- **How can we show our faith to those who oppose us?**

Choosing God's way can be a battle. (PPT) Temptation still works in us, pulling us toward the life we left behind. We may have addictions that are hard to break. We may have habits we developed in the world that will take time to overcome. The truth is: we all encounter temptation and battles. Paul addressed his own struggle in a letter to the Romans (Romans 7:14–25). He observed that when he tried to do good, the opposite would win out. He failed many times, but he did not give up. He recognized that the life of sin was what was holding him back from doing what God wanted him to do.

The only way to overcome sin is to allow God's Word to penetrate our desires. We then make a firm decision to turn away from the desires of the flesh. We choose God's way. We choose to take the Lord's side.

- **What are some practical things we can do to help us turn away from sin?**

Turning away from sin can be a daunting task. (PPT) Temptation is difficult to resist in our own power. The best ammunition against temptation is using the Word of God as our weapon. We can find passages in the Bible that give us the faith to fight. When we test the Word against the enemy, the Word always comes out victorious. We must make deliberate decisions to resist temptation and sin. We must set our minds toward God's way. In other words, we must take control over our thoughts and point them toward God. The Word of God gives us the key to accomplishing this change of mind:

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. (Philippians 4:8, NLT) (PPT)

After Gibeon signed a treaty with Israel, the enemy moved in to take over. At first, perhaps Gibeon did not realize the benefit of being Israel's ally, but when they needed help, they called upon the army of Israel. **When the battle becomes too much for us, we can call in reinforcements, just as Gibeon did.** (PPT)

Some battles wear us down. When we struggle with sickness, it can wear heavy on our faith. After a long physical battle, our faith can waiver. But we should not feel guilty to ask for help. Asking for others to pray for us when we are sick is biblical. Calling on the pastor or others to lay hands on us when we are sick is perfectly normal (James 5:14). This is why pastors may call for those in a congregation who are sick to come to the front for prayer.

In the Bible we read about a man who could not get to Jesus for healing because he was paralyzed. Four of his friends decided to carry him to Jesus. The crowd was so large, the friends could not get inside the house, so they took the man to the roof, started tearing off shingles to make a hole, and let the man down through the ceiling to Jesus (Mark 2:3–5). At times we need others to intercede for us.

- **Who are some friends you would call on to help you pray if you were in a crisis?**

Asking friends to pray with us as reinforcements is good. Matthew wrote, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:19, KJV). (PPT)

We should not feel hopeless. God will provide what we need when we need it. He knows where we are, and He knows the outcome before we get there. God is in our tomorrows. He is not tethered to time like we are. He sees tomorrow as it were today. When we trust in Him, we are giving our vision an eternal push. **Just as Joshua did when he faced the armies of five Amorite kings, we may feel outnumbered, but God will come through for us.** (PPT) God had a plan for Israel's victory. When Gibeon signed the treaty with Israel, Joshua did not know the battle with five kings was in his future, but God did. Joshua did not know God would pour down hailstones from heaven upon the enemy, but God did. Joshua did not know he would boldly ask God to stop the sun and moon in the sky for a day, but God knew. God knew because He was already there.

- **How does knowing God has already been in your present situation impact your response to God?**

We can trust a faithful God because He is already there. He is in our future, fighting for us. He is there, preparing the way for us to come through our battle victoriously.

We know who to turn to when the battle seems hopeless. (PPT) God is our ally. God is on our side. Even when we are unfaithful, He remains faithful. Probably the most obvious record of God's faithfulness to us personally is our initial encounter with Him. When we repent of our sins and ask God to forgive us for everything we have done in our past—all the bad decisions we made, all the chains we allowed to bind us, all the people we hurt and rejected, and all the times we turned away from Him—He did not walk away. God was faithful to forgive us (1 John 1:9) and to wash away all the stains sin left on our hearts.

We have discovered the wonderful truth that God does not change. He remains faithful, even when we make mistakes. We learn to turn to Him time and time again when the battle gets heavy. When we ask God to be our ally, we are appealing to a greater strength than any man possesses. If we stay connected to Him, we can ask Him anything and we will receive it.

John wrote, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7, KJV). **If we will trust God, He will move Heaven and Earth for us to be victorious. (PPT)**

FINISH

"Wake up, Teacher. Don't You care that we are all going to drown?" the frightened sailors cried. Jesus rubbed His eyes and looked around. The clouds were dark. The water was so choppy that it was pounding over the sides of the boat. Jesus stood up and turned to the storm. He simply spoke to it, "Peace be still." Stopping the storm did not take an hour or an intercessory prayer meeting. Three simple words calmed the elements that day. In only a few seconds, He halted a devastating storm and saved a boat full of followers.

Perhaps Jesus had good reason for sleeping in a boat being tossed on the sea. Maybe He was dreaming of the day He created the Heavens and the Earth. Could it be He was reminiscing of the day He separated the waters from the land? Speaking to the elements was not new to Him. He created them and spoke them into being. Jesus was as much God as He was man. He knew the storm was going to come, but He was not worried. He had it all under control. If He created it, He could handle it. Perhaps that is why He wondered at the lack of faith the disciples exhibited during the storm. He may have been disappointed to know His disciples still did not have a revelation of who He was. Would He have to walk on water for them to believe?

The disciples did not realize they were in the storm with the Creator. No storm, no disease, no chain, no situation is too difficult for God to intervene. He created the elements, so the storm was in His control. He created every living creature, so sickness is no challenge to heal. He knows Satan will be defeated at every turn, so no chain is too strong to break. No situation can stop an unstoppable God. Even famine and war are subject to the Savior. He stopped the sun and moon to give Israel daylight so they could watch Him fight the battle and deliver them from the enemy.

Whatever we face, we should have no fear. If we put our trust in God, He will see us through. A storm-tossed sea battering our boat is no challenge for God, and neither is being surrounded by the enemy. God created the elements, so He can handle them. He will fight, He will calm, He will heal, and He will deliver. All we have to do is stand in the light He provides and watch Him win the victory.