

## JOSHUA – OUR EXAMPLE OF OBEDIENCE

Some day perhaps sooner than we think someone will stand at the front of an auditorium and eulogize us, helping our friends and families in their grief. He will probably tell some stories about things we did and enjoyed, highlighting some of our better character traits. But consider this: if you were writing a one sentence obituary that you wanted to be true of you after you are gone, what would it say? It could not be any better than this description of Joshua: “As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses” (Joshua 11:15). This man did what God said. What could be better than that?

Joshua’s life consistently modeled godly obedience. Here are two specific situations that seem to represent everything about his life.

**Joshua obeyed even when in the minority (Numbers 13-14).** His attitude is refreshing and encouraging. When God said something, Joshua simply took Him at His word. Before Joshua was given the reigns of leadership after Moses’ death, God had told Israel to send twelve spies into Canaan to investigate it. The mission was not to see if the land could be taken, but how. God had already told the people that He would give them the land. How the story ends is well known. Joshua and Caleb refused to give in to the pressure from the other ten spies, who said the land was too strong and the people too powerful. Joshua seemed baffled by his peers’ faithlessness. The Lord is with us, he said (Numbers 14:9), seemingly implying, Isn’t that all we need to know?

One of the most important lessons our generation could learn is that we should not test the winds before we decide what we believe to be true. That may work in some sense

for politicians, but it has never worked for determining the will of God. In a world that is rapidly changing what it accepts in the realms of sexuality and ethics, God’s word speaks clearly. In a religious climate that often demands conformity, we should be willing to embrace Joshua’s willingness to step out, even when threatened by our peers (v. 10). Those following God’s will have always been in the minority.

**Joshua knew that grace did not nullify the need for obedience.** There are extremes on most issues, and the relationship between grace and obedience is no exception. Some seem to think that if we can just obey perfectly, then we might be able to eliminate our need for grace. Others go to the other extreme and argue that God’s grace and any kind of human response are mutually exclusive. Just relax, sit back, and enjoy the blessings, they seem to say. But neither extreme teaches Bible truth, and an example in Joshua’s life displays a picture of God’s grace and human obedience. And the Lord said to Joshua: See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor (Joshua 6:2). That must have been hard for Joshua to understand, because the army behind him was not exactly an elite fighting unit, and Jericho was ready for them (v. 1). Just a few days after God said this, though, Jericho’s walls were lying flat on the ground, and Joshua and his troops were inside the city (v. 20). So what happened between God’s saying the city was Joshua’s and the actual fall of the city? In that answer lies a fascinating truth about grace and obedience.

God clearly said that He had given the city to the people, which is His grace. They had done nothing to deserve it. But immediately after this statement God gave instructions on what the people should do to possess the city (w. 3-5), which was obedience. Here’s the gift, God said, and here is what you do to accept the gift.

Now suppose Joshua understood grace the way some people do today. He might have stopped listening when God

said the city was his and simply expected to watch God give him the city. After all, God’s grace is so big and powerful, certainly he does not need our help. Joshua did not do that, of course, because he knew that gifts from God do not eliminate the need for us to accept them. He understood that God’s grace was contingent on the people’s obedience. When the battle was over, he also understood that it wasn’t Israel’s military might that led to the victory. Jericho belonged to Israel because of God’s power and mercy, not anything the people had done.

And so it is today. We obey, not to earn salvation or somehow achieve a level of goodness so that we deserve blessings from God. We obey because of God’s grace and because of our own inability to save ourselves. A classic example is baptism instead of mocking God’s grace, it is actually a human response of obedience to the goodness of God (cf. Romans 6:3-5).

Obedience is a bad word in some circles today, even in some religious circles. But God has always valued obedience in His people, and He expects us to seek His will in all that we do. When Joshua died, he was given a simple title: the servant of the Lord (Joshua 24:29). If we obey, and if we do so with the proper motivation, God will use that same expression to describe us. The servants of the Lord are those who seek to obey everything that God has said, no matter what happens.

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*adapted from The Encourager*

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*“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”*

**Matthew 7:21**

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## **ANNIVERSARY**

Joel and Cindy Nelson, 03-09.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Taylor Nemechek, 03-08; Gary Cole, 03-09;  
David Parish, 03-12.

## **ILL**

**Sunday:** Jessica Carter (AM); Chris Edwards; Millie Robertson (PM); Clara Scott (PM); Tom Tucker.

**Wednesday:** Millie Robertson.

Evelyn Marquardt had surgery at Shawnee Mission Medical Center last Monday.

**Those battling cancer:** Ledgia Campbell, Betty James and Cleo Stone. Please remember these in your prayers.

## **HOME BOUND**

Kathleen Camp is in Room 101 at the Royal Terrace Nursing Home in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Barbara James' aunt, Evelyn Marquardt is at the Sweet Life of Rosehill in Shawnee. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

## **OUT OF TOWN**

Wilba Hopkins is in Iola, Kansas visiting relatives this weekend. Julia Thrasher is in Marietta, Oklahoma assisting her mother. Ed and Verna Hanson are vacationing in Destin, Florida.

## **MEN'S MEETING**

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held this Sunday, March 8 following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

## **GOSPEL MEETING**

Mark your calendars for April 26-30, 2009 for our Gospel Meeting with brother Randy Carr of the Liberty church of Christ in Belle, Missouri. See the flyers in the foyer for the interesting details and take some to invite others!

## **ATTENDANCE**

Sunday AM, 41; Sunday PM, 36; Wednesday PM, 33.

## **Those To Serve**

March 8, 2009

**BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Thrasher**

### **MORNING WORSHIP**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson**  
**SONG LEADER..... George Thomas**  
**OPENING PRAYER ..... Trent Thrasher**  
**PRESIDE..... John Dodson**  
**ASSIST..... Chris Edwards**  
**ASSIST..... Dave Parish**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... Steve Brown**

### **EVENING WORSHIP**

**OPENING PRAYER ..... Jared Nelson**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeff Nemechek**  
**LORD'S SUPPER..... John Dodson**

### **WEDNESDAY 11th**

**SONG LEADER..... George Thomas**  
**INVITATION ..... Jeff Nemechek**

## **WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

### **Sunday**

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### **Wednesday**

Ladies Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM  
Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

**Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher**

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