

Lessons for Life - Joshua 2, part 2

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, July 10th 2022

I. Introduction

Last week we saw that Rahab's story reveals the incredible compassion and grace of God that condescends to pluck people like Rahab as brands out of the fire. And if we are to reflect the heart of God, we as a church must be willing to not only come into agreements with God's judgments (that's important), but also to be used as God's tools to rescue people out of captivity to sin. I'm so grateful for the leadership of Michael, Bill, and others witnessing at the pride parade last week and boldly sharing God's judgments and his grace. And it's my prayer that the Lord would bring much fruit from those labors.

But we also saw that Rahab models true faith and true good works and that she illustrates several ways in which those two things are distinguished from the counterfeits. For example, we saw six descriptions of her faith that are in stark contrast to the modern counterfeits. No wonder Hebrews sets her as a model of faith.

And there were other lessons we looked at, but last week our focus was mostly on Rahab.

Today, I want to look at the passage once again, but this time draw out some of the applications that we missed. So it's going to be a little bit more of a haphazard sermon, but I don't want to move on till I have looked at six more lessons for life. Just think of it as more slices coming off of the loaf of bread.

II. The use of prudent means is not a tempting of God's providence

And the first lesson in your outlines is that we must never pit human responsibility against the divine promise. Another way of phrasing it is that we must never ignore God's calls to use prudence and care with the excuse that we are trusting God. Now that may seem so obvious that it doesn't even need to be mentioned. But if you sat in on my many counseling sessions, you would know that you can't take anything for granted. I have seen too many faulty conscience problems that stem from exactly *this* false dilemma.

For example, I have known Christians who have thought it might be sin to have house insurance, medical insurance or life insurance. They feel like that is not trusting God. In fact, I know an entire denomination up in Canada that takes that stance. They say that all insurance expresses a lack of trust in God. Well, I think there are principles in this chapter that would say otherwise.

Another example: Years ago one couple wondered if it was expressing lack of trust in God if the wife was to get surgery on her scarred Fallopian tubes in order to have children. They had prayed for miraculous healing many times and been anointed by the elders. And I asked them if they would now stop trusting God for children if they were to get surgery, and they said, no, they would pray and trust God even about the surgery itself. And at least

in their case, I didn't see any reason why their use of medical treatment would be a lack of trust. Every time I take medicine or even herbal remedies, I ask God to bless those because I know that without His blessing, the means we use will not work. The only question is, "Are we allowed to use means?" And I believe this is one of hundreds of passages that would indicate that we can.

And to those who make trust and prudence incompatible I would ask, "Why did the two spies hide out in the mountains for three days instead of trusting God to protect them? Why did they go down over the wall instead of boldly marching out the front gate? Was that a lack of trust? James 2:25 says it was a righteous example of trust and good works" when she received the messengers and sent them out another way." It specifically says that going out a secret way was a good thing.

Verse 1 says, "**Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly...**" Why did Joshua send these spies? And why did he send them secretly?

One commentary suggested that this might be a lack of trust on Joshua's part and he should have gone into the land without sending spies.¹ After all, God didn't command the spies this time. He commanded mobilization. Another author claims that for Joshua to send spies was to trust in his own wisdom. He pointed out that God was not going to use typical means to defeat Jericho anyway, so sending spies was a total waste of time and totally unnecessary. But worst of all, he claims that it evidenced lack of faith.

But Matthew Henry points out that faith does not replace our human responsibility. And this is the historic Reformed viewpoint. Matthew Henry said, true faith would "encourage our *diligence* in the use of proper means."² And I agree. Let me read you God's command in Numbers 13 forty years before. "**And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel...'**" That is an exactly parallel situation. God was going to give the land, yet God commanded the Israelites to use ordinary human means to achieve what God was going to do. And this is almost always the way that God has worked. For example, in the book of Numbers God led the Israelites in the wilderness with the pillar of cloud. But in Numbers 10:31 we find Moses entreating his father-in-law and the Midianites to stay with him and to be their eyes and to guide them through the wilderness since they knew the terrain so well. God guiding them did not mean that this vast army didn't need scouts to go ahead and watch out for trouble, or look for specific pathways around ravines, etc. God guided in such a way that the men

¹ While not dogmatic, Hamilton gives the opinion of some when he says, "His action may be judged negatively as a lack of trust in the word of God. That is, why does a targeted city need to be scouted when (in the preceding chapter) Yahweh has given almost unconditional guarantees of success (e.g., "no man shall be able to stand before you")?" Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 21-22.

² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 292. Emphasis mine.

still had to use their ingenuity. After all, the Amalekites did sneak out of ravines to attack Israel, so such prudence paid off.

Another example: In Genesis God commanded the earth to bring forth fruit and to multiply, and yet He still wanted Adam to be nurturing it. Scripture makes clear that God is the one who brings the harvest, but does man have a role in it? Does man need to plant, water and harvest? Yes. God opens and closes the womb, but He also expects that we will be involved in the process. When I had the public debate on conception control in California (and by the way, I am opposed to most forms of birth control – but anyway), my worthy debate opponent said that it was sin to try to open the womb of a woman by repairing scarred fallopian tubes. He said that God alone can close the womb and God alone can open it, so it would be fighting against God to have that surgery and thus a lack of trust. He insisted that we could not use any other means than sexual union (and he agreed that sexual union was a human means). But that is arbitrary to allow *one* means and not to allow any other means. It is a faulty dilemma. Now there are *very* good arguments against *most* forms of birth control, but lack of trust in God's providence is not one of them.

Another illustration. Psalm 127 says, “**Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.**” But the way many people pit God's role against man's role you would think that if the Lord builds the house, then we don't build it. If God guards the city, then we don't have to set guards. Faulty dilemma.

Now hear me carefully. I am not saying that the spies did not have the *potential* to trust their *own* spying rather than to trust God. That was *exactly* the problem exhibited by ten of the spies in the previous generation. Ten of them used their spy work to *doubt* God's promise and *reject* God's command of conquest. So self-trust is *very* possible and it would be wrong to trust our own resources rather than to trust *God* to be blessing our resources. You shouldn't so much as take an aspirin without praying for God's blessing. When we were intimate, we prayed that God would bless us with elect children who would love Him all their days. We prayed for a lot of other things as well. Actually, my prayers for my children and grandchildren started long before I even met Kathy. The point is, we can use means *all the while trusting God* or we can use means *as a reason not to trust God*. So don't see your car insurance or house insurance as a way to relax in your trust of God. The same is true of insect control and any other thing that God has authorized us to do.

So I do not believe Joshua was doubting God's Word when he sent the spies, when he sent them secretly (that's prudent), or when these men hid in the mountains for three days (that too was prudent). It was prudence by men who definitely trusted God. OK, enough said on that.

III. The iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full (Gen. 15:16) God waited over 400 years before judging. There was time for repentance.

A second principle which we did not address last week was why God waited so long to judge these perverse Canaanites. Turn with me to Genesis 15:16. This was God's promise to Abraham that Israel would come out of the land of Egypt and eventually inherit the land of Canaan. Genesis 15:16. Actually, let's begin at verse 13 because it sets the time-frame.

Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

That is an interesting phrase: "for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." The KJV says, "is not yet full." The NIV has, "has not yet reached its full measure." The Amorites in Canaan were already wicked when Abraham was alive, but God let that wickedness get a whole lot worse over the course of 400 years. He patiently bore with them. And then God gave them another 40 year period at the end of which time Rahab and the Gibeonites came to faith. They were elect. If the Canaanites had been destroyed 100 years earlier, they would not have been saved. We deal with an incredibly patient and gracious God. But once the time has come, He is speedy. Chapter 1:11 indicates that they were going to move out within three days.

Now we don't know if God is in the waiting stage for America or if he is in the wipe out stage. We don't even know if America's cup of sins is full yet. There are a lot of parallels between Canaan and America. Presently we sacrifice more children through abortion than the Canaanites did. We have homosexuality, transvestism and other perversions that the Canaanites had. The LGBTQ were out in full numbers during the last three days celebrating their perverse lifestyle publicly. But we have no way of knowing when the cup of Iniquity of the Americans is full. We just know that God keeps record, and when the cup is full, it is all over.

So, what difference should this make in our day-to-day living? Well, for one, this knowledge ought to motivate us to pray for our nation, and to work for our nation, and to get involved in the culture. When you are tempted to think that slowing down the moral degradation of our nation is not worthwhile, keep in mind that concept of a cup of iniquity becoming full. We don't want America's cup filled. It's worthwhile stopping abortion, socialism, and other evils. And I praise God for the 11 states that have made abortion illegal. A Reformed pastor in town said that he isn't involved in opposing abortion because the world is Satan's domain and we are not called to influence it - just rescue people from it. I beg to differ. It is precisely such attitudes that have caused the church of the past 100 years to *not* be salt and light to *not* slow down the decay. And Jesus says that when the salt has lost its saltiness, it is

good for nothing but to be cast out and trampled under foot of men. That's what has happened to the church - we have been cast out and are for the most part irrelevant. It is a good thing to seek to slow down the filling up of the cup or even try to empty it out altogether through Reformation.

IV. The role of an underground church

Well, let's look at a third principle. When I grew up, Brother Andrew was one of my heroes, and I loved his book, *God's Smuggler*. But I was shocked when I went to school and found so many Christians criticizing brother Andrew for smuggling Bibles into the Soviet Union. They said, "He's breaking the law in Russia. You can't do that. To break the law is a sin." And of course, since then I have run across numerous Christians who think it is serious sin for Voice of the Martyrs, Frontline Fellowship, Free Burma Rangers, and other heroic organizations to go illegally into Islamic, Buddhist and Communist countries to deliver Bibles and preach the Gospel. What is their criticism? They cite Romans 13:1: "**Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities.**" Sadly, they take it out of context, and my book, *The Divine Right of Resistance* shows how Romans 13 teaches the exact opposite.

Well, Joshua chapter 2 all by itself shows us all the things for which Brother Andrew was criticized. Rahab doesn't hide Bibles in her car, but she hides Christians in her attic. Verse 4 says, "**Then the woman took the two men and hid them...**" She doesn't go across enemy lines herself, but she illegally sends these two men across the border. Like Brother Andrew, this woman refused to hand over the goods that the government wanted. In verse 3 it says, "**So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."**" I have read at least two commentaries which claim that she should have obeyed - that it was her moral obligation to hand over those spies. But Hebrews 11 and James 2 praise her for disobeying her king in order to obey God. Many people criticize Rahab for hiding the truth from the enemy, but remember from last week that God defines the ninth commandment, and during times of war such hiding of the truth from those who will misuse the truth is not only allowable, it is mandated. To give the truth to God's enemies is to hate the truth and to stand against the truth. And so the Larger Catechism speaks of "speaking the truth unseasonably" as being a violation of the ninth commandment. You can speak the truth and break the ninth commandment by speaking the truth when you shouldn't. It is never appropriate to lie, but lying is unjustly sharing the truth or withholding the truth - unjustly. Now, granted, there are five different positions on this complicated ethical issue and it might be worthwhile looking at how godly men have wrestled with the ethics of Rahab's words on our social media for members. I do respect the other positions, but I'm just explaining why I believe her actions were righteous.

But Rahab also disobeys and harbors these enemies of the state, and that's what I want to focus on. She sends the government soldiers on a wild goose chase wasting their money, time and resources. And notice that none of this impinged upon her trustworthiness. She was trustworthy and these spies could be trusted in their oath to protect her. Why? Because their concept of righteousness was bounded by God and directed to God, not to the changing opinions of man.

But a person might respond, “You can’t take your ethics from a historical passage. They rightly point out that getting ethics from an historical passage is the logical fallacy of deriving ought from is. They would ask, “Where in the Scripture are we commanded to do these things or even allowed by God to do them?” And that’s a legitimate objection that my book, *Divine Right of Resistance* covers in detail.

But really, all you need to ask is what *kind* of submission does God command? It is submission *in* the Lord, not *against* the Lord. Isn’t that what Peter says? **“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake...”** Romans 13 makes clear that civil governments have no independent authority. It says that the governments are *God’s* ministers, and they have *God’s* authority - not independent authority. Think of it this way. Paul did not contradict himself a decade later when he got executed by Nero. He submitted where he could, but where Nero’s commands contradicted God’s commands, he followed the example of the earlier apostles who told the authorities, **“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”** (Acts 4:19-20). They went out preaching in the streets which was a direct violation of the state orders. In Acts 5:28 these magistrates said, **“Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name?”** Peter’s response is: **“We ought to obey God rather than man.”** *We ought to.* It is a moral imperative to disobey the civil government when the government tries to keep us from doing our duty to God. To fail to disobey the government in such a situation is to disobey God. And in my book, *The Divine Right of Resistance* I give over 200 Scriptural examples of disobedience to civil government that was authorized and blessed by God. No one but God has unlimited authority, and the literal rendering of Romans 13:1 is that “there is no authority if not from God.” There is a chain of command from God to magistrate to the citizen. The only authority that the state has is a derived authority. Just like a sergeant in the army does not have the right to command his men to fire their weapons at the President of the United States, the president of the United States does not have the authority to try to make us spiritually fire at God.

So Rahab is very relevant to the situations of underground churches in persecuted countries. Let’s not be critical and judgmental of men like Brother Andrew, Richard Wurmbrand, or Peter Hammond. They were following Biblical commands in heroic ways in the front lines of the battle field. Let’s pray for them and support them. And if you want lots more information on this subject, you can read my book, *The Divine Right of Resistance*.³

V. Walking by faith, not by sight

The fourth principle is that these men and this woman were walking by faith and not by sight. There are so many statements to indicate this, and we dealt with many last week. But consider just the statements which show that she was convinced Jericho would fall. If you

³ Can be obtained from various sources listed here
<https://kaysercommentary.com/booklets.md>

knew how impregnable Jericho was, you would find that astonishing. In verse 9 she says, **“I know that the LORD has given you the land...”** In verse 13 she says, **“and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.”** This is an amazing statement to make when you consider that she is safe inside Jericho and there is no visible, obvious way that the Israelites could get inside. It was impregnable with two huge walls surrounding it and with huge fortifications. Any unbeliever who was looking on might think this rather strange. They might say, “Look lady. The only one you need to be afraid of are the king's soldiers. You're safe inside.” So she is going simply upon the *word* of a God who cannot lie. She is not operating by sight. God said that He would give Israel the entire land, so she believes it.

We have got to get used to walking by faith, not by sight. If you walk by sight, you are not going to believe that the Great Commission will be fulfilled. You will question whether Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. And how many Christians do deny that Jesus currently has authority over the state and over all of culture? Has Jesus or has He not promised that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it? He has. Then why are we so discouraged? Why are we so prone to retreat? God has called us to go forth in the obedience of faith just as Joshua and Caleb did.

And we need to live by faith rather than living by sight on personal issues as well. Jesus said, “Without me you can do nothing.” Do you believe that? Then you are going to pray like crazy. Prayerlessness is treating that statement as what is false and treating what we see as being more true. On the flip side, Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” When we say about God's commandments, “It's too hard. I can't do it.” we are living by sight rather than by faith.

VI. The victory is assured; our call is to live by faith and hope

And that brings us to the next point. The victory was assured to them even as it is to us. And the marvelous thing about this is that demons know that they are doomed, and they tremble at God's word. Demons are far more terrified of us than we are of him. Verses 9-11 talk about how terrified the Canaanites were. Verse 24 summarizes: **“And they said to Joshua, ‘Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.’”** And of course, Rahab said the same thing about the Canaanites - they were terrified.

Well, let's apply this. Though Bible believing Christians are a tiny minority in America, there is abundant evidence that God's enemies are beginning to be terrified of Christians applying the Bible to public policy. And given our tiny numbers, and given the huge forward progress that God's enemies have made in America, that may seem odd. Is it demons moving them to fear? I don't know. But you do see the same fear that the Canaanites had now being expressed by MSNBC, blogs, and other media. The SPLC has said

that they are scared to death of Doug Wilson, saying that he has a “fast expanding empire.”⁴ A Geopolitical commentator said, “Justice Alito’s draft opinion reinforces the view that there’s a very dangerous Christian movement afoot in our nation,”⁵ and he blames conservative Christians. A Law Digital Commons legal brief denounces Senator Ben Sasse for his call to investigate pornhub.⁶ But it also denounces other Christians involved in politics, speaking of “A Dangerous Christian movement influencing Michele Bachman,” Rick Perry, and others. I won’t bore you with a lot of quotes, but the Canaanites *are* concerned that the Gospel is taking over.

This past Tuesday I listened to a lecture by Frederick Edwards, the Executive Director of The American Humanist Association.⁷ This was a closed door meeting that was surreptitiously recorded by a friend of mine who is a mole. And I was pretty impressed by the lecture. Edwards was obviously incredibly well-read, quoting extensively from Rushdoony, Gary North, Jay Grimstead, Bahnsen, John Whitehead, and other writers. And he actually presented their position very fairly, giving an accurate description of presuppositionalism, theonomy, postmillennialism, and what it looks like to have a comprehensive Biblical worldview. He was very knowledgeable. And again, the purpose of this meeting was to help affiliates oppose this Biblical worldview more effectively.

In his lecture he gave his opinion that Christians who love Biblical law, who hold to presuppositional apologetics, and who believe in Postmillennial eschatology *are the greatest threat to have arisen in his lifetime to atheism, humanism, and other secular systems*. In this lecture he said that people didn’t really need to be worried about premillennialists or amillennialists because their eschatology completely robs them of any hope of success in history. I found those kinds of statements fascinating, coming from an atheist, whose motto is doing good without God. But his point about those pessimistic eschatologies is that people don’t try to achieve what they don’t think will be achievable, so they are not a danger. But he said it was totally different with the Postmillennialists. He knew that those who believe the Bible promises victory will be in this for the long haul. He said that people didn’t really need to be worried about most Christians who could easily be embarrassed by bringing up certain passages from Biblical law. He said, the problem is that Christians are once again beginning to believe that stuff and you can’t embarrass them with that stuff.

Edwards said that it wasn’t our numbers that made him fearful, since we were a tiny minority. Instead, it was five things that made us dangerous. And I want to ask you - do you believe these five things? Here they are: 1) Any Christians who believed in the continuing

⁴ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2004/doug-wilson%E2%80%99s-religious-empire-expanding-northwest>

⁵ <https://wrongologist.com/2022/05/thoughts-on-alitos-draft-opinion/>

⁶ <https://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4059&context=bclr>

⁷ This was a closed door meeting of the American Humanist Association, but a mole recorded the whole meeting and gave me a copy of the recording.

relevance of Old Testament law. 2) Second, any Christians who were Postmillennial in eschatology. 3) Third, any Christians who were self-consciously presuppositionalist. 4) Fourth, any Christians who self-consciously embraced the whole Bible for the whole of life. 5) Fifth, Calvinism. As he worded it, they have “a formidable theology designed to take on all.” And I say, “Yes! Amen!” In the question/answer period he said that the biggest conflict is between Marxism and Calvinism, not Marxism and capitalism. I found that interesting too. And the reason for that is that Calvinism is a comprehensive worldview that takes the Bible seriously and applies it to even economics.

Why am I quoting the Canaanites? Why bother? For the same reason the spies did - to encourage you that even they recognize that we are on the winning side. The bottom line is that we need to have a Biblical confidence that all other systems *will* eventually collapse like Jericho did. The two spies said in verse 24, **“Truly, the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.”**

May the church of Jesus Christ once again regain confidence that the Great Commission will be a total success and we will have a Christianized world where all nations will obey all things that Christ commanded. It will be a success because *that is God's plan; that's the Great Commission*. Are we willing to believe it? I believe demons do - and they tremble. That's why Demons use every trick in the book to keep the church from having an eschatology of hope and a worldview of faith. If he can rob the church of faith and hope, then the forces of darkness will succeed. Why? Because Hebrews 11 says that without faith it is impossible to please God, and without hope Christians will be discouraged. If we *embrace* God's hope and live by faith, we will succeed.

VII. The scarlet cord

Lastly, we need to remember that this victory is not achieved because of the greatness of Israel, the faith of Israel or the good works of Israel. God after all, gave them their faith, their good works and any other greatness that was there. Always, we must remember two things. First, that without Christ we can do nothing, and second, the reverse is also true: **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”** And I think that is the symbolism of the scarlet cord. Let's read verses 17-21.

Then the men said to her: “We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear.” Then she said, “According to your words, so be it.” And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

Most people don't comment on where this cord came from, but if you grew up in the middle east (or in Africa, as I did), this would be obvious. In fact, world wide, what is the sign of a harlot's trade? It is the color red. It's not just in modern days that there was a red light district. In Ethiopia there was a red cloth district, or red paint district, or some other red token. And what an appropriate token for these men to take. It speaks of her repentance, because it would require her to remove her advertisement for harlotry off the front of her house and put it on the back of the house facing Israel where it wouldn't do any good as a sign of a harlot. It wouldn't do her old trade any good to be hanging on the outside of the wall away from her customers - but facing towards God. You see, she was giving God all that she was and all that she had. She gave to God her sin, and God cleansed it. She gave up her sin, and by faith embraced God's promise.

And now that the scarlet of sin has been dealt with, this can be a new token of the scarlet of sacrificial blood. During the first Passover forty years before, those who applied the blood of the lamb to the lintels of their doors and windows were spared the judgment of the death angel. It is not by accident that they are on the verge of Passover. In chapter 5, just before approaching Jericho, they celebrate the Passover. This scarlet token probably was a token of God's grace; a grace which is not possible apart from the blood of Christ. And the death angel that made all the rest of the wall crumble passed over that portion of the wall to spare Rahab and her family - because she had the blood red symbol of safety. It was *her* Passover.

Are you a Christian? Have you trusted Christ's blood which was shed for you? Without it you have no security. If Christ did not die in your place, and if you have not applied His blood to yourself and to your household, you must die in hell yourself. Christ died to be our substitute, and it is only as we trust in Him that we can be spared God's judgment. But if you have trusted His blood, then you not only have grace for eternity; you have all the grace that you need for the battles and the duties down here below. I urge you to go into your work of this next week realizing that without Christ, you can do nothing. But praise God, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Amen?