

Let us begin with the eighth lecture on Joshua. / Today's word comes from Joshua chapter 8. / The Israelites lost the battle against Ai. / But now that their sins were cleaned, God promised victory over Ai in chapter 8.

/How can they conquer and be victorious against Ai? / In verses 1-2, God promised victory over Ai.

*/Please read verse 1. / Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land.*

/God told Joshua not to be afraid. / Although they lost the battle because of their sins, / God will be with them now that their sins are cleared. / God affirmed that victory guaranteed as long as He is with Joshua.

/He told Joshua to not be afraid and take the whole army with him and go up to Ai. / Even if Ai looks small in size, they should not be unprepared. / They once were careless and were defeated as written in verse 7.

/God told Joshua to take all the army. / In any work, no matter how small it may seem, they can be successful only when they do their best. / In verse 2, God allowed Joshua to plunder the articles of the city and the livestock.

/In the fight against the City of Jericho, God told them to offer the plunders to Him. / But this time, God told them to take those for themselves.

/God told them to offer the plunders at the first battle to acknowledge that those belong to God. / In such a manner, God gives abundant grace and blessing after the offering of first fruits.

/Even in our lives, God will abundantly provide us with everything when we offer the first fruits. / God's words to take the plunders and livestock /was a guarantee of victory.

/God affirmed victory to Joshua. / God told him to hide some army behind the city and make them ambush later on. / God commanded, / and Joshua obeyed Him.

/When we obey God's words as they are, God will be with us / and grant us victory. / Verses 3-9 mention the strategy to conquer the City of Ai.

*/Verses 3-4. / So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night with these orders: "Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on the alert.*

/In verse 3 Joshua prepared thirty thousand armies to hide behind the city. / Joshua gave order to the army the moment God commanded him. / Also in verse 4, he told the army not to go far and prepare themselves for the fight.

/God ordered Joshua in details. / In which position should we fight this spiritual war? / We all have our own positions where God placed us. / We should fight the good fight at our positions.

/Our God is a God of order. / The local churches today are in a war. / In order for a church to claim victory in a spiritual fight, / we should do our best at our given position.

/In verses 5-9, God told the people to lure the army of Ai far away from the city.

*/Verses 5-6. / I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them. They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, 'They are running away from us as they did before.' So when we flee from them,*

/God told Joshua to take the rest of the army and advance to the city, / and when the army of Ai follows them, they will flee, only to lure them. / He told Joshua that when the city is empty of soldiers, the army hiding will attack the city.

/God gave such a detailed strategy to His people. / Victory is assured to those who obey His word as it is. / Whenever we are fighting in the spiritual battle, / God teaches and leads us to victory.

/After preparing everything needed for the battle, / God told Joshua to conquer the city. / The moment Joshua heard God's command, / he went up to the city. / In verses 10-14, / details about the fight against the people of Ai are written.

*/Verse 10. / Early the next morning Joshua mustered his army, and he and the leaders of Israel marched before them to Ai.*

/Joshua woke up early in the morning and gathered the army. / That is, he checked the army / and prepared for the battle. / Then he marched before the army with the leaders of Israel.

/What is God teaching us here? / He teaches us that leaders are to show the example. / Leaders should be the first to take the responsibility in pushing for good works. / They should always display good examples.

/Moreover, blessed are those who are active and diligent in doing righteous works in the church. / Next in verses 11-12, Joshua placed five thousand soldiers for ambush. / He set thirty thousand soldiers at the west side of the city.

/He again placed another five thousand for ambush. / He did just as God told him. / In verses 13-14, Joshua went into the valley.

*/Verses 13-14. / So the soldiers took up their positions—with the main camp to the north of the city and the ambush to the west of it. That night Joshua went into the valley. When the king of Ai saw this, he and all the men of the city hurried out early in the morning to meet Israel in battle at a certain place overlooking the Arabah. But he did not know that an ambush had been set against him behind the city.*

/God ordered Joshua to arm his soldiers fully. / Joshua went into the northern valley at night with the army. / The king of Ai, not knowing about the ambush, hurried out to fight.

/Then another army of Joshua ambushed the city and destroyed everything. / Even today, we can win a battle when we are fully armed.

/The details of how they conquered the city are recorded in verses 15-25. / God

taught Joshua to conquer the city. / A leader should stand before his people. / It is the same within a church today.

/Those with strong faith should take the first step as well. / There should be people who take the first step and become an example in such a good fight. / We need workers in our church who strive hard to accomplish good works.

/Second, in verses 11-13, Joshua obeyed God's commands. / The Israelites did not take action as they desired. / "Place thirty thousand army at the west side of the city." / "Place five thousand more." / Joshua went into the valley with the remaining army.

/He went in only to draw the people of Ai. / So, as written in verses 16-17, the people of Ai begin to come out and pursue Joshua. /It is written in verse 16, "they pursued Joshua and were lured away from the city."

/And in verse 17, it is written, "they left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel." / We have to take note of the excited state of the people of Ai. / They were excited because they were victorious against Israel based on chapter 7.

/But, no matter how great human's schemes might be, / humans can never outsmart God's strategy. / Joshua lures the army of Ai / and they pursue after him. / They were pursuing while forgetting to close the door of the city.

/Then the army waiting for ambush begins to conquer over the city. / In verses 18-19, / Joshua held out the javelin he was holding toward the city.

*/Verse 18. / Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Hold out toward Ai the javelin that is in your hand, for into your hand I will deliver the city." So Joshua held out toward the city the javelin that was in his hand.*

/He held out the javelin towards the city. / "For into your hand I will deliver the city," God said. / The moment he made the gesture, the army began to take over of the city and kill the people there.

*/Verse 19. / As soon as he did this, the men in the ambush rose quickly from their position and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it and quickly set it on fire.*

/The men in the ambush took the city the moment Joshua held out his javelin. / The army captured the city/ and set it on fire. / And based on verse 20, the Israelites prevented the people of Ai from escaping. / Thus, the people are all killed.

*/Verses 21-22. / For when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that smoke was going up from it, they turned around and attacked the men of Ai. Those in the ambush also came out of the city against them, so that they were caught in the middle, with Israelites on both sides. Israel cut them down, leaving them neither survivors nor fugitives.*

/God judged the city by setting it on fire. / No one was saved from the fight. / They set the city on fire, / killed the people, / and captured and brought the king before Joshua.

/All the people of Ai are killed in verses 24-25. / It is written in verse 25, “twelve thousand men and women fell that day—all the people of Ai. “ / Why did God let such a great number of people die from the battle? / God is a God of love and righteousness.

/He is very strict when it comes to taking care of evil. / This also teaches us today that we ought to be merciless when it comes to the power of evil. / The power of Satan/ or evil should be completely eradicated so that we can serve God with our heart.

/We should get rid of every evil within us. / God said that we are to throw away even a form of evil. / Evil thoughts, / evil words, / and evil actions, we have to completely get rid of them.

/God will be with us once we get rid of the power of evil. / Because a large number of people were killed in the battle / readers might get confused. / How can God let such people die, when God is full of love?

/God is not only filled with love, / but also judges evil and sin without any compromise.

/In verse 26, Joshua did not draw back his hand that held out the javelin until all the people in Ai were destroyed. / He did not draw back his hand that held out the javelin. / He can win the battle only when his hand is held out.

/In Exodus 17, / we can read about the battle against the Amalek people. / Joshua goes into war in the front, / while Moses, holding his hands up in the air, prays on the top of the mountain with Aaron and Hur. / The Israelites were winning the battle when his hand was raised / and vice versa.

/What does this teach us today? / It teaches us that we need someone in our church and family who raises his hands up in the air. / In other words, we need those who constantly pray before God in alertness. / Churches and families with people of prayer will never fail.

/People who pray can overcome the temptations of Satan every day. / Why pray with hands raised up? / This indicates that one’s heart is set toward God. /Why pray with hands raised up? / It shows one’s trust in God.

/Why pray with hands raised up? / It shows one’s submission to God. / It is another way of saying that we can live and be victorious with God’s help, not ours. / We should raise our hands toward the sky today.

/Our churches can win the spiritual warfare when there are many people who pray. / Much grace and blessing is given to a family filled with prayer. / In verses 27-29, the Israelites take the livestock and other articles.

*/Verse 27. / But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the LORD had instructed Joshua.*

/They did so just as God told Joshua. / Everything was offered to God in the case of the battle against the people of Jericho, / but this time God allowed them to take everything.

/What does this teach us? / God is teaching us here that He gives grace and blessings to those who offer the first fruits to Him. /We must offer it to Him. / We can receive much when we offer it to God.

/God lets us reap what we sow. / Those who sowed many will reap many/ and vice versa. / Those who sowed nothing will reap nothing. / We should always serve the Lord by offering our first fruits to God.

/We must offer tithe to God. / Everything in this earth belongs to God. / Yet why did God ask us to offer our tithe to Him? / This is because offering tithe is a way of acknowledging that God is the owner of everything.

/By offering tithe to God, we acknowledge that He was the One who let us work and earn. / We may say that we earned it by our efforts. / But health came from God, / the workplace came from God. / We are able to earn only because God has provided us with everything we need.

/In addition, offering tithe / is the same as confessing that we will spend rest of the money according to God's will. / We can receive abundant grace and blessing when we offer tithe to God.

/God is teaching the people of Israel how blessed are the victorious/ by letting them take everything. / Had they lost the battle, / many casualty would have been made/ and many properties would have been taken away.

/Even in today's time, when we become victorious in spiritual warfare, / our horizon will be expanded and we will receive more grace and blessing. / So after completely destroying the city of Ai, / they impaled the king on a pole till sunset. / What did the Israelites do with the king?

*/Verse 29. / He impaled the body of the king of Ai on a pole and left it there until evening. At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take the body from the pole and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate. And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day.*

/They impaled the king on a pole till sunset. / It symbolizes God's curse. / The king of Ai was cursed by God and was completely destroyed.

/In verses 30-35, Joshua offered sacrifices to God and taught the people the laws, after they won the battle.

*/Verses 30-31. / Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses—an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron too, had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings.*

/God told Joshua to build an altar. / He told him to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. / In our context, this means that we should be faithful in worship. / In the Old Testament, people offered sacrifices by building an altar. / Even today, we worship God in Spirit and Truth.

/Worship is the same as sacrifices of gratitude offered to God. / It is also our confession to live according to the will of God. / God told Joshua to offer sacrifices as a way of thanking Him for granting Joshua the victory against the king of Ai.

/What is important for the believers today? / The most basic thing in our faith is worship. / We should strive to have fellowship with another every day / and worship God and give the glory to Him.

/Success of worship is success of our faith. / Success of worship determines our success in today's time. / We should make our mind to devote ourselves to God in every worship.

/Just like offering sacrifice in the altars, / we ought to profess our will to live for God. / What did God ask Joshua to build the altar with / in verse 31?

*/Verse 31. / as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses—an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings.*

/He is to make the altar with uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. / This can be applied to our worship today. / We should not decorate the sanctuary in anyway. / What God wants in worship / is sincerity.

/God wants us to worship Him with a pure heart. / Otherwise, we may tend to put more importance on the principle of the church. / We should worship God in purity and truthfulness, without putting importance on external things.

/God spoke about burnt offerings and fellowship offerings in verse 31. / Burnt offerings are offerings which are burnt and offered to God. / This refers to our devotion to God. / We should always devote ourselves to God in every worship.

/Our worship is not just about going to service for one hour, / but we should live a devoted life for God. / We should live for God as His people. / If we die, we should die for the Lord. God demands such a faith from us.

/Moreover, through fellowship offerings, they should be in peace with God and their neighbors. / We should restore the relationship between God and between humans. / In verse 32, Joshua wrote a copy of the law of Moses on stones.

*/Verse 32. / There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses.*

/It is written that Joshua wrote a copy of the law of Moses on stones, in presence of the Israelites. / This was to tell them indirectly to read and meditate His word at all times. / In today's time, where should we record the law?

/We should write it in our heart. / God's word is the standard of our faith / and our life. / We should always write His words in our heart, and we should meditate and live according to God's word. / This is very important in our life of faith.

/We have been saved through His words, / and our faith grows as we hear His words. / We are blessed when we obey His words. / He also heals us through His words.

/He changes us through His words. / It has amazing power and life. / If we live according to His words, He will take care of us and lead us till the end.

/We need His words in every situation while we are living in this world. / How should we obey today in our given situation? / We can receive blessing from God when we live according to His word.

/God ordered Joshua to record God's words and read and meditate it every day. /In verses 33-34, Joshua reads the law to the people.

*/Verse 33. / All the Israelites, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing the Levitical priests who carried it. Both the foreigners living among them and the native-born were there. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel.*

/As Moses commanded before, half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and another half stood in front of Mount Ebal. / They obeyed Moses and blessed the Israelites.

/In verse 34, all the blessings and curses written in the law were read aloud.

/God also told Joshua / to read blessings for Mount Gerizim / and curses for Mount Ebal.

/We have blessings and curses before us. / God has given us the freedom to choose. / The people who obeyed His words were proclaimed blessings, / while those who disobeyed were proclaimed curses.

/There are many people in this world, / and those who obey His words are blessed. / Those who disobey and refuse His words are cursed. / Where are you going to be - Mount Ebal or Mount Gerizim?

/We should make wise choices today. / God has given us the liberty to choose. / It all depends upon which path we will take. / The consequence of our decision will be great.

/In chapter 1 of Ruth, / Naomi's family made a wrong choice and they all failed. / But Ruth made the right choice and was blessed.

/In Genesis chapter 13, there are paths for Abraham and Lot. / Abraham is God-centered to the core, / while Lot serves both God and the world.

/The former was blessed as he obeyed God's words to stay. / But the latter left and headed to Sodom. Then he failed.

*/Verse 35. / There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the foreigners who lived among them.*

/Joshua obeyed God's commandments. / He read every law of Moses / before the entire congregation of Israel, / including women and children, / and the foreigners who lived among them. / Not a single word was missed from reading.

/Today, the leaders of the church / should take this prophetic calling. / Whether people listen or not, we should share the Gospel.

/There will be people who listen with open ears, / while some will refuse to listen. / There will be people who oppose the Gospel. / But when we share the good news by obeying His commands, God will work in us.

/Now I will end the eighth lecture on Joshua. / Thank you.