

Joshua 5:1-12

“Let’s get rolling”

I. Intro

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III. Vs. 10-12 Recalling God’s goodness

I. Intro

I was doing a little research on the Azusa Street revival that happened in L.A. back in 1906 and lasting only three years that shaped what we now call the Pentecostal movement of Churches. Most folks look back and wish for something like what happened prior instead of a fresh work of the Spirit. It is interesting to read the prophetic words of the primary instrument William J. Seymour as the Lord spoke to him saying, *“Three things will cause the movement of the Spirit to be quenched”*:

1. **More attention given to the Holy Spirit than to Jesus Christ.**
2. **More attention given to praise than prayer.**
3. **More attention given to the gifts of the Spirit than to the fruit of the Spirit.**

Oh for a fresh work of the Holy Spirit by which Jesus is the center, a heart of brokenness in prayer are our words and the evidence is that this is happening is the fruit of the Spirit!! I for one am not content with looking back upon what God did in my life years ago I want a fresh work an even greater work!

II. Vs. 1-9 Renewing the covenant

Vs. 1 Based upon this fresh work those held up in Jericho had moved from *“faintheartedness”* to *“hearts melting”*. You would think that this would have been a great time to attack but that was not the next step. Melting hearts are a wonderful thing if they melt into His love away from their hardness but if they only melt and then solidify into a harder state then this is not good. Those in

Jericho saw not only God being powerful but God's people being obedient despite the consequences it melted their hearts?

All the military experts must have thought Joshua had spent too much time under the sun. Ah but the Lord reminds us in Isaiah 55:8-9 that His, "*Thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.*" Though Proverbs 24:6 tells that, "*In a multitude of counselors there is safety.*" Based upon Joshua's time line given us in 4:19 the events in the 5th chapter took at least ten days before they started walking around Jericho for six days (6:3). What this suggests is that God waited a full 2 weeks after entering the land before they encountered their first battle and **during those two weeks the primary focus was preparing the person for the work.** The work which God was calling them too according to 1:5, God had promised to defeat all the enemies. The preparation was not for battle but a preparation of victory! It's not our training or expertise that will ensure the victory but rather our learning to trust God who has already won the battle on our behalf. We can see the first of two things that needed to be accomplished in preparing the people for victory:

Vs. 1-9 **Renewing the covenant**: It is very apparent by the use of the phrase "*At that time*", that **the placing of the sign of the covenant (circumcision) was to be right after the victorious crossing after the presence of the Lord and into the promises of God.** You may recall that the relationship God had with Israel was unique to Israel. God had said so in Exodus 19:5 where He said "*Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*" Then in Deut. 7:7-8 the Lord tells them that He "*did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and*

because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers". In other words, He has loved them not because of who they are but rather to be a living demonstration of who He is!

Circumcision was not to be a sign of Israel's greatness it was to be a daily reminder of His greatness and their need for Him. They were to be a "marked" people a special treasure revealing His desire to redeem the unlovable. For almost 40 years they had not taken the sign of separation, the cutting away of the flesh and yet in spite of that God still worked wonders and signs among them. The signs and wonders that the Lord does amongst us is not an indication that we are right with the Lord it is an indication that He loves us in spite of our refusal to surrender to Him. God's blessing upon our lives are not an indication of our goodness they are an indication of His! Of further interest to me is the fact the according to Deut. 10:16 where the lord tells the people to "*Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer*" the symbol on the body was meant to be a symbol of a spiritual operation on the heart. The history of Israel indicates that they began to trust in the physical sign as an indication of an inward truth and started living as they pleased under the false security of an outward sign.

Vs. 2 A generation had been born to parents who were rebellious so now the time has come when they were ready to shed the flesh. Doing so made them vulnerable militarily as they would be unable to fight but spiritually it was a sign of consecration and faithful obedience to the Lord. Remember they crossed over the Jordan right in front of Jericho and now completely incapacitate the army which from a human standpoint looked very foolish. **But what a great symbol of dying to self as they had to trust God for their protection and demonstrated that obedience is better than sacrifice.** The timing of this command of God happened right after He had showed himself strong on their behalf.

Notice the word of the Lord to Joshua as He says in verse 2, “Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.” This verse starts with the words, “*at this time*” which suggests to us that **what was the most necessary in defeating the enemy was not the condition of the heart of the enemy but rather the condition of the heart of the saint!**

Please hear me out saint’s, most the time in our lives when we are facing obstacles and enemies in our advancement into the presence and promises of God we tend to view **what needs to be changed is what we are facing instead of our own hearts** but such is not the case as we discover the greatest enemy and obstacle to our advancement is our own hearts.

Vs. 3-9 Here we are given the explanation for what seemed to be a bazaar command. In this act God told them that they were forever casting of the sign of slavery to Egypt. They were no longer a people who were imprisoned by their passions, enslaved to the things of the world they were a people who had cast off the flesh and were living an obedient life, a free people. What caused this rolling away of the flesh? Well it was the radical trust in God despite the circumstances.

There will be times and seasons in our lives where we think that what the Lord is commanding doesn’t make much sense but or responsibility is to trust and obey not discuss and dialogue. As we saw last week the name Gilgal literally means “*a place of rolling*” and we find out that the practice of circumcision which was at first given to Abraham in Genesis 17:10-11 was to be a sign the relationship that God had with Abraham. I’m wondering if Abraham might have thought, “*Uh couldn’t I just have badge or a plaque?*” The sign was that the flesh had been dealt with and sense it is in a private area it was to remind him that it had to be dealt with daily in fact several times a day. **Further more sense it was to be done on an organ that was responsible for reproduction it was to remind him that to be fruitful, to multiply there needed**

to be this regular cutting away of the flesh. So now we fast forward to the time when they departed from the bondage of Egypt and they were baptized into the Red Sea relationship that Moses had with the Lord. And we are told in Deut. 10:16 *“Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.”* Yet as we are told here in verse 5 that circumcision had not been practiced for 40 years they wondered in the wilderness. Yet Moses said in Deut. 30:6 *“the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”* The Lord tells Joshua here, *“You want to get rolling, well you start with your heart fellows!”* The Lord said to Joshua in verse 9, *“This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you”*, and that is why the name is called Gilgal. God was cutting away the reproach of the world from their lives.

III. Vs. 10-12 Recalling God’s goodness

The second of two things that needed to be accomplished in preparing the people for victory:

2. Vs. 10-12 **Recalling God’s goodness**: The truth of the Passover feast was that they were a redeemed people folks who were once slaves but now set free by the sacrifice of another. Based upon Number 9:1-14 the nation had only celebrated the Passover twice once while still in bondage to the Egyptians (40 years ago) and once just before departing to head to Kadesh Barnea where they were to enter the promised land 38 years earlier. So not only was the new generation not circumcised they hadn’t participated in the remembrance of God’s deliverance. The day after the celebration of the Passover the miracle of Manna ceased, what is interesting is to go back to and read the reason for the Manna was that the people rebelled and desired to go back to Egypt. So the miracle of Manna from heaven was in response to the people’s desire to return to the former things. I’m not down playing the miraculous only suggesting that based upon scripture that such works of God are not necessarily always a sign of our faith they are also a sign of our faithlessness. Far too often Christians’ seek the things of the past instead of pressing into His presence and promises of today and seek to qualify this by going after the miraculous as the goal instead of His presence.

The Passover symbolizes the work of Christ’s sacrifice for our redemption and they were to celebrate this right after they died to the flesh. It is my personal opinion that our Christian life is to be a constant renewal where we come to Him broken desiring for more of the Lord’s presence

in our lives are moved by His Spirit to take the plunge and cross over becoming more immersed in His Spirit which leads us to cut away our flesh and celebrate our relationship with Him.

So after they had died to self and took a step of faith, been baptized in the Spirit, dealt with the flesh then they partied in the Passover! We can see the progression as the Lord lead His people to a place of celebration after a 40-year absence. There are many times in my life where the celebration and joy of our Christian life is missing perhaps it is missing because we haven't taken a step of faith died to self been immersed in the Spirit and cut away the flesh. Finally notice the fact that the miraculous ended once the day after the Passover was celebrated. I would have thought that it would have been a greater time of seeing the miraculous instead of a lessoning. When the people were in the wilderness a place of dryness and rebellion miracles abounded daily but once they went after His presence and entered into His promise they ceased.

Now this speaks to me on two fronts:

1. With all of those signs and wonders you would have thought that this would have produced enough faith for them to trust the Lord and enter into the land of promise but that was simply not the case. **What this reveals is that or lack of faith has nothing to do with a lack of evidence and everything to do with the condition of our hearts.**
2. Secondly, and this speaks to my heart with regards to that which is greater verses that which is lesser. Our natural assumption is that signs and wonders are the greater but if that was the case they would have remained or increased. So it would appear that such working is to get us to a place where we seek all the more to be in His presence, going after the baptism of the Spirit, being cleansed and having the flesh cut away so that we see that the moving of the Spirit is equated with the fruit of the spirit not just the gifts of the Spirit.

With this came a new source of provision which He works through because He has worked in us.

The empowering of the Spirit of God in our lives brings us into a new celebration and a new season of fruitfulness where by we move from being mere spectators of His power to becoming instruments of His power. God wants us to be partners of His work but it is always in us before it will be through us, saints. Before they had to wait upon the Lord to bring the Manna for heaven everyday but now they had to trust the Lord to enable them to provide for the sustenance a new

way. God still provide as He always had He just changed the means and manor by which He was doing so. We like the security which having something always the same way brings us but our security ought not to be in the manor in which the Lord works but rather in the fact that the Lord works.