

Sermon Outline

“AND THE LORD GAVE THEM REST”: A CHRISTIAN READING OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

NO MORE SHAME (JOSHUA 5:2-9)

I. Shame on You

II. “And the Lord Said to Joshua” (Joshua 5:2)

- A. When Israel comes to Gilgal, the Lord speaks to Joshua again.
1. This is now the fifth time that this phrase “the Lord said” appears.
 - a. 1:1: “After the death of Moses...*the LORD said* to Joshua ...”
 - b. 3:7: “*The LORD said* to Joshua...”
 - c. 4:1: “When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, *the LORD said* to Joshua”
 - d. 4:15: “And *the LORD said* to Joshua”
- B. Once again, we are reminded: The Lord God rules his people by his Word.
- C. The Lord now instructs Joshua to do two things.
1. “Make flint knives...”
 2. “...and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time.”
- D. Concerning Circumcision
1. To understand what circumcision means to Israel, we have to go to Genesis 17.
 - a. The Lord made a covenant with Abraham, ancestor of Israel.
 - b. The Lord gave circumcision as a sign of the covenant (Gen 17:10)
 2. Why choose circumcision as the sign of the covenant?
 - a. Circumcision may have been God’s way of saying to Israel, especially to male Israelites, that he rules their sexuality and their descendants.
 - b. Circumcision symbolizes separation from sin (Col 2:11).
- E. The Lord instructs Joshua to “circumcise the sons of Israel *a second time*.”

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What is the significance of the phrase “the LORD said”? What does it say about how the Lord rules amongst his people? (2) What does the Lord now ask Joshua to do in 5:2? (3) What is the significance of circumcision?

III. Joshua Obeys the Lord (Joshua 5:3)

- A. Joshua proceeds to obey the Lord: “So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.”
- B. Notice the echoing effect of 5:3 (see also 4:1, 16).
—The Lord speaks and Joshua echoes God’s Word by his actions.

- C. Notice how quickly Joshua does what he is told to do.
 - 1. There should be no complaining but excitement at the will of the Lord.
 - 2. God is bringing us to the point where his Word and our walk become one and virtually indistinguishable. People will know God's Will just by looking at how we behave and listening to what we say.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Joshua faithfully echoes the Lord's will in his actions. What does this say about how we should respond to the Lord's Word? (2) "God is working in us to bring us increasingly to the point where his Word and our walk become one and virtually indistinguishable." Do you long for that day?

IV. Why Joshua Circumcised the Israelites (Joshua 5:4-8)

- A. 5:4-6 explains why Joshua circumcised these Israelites: "And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them..."
 - 1. The Israelite males who came from Egypt "had died in the wilderness."
 - 2. And those who were "born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised."
- B. And so, Joshua obeys what the Lord tells him to do.
- C. The Israelites remained in the camp "until they were healed" (5:8).

***Questions for reflection:** Why did Joshua have to circumcise these Israelites?

V. The Lord Has Rolled Away Our Shame (Joshua 5:9)

- A. 5:9: "And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.""
- B. The word "reproach" means "shame," "scorn," or "indignity."
- C. Shame was associated with Egypt because the Israelites were slaves there.
- D. "And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day."

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What does the Lord say to Joshua in 5:9? (2) What does "reproach" mean? (3) Why was Egypt associated with shame?

VI. We Were Circumcised in Christ Jesus

- A. How are we even related to what is happening here in Joshua 5?
- B. The link can be seen in Colossians 2:11-12.
- C. Paul makes the following points.
 - 1. We were circumcised in Christ.
 - 2. This circumcision was not a physical circumcision.
 - 3. This circumcision happened "by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ..."
 - 4. The circumcision of Christ refers to his cutting off, that is, his death.
 - 5. We shared in the circumcision of Christ when we were buried with Christ in baptism.
- D. If you have been joined to Christ by baptism to his crucifixion, God considers you to be amongst the circumcised.

- E. This is why we can read Joshua 5 as our story, as our history.
—Since our Lord Jesus was an Israelite, we who are in him can share in the story of Israel, because Christ himself was a part of that story.
- F. The most important question: *Am I one of those who has been circumcised in Christ? Have my sins been put away in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ?*
- G. If you are not yet a believer in Christ, you are still outside the Community of God.
- H. To be joined to Christ, you need to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Life.
 1. Let his obedient life count for yours before God.
 2. Let his death be the full punishment of your sins.
 3. Let his resurrection be your future.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) According to Colossians 2:11-12, in what way can we be said to be circumcised in Christ? (2) How are we joined to the Lord Jesus Christ?

VII. Christ Our Circumcision—and Our Dignity

God rolls our reproach or shame away when we are circumcised in the Lord Jesus Christ. God is ultimately the one who joins us to Christ by his own power, causing us to trust in Christ for our dignity and eternal life. In Christ, we are no longer condemned (Rom 8:1). Now that God has rolled away our shame in Christ, we need to stand firm in Christ—and let *him* deal with our shame, real or false.

- A. The original point that Paul was making in Colossians is to show that our circumcision in Christ frees us from superstitious human traditions (Col 2:8-15).
- B. We let Christ free us from misplaced shame.
 1. We refuse to allow others to control us by shaming tactics.
 2. We must be willing to endure the suffering that comes with false shaming.
 - a. The price of freedom is sometimes suffering.
 - b. We cannot be free from misplaced shame if we are not willing to bear the cost of inconvenience or persecution.
 3. Christ Jesus died so that we can have the courage to reject human traditions that try to take God's place in our lives (Col 2:8).
- C. We let Christ free us from real shame.
 1. We let our shame drive us to Christ for forgiveness whenever we sin.
 2. Once we return to Christ through prayer, we must accept that his death is enough to cover our sin.
 3. We must learn to boast in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17).
—See Christ's accomplishments as yours: His obedience, his death, his resurrection.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How do we let Christ free us from misplaced shame? (2) How do we let Christ free us from real shame caused by sin? (3) Do you boast in Christ?