

THE SOLUTION FOR EVERY PROBLEM
Joshua 22:5

Scripture reading: Joshua 22:1-6.

Intro: The two and one-half tribes are ready to go back over the Jordan to their own land after helping the other tribes in the conquest of Canaan.

They had seen the faithfulness of God to an amazing degree. Cf. Joshua 21:43-45.

How would Joshua advise them?

After choosing my subject, I felt that perhaps a better subject for this text would be, HOW TO KEEP FROM HAVING PROBLEMS. Joshua is certainly talking about prevention, rather than a cure.

No one can keep from having troubles, trials, testings. They are a part of God's way with us -- to strengthen our faith, to make Himself known, to teach us, etc. But what we are concerned with in this text is how to avoid doing those things which bring troubles upon ourselves -- things which we do!

Before we look at the text, let us notice some other things:

- 1) Note that three times in vv. 1-6 Joshua speaks of "Moses" as "the servant of the Lord" (vv. 2, 4, 5).

The Law which God gave through Moses became known also as the law of Moses because it was not only what he gave to the people, but it became his way of life, and it was the subject of his teaching.

If you had gone to Moses for counsel, you would have gotten "the statutes of God, and his laws" (Ex. 18:16).

So -- what Joshua had to say to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, had the distinction of being from Moses.

But there is another thing of interest:

- 2) Cf. Joshua 1:7, 8.

This is what "the Lord" had told Joshua (so it had divine authority, and it was the way that Joshua had lived. It was the way that he had taught the people of Israel to live!

Joshua himself was an old man now, and he had no regrets for the way he had lived.

So often we get our advice from those who are untried and who are experimenting themselves instead of taking the advice of those who have lived and who have succeeded in seeing the blessing of the Lord.

We realize, of course, that we are no longer under the Law as the children of Israel were. This does not mean that we can forget about the Old Testament. The moral teachings of Scripture never change from one generation to another. God Himself does not change. Many of the teachings of the OT are not only repeated in the NT, but they are enlarged upon and given even greater detail.

So -- we can turn to the words of Joshua and follow his teaching just as the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the ~~Manasseh~~-ites needed to do.

Let me state the principles which Joshua gave to these people almost 3,500 years ago.

- I. Always get your advice from the Word of God -- and never accept any teaching that is not supported by the Word of God.

"But" in v. 5 can be, and probably should be translated, ONLY. Joshua was limited his people to the Word of God, restricting them to the Word. We can never go wrong if we live according to the Word.

- II. Go beyond what the ordinary child of God does in his study of the Word of God.

"Diligent" means to go beyond what other Christians are satisfied with. Do not put any limitations on your hunger for the Word, or on your desire to know it.

Note what the Lord told Joshua to do in 1:8 -- "day and night."

Read what Moses told the people to do when he instructed them on raising their children -- Deut. 6.

Cf. Psa. 119:97.

- III. Be concerned about all of the Word, but at the same time do not overlook a single detail.

This is the reason that Joshua speaks of both "commandments" (2x) and "the law," i.e., the whole thing.

The people of God are prone to do one or the other -- and sometimes both. That is, they will look at the whole thing, but never see details, or they will pick and choose among the details as though they were responsible to do some but not all!

- IV. Remember that the Word is our God-given responsibility; we

really do not have any choices.

That is why they are called "commandments," "the Law."

For the NT, cf. John 14:21 for our Lord's commandments.

- V. Always keep the Lord in the central place when you are dealing with the Word of God.

It is His Word -- not Moses', not Joshua's, not your parents', not even yours!

How can you do this? Joshua helps us:

- A. Obey the Lord because you love Him and then you will love to obey Him -- and you will love the Word which He has given to you.
- B. To "walk in all his ways" means that you can expect that His Word will be the instrument that He will use to make you like He is.
- C. Be careful of anything that would turn you away from the Lord. "Cleave unto him."

This is what Ruth did for Naomi. It means that there will be such intense personal devotion for the Lord that you will gladly forsake everything else for Him.

- D. Make yourself, like Moses and like Joshua, a "servant of the Lord."

And do it "with all your heart and with all your soul."

Did they regret it? Did they look upon it as a mistake? Have you ever found anyone who was sorry that they had served the Lord? Ask the oldest saint, and see what he says.

And one thing to keep in mind: Remember that service does not just mean work, but worship! There is no service that really amounts to anything that does not come from a loving, worshipful heart.

Concl: Read the verse showing the emphasis that there is upon the Lord -- "the Lord . . . his . . . him . . ."

No better advice could be given to us today. The more we make the Lord and His Word the very center of our lives, turning from anything different, the greater will be our blessing, and the greater will be the glory we will bring to God!