



# 12 | JOSHUA 11:9

## FAITH VS. FEAR: A GOD BIGGER THAN OUR ENEMIES

*We are called to walk in faith and not in fear.*

### Outline

#### 1. THE ENEMY MAY BE GREAT (11:1-5)

Why is worry Sinful?

1. Because it expresses heart **idolatry** (Mt 6:19-24)

2. Because it expresses heart **unbelief** (Mt 6:25-34)

What should you do instead of worry?

#### 2. GOD IS GREATER THAN THE ENEMY (11:6-9)

Put Away Fear

Put on Faith

Put God's Word to the Test

*Is Anything Too Hard for the Lord?*

### Call to Worship

Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!  
4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. 5 Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. 6 This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. —Psalm 34:3-7

### Songs

*How Great is Our God / How Great Thou Art*

*I Am Who You Say I Am*

*Blessed Assurance*

*All is Well*

*Yet Not I but through Christ in me*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**WELCOME:** We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet from the Welcome Center if you are visiting with us

**GIVING:** You can still give over Zelle through your bank with no fees.

Use [secretary@livinghopechurch.net](mailto:secretary@livinghopechurch.net).

We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH:** Children's Church is available for ages 2-6 at the start of the sermon

**MIDWEEK SERVICE:** This Wednesday 7 PM Prayer Meeting (in person and ZOOM) & Youth Group

**SUNDAY SCHOOL:** Starting next week we will again have Sunday School at 9:30 AM! **On Oct 11 we will have missionaries Jim and Lydia Johnson with us to give an update.** Starting Oct 18, Jerry Soen will be teaching a class for men only and Pastor Mike will continue his class on Creation, Man, and Sin

**LIFE GROUPS:** Life Groups are beginning back up! If you need a group check with one of the pastors or elders and we will get you connected. There will be no Midweek service on Life Group weeks. Check with your Life Group leader to confirm meeting dates and locations. All meet on Wednesdays at 7pm.

Leader: Matt Black; Host: Cerrillos, Elgin

Leader: Mike Klikas, online

Leaders: Marcel Reid/Jerry Soen; Host: Andrews, Carol Stream

Leader: Mike Tiberi; Host: Poldermans, Bartlett

**MEN'S BREAKFAST:** Calling all men and boys! Come join us for our Men's Breakfast Saturday, Oct 17 at 8am for some food, fellowship and the Word. Please bring a breakfast item to share.

**CARING NETWORK GALA:** Join us for the Caring Network Gala from your own home on Thursday, October 22, 7:00-8:30 PM for an update on their ministry, how you can get involved, and to hear from guest speaker Dr. David Jeremiah. If you would like more info on how to get access to this event, please contact Wendy Jones at [Allhisglory6@yahoo.com](mailto:Allhisglory6@yahoo.com).

## Introduction

We continue in a series in the book of Joshua called "Footsteps of Faith." Our title this morning is: "Faith vs. Fear: A God Bigger than Our Enemies".

**Key thought: If we live in fear, we are not taking God at his Word, and we can't receive God's blessings. When we live by faith, God enlarges our heart so we can receive more blessing.**

Sometimes God breaks through the normal happenings of history and science and does a miracle. Chapter 10 of the book of Joshua celebrates a divine intervention unparalleled in world history. There was "no day like it" (10:14). So that's like high school graduation. They've seen some amazing things, but now they are going to get a course in college level sanctification.

Joshua 10 records the defeat of the southern nations of Canaan. Joshua 11 now records the defeat of Northern Canaan. And it's going to be way harder. This group is far more equipped than the south. They have chariots of iron.

We come to a theme in Joshua 11 about walking in faith instead of fear. The final phase of the conquest of Canaan was in the north, and again it followed the actions of the

kings of the land. Jabin, king of Hazor, was the leader of a northern coalition, just as Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem, had been the leader in the south. He was alarmed at the Jewish victories, as well he should have been, so he called the kings and armies of the northern cities together. These joined forces near the Waters of Merom, a lake a little north of the larger Sea of Galilee.

The new element in this battle was the use of chariots by the coalition. I do not know how accurate Josephus, the Jewish historian, is at this point, since he wrote so many hundreds of years later, but according to him, the combined forces of the Canaanites numbered 300,000 foot soldiers, 100,000 cavalry, and 20,000 chariots. If this was so (or even if it is only an approximation of the size of the army), this must have been the greatest engagement of Joshua's distinguished career. The numbers themselves are daunting, but in addition, there were the chariots, against which Israel had never before fought.<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. THE ENEMY MAY BE GREAT (11:1-5)

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The enemy may be great, but we must never allow any fear to be magnified as greater than God. This is why worry and fear are such a great sin.

We read a very detailed summary of the enemy's expanse. Why so much detail? The writer is helping us to see the almost hopeless situation Israel faces.<sup>2</sup>

**Joshua 11:1-5** | When Jabin, king of Hazor, heard of this, he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,<sup>2</sup> and to the kings who were in the northern hill country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and in Naphoth-dor on the west,<sup>3</sup> to the Canaanites in the east and the west, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites under Hermon in the land of Mizpah.<sup>4</sup> And they came out with all their troops, **a great horde, in number like the sand that is on the seashore**, with very many horses and **chariots**.<sup>5</sup> And all these kings joined their forces and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

To impress the reader (and Israel) with the massive resources available to the enemies of God makes the power of God shine more brightly in delivering his people from their hands.

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<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Joshua* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 87–88.

<sup>2</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *Joshua: No Falling Words, Focus on the Bible Commentary* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 90.

<sup>3</sup> Boice, *Joshua*, 88.

When we clearly see both Canaan's **numerical** (11:4a) and **technological** (11:4b) edge, we realize that however big our fears might be, God is infinitely greater than anything that might bring us fear.<sup>4</sup> Be commanded them not to commit the sin of fear and worry when it came to the Canaanites. And these are good words for us.

“When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them, for the Lord your God is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt” (Deut 20:1).

### WHY IS WORRY SINFUL?

#### Why is worry sinful?

1. Because it expresses heart idolatry (Mt 6:19-24)
2. Because it expresses heart unbelief (Mt 6:25-34)

#### 1. *Because it expresses heart **idolatry** (Mt 6:19-24)*

We magnify something as a fear that God cannot handle. So it begins to eat at us. But we are not taking God at his Word. Fear comes when we treasure something or someone too much, and we fear that security, health, comfort, or relationship being taken away.

Good question: what do you sometimes tend to treasure or magnify more than the Lord? Three pictures:

- Competing treasures (v. 19-21) – You can't serve God and money. Identify, repent, uproot
- Competing eyes (v. 22-23)
- Competing masters (v. 24) security, health, comfort.

Worry is sinful because when you worry, you are saying:

- ◆ I am afraid God will not take care of me.
- ◆ I am treasuring comfort more than God.

What's the remedy? Identify, repent of, and **uproot** your heart idols. Question: What earthly treasures—good things (people, possessions, circumstances, identities, etc.)—do you sometimes tend to treasure more than the Lord and his heavenly treasures?

#### 2. *Because it expresses heart **unbelief** (Mt 6:25-34)*

**Worry is an unbelief in the love of God.** It's not the total unbelief of a pagan, but the remnant unbelief of a true believer.

Reasons to not worry:

- (1) Because the God who provides for birds and flowers is your Father, and he values you much more than he values them (Matthew 6:25-30)

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

(2) Because worrying characterizes pagans, not those who belong to and who are known by God your Father (Matthew 6:31-32)

(3) Because worrying can't improve your future, and it instead diverts you from your present responsibilities (Matthew 6:34)

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO INSTEAD OF WORRY?

You should seek God's kingdom (Matthew 6:33).

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. –Matthew 6:33

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## 2. GOD IS GREATER THAN THE ENEMY (11:6-9)

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Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. –1 John 4:4, KJV

### PUT AWAY FEAR

Faith focuses on the certainty of greatness of God and his love for me, not on the possibilities of fear. Do you have a good theology of worry. You should never magnify anything as greater than God. The moment you sense worry, cut it off.

1 Peter 5:7, Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. –Philippians 4:6-7

**Joshua 11:6** | And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire."

**Hamstringing** a horse made the animal militarily useless; it involved cutting the large tendon at the back of the knee on the hind legs. It did not kill them or permanently injure them. It merely made them not able to be as quick, so they were no good for war. Some hold that the Israelites did this because they were untrained in the machinery of Canaanite hi-tech warfare and, not knowing how to use horses and chariots themselves, simply disabled and destroyed them. However, the command probably stems more from God's divine intention which was to teach Israel **not to depend on such modes of assistance but to repose in God's help alone.**<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 92

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. –Psalm 20:7

What is a chariot compared to the infinite God?

By prohibiting such means of normal human security, The Lord is looking for them to depend on him alone. They can't give glory to their weapons or their wisdom. It's all God.

### PUT ON FAITH

God doesn't want us to sit back in fear, but to walk in faith. Faith is complete trust or confidence in someone or something. Jesus said faith is always accompanied by obedience. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (Jn 14:15). "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure" (Phil 2:12-13, NKJV).

Verses 6–7 contain an implicit recognition of our God's sovereignty enables our courage and conviction to face the enemy.

Joshua 11:6-7 | And the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." <sup>7</sup> So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them.

In verse 6 Yahweh gives his sovereign assurance, "I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel"; in verse 7 Joshua and Israel blast into the enemy camp in a surprise attack, "So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them" (11:7). Isn't the sequence significant? Divine sovereignty does not negate human activity but stimulates it. Because God is sovereignly directing, we should act in faith and go forward, not "let go and let God."

Joshua knew better. His view was not to let go but to grab hold of the divine power of God. Divine sovereignty creates **confidence**, which calls forth our effort even to the point of reckless abandon. God's sovereignty is not a doctrine that shackles us but a reality that liberates us.<sup>6</sup>

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He loves you.

I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. –Jeremiah 31:3

That means...

God my Father *knows* what is best for me.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 90–91.

God my Father is more than *able* to bring what is best for me.  
God my Father deeply *wants* what is best for me.  
God my Father *will* always give me what is best for me.

You worry because you are not taking God at his Word!

### PUT GOD'S WORD TO THE TEST

Trust God. He is faithful to his word.

**Joshua 11:8-9** | And the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel, who struck them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward as far as the Valley of Mizpeh. And they struck them until he left none remaining.<sup>9</sup> And Joshua did to them just as the Lord said to him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

Joshua obeyed, just as the Lord told him to do. He says something amazing later in the book of Joshua.

**Joshua 21:45**, “Not one of all the Lord’s good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.”

God keeps his Word. You will see this if you walk in faithful obedience instead of fear. God will do what he says he will do.

“My word... shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isa 55:11).

You will not be disappointed when you obey God’s Word. Our peace is different than the theocracy of Israel. Today’s Israel, the church, sees the victory through the inner workings of the Holy Spirit with peace, love, and joy in the heart of the Christian. Are you at rest?

*Is Anything Too Hard for the Lord?*

Faith is not in any way faith in OUR ability, but trust in GOD’s ability. Remember when Abraham was informed that Sarah would be pregnant. God said,

“Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son” (Gen 18:14).

### Conclusion

Now look at the blessings that Joshua received because he and all Israel took God at his Word! Joshua closes the conquering of the land of Canaan, with a kind of celebration, a glorious celebration. Verses 1–6 speak of the conquest and settlement of the land east of the Jordan, which had happened under Moses, while verses 7–24 list the thirty-one kings that fell to Joshua from Jericho onward.

Each king and kingdom represent the removal of an impossibly strong opposition by the hand of the living God and his limitless, sovereign power. So let us celebrate this morning. To God be the glory. We have every spiritual blessing in Christ. We have the fullness of God dwelling in us in the Holy Spirit. We have the riches of his presence. We have power to live in the pure peace and love and righteousness in the Spirit. We no longer have to fuss and worry and despair.

If you are fussing and fearing, you are not taking God at his Word.

As a Christian, you never have to live in the bondage of fearing and fussing. You have the kingdom. It's not a physical kingdom like Canaan.

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. –Romans 14:17

What is left for the Christian is to lament this wicked world. We weep with those who weep. We come alongside the sufferers, but we never lose hope. We are still in a battle till we see Jesus, but the enemy is defeated. We don't ever have to worry or fear or fuss. That is not what we do. **Fearing and fussing are indicators that you are not taking God at his Word.** Whatever is in front of you, take God at his Word. When you see an impossible situation, count it all joy. Rejoice because you are going to do exploits as your your great God fights for you. Look at all those kings listed. They had no chance. And no sin has a change in your heart when the Spirit and the Word are reigning. Do fear. Don't fuss. Wal in the Word through worship and celebrate! Insist on living out the Word of God by faith. We are in the Promised Land, Christ is our inheritance. We are united to him, and he to us. Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to his eternal kingdom (Col 1:13).<sup>7</sup> We are in the Promised Land! To him be the glory forever and ever!

Is your heart enlarged, or are you dealing with a tiny, tiny heart that relies on the horses and chariots of idolatry? We must trust God alone. He will enlarge our hearts to receive all his incredible blessings!

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<sup>7</sup> David Jackman, *Joshua: People of God's Purpose*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 134.