

## **Joshua 4:10-24 – Dominion Work: Unity and Leadership**

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Bezuyen, Henry, Geneva, JFB, Poole, Trapp, Delitzsch, Calvin, INT,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Have you ever watched some of the relief trucks that take food to starving people and see how people often walk over each other to get more food for themselves? It is usually every man for himself. Recently a man was charged in the US for tossing 1000 dollar bills from the upper level of a mall so people could grab as much as they could. The police charged him because people could have run over each other to get as much money as possible for themselves and caused serious injury. But you do not see that selfishness with God's covenant community. The church knew that the job God gave them was much bigger than their individual lives and they knew they had to work together...people and leader. This is what you will hear about from God today.

Our headings are: **Unselfish Unity is Essential必要 for Dominion and Limited Leadership is Essential for Dominion**

Our goals are: **That you will learn of the importance of unity of the brothers and submission to leadership so that Christ can have dominion on the earth.**

### **Unselfish Unity is essential for Dominion**

10 So the priests who bore the ark **stood in the midst of the Jordan** until everything was finished that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua; and the **people hurried and crossed** over. 11 Then it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over, that the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed over in the presence of the people.

**1. The Ark of the Covenant, which represented God's presence, guided the Jews across the Jordan.**

**2. In unity Israel crossed the Jordan.** Imagine how they had to help the elderly, maybe carrying them on their backs or on makeshift stretchers在临时搭建的担架...and imagine how they had to help those with children or little babies! Imagine how they had to care for the pregnant ones...and the mothers who were in labor! If they just charged across there would have been serious injuries. Unity was essential.

**3. In unity, Israel hurried over.** They did not hurry over from fear the water might fall on them and drown them. They hurried so as **not tempt God to anger**. They hurried because they **were eager to get into the land**. **They knew that obedience to God (hurrying over the Jordan) always was attached to the blessing of man (entering into the land).**

12 And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, **as Moses had spoken to them**.  
13 About forty thousand prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains平原of Jericho.

**4. All the tribes, even the 2 ½ tribes that were given land on the east side of the river, went across with the other 9 ½.** Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh could have taken the easy way

out and said, “we have our land, you have to fend 捍卫 for yourselves,” but instead they crossed with their brothers to help them fight the Canaanites.

Numbers 32:27 "but your servants will cross over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, just as my lord says."

**And look at Moses' desire for unity in the church even though he knew he would be dead by the time they entered Canaan.** He gave instructions to the 2 ½ tribes to accompany their brothers! **Isn't this the desire of every dying parent that their children are faithful to God and stay united?**

What is interesting here is what you *don't see in this text*. The 2 ½ tribes did not send all their soldiers. They sent across 40,000 soldiers and left some back to protect their women, children, and the elderly. This was good planning. They knew that faith did not take away responsibility. This was why there was no protest from the rest of the people that the 2 ½ tribes left some soldiers to guard their families. They understood their covenant responsibility.

**5. This is how New Horizon URC should be!** Make sure that no one feels abandon or unsafe in this church? If someone is sick or needs help, be willing to give up your time to help them. You are all parts of the body. The toe must not say to the heart: “I have no need of you.” The eye needs the fingernail. When the parts are working together...how wonderful it is! How good and pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity and love! Remember Romans 12. We memorized it. Now make it reality in your life. And **at the same time**, make sure that you don't spend so much time helping others that you forget to take time with your own spouse and children! They are your first priority.

### **Limited Leadership is essential for Dominion**

14 On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and **they feared him**, as they **had feared Moses**, all the days of his life.

**1. God established Joshua as leader by exalting 表彰 him in front of the people. By doing this the people became sure in their hearts that Joshua was chosen by God and that he was equipped to marshal 鼓起 them into war. (“Fear” did not mean “scared.” “Fear” meant “respect.” They respected Joshua.)** It was essential that Israel trusted its general. They respected their general. No one wants to risk his life in war if he does not feel confident in his general! They were ready to obey their general without question even if he told them to get ready for war.

**But notice V14, did Israel really fear Moses?** Didn't Israel rebel, evening wanting to kill Moses? The early generation did not fear Moses, but the generation with Joshua was a more godly generation. So Moses died in peace.

15 Then the **LORD spoke to Joshua**, saying, 16 **Command the priests** who bear the ark of the Testimony to come up from the Jordan." 17 Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, **"Come up from the Jordan."** 18 And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come from the midst of the Jordan, and the **soles of the priests' feet touched the dry land**, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before.

### **2. How did God establish Joshua a leader?**

**a. God gave Joshua authority over the priests.** Joshua's mouth became the mouth of God. God

told Joshua to tell the priests to come out of the Jordan with the Ark of the Covenant. The priests did not move a muscle without the command of their leader. And notice that Joshua did exactly as he was told. He did not adjust God's commands. He knew his authority was limited. He ruled under God.

**b. God made Joshua's Words come true. As soon as the soles of the priests' feet touched dry land, the waters of the powerful Jordan returned.** What an obedient river! The people were assured that Joshua was their ruler.

**Wasn't this a picture of your Joshua?** Wasn't Jesus known for having such **powerful words** that even the winds and the waves obeyed him and wasn't he known for being one who spoke with authority? Wasn't Jesus known to **talk directly** to his Father and for the Father speaking directly to him? Wasn't **Jesus said to be greater than Aaron?**

Mark 4:41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that **even the wind and the sea obey Him!**"

John 8:28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; **but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.**

Hebrews 5:6 As He also says in another place: "**You are a priest forever** According to the order of Melchizedek";

**Didn't Jesus exalt and establish his under-shepherds as well?** Didn't his disciples say even demons bow to them?

Luke 10:17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, **even the demons 恶魔 are subject to us** in Your name."

John 14:12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and **greater works than these he will do**, because I go to My Father.

19 Now the people came up from the Jordan on the **tenth day of the first month**, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.

**3. God reminded the people that Joshua's authority was limited.** How did he do that? He did that by **drawing Israel back to their days in Egypt when he promised that he would bring Israel into the land at the Feast of the Passover.** Israel arrived in Canaan 4 days before the end of 40 years. (The first month, Abib, was part of March and part of April.) The 1<sup>st</sup> thing they did in Canaan was to remember how God freed them through blood sacrifice. By drawing Israel back to what **he** did earlier, God was showing them that Joshua's power was limited, but he, unlimited.

Exodus 12:2 "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the **first month** of the year to you. 3 "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the **tenth day of this month** every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. 17 'So **you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened 无酵 Bread**, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as **an everlasting ordinance.**

20 And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. 21 Then he **spoke to the children of Israel**, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' 22 "then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; 23 "for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, 24 **that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD**, that it is mighty, that you may **fear the LORD your God forever**."

**4. God then reminded Joshua that Joshua's power was limited. How did God do that? God instructed Joshua what to tell the people. Specifically, Joshua had to tell the people that they had to remember what God had done for them.** Joshua had to become a distant memory, like Moses and like John the Baptist, but God had to be remembered and honored forever. Joshua couldn't threaten the people, harangue高谈阔论or bully them. He simply had to speak what God spoke. Joshua told the people what they were to teach their children about the 12 stones that were set up in Gilgal. And Joshua couldn't tell the people what they wanted to hear: "Enjoy the land. Do what you want. Marry whomever you want." He would have done that at his own peril.

**5. Aren't you too called to follow in the footsteps of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Joshua and teach your children the truth?** If you do not teach your children to cry out to God then God would have to raise up the stones to do so. One man said: "If you want your children to be wise when they are old, they need to be inquisitive好奇when they are young." Teach them to ask questions. Learn from Christ: even as a child, Jesus learned deep truths!

Luke 2:46 Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

If we are going to have dominion for Jesus Christ, truth must be the foundation – truth that is explained and applied.

**If you don't teach your children, then they will be subject to the world – a world that says:**

- a. Buy birth control for your kids, as they are going to be promiscuous淫乱anyway!
- b. Don't spank rebellious children, or they will become murderers and arsonists纵火犯.
- c. Give your children to us to educate them; we will do it "for free." You won't pay anything.
- d. We'll reward your children's bad behavior because we will redefine their bad behavior as good.
- e. We'll help your children to kill your grandchildren, even though we'll call it family-planning.
- f. We'll teach your children that they are products of evolution and God doesn't exist, so they don't have to obey or worship him.
- g. We'll ban your children from praying in schools, unless they are praying to a false god, which we will allow!

**6. With the people safely across, with religious and political leadership firmly established, they needed to do one more thing before they moved on Canaan.** They needed to ratify 批准 their covenant relationship with God, and they would do so in Gilgal in a most memorable way!

**Conclusion:**

**Look at the unity of the children of Israel as they hurried over.** Look how they helped each other as fellow citizens. Look how the different tribes helped each other. Look at the limited authority that God gave Joshua to prevent abuse. Look how leadership and citizens worked together for the glory of God.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Continue to work together to build up the kingdom of God.** I know that we are from many different background and many different cultures, but we are one in Jesus Christ. We are blood brothers and sisters. Let the love of Christ be felt by each one. And if you haven't been working together with others, start doing so. Ask how you can be involved in the life of the church. And work with those from other denominations 面值 as well. We are all part of God's family. Let unity be seen and felt.

**2. Submit to those the Lord has placed over you.** Let our lives be easy by your obedience to God. Get rid of any independent streak 迹 if you have one.

**3. Rule those the Lord has placed under you with courage, not fear.** Don't be afraid to tell you children (or spiritual children) the truth about the challenges of life and how they need to keep their trust in God even when they are pressured to do otherwise. Rebuke them if you need to.

**Your work is too great!** You have to be fully prepared and determined for world dominion.

Finally, I pray that if you are not a Christian that you will follow the words of the one Joshua prefigured – Jesus Christ. If you don't, you will die in a spiritual desert, except that that torturous 折磨 death with continue forever with a tortured conscience. But if you do believe the words of Jesus you will have life.