

JOSHUA 15-16
THEY DID NOT. . .!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 15 as we continue our study through this book that deals with victorious Christian living.

As we have seen in our studies here in Joshua, the children of Israel are in the Promise Land or the land of Canaan, just as God had promised them.

And we have seen that the children of Israel have defeated their enemies in the central part of the land, Jericho and Ai.

Then, once that wedge was driven between the north and the south, they defeated Adonizedek and the surrounding armies that federated with him in the southern part of the land.

And then they made their northern conquest of the land that God promised to the children of Israel as they defeated Jabin the King of Hazor and the other nations that joined with them.

But that was not the end of the battles for the children of Israel. Yes, the major nations were put down but there were still many pockets of resistance that needed to be dealt with.

But for seven years they fought as a nation, now the land would be divided up and each tribe would have to drive out the enemy from the land that was allotted to them.

And this division of the land was important to the children of Israel, it showed where the boundaries of each tribe were.

For us, they don't seem that important, but within these chapters there are some important lessons for us to learn.

And what I would like you to think about is this. Yes, the main or major battles are over, and the children of Israel were victorious. That was not the issue.

I think the real battles for the children of Israel and for us are the small battles, the ones we don't think are that important, that don't seem to be such a big deal, but they are!

And, as we will see over the next several weeks, in Joshua chapters 15 through 22 that there were some dangers that I don't think the children of Israel saw as dangers, at least three of the four they didn't.

Here in Joshua chapters 15 and 16 I will give you an overview of what is going on here, the division of the land and then we will look at the danger.

The danger here and the title of this study is this, "***They Did Not. . .!***" And, as you will see, this is probably not a big deal for many if not most of us, but it should be because it is what helped bring the children of Israel down.

You see, God gave them a task to complete, to drive out the enemy from the land, but, as we will see, they did not do that.

Yes, they drove the major nations out, but these pockets of resistance, they did not. And maybe they were tired, doing battle for some seven years and maybe they felt this was not such a big deal, and they let it go. Bad idea as we will see.

Let me share this with you and as you will see, once the battle starts, it must be completed, or you will be in trouble.

We are told,

The War had been raging in Europe for some five years now. The struggle had been long and hard. In the spring of 1944, the Allies prepared one of the largest invasion forces ever assembled to that time. They wanted to be ready and every effort was made to accomplish that.

They carefully evaluated their forces and those of their enemies. They planned considering many alternatives. They considered their enemies strengths and weaknesses and many things right down to the tides and the weather. The channel crossing was also of the utmost importance.

Once the D Day invasion had started there could be no going back. Many lives were at stake and bad plans could be devastating. Can you imagine the strain upon the generals as they worked through all of this. And in particular General Omar Bradley the commander in chief of the allied forces.

- <http://bit.ly/2Kuacz9>

And the same is true here with the children of Israel. The battle had started and there was no turning back, there was no stopping, no matter how small or insignificant that battle might seem. The enemy must be destroyed, just as God had instructed them!

With that said, let me give you an overview and then we will focus on the verses I would like you to see this morning. We are going to begin in Joshua chapter 15 this morning.

JOSHUA 15

VERSES 1-12

In these first 12 verses of Joshua chapter 15 the land is being divided for the tribe of Judah and they occupied the land in the south from the Dead Sea as its boarder on the east all the way to the Mediterranean Sea or the Great Sea to the west. Judah was one of the larger tribes.

VERSES 13-19

As we continue on here, in Joshua 15:13-19 we continue to see the tribe of Judah as the focus but now, specifically speaking, we see the area that was given to Caleb and his family, who were from the tribe of Judah.

And once again he defeats these enemies and he encourages others to go forward. And Othniel takes that challenge and he defeated the enemy at Kirjath Sepher and this must have been another incentive because he got the daughter of Caleb for his wife!

And by the time we get to the book of Judges, we see Othniel as one of the Judges in Israel. (Judges 3:7-11)

VERSES 20-62

Here in Joshua 15 we see 29 towns and villages in the south that were given to the tribe of Judah and these are given in verses 21-32.

Then we see that 42 towns and villages were given to them and these were located in the western foothills and we read of them in verses 33-47.

Then there are another 38 towns and villages that are located in the central hill country and we can read of them in verses 48-60.

And then there are 6 towns and villages in the sparsely populated wilderness of Judah which slopes down toward the Dead Sea and that is found in verses 61-62.

Now there seems to be some discrepancy with the number of towns in the south. The number of towns in the south is said to be 29 here in verse 32 and yet, 36 are mentioned.

Is this an error?

Not at all, you just need to read on in Joshua and you will find the solution to this problem.

The solution to that problem is that seven of these are later given to the tribe of Simeon and you can read of it in Joshua 19:1-7.

The tribe of Simeon was located within Judah!

I am going to skip Joshua 15:63 because we will go back and focus on that verse and another verse in Joshua chapter 16 as this will be the main focus of our study this morning.

Let's move into Joshua chapter 16 and see how the land was divided between another tribe in Israel.

JOSHUA 16

VERSES 1-9

Here in Joshua 16:1-9 we see the area of land that was given to Joseph.

And as we read on, we see that specifically the land was given to one of his sons, Ephraim.

They occupied the area of land that was in the center or in the heart of the nation you might say, just south of Shechem.

In chapter 17 we will see the area of land given to Joseph's other son, Manasseh.

I do think it is important to see the division of the land to show you that what God had promised them came to pass!

But what I would like to focus on now are two verses, Joshua 15:63 and Joshua 16:10. Let me read them to you and then we will expound on them.

We are told, **“As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day. . . .And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.”** Joshua 15:63, Joshua 16:10.

What we see here and what will be a repeating theme for them, is that they did not finish the job that God called them to do. They did not wipe out the enemy completely!

Back in Deuteronomy 20:16-18, before they entered the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, Moses told them, **“But of the cities of these peoples which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God.”**

And that was what Joshua and the children of Israel were to do. But they did not finish the job that God had for them and in the end, it would cost them dearly.

You see, God warned them that if you let just a few of the enemy remain in the land, in the end, they would teach you to follow their ways, their sin.

And, instead of you bringing them to the Lord, they will bring you into the world with all its wickedness, immorality, false gods!

One writer put it like this in regards how this relates to us today. He wrote,

In a picture, God saves us and brings us into the promised land. Yet, there remain pockets of resistance in our lives. We still have besetting sins, weaknesses of character, bad habits that give way to the world, flesh and devil. God expects us to fight against these enemies and to ever strive to grow in grace. Yet, many believers decide the battle is too difficult. They choose the easy way of compromise. They decide that the pockets of resistance are small and not worth the trouble.

Yet, these areas of our lives continually trouble us. They keep us from a victorious life.

God would help us if we would just continue in the fight. But we quit on God.

Have you made peace with a besetting sin in your life?

Have you given up on the battle?

Have you given your flesh a win by default - because you did not even show up?

Then repent of your sin of not fighting and return to the battlefield. Give yourself to God afresh. He is still there. He will still give the victory!

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And again, there are many today who don't see this as being important, but I will tell you this. If you don't deal with it now, you will deal with it down the road because those little pockets of resistance will end up controlling your life!

Let me give you an example from the Scripture to show you what I mean.

As King David was coming to the end of his life, he made Solomon, his son as King of Israel!

And on the day that Solomon was coronated as the King of Israel, his father, David, gave to him this advice. He said, **“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.”** I Chronicles 28:9.

These were not just nice words to say as your son became King. These were wise words to help Solomon not only rule the kingdom of Israel, but to rule his own life as well.

David admonished Solomon to serve the Lord with a **“loyal heart.”** The word loyal carries with it the idea of “completeness” or “whole-heartedness.”

Solomon even echoed these words when the Temple was being dedicated. He told the people, **“Let your heart therefore be loyal to the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day.”** I Kings 8:61.

Even Jesus said in Luke 10:27, **“So he answered and said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’”**

In other words, the idea here is that of an undivided heart. It is as Jesus said, **“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”** Matthew 6:21.

It is hard to serve the Lord, to follow Him when your heart is divided between the Lord and this world!

Solomon found that out!

He started out strong, he started out doing well. He even echoed the words of his Father, King David in regard to having a loyal heart unto the Lord!

What happened?

I believe the heart of Solomon was divided and for him, we see wealth, treasures, all kinds of earthly materials, women, and it was never enough because you can't fill that void in your heart with anything but the Lord for in the Lord we find that true joy, that true peace, that true satisfaction!

In I Kings 11:4-8 we are told about Solomon and his heart. We read, **“For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.”**

What happened? These 700 women and 300 concubines that he married, pagan women, led him away from the Lord.

Now, in knowing that is what happened, let me ask you this.

When Solomon started out down this road, do you think he thought it would ever bring him to this point where he is turning from the Lord and worshiping these other gods?

Absolutely not and thus, what a warning to us, that traveling down this road of compromise will only bring about destruction to our lives! God knows best and thus; may we listen and obey His Words to us!

Keep in mind that Solomon was the wisest man in the world! And yet, if he can fall like this, what hope do we have?

Our hope is only found when we cling to the Lord Jesus Christ, abiding in Him! That we are loyal or wholly devoted to Him and not have a divided heart allowing other things to draw us away from the Lord!

Now some may wonder and feel that this was not fair, what God was going to do to Solomon. But make no mistake about it, the Lord had spoken clearly to Solomon, he just chose not to listen, and he paid for it.

Listen to what we are told in I Kings 11:9-13, **“So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded. Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, ‘Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.’”**

You see, God appeared to Solomon twice and many times we think that spiritual experiences will keep us from sin and will keep us faithful to the Lord.

As we can see, that is not so.

Then what was the problem?

First of all, he did not listen to the Lord, he did not listen to the wisdom of his father David, and he did not even listen to his own wisdom that he gave to the people!

And the main issue is that it is the Word of God applied to our lives that helps us to live as God desires.

For Solomon, his heart was divided, and it took him his whole life to finally recognize that true happiness is not found in books, intellect, possessions, wealth, wine, women or song or any other material possession.

He spent a good portion of his later years in a backslidden condition because he did not obey God's word.

Yes, I believe he was saved, but he was not walking with the Lord in his later years. Solomon needed other things to satisfy or try to satisfy him.

David, on the other hand, only needed the Lord.

Psalms 27:4 says **“One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His Temple.”**

Again, that is where true satisfaction is found and yet, the enemy gets us focused on so many other things and in the end, we are not satisfied and many times we have moved farther away from God in our relationship with Him! Those pockets of resistance, those sins keep growing and consume our lives if we are not careful.

Now for Solomon, it was a lesson that he was going to learn.

A tough one and yet he did learn it.

You see, at the end of his life, Solomon saw these possessions as emptiness, vanity.

You see, no possessions could satisfy like the Lord. No possessions could bring joy like the Lord. And so, Solomon, the wisest man, the richest man, the man who had everything a person could ask or want, came to this conclusion at the end of his life.

This is what brings true joy. He said in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, **“Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil.”**

In other words, seek first the kingdom of God, seek His righteousness and you won't have to worry about these other things because God will supply them as He sees fit and you will find contentment, joy and even peace.

You can't serve God with a divided heart, with a heart that is not loyal to Him because in the end, the world will draw you farther and farther away from the Lord! Be careful! Be warned!

It is as Solomon wrote in Proverbs 4:23, **“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”**

Serve the Lord with a loyal heart, follow Him all the days of your life and you will not be drawn back to the world's wisdom, the world's wickedness, the world's immorality and all the other evil that goes with it!

Remember the letter that Jesus wrote to the church in Pergamos. The name “Pergamos” means mixed marriage, which is interesting to me.

You see, for about 200 years the church was under intense persecution where millions of Christians were put to death for their faith in Jesus Christ.

But now, in this letter to the church in Pergamos something changed and not for the better. You see, the picture that is being painted is as follows. The church was united with or married to the world, as I have said!

How could this happen?

In 312 A. D. Constantine became the Emperor and instead of persecuting the church, he joined the church with the government, you might say and that was not a good thing.

Then, in 313 A. D. Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which granted religious freedom for Christians.

That sounds great, after some two and a half centuries of intense persecution, violent deaths; this is all going to stop as Constantine made Christianity the state religion.

Folks, this was not good, as I have said. To be politically correct, to not offend anyone, heathen priests became Christian priests.

The heathen temples became Christian churches.

The heathen feasts became Christian festivals.

And everyone was happy, even the Devil, because what persecution could not do in over 200 years, weaken the church; this marriage to the world, this compromise did!

Thus, Christianity began to decline as they attempted to combine Christian theology and pagan philosophy.

And look at what we are seeing today, the fruit of what has been taught in churches for some 40 to 50 years has come forth, and it is not good.

You see, as they have moved away from the Word of God. And, as they have moved away from teaching from the Bible, they have adopted a world view that is man centered or secular instead of a Biblical worldview. We see Christians, or I should say “So called Christians” departing from the faith, a faith that I don’t believe they ever had and yet they were welcomed into the church and made to feel comfortable, even being pastors and worship leaders!

Let me share a few things with you on this because I believe it is very important! And, again, you can’t mix the world and the things of God together, you can’t have a divided heart, your heart must be loyal to the Lord or you will be affected by it and not in a good way!

We are told,

A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world. “[It’s] any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world and man’s relations to God and the world,” says David Noebel, author of *Understanding the Times*.

For example, a 2-year-old believes he’s the center of his world, a secular humanist believes that the material world is all that exists, and a Buddhist believes he can be liberated from suffering by self-purification.

Someone with a biblical worldview believes his primary reason for existence is to love and serve God.

Do you have a biblical worldview? Answer the following questions, based on claims found in the Bible and which George Barna used in his survey:

Do absolute moral truths exist?

Is absolute truth defined by the Bible?

Did Jesus Christ live a sinless life?

Is God the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe, and does He still rule it today?

Is salvation a gift from God that cannot be earned?

Is Satan real?

Does a Christian have a responsibility to share his or her faith in Christ with other people?

Is the Bible accurate in all of its teachings?

Did you answer yes to these? Only 9 percent of “born- again” believers did. But what’s more important than your yes to these questions is whether your life shows it. Granted, we are all sinners and fall short, but most of our gut reactions will reflect what we deep-down, honest-to-goodness believe to be real and true.

Here is the big problem. Nonbiblical worldview ideas don’t just sit in a book somewhere waiting for people to examine them. They bombard us constantly from television, film, music, newspapers, magazines, books and academia.

Because we live in a selfish, fallen world, these ideas seductively appeal to the desires of our flesh, and we often end up incorporating them into our personal worldview. Sadly, we often do this without even knowing it.

For example, most Christians would agree with 1 Thessalonians 4:3 and other Scriptures that command us to avoid sexual immorality, but how often do Christians fall into lust or premarital and extramarital sexual sin? Is it simply because they are weak when tempted, or did it begin much earlier, with the seductive lies from our sexualized society?

- <http://bit.ly/2MeSOkg>

This next article or I should say report is some twenty-one years old and I can tell you that things have not gotten better since this report was written by George Barna back in 1998, they have only gotten worse. Listen to what is said, and this article is from a secular writer who is using George Barna’s results to show that Christians and non-Christians are no different in their morality!

How can that be? Listen to what we are told and then I will expound on it!

This is what he wrote,

The Second Coming Of The Church by George Barna (Word Publishing, 1998), reports that they are not [Morals are no different between Christians and non-Christians]. The author, a born-again Christian sociologist, is founder and president of Barna Research Group (CA), which releases many meaningful survey results.

Although most of Barna's book is a sermon to Christian ministers on how the church should regain its lost status, it does contain some frank statistics showing how the present church has "failed" in its mission. The numbers are based on Barna's own studies, and other national surveys.

Barna compares the behaviors and attitudes of Christians with Non-Christians (see tables below) and concludes: "We think and behave no differently from anyone else."

Examples of the Similarity of Behavior Between Christians and Non-Christians (from The Second Coming Of The Church, p 6, partial list)

Have been divorced (among those who have been married) Born Again Christians: 27%; Non-Christians: 23%

Gave money to a homeless person or poor person, in past year Born Again Christians: 24%; Non-Christians: 34%

Watched an X-rated movie in the past 3 months Born Again Christians: 9%; Non-Christians: 16%

Donated any money to a nonprofit organization, in past month Born Again Christians: 47%; Non-Christians: 48%

Bought a lottery ticket, in the past week Born Again Christians: 23%; Non-Christians: 27%

Attended a community meeting on local issue, in past year Born Again Christians: 37%;
Non-Christians: 42%

Examples of the Similarity of Attitudes Between Christians and non-Christians (from The
Second Coming Of The Church, p 21, partial list)

Feel completely or very successful in life Born Again Christians: 58%; Non-Christians:
49%

It is impossible to get ahead because of your financial debt Born Again Christians: 33%;
Non-Christians: 39%

You are still trying to figure out the purpose of your life Born Again Christians: 36%;
Non-Christians: 47%

Satisfied with your life these days Born Again Christians: 69%; Non-Christians: 68%

Your personal financial situation is getting better Born Again Christians: 27%; Non-
Christians: 28%

Barna also sheds light on the definition of “God” that most Americans claim to believe
in:

“Since more than nine out of ten Americans own at least one Bible, and 86 percent call
themselves Christian, you might expect people to pay homage to the deity described and
followed by the Christian Church. In July 1997, we asked a nationwide sample of 1,012
adults to describe the God they believe in. Two out of three adults (67 percent) said they
believe that God is the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator of the universe who rules the
world today.

The remaining one-third described their god as ‘the total realization of personal, human potential’; or ‘a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach’; or said, ‘Everyone is God’; ‘There are many gods, each with different power and authority’; or ‘There is no such thing as God.’ The remaining 5 percent said they did not know.” [Pages 25-26]

- <http://bit.ly/2Kv0OeP>

Again, how did this happen that the world and the church are so similar?

It is really very simple. We have moved away from the truths of God found in the Word of God and because we have been doing that for such a long time, we now have let the world into the church!

In other words, there is this mixed marriage, like we saw in Pergamos and it is detrimental to the health of the church and to the health of individual Christians.

We accept homosexual and lesbian lifestyles as being normal and approved of God! We see that transgenderism is okay and we encourage our children to change their sexual orientation. We approve of abortion and are proud of it! You get the idea, a little compromise, a little pocket of resistance can affect our lives and it does affect our lives!

This is from Inside Edition, a secular news show and listen to what they say about one Pastor’s faith and what he is now saying.

We are told,

Joshua Harris, former pastor and the author of “I Kissed Dating Goodbye” is renouncing his faith.

“By all the measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian,” Harris announced in a post on Instagram.

“My heart is full of gratitude. I wish you could see all the messages people sent me after the announcement of my divorce. They are expressions of love though they are saddened or even strongly disapprove of the decision.

I am learning that no group has the market cornered on grace. This week I’ve received grace from Christians, atheists, evangelicals, exvangelicals, straight people, LGBTQ people, and everyone in-between. Of course there have also been strong words of rebuke from religious people. While not always pleasant, I know they are seeking to love me. (There have also been spiteful, hateful comments that angered and hurt me.)

The information that was left out of our announcement is that I have undergone a massive shift in regard to my faith in Jesus. The popular phrase for this is “deconstruction,” the biblical phrase is “falling away.” By all the measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian. Many people tell me that there is a different way to practice faith and I want to remain open to this, but I’m not there now.

Martin Luther said that the entire life of believers should be repentance. There’s beauty in that sentiment regardless of your view of God. I have lived in repentance for the past several years—repenting of my self-righteousness, my fear-based approach to life, the teaching of my books, my views of women in the church, and my approach to parenting to name a few. But I specifically want to add to this list now: to the LGBTQ+ community, I want to say that I am sorry for the views that I taught in my books and as a pastor regarding sexuality. I regret standing against marriage equality, for not affirming you and your place in the church, and for any ways that my writing and speaking contributed to a culture of exclusion and bigotry. I hope you can forgive me.

To my Christians friends, I am grateful for your prayers. Don't take it personally if I don't immediately return calls. I can't join in your mourning. I don't view this moment negatively. I feel very much alive, and awake, and surprisingly hopeful. I believe with my sister Julian that, 'All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.'"

Harris also went on to apologize for his attitudes toward the LGBTQ+ community in the past: "I regret standing against marriage equality, for not affirming you and your place in the church, and for any ways that my writing and speaking contributed to a culture of exclusion and bigotry."

Harris, who was a lead pastor of Covenant Life Church in Maryland, was outspoken for his religion-based writing on love and sexuality. Following his 1997 best-seller, "I Kissed Dating Goodbye," he went on to publish several other books that discussed both faith and his own relationship.

He announced his separation from his wife earlier this month, citing changes in both of their lives and assuring their three kids will continue to be well cared for.

- <https://ietv.co/31Ay1Lp>

As sad as that is, now the world is responding to it and seeing how faith can come and go and it really doesn't matter. You can believe whatever you want, it is based on your feelings and not the Word of God. And make no mistake about it, people are listening, and they are watching and what they are hearing and seeing is not good!

And then there is a worship leader who had renounced his faith in Christ. This is what we are told,

Marty Sampson is a prolific worship music writer, writing and cowriting songs for Hillsong Worship, Hillsong United, Delirious and Young & Free.

Originally from Sydney, he first started leading worship with Hillsong in the late 1990s, though it's been years since he has written music for them.

However, this weekend Sampson took to Instagram to inform his followers that "I'm genuinely losing my faith."

Here's the post. (We've cleaned up some of the punctuation)

Time for some real talk. I'm genuinely losing my faith, and it doesn't bother me. Like, what bothers me now is nothing. I am so happy now, so at peace with the world. It's crazy. This is a soapbox moment so here I go . . . How many preachers fall? Many. No one talks about it. How many miracles happen. Not many. No one talks about it. Why is the Bible full of contradictions? No one talks about it. How can God be love yet send four billion people to a place, all 'coz they don't believe? No one talks about it. Christians can be the most judgmental people on the planet - they can also be some of the most beautiful and loving people. But it's not for me.

I am not in any more. I want genuine truth. Not the "I just believe it" kind of truth. Science keeps piercing the truth of every religion. Lots of things help people change their lives, not just one version of God. Got so much more to say, but for me, I keeping it real. Unfollow if you want, I've never been about living my life for others.

All I know is what's true to me right now, and Christianity just seems to me like another religion at this point. I could go on, but I won't. Love and forgive absolutely. Be kind absolutely. Be generous and do good to others absolutely. Some things are good no matter what you believe. Let the rain fall, the sun will come up tomorrow.

- <http://bit.ly/2Mfn7Hn>

Did you see what brought him to this point?

He discredited the Word of God by saying that a lot of preacher's sin and fall out of the ministry and that in some way discredits God. Yes, it is true, some ministers do, but that is not on God, it is on the individual.

He discredits miracles but so do a lot of people and that does not negate them!

He says the Bible is full of contradictions, and yet, he does not sight even one!

He talks about the judgment of God upon innocent people, and that is the problem, none of us are innocent before a holy and righteous God. And please understand, that before God pours out His judgment, He gives people a chance to repent and get right. It is their choice!

He says that Christians are some of the most judgmental people around. Hey, isn't he judging me? Of course he is but that is not the problem. Why are people so upset with Christians? Because the light of God shines upon their immoral lifestyles and they don't like it!

He says that science discredits the Bible, really? God said that the earth is a sphere and that He hangs it on nothing, and He is correct! Is he speaking of evolution? If he is then he has more faith than I do. He believes everything came out of nothing!

So here is this man that was leading millions of people and he is saying that you can believe whatever you want, it really doesn't matter!

Again, this is another sad story and this man did not lose his faith, he never had it in the first place. He was a professor of Jesus but not a possessor of Jesus.

How can I say that?

Because Jesus said it in Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus said, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”**

So those who say that they are walking away from Jesus never really had a relationship with Him, for Jesus said that He never knew them!

But maybe you are thinking, “Hey, what is this guy talking about? I would never walk away from the Lord! So how does this even relate to me?”

Remember what we read earlier.

In a picture, God saves us and brings us into the promised land. Yet, there remain pockets of resistance in our lives. We still have besetting sins, weaknesses of character, bad habits that give way to the world, flesh and devil. God expects us to fight against these enemies and to ever strive to grow in grace. Yet, many believers decide the battle is too difficult. They choose the easy way of compromise. They decide that the pockets of resistance are small and not worth the trouble.

Yet, these areas of our lives continually trouble us. They keep us from a victorious life.

God would help us if we would just continue in the fight. But we quit on God.

Have you made peace with a besetting sin in your life?

Have you given up on the battle?

Have you given your flesh a win by default - because you did not even show up?

Then repent of your sin of not fighting and return to the battlefield. Give yourself to God afresh. He is still there. He will still give the victory!

- <http://bit.ly/2KKDHeX>

Make no mistake about it, there are still those pockets of resistance in our lives that the Lord wants us to drive out, He wants us to destroy!

What are those pockets of resistance? They can be any number of things, but I will give you a few examples.

The first one that we must deal with is sexual immorality! I know, nobody wants to talk about it, but it is important because we are being attacked every day in this area.

Are you lusting after a person? Are you looking at pornographic web sites? Are you seeing movies that you should not be seeing? Are you engaging in a relationship with another person when you are married? Are you looking at magazines that are pornographic in nature? Are you attracted to a same sex person as you? And the list can go on, but I think you get the point!

You must drive this out of your life or in the end, it will consume your life! Be in the Word of God, allow the Word of God to minister to you. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength to stand strong in the things of God and not be tempted to do wrong! The enemy of sexual immorality must be dealt with, you can't leave it in your life without it compromising your faith!

What about anger, do you justify your actions, the way you respond to situations, how you treat your spouse, your friends, your family, your co-workers and-so-on?

Again, this is not an option because the more you allow anger to control your life the less the Holy Spirit will be controlling your life! It is as simple as that and yet, we can justify our behavior and we do.

No, that enemy; anger, must be dealt with. Don't leave it in your life because it will consume your life and, in the end, you will lose this battle!

What about lying, or stealing, or unforgiveness or cheating or greed or covetousness and the list can go on?

You know where you are at and if you don't deal with these things in your life, not in the power of your strength, but asking the Holy Spirit to help you to walk worthy of the high calling by which you have been called, you will lose!

The key is our faithfulness to the Lord, having a loyal heart to the Lord and a willing mind that will obey as the Lord leads you!

A good example of faithfulness until the end is seen in the life of the apostle Paul.

We are told in II Timothy 4:6-8, **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”**

Paul knew that his life was coming to an end, at least on this earth. He has been re-arrested by Caesar Nero and there is no getting out of jail this time.

And Paul starts out by likening the ending of his life as a drink offering to the Lord!
(Numbers 15:1-10)

The idea is this.

First of all, there was the burnt offering to the Lord.

Then there was the grain offering to the Lord.

And lastly, there was the drink offering to the Lord.

What is that about? It is as Hiebert said, “His whole life has been presented to God as a living sacrifice; now his death, comparable to the pouring out of the wine as the last act of the sacrificial ceremony, will complete the sacrifice.”

How do I know that Paul felt that his end was getting close? Because Paul speaks of his **“departure.”**

This word, in the Greek, is ANALUSIS, (an-al’-oo-sis) and it carries with it a few different ideas.

It speaks of the unloosing of a ship from its moors, as Paul is ready to set sail home to heaven.

It speaks of the unyoking of a weary team of animals after a hard day’s work, and Paul has finished the work that God has called him to do, he is going to enter that rest.

It is the striking of a tent, taking it down so you can move on and Paul was going to leave this earthly tent for a mansion!

You see, Paul knew he was going to die, and he is passing the mantle of ministry to Timothy, his son in the faith.

And Paul wants Timothy to look back at his life as an example to live by. How was his life an example?

He gives to us three examples.

First of all, we are told that Paul *fought the good fight*.

And I think the idea here is that of a boxer or wrestler who has fought Satan to spread the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! He wants Timothy to do the same!

Not only that, but he *finished the race*.

And here the idea is that of a long-distance runner who finished the race God set before him (his ministry) and was now looking forward to receiving his prize.

And lastly, Paul *kept the faith*.

We saw this morning how some have not kept the faith but fizzled and dropped out. Not Paul, he finished the race that was set before him. And the picture here is that of a faithful steward who had not only guarded but multiplied what his Master had entrusted into his care.

Let me share this with you and then I will close. This is something that you are going to have think about, you are going to have to evaluate your own walk, your life, if you are allowing these pockets of resistance or sin in your life that is compromising your faith and moving you farther away from God.

And please understand, God is not moving, you are!

Think about this and then, as need be, act upon it. We are told,

Have you made peace with a besetting sin in your life?

Have you given up on the battle?

Have you given your flesh a win by default - because you did not even show up?

Then repent of your sin of not fighting and return to the battlefield. Give yourself to God afresh. He is still there. He will still give the victory!

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In other words, fight the good fight! Finish the race! Keep the faith! Don't allow sin to control your life, let the Lord and destroy those areas that are holding you back, that are compromising your faith! ***CRUCIFY THE FLESH!***

Remember the title of our study this morning, ***They Did Not. . .!*** They did not drive out the enemy and they paid for it. The fight, the battle continues on, even though we may be tired, we may not want to fight, we must or that little compromise will grow, and it will eventually bring us down!

Make no mistake about it, the Lord is looking for servants that He can use in the work He has. He is looking for men and women who will take Him at His Word and step out in faith. God is seeking to show Himself strong to His servants who will obey His Word no matter what!

Are you that person?

