

**JOSHUA 18**  
**THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 18 as we continue our study through this amazing book on victorious Christian living!

Over the last few weeks we have been looking at some dangers that are out there that we need to pay attention, guard against, so we don't go down that path!

We looked at the danger of not obeying all that the Lord had told them to do and they allowed the enemy to remain in the land.

Yes, it was not a huge number, but it does not take a lot to influence a person and that is what we see here with the children of Israel. These pockets of resistance that they did not drive out ended up being a thorn in their side, an irritant to them and, in the end, it brought them into captivity.

You can't comix with the enemy and not expect to have them influence your life! Paul warned us of this very thing in II Corinthians 6:14-18, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’ I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”**

But the children of Israel did not listen to the Lord, they did not fully obey the Lord, the danger He warned them of, and it affected their lives and not in a good way.

May we learn the lesson and wholly follow the Lord!

Then we looked at the danger of complaining and we saw how easy it is to lose focus and complain about this and complain about that. We can think too highly of ourselves and lose our focus of the Lord and what He wants to do.

We are going to face difficult times in our lives, that is not the issue.

The issue is this. Are we going to complain about these things or are we going to serve the Lord with gladness? You see, the choice is ours and we need to rejoice in the Lord always and let people see the joy that God has brought into our lives!

This morning we will be looking at the third danger that we find here in Joshua and that is this – ***THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY!***

Let me share this with you and you will see that complacency is a dangerous place for a Christian to be. We are told,

One of the greatest dangers in the Christian life is complacency. Contentment in Christ is to be sought after and celebrated. Complacency in Christ, however, is very different.

Christian contentment means that no matter what happens, you are fully satisfied in Jesus. Christian complacency means that no matter what happens, you are fully self-satisfied with your current personal effort in pursuing Christ.

Webster's definition of the word "complacency" is: "a feeling of being satisfied with how things are and not wanting to try to make them better: self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies." This sound like a very dangerous place to be if you are a Christian.

The Bible makes clear that Christians are never standing still. They are either growing or backsliding. After listing some of the qualities every Christian should have, Peter then states, “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8). In other words, if you are a Christian who is complacent with your growth in God, you are in danger.

- <http://bit.ly/30EyFYb>

And as we have done with some of our previous studies, I will give you an overview of what is going on in Joshua chapter 18, this division of the land of Canaan between the tribes of Israel, and then we will focus on the verses we will be studying this morning.

I have broken these verses down as follows:

***SETTLING DOWN – JOSHUA 18:1***

***COMPLACENCY – JOSHUA 18:2***

***GO FORWARD – JOSHUA 18:3-7***

***OBEDIENCE – JOSHUA 18:8-9***

***THE BLESSING – JOSHUA 18:10***

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in Joshua chapter 18 and see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at this topic – ***THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY!*** And we are going to pick up in verse 11 of Joshua chapter 18, as we see the land given to the tribe of Benjamin spoken of.

**JOSHUA 18**

**VERSES 11-28**

In these verses we see the area of land that was given to the tribe of Benjamin.

They were a small tribe and occupied an area of land between Judah and Ephraim, south to north, and from the Jordan River westward, about ½ of the way to the Mediterranean Sea.

Yes, they were small in number, but they were fierce warriors!

Now, what I would like to focus on this morning, is the first 10 verses of Joshua chapter 18 because there are some valuable lessons for us to learn.

Let's pick up our study this morning in Joshua 18:1 as we look at our first point,

***SETTLING DOWN!***

**VERSE 1**

Shiloh was located in the area of Ephraim and it became the center of worship for the nation of Israel until the time of David, when he moved the Ark to Jerusalem.

Shiloh was located about 20 miles from Gilgal, which was their base camp.

But the main battles are now over and Shiloh was the center for their worship of God.

And as you read this it all sounds great. They are in the land of Canaan. They have subdued the enemy. Things are going well.

But, as we will see, that is not exactly true.

I do realize that many see this idea of settling down as a good thing. Time to kick back, things are going well, no need to do anything.

And let me tell you, that is a dangerous place to be.

Let me give you this example, marriage.

We look at settling down in marriage as good, but I don't see it that way.

Hang on, I am not saying marriage is wrong, but settling down, to me, is just doing the same thing day in and day out. There is no moving forward in the marriage.

Different day, yes! But same as yesterday!

No, you have to move forward, you have to do things that will help your marriage to grow and not become stagnant! You should not be in the same place you were when you got married, you should be growing and as you do your relationship grows deeper and stronger!

And, as important that is in our marriages, in our jobs, in our relationships, it is also important in our walk with the Lord. We need to keep moving forward or we will find ourselves where some of the children of Israel were at. We need to grow in the Lord, our relationship with Him should be far deeper and richer than it was a year ago, five years ago and so on!

But if you don't go forward, you will go backward!

Let's read on and you will see what I mean.

## VERSE 2

Can you image that seven of these tribes had not gone out to take the land, to take possession of what God had given them.

They were willing to remain nomads as they were in the wilderness.

What happened here? Why did they become stagnant and not take the land that God had given to them?

I think what we see here is ***THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY!***

Let me give you this example and then we will look at some reasons for growing comfortable or becoming complacent in our walk with the Lord.

Here is someone who has been going to church for a number of years. Same church doing that same thing or maybe not even doing anything now. It almost becomes a routine and that is never a good thing.

Walking the same piece of land over and over again. And do you know what you get when you do that? A rut or a groove and it gets deeper and deeper and if you continue down that path, it is so deep it might as well be a grave because you are not getting out of it!

There is that danger. Nothing new. Same old thing. And it can be dangerous. We need to keep moving forward because, I will tell you this, if you become stagnant in your walk with the Lord, you will end up going backwards. It is just the way it works. And the only solution to that is keep moving forward and we will look at that next.

But first I want to deal with some of the reasons we become complacent, some of the reasons we are not moving forward.

This first is that we are just ***COMFORTABLE!***

Think about the children of Israel. They were in the land. They had defeated the major enemies that were in the land of Canaan. Yes, there were still some pockets of resistance, but for the most part, the land was theirs. They were comfortable, even though they did not take possession of all that God had for them, these seven tribes that is. And because of that, they became stagnant, they did not move forward!

And we can apply this to many areas of our lives. Think about it. Are you comfortable at work, so much so that you just do your job and that is all you do?

Are you comfortable in your marriage to the point where you just don't do anything new?  
Yes, the days go by but same thing day in and day out!

We can even see this in sports where athletes have a great season and then they rest on their past achievements, they don't press on, and in the end, the next season is not as good as the previous because they were comfortable where they were at!

And what about our relationship with the Lord? Are we just comfortable with the Lord and because of that, we are just stagnant in our walk with Him? Be careful!

There was a concert pianist who said this, "If I stop practicing the piano, the first day there won't be any difference in my playing; the second day there will be a slight difference; and by the third day it will become noticeably different."

The same is true with our walk with the Lord. Are we spending time with Him? Are we open to what He is showing us? Are we willing to take those steps of faith and do all that He has told us?

With our complacency, sometimes it is just ***SELF-SATISFACTION!***

We are satisfied where we are at and there is no need to press on, to move forward.

This is dangerous, very dangerous to our spiritual health. We are told,

One of the greatest threats to our growth as Christians is the notion that we have arrived at a pretty good place and no longer need to develop our Christian walk and become more like Jesus.

If the Apostle Paul did not feel like he had reached the peak but still needed to improve, there are certainly areas where we still need work as well.

People who are greatly accomplished in any field - athletes, musicians or speakers - often make what they do look simple, yet it is anything but.

For example, professional athletes do not stop practicing because they have reached the highest level of their sport. Instead they practice even more, because the reality of any human endeavor is that if we are not getting better at what we are doing, we are getting worse.

The same is true in our spiritual growth. Everything that we have and everything that we accomplish is a gift from God, and nothing for us to brag about.

The presence of self-satisfaction with our spiritual life is a flashing red danger light. For it is when we are most confident and complacent that we are in the greatest danger of falling.

- <http://bit.ly/30zIoPA>

How true that is. We need to be careful here once again and not become comfortable or self-satisfied where we are at, but we must press on as Paul reminds us in Philippians 3:12-14, **“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”**

Pressing on speaks of growing, moving forward, and that is exactly what we need to do in our Christian lives!

We also see that complacency can come from ***DISCOURAGEMENT!***

Think about it for a minute. The work is overwhelming! I don't know how we are going to do it! I am never going to get out of this mess!

And discouragement sets in and because of that, we just give up and we become stagnant in what we are to do.



I experienced this in my own life several weeks ago. I was running in a race at night on a cross-country ski trail and it was fun, but it was hard. Up and down, up and down the hills. The path was rocky, it had tree roots going through it, you had to pay attention.

And as I looked at my watch to see how I was doing; it was not good.

And when I crossed the finish line I was discouraged. My time was 4 minutes slower than it should have been.

Because of that, I cooled down and went back to the car and told Julie that we should just go back to the hotel, I did so bad that there is no way that I placed in my age group. I was very discouraged!

And the Lord knows what we need, and He knows what He wants to show us and thus, I get this e-mail from the race that night, not long after we got back to the hotel, and it said that I came in second place! I guess I should not have gone to the hotel!

But that is exactly what discouragement does, it causes us to drop out, to stop instead of pressing on!

And it can get worse. I truly believe that as we focus on this discouragement, it will lead to ***DEPRESSION!***

And depression causes us to even drop out more. We tend to isolate ourselves from everyone. We tend to stay in our homes or away from anyone and everyone.

Let me say this. That is exactly where the Devil wants you because you are alone, and he can get at you. You don't have the fellowship of the brethren and it is a dangerous place to be!

And the cure is this. Get back into fellowship with the brethren! Get back into the Word of God! Get back into ministering to others! Put on praise and worship music!

Why is that so important?

Because as you are helping others you are not focused on yourself. Let's face it, if we spent all of our days focused on all the things that have happened in our lives, are happening in our lives and might happen in our lives, we all would be depressed. But we are not called to do that.

We are called to serve, and I think service helps us focus on the Lord and on others and as we do the Lord takes care of us!

Also, listening to praise and worship music takes your focus off yourself and places it back on the Lord. In a sense, you are getting refocused!

We also see that complacency can be a result of *DISINTEREST!*

Let me say this. Losing interest in the things of God is dangerous. Let me share what one person wrote and you can just see his struggles. He wrote,

I've been a Christian all my life. I've done voluntary missionary work, served in my church and prayed most my life.

The last couple years I've been slowly questioning everything and finding answers that helped, but spiritually I feel lost. I can't even be bothered to read the bible, I have zero interest now. I can't be bothered to pray, as I feel like it does nothing. If someone asks me about miracles and prayer, I just feel like it's a placebo effect.

Attending Church is getting boring too. I've been depressed and had a lot of anxiety the past few years, and I'm over that too. Lifestyle choices such as exercise and clean eating never really helped all my doubt and anxiety either.

I just can't be bothered. Many people have told me to "read the bible more", "pray more", "you need more faith" yadayadayada . . . I've tried all that, I've screamed to God, I've looked for answers. Now I'm here just so tired of it, and everything spiritual I doubt and attribute it to something like the complexity of the human mind.

I really wish I was interested and felt the presence of God like I use to think I could, or . . . maybe that was my emotions all a long?

I'm tired, and I can't be bothered anymore. I still feel that I believe in Christ, but I can't be bothered to continue with acting on my faith to grow it. Either way, my life seems like it doesn't improve with, or without it.

I know the Christian faith isn't all rainbows and happiness, I understand there's doubts and all that.

But me, I'm over it and I don't know where to go now. As I said before, I believe Christ, but what's the point if I don't have the passion or even care to push and grow my faith.

I still have a heart for helping the underprivileged, and people will say "Look, God put that on your heart". But even non-believers have a passion for that too.

Anyways that's all. Just getting this off my chest and I don't even know what answers and advice I'm looking for now. I feel like I've heard it all.

- <http://bit.ly/2Zp8it2>

First of all, my heart goes out to the person and some of the replies to him, dangerous. One person wrote that he should seek out other religions! Are you kidding me? In other words, move away from the true and living God and go after the false gods, go after demons! That is not the solution and it will never be the solution!

First of all, you can't go by feelings or emotions because they can be wrong!

And the answer, whether he agrees with it or not, is found in Revelation chapter 2 in the letter that Jesus wrote to the church in Ephesus. They left their first love and Jesus has the answer to this problem.

Listen carefully to what He said to them. He wrote to this church that was busy serving the Lord, but again, left their first love, "**Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place - unless you repent.**" Revelation 2:4-5.

As much as they were serving the Lord their heart was not in it and Jesus rebukes them for it and then He tells them what they must do!

And the solution is threefold. They are to: **REMEMBER**, **REPENT**, and **REPEAT!**

First of all, they were to **REMEMBER** how things use to be. Remember when you first got saved, that love you had for the Lord and how you just wanted to tell everyone about Him. How you went to every Bible study you could because you loved to learn about the Lord, and you desired to draw close to Him.

What happened to those fires that once burned bright in your heart?

Now it is easier to stay at home than to go to Bible study. You can find all kinds of excuses not to go to study. God wants you to remember how it once was with Him and then . . .

He tells them that they need to **REPENT** before God. In other words, stop where you are at, and then do 180 degree turn back to God. It is a radical turn back to the Lord. Have the driving force in your life be the love of Christ, and then . . .

He tells them that they need to **REPEAT** your first works.

What does that mean?

It means that they were to fall in love with Jesus all over again.

Remember Jacob as he was fleeing from his brother Esau and he came to a place called Bethel or house of God.

There he had a dream and saw a ladder from heaven reaching down and angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

Here Jacob has an encounter with God, but he then leaves this place.

And some 30 years pass by and many difficult times for Jacob, and in Genesis chapter 35 we see God call Jacob back to Bethel. Back to the house of God, the place of fellowship, of love with God.

We need to return to the house of God and fall in love with Jesus again. Not a works relationship with Jesus, but a love relationship!

But if you refuse to do those things, if you refuse to listen to what the Lord is saying, He gives them and us this **WARNING**, and it is simple.

If you don't **remember**, **repent** and **repeat**, your light will go out!

You see, we are to be light bearers of Christ, but if we remove Him from our lives, the light of Christ in us will go out. Our witness of Christ will be gone.

People may still gather in these churches, but the lights have been turned off! You see, the purpose of the church, and of us as individuals is to hold the light of Jesus for the world to see!

And if you don't believe this, then just look at what happened to the Ephesian church, a church that started out so well?

What happened to them is just what the Lord said would happen if they did not return to their first love.

Ephesus today is in ruins, their light has gone out. Its harbor is gone, the sea is some 6 miles away and is unapproachable by ship. The Gulf of Ephesus and the harbor is nothing more than a marsh dense with reeds.

When the Lord says, “**or else**” He means it! Their witness to the world is gone and so is their city. The Desirable One is not seen in them anymore, their lights have gone out.

And what is left for us to see is a vivid reminder that God means what He says and says what He means.

If you are feeling this disinterest in the things of God, like this person is feeling in that letter we read, then you need to listen to Jesus and not to anyone else! Fall in love with Him once again.

And here’s the thing. Do you really think if you are seeking the Lord, that He will not reveal Himself to you? Of course He will. Now you may not always feel close to Him. You may not always feel His presence, but He is always with you and will never leave you nor forsake you. Not because I have said that, but because His Word tells us this very thing! Trust in the Lord always and don’t let complacency cause you to be disinterested in the things of God!

And I guess there is one more we should look at and that is ***LAZINESS!***

And the Bible has a lot to say against this one, laziness. Let me share this with you. We are told,

Newton’s first law of motion states that an object in motion tends to remain in motion, and an object at rest tends to remain at rest. This law applies to people. While some are naturally driven to complete projects, others are apathetic, requiring motivation to overcome inertia.

Laziness, a lifestyle for some, is a temptation for all. But the Bible is clear that, because the Lord ordained work for man, laziness is sin. “Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise” (Proverbs 6:6).

The Bible has a great deal to say about laziness. Proverbs is especially filled with wisdom concerning laziness and warnings to the lazy person. Proverbs tells us that a lazy person hates work: “The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work” (21:25); he loves sleep: “As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed” (26:14); he gives excuses: “The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets’” (26:13); he wastes time and energy: “He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great waster” (18:9 KJV); he believes he is wise, but is a fool: “The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly” (26:16).

Proverbs also tells us the end in store for the lazy: A lazy person becomes a servant (or debtor): “Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor” (12:24); his future is bleak: “A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing” (20:4); he may come to poverty: “The soul of the lazy man desires and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich” (13:4 KJV).

There is no room for laziness in the life of a Christian. A new believer is truthfully taught that “. . . it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

But a believer can become idle if he erroneously believes God expects no fruit from a transformed life. “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). Christians are not saved by works, but they do show their faith by their works (James 2:18, 26). Slothfulness violates God's purpose - good works. The Lord, however, empowers Christians to overcome the flesh's propensity to laziness by giving us a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In our new nature, we are motivated to diligence and productiveness out of a love for our Savior who redeemed us. Our old propensity toward laziness - and all other sin - has been replaced by a desire to live godly lives: “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (Ephesians 4:28). We are convicted of our need to provide for our families through our labors: “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8); and for others in the family of God: “You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:34-35).



As Christians, we know that our labors will be rewarded by our Lord if we persevere in diligence: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:9-10); “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23-24); “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them” (Hebrews 6:10).

Christians should labor in God’s strength to evangelize and disciple. The apostle Paul is our example: “We proclaim him [Christ], admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me” (Colossians 1:28-29). Even in heaven, Christians’ service to God will continue, although no longer encumbered by the curse (Revelation 22:3). Free from sickness, sorrow, and sin - even laziness - the saints will glorify the Lord forever. “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

- <http://bit.ly/2Zzj5Qk>

And here’s the thing. The cure for laziness is obedience to the Lord! That does not mean we don’t get tired in the work, we do. We have these physical bodies that get tired. The thing is, as we are serving the Lord, we never get tired of the work we are doing for Him!

These are just some of the things that complacency can cause in our lives and stop us from all that the Lord has for us. The cure is really what we are going to look at next, **GO FORWARD!**

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean when I say that sometimes the Lord needs to give us a little push.

We are told,

Danny Cox, a former jet pilot turned business leader, tells his readers in *Seize the Day* that when jet fighters were first invented, they “flew much faster than their propeller predecessors.

So pilot ejection became a more sophisticated process. Theoretically of course, all a pilot needed to do was push a button, clear the plane, then roll forward out of the seat so the parachute would open.”

But there was a problem that popped up during testing. Some pilots, instead of letting go, would keep a grip on the seat. The parachute would remain trapped between the seat and the pilot’s back.

The engineers went back to the drawing board and came up with a solution. Cox writes: The new design called for a two-inch webbed strap. One end attached to the front edge of the seat, under the pilot. The other end attached to an electronic take-up reel behind the headrest.

Two seconds after ejection, the electronic take-up reel would immediately take up the slack, and force the pilot forward out of his seat, thus freeing the parachute.

Bottom line? Jet fighter pilots needed that device to launch them out of their chairs. Question is, what will it take to launch us out of ours?

That is a great question and listen to what we are told as we read on here in Joshua chapter 18!

VERSES 3-7

We see here that Joshua rebukes them and he sends out 21 men, 3 men each from the remaining tribes, to go and survey the land, and then that land would be divided into 7 parts.

Our Joshua, our Jesus does the same with us when we become complacent and we are not moving forward. He does not do this to hurt us or harm us but to get us moving!

And again, some of you may not see this as important, but it is!

If these tribes did not go and possess the land that God had given to them, then these pockets of resistance, the enemy, would remain in the land. And, as we have seen in previous studies, they will become a thorn in their side, an irritant to them and in the end, it will bring them down!

The same is true in our own lives. If we are not moving forward, if we are not taking back the land that God has given to us, we are leaving these pockets of resistance in our lives and the enemy will use this to bring us down!

We must go forward and see the salvation that the Lord will bring to the situations we are facing!

Remember when the children of Israel were cornered by the Egyptians, with the Red Sea in front of them, and they were complaining to Moses that he brought them out here to die.

Listen to what we are told in Exodus 14:15, **“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.’”**

What was the command? Stop crying and start moving! But the Red Sea was in front of them? The Lord knew that and all they had to do was walk by faith and see the salvation that the Lord was going to bring to that situation! And He did!

The Lord is calling us to ***GO FORWARD!***

And the response that we see with the children of Israel is what we must do!

### ***OBEDIENCE!***

Let's read on and see how this plays out!

### VERSES 8-9

What I like about this is that Joshua told them what they needed to do and instead of complaining, they went forward, they were obedient to Joshua!

What about us? When the Lord calls us to step out in faith, to move forward, are we obeying Him or are we sitting back to see what is going to happen?

If you sit back, I will tell you this, nothing good will happen and many times, if you don't go forward, you will end up going backward and that is not a good thing!

Listen to what Paul wrote in Romans 16:17-20, **“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”**

Paul is speaking of these false teachings that were coming into the church and how they needed to stand against them.

He wants them to learn what is good, what is truth, the Word of God and you won't be deceived!

The word "**simple**" or "**innocent**" in verse 19 is the Greek word AKERAIOS (ak-er'-ah-yos) and it speaks of being unmixed, simple, pure.

In other words, don't become polluted with the false doctrine that is out there but hold onto that which is good, God's Word! Don't mix truth with error, not even a little because it doesn't make it more truthful, but it weakens the truth!

Now here's the thing. As we stand up for God with His truth, Satan and his followers are crushed.

Yes, ultimately God will crush Satan completely as we see the fulfillment of Genesis 3:14-15, "**So the LORD God said to the serpent: 'Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.'**" come to pass in Revelation 20:10, "**The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**"

And here's the thing. Don't give Satan a foothold with his false doctrine, because it will destroy you!

Be obedient to the Lord and His Word and here's the thing. As you stand up for the things of God, people will notice. Believers will be encouraged to do the same and unbelievers will either be drawn to the Lord or they will get mad at you. But don't let that stop you from being obedient to what the Lord is telling you!

Let me share this with you and you will see how obedience is the most important thing, our obedience to our Joshua, to Jesus!

We are told,

When J. Wilbur Chapman was in London, he had an opportunity to meet General Booth, who at that time was past 80 years of age. Dr. Chapman listened reverently as the old general spoke of the trials and the conflicts and the victories he had experienced.

The American evangelist then asked the general if he would disclose his secret for success. "He hesitated a second," Dr. Chapman said, "and I saw the tears come into his eyes and steal down his cheeks," and then he said, "I will tell you the secret. God has had all there was of me. There have been men with greater brains than I, men with greater opportunities; but from the day I got the poor of London on my heart, and a vision of what Jesus Christ could do with the poor of London, I made up my mind that He would have all of William Booth there was. And if there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life."

Dr. Chapman said he went away from that meeting with General Booth knowing "that the greatness of a man's power is the measure of his surrender."

- A Treasury of Bible Illustrations

How true that is, and it really brings us to our last point, ***THE BLESSING!*** You see, the blessing is in response to obedience.

#### VERSE 10

Here we see that out of their obedience, the land is divided, they get their inheritance! Now let me be clear on this. Because they were obedient didn't make Joshua feel that he owed this to them. Not at all. It was because they were obedient that this is the result.

Think of it like this. The sign on the road says 35 mph and you have an option. You can go 35 mph, or you can go faster if you want.

If you go faster than the speed limit you will probably get a ticket. It is just the consequences for your actions!

But, if you go the speed limit, you will not get a ticket. It is not that the police officer is there to bless you, it is just the results of being obedient to what the speed limit sign says!

The same is true for us as Christians. It is not that God owes us blessings when we are obedient to Him, but because we are obedient to Him there is the blessing.

On the other end of the spectrum, by not being obedient to Him, there is a curse that will come our way or a consequence, and not a good one!

In regard to obedience we are told,

The Bible has much to say about obedience. In fact, obedience is an essential part of the Christian faith. Jesus Himself was “obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8). For Christians, the act of taking up our cross and following Christ (Matthew 16:24) means obedience. The Bible says that we show our love for Jesus by obeying Him in all things: “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). A Christian who is not obeying Christ’s commands can rightly be asked, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Obedience is defined as “dutiful or submissive compliance to the commands of one in authority.” Using this definition, we see the elements of biblical obedience. “Dutiful” means it is our obligation to obey God, just as Jesus fulfilled His duty to the Father by dying on the cross for our sin. “Submissive” indicates that we yield our wills to God’s. “Commands” speaks of the Scriptures in which God has clearly delineated His instructions. The “one in authority” is God Himself, whose authority is total and unequivocal. For the Christian, obedience means complying with everything God has commanded. It is our duty to do so.

Having said that, it is important to remember that our obedience to God is not solely a matter of duty. We obey Him because we love Him (John 14:23). Also, we understand that the spirit of obedience is as important as the act of obedience. We serve the Lord in humility, singleness of heart, and love.



Also, we must beware of using a veneer of obedience to mask a sinful heart. Living the Christian life is not all about rules. The Pharisees in Jesus' time relentlessly pursued acts of obedience to the Law, but they became self-righteous, believing they deserved heaven because of what they had done. They considered themselves worthy before God, who owed them a reward; however, the Bible tells us that, without Christ, even our best, most righteous works are as "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). The Pharisees' external obedience still lacked something, and Jesus exposed their heart attitude. Their hypocrisy in obeying the "letter of the law" while violating its spirit characterized their lives, and Jesus rebuked them sharply: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outside, but inside they are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so you also appear righteous to men outwardly, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:27-28). The Pharisees were obedient in some respects, but they "neglected the weightier matters of the law" (Matthew 23:23, ESV).

Today, we are not called to obey the Law of Moses. That has been fulfilled in Christ (Matthew 5:17). We are to obey the "law of Christ," which is a law of love (Galatians 6:2; John 13:34). Jesus stated the greatest commands of all: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:36-40).

If we love God, we will obey Him. We won't be perfect in our obedience, but our desire is to submit to the Lord and display good works. When we love God and obey Him, we naturally have love for one another. Obedience to God's commands will make us light and salt in a dark and tasteless world (Matthew 5:13-16).

- <http://bit.ly/2Zvui0l>

Let me sum it up like this. If we begin to settle down, rest, sit out we will become complacent in our walk with the Lord! And in that is much danger. We must not sit back, not at all!

We are to go forward, move ahead, because, if we don't, we will end up not just becoming stagnant in our walk with the Lord, but we will end up going backwards, backsliding!

Thus, may we be obedient to what the Lord is telling us to do and as we listen, as we obey Him, there are those built in blessings that God has for us.

Let me close this morning with this. We are told,

The dictionary's definition of complacent is "to be contented to a fault; self-satisfied and unconcerned, especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies."

Sadly this describes far too many in the church today. They have grown so comfortable with their spiritual standing that they have become complacent, to the point where they are living out a Christless Christianity.

Complacency is never good; contentment is another thing altogether. The Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to encourage us:

“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me (Philippians 4:11-13).”

When the apostle Paul said he had learned to “be content,” we misunderstand if we believe he was equating content with satisfied. Sure, we all need to learn to be content with what we have, but that is to be in the context of pursuing what God has set before us. The rhythm of redemption is not to rest on our laurels and succumb to the cruel current of complacency. We are to continue pressing on until our race is over.

“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12-14).”

In Paul’s contentment, he continued straining forward and pressing on in the direction God was calling him to go. Paul knew that being “satisfied” would only lead to complacency and watering down his impact in expanding the cause of Christ.

Do you think Paul was ever satisfied with the level of ministry he was accomplishing? If he was, he probably would have rested while behind prison walls. Honestly, if it had been you, do you think you might have sulked and pouted at this unpleasant turn of events? “Lord,” we might whine, “I did all of that great ministry for You, and this is what I get?!” Yet we know that most of what Paul contributed to the New Testament was written while he was in chains. He never stopped pressing on toward the goal.

Paul never grew complacent about his relationship with Jesus. We know that his heart continually ached to be in the presence of his Lord, yet he knew he still had work to do, because God had not called him home yet. Paul was not subject to the cruel current of complacency.

What about you? There are so many areas in life where we can grow complacent. . . .

The call to every Christian is to continually press on and pursue God's perfect plan for our lives.

And those who are His by faith know we never reach our final destination until we get to the other side.

The cruel current of complacency is not to be the mark of the committed Christian.

It has been wisely said, "It is far better to burn out than to rust out!"

Now, I am not encouraging burn out; if you've been around the church for any length of time, you've seen that happen to great men and women of God who did not find balance in life.

Remember that a life without balance leads to an unbalanced life.

Let me close by encouraging every member of the church to be active in playing their part, straining forward until the moment we are no longer needed; and that will be the moment that God calls us home.

This grace is for your race. ***NEVER FORGET THAT. . . AMEN!***

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