

**JUDGES 1:21-36**  
**PREPARING FOR FAILURE!**  
**PART 2**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 1 as we continue our study through this tragic book of the Bible.

As we have seen in our study of the book of Joshua, it was a book of victory for the children of Israel as they obeyed the Lord.

The book of Judges is an exact opposite to the book of Joshua. The book of Judges is a book of defeat, a book of not obeying the Lord and as they failed to obey, there were consequences to their actions, and, as you will see, it is not good. It really never is!

In our study last time we looked at part 1 of this study on ***PREPARING FOR FAILURE!***

In that study we saw how Judah was called by the Lord to go to battle against the Canaanites and instead of completely obeying the Lord, they asked Simeon to help them.

Now it does not sound like such a big deal, but when you add to or take away from what God has called you to do, it is a huge deal!

This one compromise here led to an even bigger compromise as we are told in Judges 1:19, **“So the LORD was with Judah. And they drove out the inhabitants of the mountains, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron.”**

And here we see that they did not completely wipe out the enemy. Why did they not completely wipe out the enemy in the land?

It is simple, from a human perspective, “**... because they had chariots of iron.**” Judges 1:19.

Now we read that, and we think that their actions were foolish, so what, they had chariots of iron. It was a big deal. They were like our modern-day tanks back in those days. It gave you an advantage in battle.

So as you understand the military strength of the enemy, you can understand why Judah did not completely drive out the enemy, from a human standpoint.

But what did God tell Judah? The Lord said to Judah, “**... ‘Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.’**” Judges 1:2.

God did not say that they might get the victory but that the land was theirs, all they needed to do was walk by faith and take what God had already given them!

Now here’s the thing. Yes, Judah had a successful military campaign. But, and here is the problem, it was incomplete.

They did not drive out the enemy, and it wasn’t because of the chariots, it was because of their lack of faith.

I know, easy for me to say, I am not facing these iron chariots. And that is true. But were they going to do battle in the power of their might or in the power of God? Of course the Lord was fighting for them!

You see, it didn’t matter what the latest military equipment the enemy had, even chariots, because God had already told them that the enemy was defeated, but they did not walk by faith, but by sight.

Thus, their mind told them it was impossible to defeat the enemy that had chariots, and that was reflected in their actions.

Remember what the Psalmist said in Psalm 20:7, **“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”**

What a great lesson for us, what are we trusting in for our victories in life? May it be the Lord!

And it is easy to look at what is before us, the situations we are in and become overwhelmed, like Judah did. And then, in the end, they just gave up, they did not finish the work because they did not believe that God would give them this land.

I know that seems harsh, but that is the reality and it is true in our own lives. Can we trust in Him no matter how big the enemy is, how overwhelming the situation may be, how hopeless it may seem? We need to because God wants us to trust in Him and know what we can do through Him!

We see this played out in Psalm 33:16-17 as we are told, **“No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for safety; neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.”**

And the Psalmist goes on to say where our hope should rest, **“Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in his mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, just as we hope in You.”** Psalm 33:18-22.

The Lord is our help, but we need to look to Him and not only look to Him but then walk by faith and see the salvation that He would bring to the situations that we are in.

As we continue on in this chapter, we will continue to see the children of Israel not obey the Lord completely, and this compromise will be a thorn in their side, it will eventually lead to their captivity!

Let me share this with you and then we will dig into the rest of this chapter this morning.

It is an overview of what is going on in the book of Judges, and, as you will see, it is a stark contrast from what we read in the book of Joshua.

We are told,

Few books of the Bible can compare to Judges for color and intrigue. You wince as you read how Ehud the judge goes to visit the king in his summer palace and slides his dagger between the king's fifth and sixth ribs so that the flesh closes around it and the knife cannot be withdrawn. You cringe when Jael drives the tent stake through the skull of Sisera and pins him to the ground. You bite your fingernails alongside Gideon as God introduces deep military cutbacks, reducing Israel's army from thirty-two thousand to three hundred – then sends this vastly outnumbered miniature army into battle! . . .

Perhaps you glory with Samson as he wreaks havoc among the Philistines, but wonder at his folly in allowing the Philistine temptress to worm from him the secret of his strength. Doubtless you turn with revulsion from the story of the Benjaminite perversion that marks perhaps the blackest chapter in Israel's history.

What kind of books do you like to read? What films and TV shows are your favorites? Fans of historical romance, military history, soap operas, conspiracy theories, spy novels, swashbuckling adventure, or political intrigue will find it ***all here in the book of Judges!*** This is a fascinating, spellbinding book to read. But from a broader and deeper perspective, Judges is essentially the story of a deteriorating nation – and it serves as a sober warning against deterioration and decline in our own Christian lives. . . .

Whereas Joshua is a book of victory, Judges is a book of defeat and failure. It is the first in a series of books that sets before us the warnings and danger signals regarding the perils that lie in the path of a believer. The pattern of defeat described in the book of Judges is presented to us over and over again. The key principle that always spelled defeat in the lives of the people of Israel is given to us in the very last verse of the book:

***In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit (21:25).***

These people were not trying to do wrong. They were not rebellious people, bent on frustrating God's will for their lives. At this stage of Israel's history these people were determined to do right – ***but they were trying to do what was right in their own eyes.*** They succumbed to the folly of consecrated blundering. They were will-intentioned blunderers, intending to do right but ending up all wrong.

I have seen this pattern again and again in my counseling experience. Time after time I have heard people say, "I don't know what went wrong. I tried to do right. I did what I thought was best. But everything seemed to go wrong."

This was the problem with Israel in the book of Judges. As the text says, there was no objective authority in their lives. The Lord Jehovah was supposedly their King, but they did not take Him seriously. And when they did not take Him seriously, they ended up taking themselves too seriously. So they did what they thought was right, guided by their own intellects and reasoning – ultimately proving that their ways were not God’s ways.

- Ray Stedman, *Adventuring Through Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, pp. 25-27

I think that is a powerful lesson that will come forth from the verses we will be looking at this morning. God has told us what He desires in our lives, and we can listen, we can do most of what He is telling us to do, but we don’t completely follow Him!

We think our ways are okay, it is just a little compromise, I did most of what God wanted and, in the end, when things fall apart, when we go into captivity you might say, we wonder **WHY?**

The reason is simple, we did not obey the Lord, we thought that our way was okay, and in the end, our ways need to be God’s ways, we need to follow Him fully and completely!

As I have said, this is part 2 of our study in **PREPARING FOR FAILURE!** Now please understand that this is not a study on how to fail but how to have victory as we look at what the children of Israel did that got them in trouble. We can learn from their mistakes as the Holy Spirit is using their example to teach us the lessons we need to learn!

So with that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in Judges chapter 1, beginning in verse 21 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at the topic of -

**PREPARING FOR FAILURE!**

**JUDGES 1****VERSE 21**

Let me show you what is going on here and then I will make the application to our own lives.

Remember what we read back in Judges 1:2, **“And the Lord said, ‘Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.’”**

And for Judah, they did obey the Lord and they took the land. In fact, in Judges 1:8 we see the results of what the Lord said to Judah, **“Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.”**

The Lord gave it to them!

In fact, the battle was already won, all they had to do was just enter in and it would be theirs.

But they did not do that.

And once again we see all that God had given them and then that nasty three letter word, ***“But!”*** here in Joshua 1:21.

And because of that “but”, Jerusalem was not theirs yet!

And folks, think about this. ***“But”*** is just an excuse for compromise, for sin, for failure on our part of not walking.

Let’s get rid of it or say, ***“BUT GOD!”*** He can come through and He does for us!

And here is the problem for us many times. We read these stories of the children of Israel, their failures and we wonder, ***“What in the world were they thinking of here? God told them the land was theirs and all they had to do was walk by faith and take it. How could they be so foolish?”***

And that is very true. They were foolish. They lacked the faith to walk and because of that, compromise filled their lives, and, in the end, it would be trouble for them.

But what about us? You see, I think what we see in these stories, as we read them, is a mirror into our own lives.

God is showing us our heart and what we need to do to change, what we need to do so that we can walk by faith and trust in His promises to us!

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

When Rear Admiral Du Pont explained to his superior officer, Farragut, why he had failed to take his ships into Charleston Harbor, Farragut heard him through to the end and then said, “Admiral, there is one explanation which you haven’t given.”

“What is that?” asked Du Pont.

“This: you didn’t believe that you could do it.”

That lack of confidence has been the secret of failures not only in the field of war but also in this greater warfare of the soul.

- A Treasury of Bible Illustrations

How true that is. We don’t believe we can do it and thus, we don’t do what God asks us to do!

What is the problem?



The problem is that God never said that we were going to do it. He said that He would do it through us and all we need to do is walk by faith and see the salvation that He would bring to the situations, the battles we face each and every day!

Let me give you an example of this from the Scriptures and you will see what I mean.

In Matthew chapter 17 we see the Transfiguration of Jesus in all of His glory before Peter, James and John, the other nine apostles stayed down from this Mountain.

And I believe that the place they went, this mountain is Mount Hermon, which is some 12 miles northeast of Caesarea Philippi and has an elevation of 9,200 feet.

And it is here that we are told that Jesus, “**. . . was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.**” Matthew 17:2.

And we know the story, Peter wants to stay there on the mountain top, but Jesus takes them down. Why? Because, as we will see, there are many people down below that need help and it is refreshing on the mountain top, but the work is in the valley below!

So now they come down from the mountain and when the people saw Jesus, they ran to Him and specifically a man whose son was demon possessed and these demons kept trying to kill him. That is not to say that every person who is suicidal is demon possessed or every epileptic is demon possessed, but that is what is going on here as we will see in verse 18.

But let's start reading in Matthew 17 starting in verse 14 and let's see what happens here because it applies to what we are looking at here in the book of Judges, as you will see. We are told, **“And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, ‘Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.’ Then Jesus answered and said, ‘O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.’ And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ So Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”** Matthew 17:14-21.

First of all, Luke tells us this was this man's only son and he brought him to the 9 disciples who didn't go up on the mountain, and they couldn't do anything about it. And now this father falls down before Jesus asking for help for his son.

Why couldn't they heal this man's son?

Maybe the violent actions this demon was manifesting in this man caused the disciples to take their eyes off of Jesus and focus it upon this hopeless situation. And that destroyed their faith and it will destroy yours if you let it.

Maybe they were jealous of Peter, James and John who got to go with Jesus, and they had to remain in the valley below.

Whatever the case, jealousy, fear, it caused them to take their eyes off of Jesus and the situation became overwhelming to them.

Make no mistake about it, these 9 guys seem to be paralyzed in fear, which is the opposite of faith.

And we see that Jesus rebukes them for their lack of faith, trying to get them to not let the situation get their eyes off of God, the only one who could help.

And now Jesus steps in and heals this man's son.

And if you doubt that it was a lack of faith on their part, when you look at Matthew 17:19, as these guys are trying to figure out why they couldn't deliver this young man from this demon possession, Jesus tells them in Matthew 17:20, "... 'Because of your unbelief [lack of faith] ...'"

And that is what we see here in Judges. They did not drive out the enemy and the reason was simple, it was a lack of faith on their part.

I know, you are thinking, "***It does not say that here in Judges 1:21! So where do you get that from?***"

Simple, God gave them the land, all they needed to do was trust in what the Lord told them and walk by faith and they did not do that because they lacked the faith to trust God!

Again, what is God admonishing us to do in our lives that we are afraid to do, afraid to take those steps of faith and see the victory that God has in store for us as we do?

And as we look at the several times that this occurs in this chapter, this lack of faith on the part of the children of Israel, I am going to link it to their ***DISOBEDIENC TO THE WORD OF GOD!***

And as I conclude this morning, we will focus on that because there are several points I would like to focus on because it is all related to their failure and the reason being, their

***DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD!***

VERSES 22-29

I like this because they knew that God gave them this land, but they are seeking the best way to get into the city to take it.

You see, these men were not looking for the main entrance to the city. Of course that would be easy to find. And, the gates could be locked down so no one could get into the city.

Then what were they looking for.

Here's the thing. Many of these cities would have a tunnel that would take you out of the city so you could get to a fresh water supply if they were under attack from an enemy.

Hezekiah had something similar, he built a tunnel that was dug through 1,700 feet of solid rock, to bring in a fresh water supply into the city, which is still in existence today.

So these spies were shown how to get into the city of Bethel, and they destroyed the city.

And we need to understand that it was not their military strategy that brought them this victory, it was the Lord and it is always the Lord folk's!

He gets the glory and we are just the instruments that He uses to work through!

And that is what we see here as the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh take the city of Bethel!

But listen to what they did to the man who showed them how to get into the city and then, what he did. We are told in Judges 1:26, "**And the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a city, and called its name Luz, which is its name to this day.**"

They let this man who helped them go and he leaves and builds a city called Luz! Again, not completely following the Lord and that is never a good thing.

Not only that, but we see that Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean and its villages and many more areas of land.

And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who were in Gezer.

And as they were left in the land they grew and eventually became a problem. To deal with this they put these Canaanites under tribute to work for them, but again, that eventually brought the children of Israel down because the worship of those false gods entered into the nation of Israel!

And the same things happen in our own lives. Instead of driving out the enemy completely we try to co-exist with them or make a profit off of them. And, in the end, it will bring us down today.

Let me show you how the church is adopting the ways of the world and not that the church is influencing the world in the things of God, as it should be doing. This is in regard to Hillsong and their worship. We are told,

Video and freeze-frames from a recent Hillsong music conference reveal a dance number that includes women writhing about sexily in the near-nude, only covered by bath towels. This isn't the first time that Hillsong has confused worship with flesh-peddling.

Hillsong has repeatedly used naked or near-naked performers to entertain their (mostly) lost audiences. In 2016, Pulpit & Pen broke the story about Hillsong's infamous "naked Cowboy," in which a youth pastor jumped on stage in his birthday suit (and a guitar for crotch cover) to entertain the ladies. Then, this same naked cowboy showed up in his underwear, draped with girls, at a Hillsong Christmas event. We also brought to you stories about multiple Hillsong Christmas concerts that resembled burlesque shows, which others called their "Sleazy Night Christmas Special."

. . . Hillsong NYC is the church whose worship team was led by two famous celebrity gay boyfriends, which was at first denied by Lentz until Pulpit & Pen found a video of Hillsong guru Brian Houston admitting the NYC campus had homosexual worship leaders.

- <http://bit.ly/2ol7TpS>

Now I have said this often, but a little compromise will led to more and more compromise until you are so far from God, that you now have women worshipping God in front of thousands of people, wearing a bath towel!

We are not to fellowship with the enemy but drive it out and if you don't drive it out, you will embrace it.

Once again we see that their failure was related to their ***DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD!***

And we are not done. There are several more examples of this lack of complete obedience on the part of the children of Israel. Do you think the Lord is trying to tell us something? You bet He is!

VERSE 30

Keep in mind that the major battles were now over, and it was up to the individual tribes to drive out these pockets of resistance in their land.

And we see here, in this verse, that the tribe of Zebulun failed to take all that God had portioned for them.

They did not drive out the Canaanites and because of that, these Canaanites dwelt among them.

And yes, they were put under tribute or forced labor and we might see that as good. But it never is. You see, when these people gain enough power they will eventually rise up and what we will see here is that they infect the children of Israel with the worship of their false gods!

And I am sure that the people of Zebulun thought they could make their incomplete obedience work to their advantage, especially economically. But, like I have said, they failed to appreciate that the Canaanites who dwelt among them would eventually bring them into both social and spiritual crisis.

And here is the problem. Because the crisis was not immediate, it was easy to think that it was not real.

Yet it was certain, and only a trusting obedience to God could spare them the later cycle of crisis that marks the Book of Judges.

And, once again we see that their failure was related to their ***DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD!***

VERSES 31-32

And we see here once again that the tribe of Asher also failed to take what God had apportioned for them.

And I think this is important for us to understand. As one tribe failed, as another failed to obey the Lord, it easier for the other tribes to also fail.

And we see this happening far too often in the church today. One church gives into this sin, or that false teaching and then there is another and another and before long you feel pressured to join along with them. It is better to join them than fight against them!

No, it is not better.

We are called to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us and I don't care how many churches, how many big Christian leaders are saying it, if it is not in the Bible, don't comprise your faith to be part of this group.

I have had to apply this to my life and to this church far too much over the last several years.

After Pastor Chuck Smith went home to be with the Lord several years ago, I saw the handwriting on the wall, I knew the trouble that Calvary Chapel was in. I saw who was positioning themselves to oversee Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa and the Calvary Chapel's in general, and it was not a good thing. I even tried to warn people of what was coming but they did not want to listen.

And Pastor Dwight from Calvary Chapel of Appleton also tried to warn them and, being part of the Midwest Leadership of Calvary Chapel's he let the pastor's know what was going on and that got him in so much trouble that they removed him from the leadership position over Wisconsin.



Believe me, I am not looking for trouble, but I am also not called to sit back and just because everyone says it is okay, to go along with them. If it is contrary to what the Word of God is saying, sorry, I fear God more than I fear man!

A year ago I had to step back from getting together with the Calvary Pastor's in Wisconsin because at the last meeting I attended the leader opened up the teaching by saying we are teaching way too much on prophesy and we need to cut back.

As shocking to me as that was, there was more.

Then he said that we need to accept our brothers and sisters at Bethel and Hillsong. Now I am not saying that anyone who is involved with these groups are unsaved, but the teachings and the worship from these groups are so wrong, so unbiblical.

And what was interesting to me is that they want to embrace these false teachers and yet, they refuse to come to Pastor Dwight and bring him back into the fellowship, even though he did nothing wrong.

And in my decision to do that, it has not been easy. But how can I not teach 25% to 30% of the Bible, which is on prophecy? I can't and I will teach it! I don't care if that is what Calvary Chapels are saying, it is not what God is saying!

Also, I am not going to embrace false teaching or teachers, not going to happen. And where do you draw the line with false teachers and false teaching if you are accepting some of it?

We are not called to go along with the flow, but we are called to swim upstream, against the current of this world and as we start letting the philosophies of the world to come into the church, the church is going down. And that is happening at an alarming rate today because they are not obeying the Word of God but the philosophies of this world!

We need to stand strong upon what God's Word says and I don't care what people may say, if they speak against the Word of God, they are wrong!

For Asher, "**... they did not drive them out.**" Judges 1:32.

And here we go once again, their failure was related to their ***DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD!***

### VERSE 33

Now we come to the tribe of Naphtali and like the others, they too found it difficult to drive out the enemy. They followed the trend of the other tribes and like I have said, it is hard to go against what everyone else is doing, and I see that here as well.

Let me also say this because many Christians think that the Christian life, the things we face should be easy. If it is hard, then it is not of God.

That is so wrong. Read the New Testament. In fact, just look at the life of Paul and see all that he encountered as he lived out his faith and shared the Gospel message!

And this is no different here. God never intended for Israel to conquer the land of Canaan easily; He never intended it to happen quickly.

We see this both in Exodus 23:29-30 and Deuteronomy 7:22-24. In both of those passages of Scripture we see that they both say that God intended to give them the land little by little.

That meant that God planned for Israel to take the land through constant trust in Him and frequent battles. But they failed to do this and therefore did not drive out the inhabitants. It was almost as if Israel said, "***If we can't have it easy, then we don't want it at all.***"

Thus, the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them. And again, they fell well short of what God commanded them to do!

And we see once again, their failure was related to their ***DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD!***

And we are not done, God wants us to see one more to drive this point home.

### VERSES 34-36

In these verses we see the people of God being pushed around by their enemies. This should never be the case when God's people are walking in the strength of their God.

And I find it interesting that when the house of Joseph was strong enough, when they were greater than the enemy, they put the enemy under tribute. But that is not what God wanted them to do with their enemies. They were to completely drive them out, but they did what they thought was best and, in the end, it hurt them.

One writer put it like this,

There is a dangerous and seductive form of pacifism in the Christian life, which ignores the reality of the spiritual battle so clearly described in Ephesians 6:10-20 and referred to by analogy in the Book of Judges. This pacifist attitude will happily make a peace with the devil that basically says, "I will not harm your interests if you leave me mostly alone." This attitude of spiritual surrender is unacceptable for the Christian.

Leon Trotsky, the infamous Communist leader said at least one correct thing: "You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you." To take an attitude of spiritual surrender is to willingly lose that war.

- David Guzik

And notice what happens to the tribe of Dan? The enemy pushes them all the way to the north. This was the result of not completely destroying the enemy – don't live in defeat instead of the victory that God has given us in Christ.

And again, we see this familiar and sad point in the lives of the children of Israel, their failure was related to their ***DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD!***

I want to take a few minutes and look at the consequences of not obeying the Lord, of disobeying His Word to us. I think this is important because if we obey the Lord there are the blessings, but if we disobey the Lord, the consequences are never good!

The first point I want to look at as we disobey the Word of God is that there will be ***CONFUSION*** in our lives!

We see this spoken of in Deuteronomy 28:15-20, where we are told, **“But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. The Lord will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.”**

I think that is pretty clear. If they refused to obey the voice of the Lord there are many things that will come upon them, but the one that we are talking about here is ***CONFUSION*** in all that they set their hand to do!

Now some would like to say that this is the Old Testament and it does not apply to us. If you feel that way let me ask you this. Don't you think that God still wants us to obey His voice? Of course He does!

But if we reject His Word to us, what happens many times is that we start to question our decisions and we wonder if we made the right or wrong choice.

The only way we will know if we made the right choice is to follow what God has said in His Word!

Remember the Tower of Babel and how God told man to fill the earth and instead of doing that, they remained together and built this tower into the heavens to worship the gods by!

And what did God do?

He brought them confusion as He confused the languages! And we see that not only were their plans frustrated now, but God accomplished what He wanted in spite of what they wanted to do. They were scattered over the face of the earth!

In James 3:16 we are told, "**For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.**"

If you are living like this, there is going to be much confusion in your life. Then what should you do?

Obey the Lord, follow His Word, don't deviate from it, but just obey it! And do you know why we should?

Because, as Paul wrote, "**For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.**" I Corinthians 14:33.

Where there is confusion, it is not from God. He is the author of peace and not of confusion and I love that about God. He wants us to have peace, He wants us to rest in Him and not live a life of confusion but one that is directed by God as we follow Him step by step!

Here is another thing we will experience when we are not obeying the Lord and that is **CONFLICT**.

And what I mean here is that we have this internal conflict within our hearts, within our lives because the Holy Spirit is showing us, we are wrong. And thus, we have this sense of uneasiness, of doubt regarding the things we are doing.

What should we do? We should bring it before the Lord, open up His Word and let the Lord, by His Spirit guide you. If what you are doing or saying goes contrary to what God has said in His Word, you are wrong and you need to change, not God!

Then there is a **COST** when we don't obey the Word of God. It can cost us in many different ways when we don't do the right thing. We can lose relationships, maybe a job, maybe a financial loss, and of course, that intimacy we have with God, and-so-on.

And the next one goes along with the **COST** of not obeying the Lord and that is a **LOSS**. And what I mean here is that we are going to lose out either emotionally or physically or spiritually when we don't obey the Lord and it will drain us!

And here's the thing. If we don't obey the Lord, if we don't follow God's Word and we are moving away from Him, in the end, we will **REGRET** it. We will not win this battle because God has what is best for us!

And here's the thing. God loves us too much to leave us heading in the wrong direction. And thus, He will *DISCIPLINE* us because He wants us to get back on the road that He desires for our lives. His goal, obviously, is that we would learn to trust in Him with all of our heart and lean not on our own understanding of the situation.

Father knows best and He has told us what is best for our lives and we need to follow, we need to obey. Remember what Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:5-8, "**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.**"

Here is the key, and we have touched on this already, but it does bear repeating. Our trust has to be in the Lord and not in what we feel is right.

How often we are wrong in the decisions that we make and God, He is never wrong! He knows everything and He knows what is best for our lives. Thus, we need to allow Him to direct our paths and we won't go astray.

The children of Israel, in the verses we have looked at this morning, were wise in their own eyes. They thought that they knew better than God. They thought it was not such a big deal.

Let me say this. If God takes the time to tell us something, it is important and we do need to learn from it, we do need to apply it to our lives!

And this is interesting to me. If we are wise in our own eyes, if we do our own thing, then we will not depart from evil but immerse ourselves into evil. And in the end, it will not be health to our flesh, it will not be strength to our bones! And this will happen, not might, in our own lives and in the life of churches as well!

But, if we trust in the Lord, if we acknowledge Him and allow Him to direct our paths, if we fear the Lord then we will depart from evil because we are following the Lord and it will be health to our flesh and strength to our bones! And again, this is for our own lives and we will also see this in the life of the church!

Remember the title of this message, ***PREPARING FOR FAILURE!***

I know, not a great title but it is true. If you are not following the Lord, if you are disobedient to His Word, then you are ***PREPARING YOURSELF FOR FAILURE!***

Let me put this in perspective for you with this story. We are told,

My son, Michael, was four years old the night I found him sobbing uncontrollably in the hallway. Concerned, I knelt next to him and drew him close.

“What’s the matter, sweetheart? Are you hurt?” He shook his head and turned to me, but I was unprepared for his response.

“Daddy said a bad word to me!” he sobbed. I almost laughed out loud. I had known my husband 12 years and had rarely heard him raise his voice. But Michael had heard him say something, and I was curious enough to want to know what it was.

“Honey, what bad word did Daddy say?” And seeing a chance for sympathy, my sensitive four-year-old stopped crying and blurted out – ***“Obey!”***

I never think of that incident now without asking my Heavenly Father to keep me from believing, as my son did, that “obey” is a bad word.

- A Treasury of Bible Illustrations

With the Lord, ***OBEDIANCE*** is not a bad word, but a safe word for us because our heavenly Father has only what is best for our lives!



Let me also say this. The Israelites did not say, *“We are going to forsake the Lord!”*

No, they did not do that, at least not yet.

What they did do is they decided that they would be satisfied with far less than God had for them. And because of that they found themselves in trouble and they did not attain what God desired of them!

The same is true for us as Christians. We might not say, *“I am going to forsake the Lord!”* But are we satisfied where we are? Are we satisfied with less instead of taking all that God has for us?

And again, there is danger in that. God truly has so much for us and many times I think we become satisfied with less. Don’t do that but seek the Lord, walk as He leads and see the salvation that He will bring to your life and to the situations that you face.

Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:13, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”**

Do you believe that? You need to, it is a promise from God and **“all things”** means just that!

May we not compromise our faith but drive out the enemies of our lives and see what God can do in us and through us as we allow Him to work and we walk by faith!

Let me close with some encouraging words for you. First of all, listen to what Paul tells us in Hebrews 10:36-39, **“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: ‘For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.”**

Make no mistake about it, it is tough when trials come, when the work we are called to do seems empty, you don't see the fruit, nothing is happening, and God's promises to us may seem so far away.

But that is when we need to continue on, be faithful because our obedience to God shows our maturity! It is easy to walk with God when everything is perfect, but what happens when things get tough?

And Paul is telling us, he is admonishing us to continue on because this endurance is built through trials, as we go through them, we are growing in the Lord, maturing in the Lord if we allow them to work in us that way. Or we can complain and be mad and not grow and have to go through the trial again!

Now as down and discouraged as we may be, Paul closes this chapter in Hebrews chapter 10 by saying that the Lord is coming back, don't lose sight of that fact and walk by faith, live by faith.

That is a great encouragement to me as I look at the wickedness of this world, the Lord is coming back! As dark as it gets, the Lord is coming back! As persecution comes our way, the Lord is coming back! That is the key, the right perspective of the situation – ***THE LORD IS COMING BACK!***

In fact, our faith will bring us to glory not to perdition because our faith is in Christ and His promises. We are not those who shrink back to destruction! We believe to the saving of the soul Paul said. In other words, our faith is real, it will stand the test of time and because of that God will not only save us by His grace, He will not only sustain us by His grace in this life, but by His grace we will be taken up to glory!

Also, in Hebrews 12:1-2 Paul writes after he speaks of the cloud of witnesses that have gone before us and walked by faith looking ahead to the coming Messiah and he admonishes us by saying, **“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”**

Look at those who walked before us to encourage us to walk by faith. Don't let sin entangle you and trip you up but follow the Lord all the days of your life.

And I know it is not easy. It was not easy for the children of Israel and, because of that they took the easy way out and it cost them dearly in the end.

May we, as Paul admonished the Corinthian believers, **“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”** II Corinthians 5:7.

May we not prepare for failure but for victory as we follow the Lord's instructions to us, as we are obedient to His Word and we walk by faith in Him and not by sight!