

4-6-25 Courage Over Fear: When Wisdom Fails: Seek God in Every Decision

Week 6 (2 weeks till Easter)

Text: Joshua 9:1–15

Topic(s): Counsel, Deceit

Big Idea of the Message: When we become confident in our experience and knowledge, we can often make decisions without consulting God.

Application Point: When we choose to act without searching a matter out, we can be left feeling embarrassed or defeated.

Have you ever made a big decision without consulting the right people? Maybe in business, your home, or a personal matter? At the time, you felt confident in your experience, your knowledge, and your judgment. But later, you realized you didn't have all the facts—and now, you're left embarrassed, defeated, or struggling to undo the damage.

Joshua found himself in a similar situation in **Joshua 9**. He was a seasoned leader, a man of battle-tested faith, yet he made a critical mistake—he trusted his own judgment rather than seeking the wisdom of God.

This sermon is a challenge to us: Do we seek God in every decision, or do we rely on our own experience and understanding?

Read Joshua 9:1-15.

I. DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU HEAR

When the Israelites defeated Jericho and Ai, the surrounding nations were terrified and prepared to fight (**Joshua 9:1-2**). But the Gibeonites took a different approach—they chose deception.

- They pretended to come from a faraway land.
- They used flattery to appeal to Joshua's ego.
- They provided false evidence—moldy bread, worn-out clothes, old wineskins.
- They told a convincing story, only mentioning victories from long ago, avoiding the recent events of Jericho and Ai.
- And what did Joshua do? He believed the lie.
- How often do we do the same?
- We trust what the world tells us without verifying it.

- We accept cultural norms without questioning if they align with God’s truth.
- We listen to gossip and rumors without seeking clarity.

Proverbs 11:14 says, "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety."

- The enemy is a deceiver— **“Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).**
- The Gibeonites used flattery to advance their agenda; **verse 9.**
- Flattery and fame are two of the slyest devices of the enemy.
- *What Jericho could not do with walls, or Ai with weapons, the Gibeonites accomplished with deceit. (Warren Wiersbe)*
- Satan tries one device after another to defeat God’s people, and we must constantly be on guard.
- Note that it is usually after a great victory that Satan begins his subtle attacks
- If we aren’t careful, we will be led astray by things that look good, sound right, and feel reasonable.
- **James 4:13-15.**

II. CHECK WITH GOD BEFORE YOU DECIDE

Joshua made a tragic mistake in **verse 14: “They did not ask counsel from the Lord.”**

- He examined the Gibeonites' evidence. He trusted in what they wanted him to see.
- He listened to their words. He trusted in what they said to him.
- He trusted his own judgment.
- **But he failed to consult God.**
- How many times have we done the same?
- A new business opportunity sounds perfect—but we never pray about it.
- A relationship seems right—but we don’t ask God for wisdom.
- A career change feels exciting—but we don’t seek the Lord’s guidance.

James 1:5 tells us, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

- God never fails to guide those who sincerely seek Him. He is willing to lead us—if we ask.
- The Israelites made peace with the Gibeonites, but only later discovered the truth.
- Their failure to seek God led to lasting consequences.

III. KEEP YOUR WORD EVEN WHEN IT HURTS

Read Joshua 9:18-21

When Israel realized they had been deceived, the people were furious! They murmured against Joshua, something they had never done before. He lost their respect because he failed to seek God's wisdom.

- And yet, he honored the treaty.
- They had sworn an oath before the Lord and breaking it would have been even worse.
- Instead of wiping out the Gibeonites, Joshua made them servants in God's house.
- Even in his failure, he upheld his integrity.
- What about you?
- Do you keep your promises, even when it's inconvenient?
- Do you remain faithful to God's Word, even when it costs you something?
- In an age of deception, do you stand firm on integrity and truth?

Psalm 15:4 says that a godly person “keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind.”

- At a time when integrity has become a lost art, maintain your own integrity and so regain any respect you might have lost when you allowed yourself to be deceived.
- That's what happened to Joshua. He regained Israel's respect, because they never grumbled against him again. You too can gain, or regain, respect if you like Joshua keep your promises even to your own hurt.
- At a time when integrity is rare, you will stand out if you maintain your own integrity.

IV. CONFRONT THE LIE AND TRUST GOD'S GRACE

Read Joshua 9:22-27

Joshua confronted the Gibeonites. He held them accountable, but he didn't destroy them.

- And here's where we see God's grace at work:
- The Gibeonites accepted their consequences and honored their word.
- In **Joshua 10**, God fights for them when they are attacked.
- In **2 Chronicles 1:3**, Gibeon becomes the place where God's altar and tabernacle are set.
- One of David's mighty men, Ishmaiah, was a Gibeonite (**1 Chronicles 12:4**).
- A Gibeonite helps rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (**Nehemiah 3:7**).

- God took a group of deceivers, exposed their lie, and still brought them into His plan.
- That's the power of His mercy and grace!
- And that same grace is available for you today.
- Maybe you've planned without consulting God.
- Maybe you've been deceived.
- Maybe you've compromised your integrity.
- God can still redeem your story.
- But you must confront the lie. You must turn back to Him. You must surrender your mistakes and allow His grace to restore you.
- **God loves you too much to leave you in sin!** He stepped into this world, exposed the darkness, and made a way for you to be restored—through the cross.
- **On that cross, Jesus paid it all.** He took your penalty, bore your shame, and three days later, He rose again offering you eternal life, full restoration, and a fresh start.
- **Don't wait. Don't hesitate.** If you haven't surrendered to Him, do it now! Confess your sin, trust Him, and watch as His grace floods your life, transforming you from the inside out!

CONCLUSION:

WALK in God's wisdom, **NOT** your own.

1 Peter 5:8-9 warns us: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith."

If we want to **walk in wisdom** and **avoid deception**, we must:

- 1. Recognize the enemy's voice – He is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).**
- 2. Reveal the lie – Confront it with God's truth.**
- 3. Rely on God's wisdom – Seek His counsel in every decision.**

And if you've been deceived, don't stay there. **God's grace is greater than your failure.**

- Joshua recovered and continued leading Israel to victory.
- The Gibeonites, once deceivers, became part of God's plan.
- And you, no matter where you've been or what you've done, can step back into God's wisdom today.

Seek Him first. Trust Him completely. And walk in His victory.

Let's pray.

Father,

We've leaned on our own wisdom, and it's failed us. Today, we choose Yours. Wake us up, God—make us sober, make us watchful. The enemy is prowling, but we will not be devoured.

Help us recognize his lies, confront them with Your truth, and rely on Your voice above all. Where we've been deceived, bring restoration. Your grace is greater than our failure.

We seek You first. We trust You, completely. Lead us in Your wisdom. Walk us into victory.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.