



Who are you working for and who are you leading?

“Be very careful to...love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.” Joshua 22:5

Warren Wiersbe writes the following in his book, *Be Strong*, “In defeat unbeatable; in victory unbearable.” That’s the way Sir Winston Churchill described a British army officer famous in the Second World War. The first half of the description would apply to Joshua, because he knew how to win victory out of defeat. But the last half doesn’t apply at all; for as commander of the Lord’s army, Joshua was magnanimous in the way he treated his troops after the victory. An Italian proverb says, “It’s the blood of the soldier that makes the general great.” But this general made his soldiers great! This is clearly seen in the way he discharged the tribes who lived on the east side of the Jordan.

He commended them (*Josh. 22:1–3*). These two and a half tribes had promised Moses that they would remain in the army until all the land was conquered, and they kept their promise (*Num. 32; Deut. 3:12–20*).

Why had they been so loyal to their leaders and fellow soldiers? Because they were first of all loyal to the Lord their God. It was His mission they were carrying out, and His name they were seeking to glorify. In the service of the Lord, far above our devotion to a leader, a cause, or even a nation, is our devotion to the Lord. *“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ”* (*Col. 3:23–24, NKJV*).

He discharged them (*Josh. 22:4*). Having fulfilled their mission and keeping their promise, the tribes were now free to go home; for God had given His people rest. The concept of *rest* is important in the Book of Joshua and means much more than simply the end of the war. The word carries with it the meaning of both *victory* and *security*, and it involved Israel having their “resting place” in the land. God promised to give His people rest (*Ex. 33:14; Deut. 12:9–10; 25:19; Josh. 1:13, 15*), and He kept His promise (*11:23; 14:15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1*).

The spiritual application of this rest for God’s people today is made in Hebrews 3 and 4. When we trust Christ as Savior, we enter into *rest* because we’re no longer at war with God (*Rom. 5:1*). When we yield ourselves completely to Him and claim our inheritance by faith, we enter into a deeper *rest* and enjoy our spiritual riches in Christ. (See *Matt. 11:28–30* for our Lord’s invitation.) When we *come to Him*, He gives us rest. When we *take His yoke of discipleship*, we find that deeper rest.

Imagine what it would be like for these soldiers to return home after being away for so many years! Think of the love they would experience, the joys they would find, the treasures they would share! That’s just a small picture of what happens when the children of God enter into the rest God gives to those who will yield their all to Him and trust His Word.

He admonished them (*Josh. 22:5*). Like any good leader, Joshua was more concerned about the spiritual walk of his people than anything else. The army had experienced victory in Canaan because Joshua loved the Lord and obeyed His Word (*1:7–8*), and that would be the “open secret” of Israel’s continued peace and prosperity. Just as they had been diligent in battle, obeying their commander, so they must be diligent in worship, obeying the Lord their God. This was the promise each of the tribes made to the Lord at Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal.

The motive for their obedience had to be love for the Lord their God. If they loved Him, then they would delight in walking in all His ways and obeying all His commandments. Instead of trying to serve two masters,

they would **cling and cleave (the Hebrew description of love)** to the Lord and serve Him alone, with all their heart and soul. Jesus said this was the first and greatest commandment (Matt. 22:36–38); therefore, to disobey it would mean to commit the greatest sin. “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15, NKJV).

He blessed them (Josh. 22:6–8).

But this blessing also involved sharing the rich spoils of battle with them and their family members back home. It was the custom in Israel that those who stayed home, or who couldn't participate in the battle for some good reason, also shared the spoils (Num. 31:25–27; 1 Sam. 30:23–25). After all, these people had protected the home cities and kept the machinery of the community going while the men had been out fighting, and it was only fair that they share in the spoils. Indeed, for the two and a half tribes that lived east of the Jordan, it was an honorable discharge. (*Victor Books*, 1996, c1993, S. Josh 22:1)

Who are you leading? Who are you teaching (discipling) how to follow Jesus? If you do not know, see who comes to you. Often leaders draw others. If you are called to be a spiritual guide to someone, get close to them and stay connected to them.

More importantly than who is following you, is, who are you following? Are you following the Lord or are you following someone or something else? Are you loving him, walking in all his ways? (Joshua 22:5). What is so wonderful about this command is that Jesus Christ followed God all the way to the cross. He fulfilled all God's expectations for you. As you follow him, you are given the power of His Spirit to keep following to the end.

Do not pay much attention to the results as to who you are leading. That is between the Holy Spirit and that person. He will always keep you close to him.

More of Him and Less of Me,

Pastor John Raddatz