

# God's Reassuring Word of Promise

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 20 November 2016

Preacher: Paul Brennan

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, we turn now to God's words, and we'll be reading in Joshua chapter 8. If you have one of the church visitor Bibles, that's page 183.
- Joshua chapter 8. Now we're picking up a series we began a bit earlier in the year. In August and September. And we got to Joshua chapter 7 last time. And in Joshua chapter 7, we read about the battle against Ai, which the people of Israel lost rather calamitously.
- Due to the sin of one man, the sin of Achan. And in chapter 8, we read the battle of Ai, part 2. So we'll start chapter 8, verse 1, and read the chapter.
- And the Lord said to Joshua, Do not fear. Do not fear. And do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you and arise.
- Go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai and his people, his city, and his land. And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king.
- [ 1 : 3 0 ] Only its spoil and its livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves. Lay an ambush against the city behind it. So Joshua and all the fighting men arose to go up to Ai.
- And Joshua chose 30,000 men of valor and sent them out by night. And he commanded them, Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city behind it.
- Do not go very far from the city, but all of you remain ready. And I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And when they come out against us, just as before, we shall flee before them.
- And they will come out after us until we have drawn them away from the city. For they will say, They are fleeing from us just as before. So we will flee before them.
- Then you shall rise up from the ambush and seize the city. For the Lord your God will give it into your hands. And as soon as you take in the city, you shall set the city on fire.
- [ 2 : 3 3 ] You shall do according to the word of the Lord. See, I have commanded you. So Joshua sent them out. And they went to the place of ambush and lay between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai.
- But Joshua spent that night among the people. Now in verses 10 to 13, you get a little flashback, which is kind of recounting what we've just read. Joshua, verse 10, arose early in the morning and mustered the people and went up, he and the elders of Israel before the people of Ai.
- And all the fighting men who were with him went up and drew near before the city and encamped on the north side of Ai with a ravine between them and Ai. He took about 5,000 men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai to the west of the city.
- So they stationed the forces, the main encampment that was north of the city and its rear guard west of the city. But Joshua spent the night in the valley.
- As soon as the king of Ai saw this, he and all the people, the men of the city, hurried and went out early to the appointed place towards the Araba to meet Israel in battle.

[ 3 : 48 ] But he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city. And Joshua and all Israel pretended to be beaten before them and fled in the direction of the wilderness.

So all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them. And as they pursued Joshua, they were drawn away from the city. Not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel.

They left the city open and pursued Israel. Then the Lord said to Joshua, Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand towards Ai, for I will give it into your hands.

And Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. And the men in the ambush rose quickly out of their place. And as soon as he stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and captured it.

And they hurried to set the city on fire. So when the men of Ai looked back, behold, the smoke of the city went up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that.

[ 4 : 55 ] For the people who fled to the wilderness turned back against the pursuers. And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had captured the city and that the smoke of the city went up, then they turned back and struck down the men of Ai.

And the others came out from the city against them. So they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And Israel struck them down until there was none left that survived or escaped.

But the king of Ai, they took alive and brought him near to Joshua. When Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the open wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them to the very last had fallen by the edge of the sword, all Israel returned to Ai and struck it down with the edge of the sword.

And all who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000, all the people of Ai. But Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had devoted all the inhabitants of Ai to destruction.

Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as their plunder according to the word of the Lord that he commanded Joshua. So Joshua burned Ai and made it forever a heap of ruins as it is to this day.

[ 6 : 19 ] And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening. And at sunset, Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the gate of the city and raised over it a great heap of stones which stands there to this day.

At that time, Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal. Just as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones upon which no man has wielded a iron tool.

And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord and sacrificed peace offerings. And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written.

And all Israel, sojourner as well as native-born, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded at the first to bless the people of Israel.

And afterward, he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel and the women and the little ones and the sojourners who lived among them.

[ 8 : 08 ] This is the word of the Lord. Well, please do turn up Joshua 8, as we read earlier, Joshua chapter 8.

Now, as I said when reading earlier, we began a series in Joshua some months ago, and it's been a little while since we were last there. So let me refresh you of the story so far in Joshua.

The book charts the conquest of the promised land under the leadership of Joshua. And it begins at a time of natural crisis.

The people were on the brink of the promised land, some 40 years after the first catastrophic attempt to enter it. And Moses has just died.

End of Deuteronomy. And we see it again at the start of Joshua. Moses had just died. And despite the great leader of Israel dying, God's promises lived on.

[ 9 : 13 ] And that is the great theme of the book. You could very roughly divide the book into two unequal halves. I think Dale Ralph Davis has this structure.

Chapters 1 to 21, you have the record of God's faithfulness. Climaxing in chapter 21, verse 43.

Let me read that little summary from chapter 21. Verse 44.

All came to pass. All came to pass. And that's a good summary of the first half of the book. It's a record of God's faithfulness.

And the second section, running from chapter 22 to 24, details the response in light of the first half. It's the responsibility of God's people.

[ 10 : 32 ] In light of all that God has done in response to his grace, his people are to demonstrate fidelity to him. Now, we've already seen in our studies in Joshua, the great faithfulness of God to his promises.

That's how it begins in chapter 1. He promises to Joshua and all the people that he'll be with them, that he'll give them the land, and he'll never forsake them. But it's also a book that speaks of the extraordinary grace of God shown to even the most surprising of people.

Chapter 2 is all about the salvation of a pagan prostitute, Rahab. It's quite extraordinary. We've seen God at work in huge and powerful miracles.

The crossing of the River Jordan, right in the middle of flood season. We've seen the astonishing, miraculous defeat of Joshua. Jericho, the great walled city, it was a promising start.

But in our last visit to the book, chapter 7, things were at a real low point. Following Jericho, next in the line of fire, was the much smaller town of Ai.

[ 11 : 46 ] Surely that was going to be a walkover. But no, it proved to be a humiliating defeat. And the reason for it was the sin of one man, Achan.

Thinking that the rules didn't apply to him, he took for himself some of the stuff, some of the plunder from Jericho that was meant to be dedicated to the Lord. He took it, he hid it, he lied about it.

And the consequences of that one man's sin were devastating for Israel and for Achan and all his household. And at the end of chapter 7, we were left wondering, what next?

Would this embarrassing defeat at the hands of a small town mark the beginning of the end of the conquest? Would God's word prove firm?

Well, chapter 8, as we've read this evening, provides a resounding answer to those questions. God is faithful to his word. He would give them the land.

[ 12 : 52 ] He would never leave nor forsake his people. This chapter is a timeless reminder to God's people that his promises are not thwarted or extinguished by our past mistakes or our past sins.

But rather, God's promises stand unmoved, unshaken, and beckoning us to trust in his words, to trust his promises, to move forward in confidence.

It is yet another episode in this astonishing book that records God's great faithfulness, his steadfastness, his unmovingness.

He is faithful to his words. Now, what reassurance this chapter would have been to the first readers. After chapter 7, after the disaster of the Battle of Ai Part 1, comes the resounding and total defeat in the Battle of Ai Part 2.

And central to the whole episode is God's word, his reassuring word of promise to a repentant people. We see in this chapter four things.

[ 14 : 00 ] We see God's tender word of protection, verse 1. We see God's gracious word of provision, verse 2. We see God's unchanging word of promise at the end in verses 30 to 35.

And in the big middle section, we see the obedience of God's people to God's words. So let's look first, verse 1, God's tender word of protection.

Verse 1, God speaks to Joshua. And what a tender thing that was. Given the absolute calamity of chapter 7, given the gross nature of the sin and the devastating consequences most obviously seen in the loss of what should have been a walkover battle against Ai, Joshua might well have considered beating a retreat.

It was embarrassing. The people's hearts melted. No doubt fearful of what might happen if they tried again. No doubt dismayed at the shock of the defeat. But God spoke.

And what wonderful words of reassurance and tenderness they are. Just look at verse 1. Do not fear and do not be dismayed.

[ 15 : 17 ] Take all the fighting men with you and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand and the king and all his people, his city and his land.

I've given it to you. Now, yes, God had already given great words of promise to Joshua. Just read back over the first seven chapters. Great words of promise.

And that was just a matter of weeks before the events of chapter 8. God had already spoken those great promises of giving him the land. He promised to be with Joshua to never leave nor forsake him.

God had already assured Joshua saying, Do not be frightened and do not be dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. He had already made that promise to him in chapter 1.

But God knew that Joshua needed those same words of assurance again. The shocking defeat of Ai was still fresh in the memory. But as we see at the end of chapter 7, following the judgment on Achan, the Lord turned from his burning anger.

[ 16 : 24 ] Just look back a couple of verses. Verse 26 of chapter 7. The Lord turned from his burning anger. No longer was it time to mourn over that sin of Achan.

No longer was it time to mourn, but it was time to move on. Joshua wasn't to languish in self-pity or contemplate what could have been.

No, it was time to press on because God's word was unmoved and unchanged. He is faithful to his promises and he tenderly reminds and reassures Joshua that the conquest continues.

He and all Israel had nothing to fear. And even for the small town of Ai, Joshua needed that word of assurance from the Lord.

And it's a word that reminds Joshua and us of where the real power lay. It's a reminder of the need to depend on God for all things. Now, without him, victory was impossible.

[ 17 : 29 ] Even for the town of Ai, God's presence with his people was required if victory was to be won. One preacher put it this way, with the power of God, the great Jericho could be taken.

Without his power, not even the smallest post such as Ai could be overrun. Whatever they were facing, they had to rely on God because it was his power that made the difference.

And God, in his tender mercy and grace, speaks his promised word again to Joshua. And doesn't God speak tenderly to us after a season of drifting away or serious sin?

Doesn't he speak tenderly to you in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? He speaks words of life, of restoration as we turn to him in repentance and faith. He reminds us of all his promises.

He reassures us of his protection, his presence. Wouldn't those words in verse 1 been like sweet honey to Joshua and to all the people given what they've just witnessed just days before?

[ 18 : 44 ] God speaks these tender words and how precious they would have been to Joshua. God's promises never fall to the ground. And so for you, perhaps, he has brought you to real repentance after confession of serious sin.

He doesn't expect you to wallow in it, to dwell upon it over and over. James Philip puts it this way, if God forgives sin, we have no right to be preoccupied with it.

No, he sets you free. He sets you on your feet and reminds you of his great promises. promises. And don't we have even greater promises than Joshua did? We can look back with the certainty of God's promises fulfilled in Christ.

Do not fear and do not be dismayed. If there are things that you are regretting, past sins, if they've been forgiven, you can move on, press on.

The past is now the past and it remains there. The future is full of certainty and hope because God's words never fall to the ground.

[ 20 : 03 ] His words of promise are sure. He will surely see you safe into his kingdom, the eternal kingdom that he's promised. That promise is sure and certain.

Nothing can shake it. No past sin too great. No past stumble too serious. He speaks to us, even to you, his tender word of promise.

And isn't that a wonderful thing? A reassuring thing. What a wonderful thing and a reassuring thing that was for Joshua. Those words of verse 1. We'll look on to verse 2.

We see God's gracious word of provision. So not only does God promise Joshua protection, and victory and battle, not only does he provide direction and instruction, he tells Joshua to take all the fighting men, he tells them to do to Ai, just as he did to Jericho, he tells Joshua to lay an ambush.

Not only does he provide direction and instruction, not only does God provide all that, but he gives more. He gives an abundance to his people. Notice what God says there in the middle of verse 2.

[ 21 : 18 ] only its spoil and livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves. God allows his people to take Ai's spoil, its livestock for themselves.

Now hold on a minute we might think, if we can think back to the last few chapters. Why is God now saying it's okay for them to take the plunder? wasn't that the very thing they told them not to do at Jericho?

Wasn't that the very thing that Achan was judged for? Well, yes it is. So why is it now okay for them to take these things? Well, primarily it's because God says so.

He gave them the permission to take them this time. But it's also the case that Jericho as the first city to be defeated, its plunder was to be taken as a first fruit to be devoted to the Lord.

And Ai being the second city of the conquest wasn't the first fruit and so the people could now take for themselves the plunder. But primarily it's because God allowed them to. He said, you can take it.

[ 22 : 33 ] And in light of this great generosity here in chapter 8, you can't help but think of Achan's covetousness just a chapter before. How needless was his action.

If only he had waited a few more days, he could have filled his whole tent with plunder. How easy it is for God's people to lose sight of his generosity and to question his goodness.

There is no need. God is good. He is a generous God. God is good. And more than providing what we simply require, doesn't he often provide for us in abundance?

He does so here. And it is one of Satan's oldest and greatest tactics to make God's people doubt in his goodness, his generosity, his provision.

It's the oldest trick in his book. In the Garden of Eden, the serpent sowed words of doubt in Eve's ears. He says this, did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

[ 23 : 43 ] Well, that's not what God said at all. What God said was you may surely eat of any tree in the garden, but of that one tree, of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat.

Satan turned God's gracious word of command on its head and cast doubt on his goodness and generosity. He zoomed in on the one restriction God imposed rather than on the riches he lavished upon his people.

One preacher says it's the device of Satan to insinuate into human hearts that God is being unfair in his dealings with us. How easily we fall for that lie.

How quickly we often suspect that God's goodness and provision is meant for us. The psalmist writes, for the Lord God is a sun and a shield.

The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. Let's remind ourselves, let's remind each other often of the great goodness God lavishes upon us.

[ 25 : 00 ] rather than zoom in on what he prohibits and prohibits for our good, remember all the good that he's lavished upon us. In church life it's often very easy to become consumed with the area of irritation and completely miss out on the great and lavish gifts he's poured out on us.

If only our church had this or that, if only that didn't happen or it wasn't done that way. we can often forget all the good that God lavishes upon us.

Perhaps in our own lives we so quickly doubt God's goodness and generosity and we focus relentlessly on the one thing that he perhaps has withheld from us.

We focus on that to the exclusion of all the things that he showers upon us, all the good things he gives us. Perhaps we grasp for the thing we don't yet have.

Not realizing that if we just waited he would abundantly provide for us in other ways. If only we waited. If only Achan waited.

[ 26 : 10 ] God is a generous God. He sees the things that we don't. He knows better than we do what we need. We can trust him. God provides abundantly for his people here.

More than what they needed. God is a generous God. Well there's verses 1 and 2. God's word to Joshua. Ai is now there for the taking.

He's reassured Joshua of his presence of victory and he's made provision generously for his people. We see in the long middle section verses 3 to 29 the obedience of God's people.

that God gave Joshua and the people his word of sure victory did not absolve them of taking action of carefully thinking and planning.

There was still a battle to be fought. Even though they were assured of victory they still had to go and fight. God had guaranteed and commanded certain things. Joshua was to take all the fighting men.

[ 27 : 15 ] God would give them victory over the king. Joshua was to do to Ai exactly as he did to Jericho and they could take spoil and livestock as plunder. But that's it in terms of instructions and commands from God.

The manner of the battle is down to Joshua and his plans and strategies. The Lord told Joshua to set an ambush but he didn't tell him exactly how to do it.

Joshua observed how the last battle went. They advanced the people from Ai pulled out and attacked them and the people of Israel fled. They retreated.

So Joshua observed how things went last time and he uses that to plan the battle this time around. He's going to trick them. He's going to trick them to thinking they're doing the same thing again. But it's all Joshua's plan.

That God is sovereign does not absolve his people of the responsibility to plan to fight. And what an intriguing and fascinating battle it is.

[ 28 : 20 ] You can imagine the tension in the camp the night before. plans are drawn up. Perhaps Joshua sketched out a map on the ground. I remember doing that in CCF at school.

You'd get the dirt and make little maps. Maybe he was doing that getting his generals around. Here's the plan. Here's how we're going to do it. They move into position by stealth and the trap is set.

And the men of Ai fall for it. Look down at verse 16. So all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them. And as they pursued Joshua they were drawn away from the city.

Not a man was left in Ai in Bethel who did not go out after Israel. And again verse 18. God directs the action. Stretch out the job that is in your hand towards Ai for I will give it into your hands.

And the people do all that God commanded them. Look on to verse 26 and 27. But Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the Javan until he devoted all the inhabitants of Ai to destruction.

[ 29 : 29 ] Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as their plunder according to the word of the Lord. They did all this exactly as the Lord commanded.

Obedience to God's word brought victory. Obedience didn't earn victory but it was through obedience that victory would be theirs.

Disobedience on the other hand brought defeat. Just think back to chapter 7. Same city same Joshua same army two very different outcomes.

And as we'll see in our final point it is commitment to God's word. It is trusting in what he has said. The submission to his words and ways.

That is the only way for God's people then and now. They carefully obeyed God's word. So let's look on to the last section verses 30 to 35.

[ 30 : 35 ] God's unchanging word of promise. God's unchanging word of promise. Now these verses at the end here, they seem like a complete sidetrack to the story don't they?

So far we've been swept along by the scene of the battle. This intriguing ambush. The battle being fought and won. But now the camera having been trained on the battlefield moves.

it now is set on a covenant renewal ceremony many miles away. It's slightly jarring isn't it?

It's a little out of place. Perhaps this is the writer's purpose. He's drawing our attention to it because what happens in this brief paragraph is so crucial.

It's crucial not only to this baffle but to all the whole conquest of the land. This covenant renewal ceremony demonstrates the centrality of God's unchanging word of promise to the covenant to the conquest.

[ 31 : 46 ] All Israel was gathered to hear the words of the law of Moses read out. And this wasn't some hastily arranged quick ceremony on the battlefield outside Ai.

No, this took place, take a look at Mount Ebal. That's some 20 miles away from Ai. And Mount Ebal is a place of great significance for God's people.

It was the place where Abraham first received the promise of the land. It was the place where Jacob returned after long exile. And they returned to that very same place all these centuries later.

It's a stunning visual demonstration of God's enduring and unfailing words. Those same promises that he made to Abraham were now being fulfilled and the people gather. Now to get there from Ai, that was a full day's journey.

Imagine getting the whole camp, all the army, all the people, families, children, livestock, all the equipment going up to Mount Ebal. It's a full day's journey.

[ 32 : 53 ] But why? Why was this such a major priority for Joshua and all the people? Why not just go on to the next battle?

They'd done Jericho, Ai, where was next? But no, they make this journey up to Mount Ebal. Why? Well, not only was it a great place of significance for the people of Israel, as I just mentioned, but Joshua is doing this in obedience to God's word.

In Deuteronomy chapter 27, Moses instructed the people to do this as they entered into the promised land. He told them they were to go to Mount Ebal. And they do here in verses 30 to 35, just as Moses instructed them back in Deuteronomy.

Joshua knew that central to everything that the people were going to do, central to the conquest of the land, was God's word and their commitment to it.

This ceremony, this reading of the law, this covenant renewal, this was a very clear demonstration of the centrality of God's word of promise.

[ 34 : 04 ] Not only were all Israel there, that's emphasized again and again, look at verses 33 and 35, but they went well out of their way to make sure this happened.

The whole army decamping 20 miles north. It was a clear indication that worship, not warfare, was the priority of their lives.

The first and greatest priority was not moving on to the next city to fight, but submitting themselves to obedience to God's law. If this conquest of the promised land was to happen, then what mattered most was the submission of all the people to all God's ways.

A failure to do that was emphatically demonstrated by Achan in chapter 7. Joshua knew this was the absolute priority. They could do all the strategizing they wanted.

They could do all the practice maneuvers. They could practice all the ambushes they wanted, but this was absolutely central. God's words, God's ways.

[ 35 : 16 ] And Joshua is careful to read the blessings and the curses, verse 34, those very blessings and curses that are detailed in G-26, 27, 28.



And the events of Ai could not be made for a clearer illustration of those very blessings and curses. Having just experienced the anger of God's curse in chapter 7, they experienced his gracious power and provision in chapter 8.

And with the reading of the law, the people of Israel could not be in any doubt as to their priority as they moved forward further into the land of promise.

All the people must give a wholehearted and total obedience to all God's word, because his word is unfailing. His word is powerful, faithfulness and he will achieve all that he has promised.

That is why these verses are here. They demonstrate the absolute centrality of God's promises and of the people's response to that, their fidelity to what God has promised.

[ 36 : 33 ] Now as we close, just a few observations and implications for us. Firstly, notice the corporate nature of God's people.

All the people are involved. It's emphasized again and again and again in this passage. Verse 1, all the fighting men are to be involved in the battle of Ai.

Verse 3, Joshua took all the fighting men. Verse 33, all Israel have gone to Mount Tebal to hear the word of the law being read out.

Verse 33, all Israel sojourner as well as native born with their elders and officers and their judges. Everyone's there. End of verse 35, all the assembly of Israel and the women and the little ones and the sojourners who lived among them.

Everyone's involved. involved. All it took for the first battle of Ai to go tragically wrong was the sin of one man.

[ 37 : 40 ] And here in chapter 8, the writer is careful to notice, to make it clear again and again that things go well when all of Christ's church are involved.

Everyone's there. All are there. All are involved. involved. That is crucial for the conquest of the land. And so we must ask ourselves, as part of the visible church, are we fully involved and committed to the life and work of the church?

Are we all fully involved in this church? And that doesn't mean that we all have some checklist to tick off and make sure we do every week.

The wonderful thing about God's family is its diversity. It's often described as a body, isn't it, in the New Testament, as a body working together, being built together, each with their own roles and tasks.

But are you pulling your own weight for the task God has equipped you to do? Are you carefully watching your conduct, your life, lest you fall?

[ 38 : 50 ] We all have responsibility, and that's clear in this passage, isn't it? The whole people, everyone's there, involves the corporate nature of God's people.

Second observation, the centrality of God's word. It's God's word that directs and instructs and reassures through this passage. It's central to all the action. Verse 1, at the start, God's word.

At the key moment in the battle, verse 18, God tells Joshua to stretch out his javelin. Now's the moment for the ambush. At key moments, God directs the action, orchestrates the victory.

It's always in light of God's real word that we respond in faith. It's always in light of his revealed word that we respond in trustful obedience. The whole army of Israel, all the people made that journey up to evil that they might not only obey God's word, but to hear it proclaimed, to witness it literally being risen on stones and planted in the land.

And it's always the church's greatest priority to have God's word central and in the driving seas. That's always the way. It was then for Joshua and all the people.

[ 40 : 04 ] It's the same now. And notice again, it's a corporate thing. Everyone was there to hear it. Children, sojourners, the proclamation of the word is not just something for the adults us or the natives.

Of course, we are to teach God's word age appropriately. But as soon as someone is able, they ought to be in with the main body, hearing God's word being proclaimed, bringing older children to church in the evening.

It's a great thing to do. I remember being brought along by my dad when I was maybe eight or nine. I didn't always understand, but it's good to be there. It's all the people being together, listening to God's word being proclaimed there.

The whole people is emphasized again and again. The centrality of God's word. And lastly, the certainty of God's promise. The certainty of God's promise.

No doubt, there would have been major doubts running through Joshua's mind at the beginning of this chapter. The first disastrous battle of air was fresh, but God speaks these words, these certain promises.

[ 41 : 20 ] Why else would God say these words unless Joshua was fearful, unless he was dismayed? We can trust what God says.

He is faithful. He will do exactly as he says. As surely as God gave the cities of Jericho and Ai into Joshua's hands, how much more surely will he bring about the consummation of his kingdom.

We await for Christ's return. The key battle has been fought and won. The tomb lies empty. Christ now sits with the Father at the right hand and one day everything will be brought under his rule.

Everyone will see it. The great conquest will be complete. that's a sure thing. Nothing will stop that from happening. Nothing will stop his word from coming to pass.

The things that we see in fear now, the things you worry about going to bed, they'll come to nothing in the end. Because in the end, Christ's victory is a sure thing.

[ 42 : 34 ] What God promises, he will do. As we close, let me read these words of the Lord Jesus spoken to his disciples. What tender words they are.

And he speaks them to you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Let me pray. Amen. Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for Joshua 8 and this ancient battle many centuries ago in a land maybe none of us have been to.

We thank you for these words which speak of such certainty of your word. Your promises never fail. And would you help us to cling to what you've said because what you've said will come to pass.

[ 43 : 42 ] So strengthen us, embolden us to live lives of faith, trusting, obeying in what you've said. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.