

JOURNEY THRU JOSHUA: TRICKED

TOUCH BASE:

Have you ever been tricked into something by someone else's deception? What happened? Were there warning signs that you recognized after the fact?

Do you think that kids tend to be more deceptive to get what they want than adults? Or would you say it is the other way around? Why?

PRAYER

BIBLE STUDY:

For the first six chapters of the book of Joshua, Israel is faithful and seems to be the opposite of the grumbling wanderers that came up out of Egypt. After those chapters of faithfulness, the author appears to be going back and forth between the faithfulness of Israel and their lack of seeking God when they absolutely should consult Him. In chapter 7, Joshua sends troops to war against Ai *without* consulting Yahweh first. Relying on Israel's power and knowledge proved deadly for the nation, when Ai routed them and killed at least 36 warriors. Things get set right in chapter 8. Now, in chapter 9 it appears that we again see Israel at something less than their best.

To be fair to Israel, the people of Gibeon engage in a pretty elaborate act of deception to ensure that Israel accepts the story. They are pretty convincing ... yet there are some burning holes in their story and Israel did not ask enough questions and demand a lot of answers. Entering into a treaty without all of the information and when there did not appear to be an *immediate* need proved to be a challenge. Israel's key challenge was their failure to ensure that they had God's approval. While things end up in perhaps an acceptable manner, the story does not present Israel as the faithful nation – God's chosen people – the way in which we would want them to be remembered.

As we begin our time thinking about the sermon, is there anything that really stood out to you that you would like to share? Is there anything that you've been challenged to consider (or reconsider) as a result of what you heard?

The passage begins with a statement by the author that several nations had created a coalition to fight against Israel, hoping that together they would be able to stop Yahweh's (and Israel's) forward momentum. **Why is this an important part of the story? Why would we need to know the nations?**

If the point of the story is to reiterate the purpose of the 'ban' for the purpose of keeping Israel holy, what similar actions should we consider today? What kinds of people or activities should be avoided in order to maintain our holiness and fitness for God?

The story of the Gibeonites and the story of Rahab both feature a confession that Yahweh is powerful and is in control of Israel's future. **Does the matter of their confession of Yahweh play into their deception? Should they/would they be more believable because they seem to be aware of God's power and activity?**

At the end of the story, the Gibeonites have been caught in the act and ‘sentenced’ to being among the lowest servants in the land. Their response to this punishment was that they were okay with it to avoid being destroyed by Yahweh. **How do you feel about the idea that they were willing to trade their freedom for life, knowing that they were likely to be destroyed as part of the ‘ban’?**

Do you see the Gibeonites with compassion? Or do you see them as deceptive and therefore have little sympathy for them? Why do you feel that way?

In the end, Israel is forced to make a decision: follow God’s initial instruction and implement the ban on the Gibeonites; or they could honor the oath they made in Yahweh’s name and allow them to live. This is a situation that one never wants to find themselves in – choosing which of the bad options that they must follow. **Have you found yourself in a situation where to be obedient would be to dishonor God? (Or someone else?) What choice did you ultimately make?**

Pastor Clint offered three suggestions to answer the key question of *“How are we similar to the Israelites and the Gibeonites in the story of the Gibeonite deception?”* He suggested that we are like the Gibeonites in that we seek to protect ourselves when we see ourselves as the underdog. We are also like the Israelites when we enter into treaties in the name of God without consulting God; as well as when we put ourselves in the difficult choice between dishonor and disobedience.

Have you ever felt like the underdog in a situation, and then ran to make a treaty with an ‘enemy’? What happened and how did it turn out? (Was God involved?)

Have you felt like you’ve entered into spiritual treaties with others – to either ignore sin in a Christ-follower’s life or to not talk to someone about Jesus to them? Would it dishonor God to then bring it back up?

What should you do when you find yourself faced with the decision to dishonor God or disobey God? How do you avoid getting yourself in this position?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

What other thoughts come to mind as we close our time out together? What haven’t we discussed that you would like to bring up? What do you still have questions about?