INTRODUCTION:

The first semester focused on the glories of our salvation. We studied what it means that we have been saved, regenerated, reconciled, adopted, and redeemed. Now we are going to look at what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. And we will start with the importance of hearing and obeying God’s Word. Our mission depends on it and so does your eternal reward when you stand before your Master.

TEXT JOSHUA 1: 1-9

I. Be Careful to Do According to All that is Written in the Book

A. God, through Moses constituted Israel on Mount Sinai. Moses dies and Joshua is commissioned to lead the people into the Promised Land. No enemy will be able to withstand them. God will not leave them or forsake them. But there is a condition:

   Only be careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left...This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. (Joshua 1:7-8 ESV)

B. Obedience to God’s word has always been non-negotiable.

   1. All the words of scripture are God’s words; they are breathed out by God (2 Tim 3:16).
   2. Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Pet. 1:21)
   3. Thus to disobey or disbelieve any Word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.
   4. To disobey what God has said is the very definition of sin.

      a. “Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature” (Systematic Theology chapter 24 Wayne Grudem)

      b. “Sin is the transgression of a law, of a good law, of God’s law. Whoever commits sin transgresses also the law, for sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). The law not only forbids the doing of evil, by thought word or deed, but also commands the doing of good. So to omit the good commanded – is sin as well as the doing of evil. Whatever then transgresses the law of God – in whole or in part (James 2:10) is therefore and therein a sin, whether it break an affirmative or a negative precept; whether it is the omission of a good or the commission of evil.” (Sinfulness of Sin, Ralph Venning )
II. Joshua & Judges: The stories of Israel’s Success & Failure

A. The Book of Joshua – Israel’s Obedience and Partial Conquest of the Land.

1. You have kept all that Moses commanded. You have not forsaken your brothers these many days, but have been careful to keep the charge of the Lord your God (Josh. 22:2-3).

2. Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. (Josh. 22:5)

B. The Book of Judges -- Israel’s tragic failure over the next 300 years.

1. “And all that generation were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. Jdg 2:10-11.

2. “Whenever they marched out; the hand of the LORD was against them for harm, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress. And he sold them into the hands of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies…and they were in terrible distress” Jdg 2:15

III. Does Obeying Matter in the NT Age?

A. Objection: “That was the OT, the age of law, for Moses’ disciples. We are Jesus’ disciples; Christianity is about freedom and grace, not about hearing and obeying.”

B. Response: Christianity is about God giving us a new nature, about the Spirit God writing his law, not on tables of stone, but on tables of human hearts (1 Cor. 3).

C. Jesus’ disciples are liberated to obey God from within, from a new regenerate heart, a new nature, and the power of the indwelling Spirit.

IV. A New Moses And A New Mountain (Mat. 5-7) [The Sermon on the Mount]

A. In the Sermon on the Mount, a new Moses constitutes a new Israel on a new mountain. This is the charter given by the Son of God, for all the Sons of God in this present age.
B. This sermon describes what salvation produces. Like the Mosaic Law, it marks out the
distinctive characteristics of God’s Covenant people:

1. Jesus’ Disciples have new hearts characterized by:
   a) Poverty of Spirit… emptiness before God.
   b) Groaning and mourning at the horror of sin in ourselves and our world;
   c) Meekness…a complete absence of a spirit of retaliation
   d) Spiritual Appetite: A hunger and thirst for righteousness.
   e) Mercy toward others
   f) A willingness to endure persecution looking to the reward.

2. Jesus’ Disciples do not relax the moral laws of Moses, which Jesus fulfills for us (5:17)
   but we obey at the heart level where God’s law is written by the Holy Spirit.
   a) Murder → Anger in the heart
   b) Adultery→ Lust in the heart
   c) Divorce→ Hardness of heart
   d) Oaths→Simple truth telling from hearts with no guile

3. Jesus’ Disciples are in profound relationship with the Father
   a) They give in secret, the Father sees and rewards
   b) They pray and fast in secret; the father sees and will reward
   c) They trust in the Father – and find inner tranquility
   d) They pray to the Father in Jesus’ name; they ask, seek and knock
   e) Their eyes are upon the Father and the Kingdom, not the world

4. Jesus’ Disciples Live Carefully
   a) They are careful to judge themselves first…not others
   b) They are careful to treat others according to the golden rule
   c) They are careful to walk in love even toward their enemies
   d) They are careful to discern false prophets
   e) They are careful about doing religion without knowing Jesus

C. How Does the Sermon on the Mount End?

“Everyone who hears these words of mine, and does them will be like the wise man who built
his house on the rock”. (Mat 7:24)
So hearing and obeying matter, very much, in the NT Age.
V. A New Conquest A New Promised Land

1. Jesus’ disciples inherit a new Promised Land: the Kingdom of God on Earth.

   “Theirs is the kingdom of heaven”. “They shall inherit the earth.” “Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

2. This will be a process, a conquest. The battles are fought not with hate and sword, but with love and the gospel.

3. The struggle will continue until the revelation of Jesus Christ (1Pet. 1:13) when Heaven and Earth will be united once again.

Conclusion

A. Mission success and eternal reward depend upon Christ’s disciples hearing and doing all Jesus commanded. What is the Holy Spirit saying to us today?

   Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all Jesus has commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or the left...This book shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it....Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.