

**HARRINAY UNITED CHURCH-BAPTIST
SUNDAY 7TH MARCH 210.**

Topic: DONT BE DECEITFUL

Text: Joshua 9:1-27

Let us sing verse 1 of 'Open the eyes of my heart Lord' without music

1. Introduction:

Thanks be to God Almighty the Father of our Lord and Jesus Christ who has given us new life instead of death and freedom in place of slavery. God is good all the time even when we make mistakes and messed in a big way, He is gracious because He does not treat us as our sins deserve but forgives when we confess and pardons us eternally. He does not count the records of our wrongs.

Today's text clearly highlights the true nature of humanity, the fallen nature, the nature that is naturally sinful, disobedient and rebellious. Even with all these, God is good to us. Let us give Him glory, honour and power that belong to Him. Let somebody shout hallelujah.

Last week we saw How God had forgiven Israel, turn them around and enabled them to face their enemies again but this with victory not defeat, with plunder not the death of colleagues.

Today we are looking at something different and from this we are climbing higher in the spiritual realm. I know that God is feeding me and He is feeding you too.

2. Three Lessons from today's Text.

i. The enemy is cunning

News travel very fast and that is why I believe that the people living in Canaan must have heard about the promise of God to the Israelites that He would give the entire land to them and wipe off the inhabitants.

The Gibeonites live only 25 miles away from Mt Ebal and Gerizim where Joshua and the Israelites camped after the defeat of Ai. They must have heard about the victory God has given Israel all along their journey. I believe that they must have heard about their defeat as well and the overwhelming victory of Ai when it was invaded the second time.

You cannot hear about victories upon victories and your heart will not melt. So I understand the state of mind of the Gibeonites that they fear for their lives and they had two choices, to wait and expect defeat and annihilation from the Israelites or to save their lives by any means.

Obviously they chose the latter after all Satan said in Job 2:4 "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. NKJV. The Gibeonites has deceitful spirit and lying tongues and they used them to save their lives.

They carefully worked their plan out, backed it up with good evidence of tattered clothes, worn out sandals, bread with mould and worn out water jug to prove their claim.

Luke 16:8 "For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light."

Joshua and the elders believed their lies and they got what they wanted, their lives were spared and a covenant of peace was made between them and Israel even though God has said "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you" (Ex 34:12, NIV) The Gibeonites bought their lives with deceit and lies.

ii. Believers must be vigilant

There are two ways Satan can manifest, like a roaring lion looking for whom he may devour 1 Peter 5:8. He comes with terror, threats, fear and force to intimidate and or in pretence like an angel of light 2 Corinthians 11:14 transforming himself in pretence to minister righteousness, loving peace and claim to be religious. Therefore Christians must be vigilant. Talking Christian jargons, claiming to have prophetic gifts, speaking in tongues and all those types of things does not make people Christian, and that is why Jesus said that you will know them by their fruit. If you see people exercising a gift without self control, love patience and other fruit of the Spirit you must watch out for them

The Gibeonites got their way through because of two reasons.

First, their evidence was convincing and almost fool proof. They did their home work, got their tactics right and their presentation was excellent. I would have fallen into the trap too, hence I dare not criticise Joshua.

Second, Joshua walked by sight not by faith

After the defeat and plunder of Ai, Joshua and the elders of Israel were a bit comfortable and they felt that they did not need God's guidance on the people that approached them for peace agreement. The evidence the enemies presented were convincing enough for Joshua and he believed the lies. Sometimes the truth may sound to be falsehood and especially when people gang up to bail themselves out of trouble at the expense of others.

He used the scientific or empirical approach instead of spiritual or divine approach. He depended on his senses rather than God's revelation.

No matter how the Devil appears, Christians must be vigilant and never take things for granted we must walk by faith and not by sight. Although God has not taken our reasoning away from us but we must not trust our judgment than the guidance of God.

Proverbs 3:5-7 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil". NKJV

Today, there are so many lies out there and even in the Church, they present their evidences and seem so real and convincing, but seek God's mind in all what you do. When we seek God's mind, we are vigilant and God is faithful He will always guide us.

I am not blaming Joshua, because I am even worse, because many times I do not consult God on what I do I just take things for granted that I know it already why do I need God? But in recent times He has been training me to consult Him first in any matter and each time I obey He always rewards my obedience.

Satan is a counterfeiter and "masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14, NIV). He has his "false apostles" and "deceitful workmen" (v. 13, NIV) at work in this world, blinding the lost and seeking to lead believers astray. Warren W. Wiersbe said "It's much easier for us to identify the lion when he's roaring than to detect the serpent when he's slithering into our lives."

It is easier to deal with the enemies of the Cross that campaign against what Christianity stands for today than the enemy within that compromises, distorting the truth and misinterpreting the scripture.

We need to be on our guard.

iii. Believers must protect their integrity

What is Integrity?

Integrity is keeping my commitment even if the circumstances when I made the commitment have changed. David Jeremiah

Nothing more completely baffles one who is full of trick and duplicity than straightforward and simple integrity in another. -Colton

There is no better test for a man's ultimate integrity than his behaviour when he is wrong. -Unknown

Joshua and his people had made a mistake by believing the enemy's lies they made a covenant with them to spare their lives.

Three days later they found out that they have been tricked and lied to; even though they did not know at the time the Gibeonites knew that they were lying. That is what I always say that two people can never lose the sight of a lie, if the person being lied to does not know the liar knows that he is lying and there is a consequence for lying. How did they know? I do not know but such things cannot be kept for long. It is either the Gibeonites were over joyous to cause Israel's suspicion or God must have told Joshua or the people of Israel.

No matter how long we cover a lie, it will come out one day.

Now that they knew that their enemies were living under their nose, they refrained from doing anything nasty to them. They challenged the people and confronted them with their lies and dishonesty. But the people replied Josh 9:24-25 "Because your servants were clearly told that the Lord your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

25 And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us." NKJV

The Israelites kept their oath and spared them but made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the house of God where water and fuel are used in abundance. For the Gibeonites, Psalms 84:10 applies "For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. NKJV.

There was no account in the Bible where the Gibeonites made trouble with Israel. Later they were referred to as 'Nethinim' meaning given ones i.e. given to assist the priests. They were helpful in re building the walls of Jerusalem after the return of exiles from Babylon during the time of Nehemiah (Ezra 2:43,58; Neh 3:26).

I believe that the Gibeonites were grafted into the family of God through their service in the Temple.

As Christians, our YES must be YES and NO be NO, Matthew 5:37 and James 5:12.

3. Conclusion:

Warren Wiersbe quoted the American political leader Adlai Stevenson who said, "A lie is an abomination unto the Lord — and a very present help in trouble."

The Gibeonites told several lies to get out of trouble but that is not a good example to follow.

Joshua and Israel leaders realised their mistakes, they admitted their mistake and made their mistake to work for them

If you have behaved craftily before, you have lied before, and have disguised yourself, and made catalog of mistakes, there is hope for you, all is not lost yet, it is what you do with those mistakes that determines the outcome.

I encourage you to be like Joshua, admit your mistakes, confront the enemy's lies (tell the truth always even when it will land you in trouble, snake example) and make your mistake to work for you by learning from it and turn it around in a positive way.

If you do not know how, ask God and He will give you wisdom (James 1:5). God bless you.