**SBJ10: Stay On Course (Joshua 23:1-14)**

***Pastor Alex Tan***

After a long time had passed and the Lord had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then a very old man,summoned all Israel—their elders, leaders, judges and officials—and said to them: “I am very old. You yourselves have seen everything the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the Lord your God who fought for you. Remember how I have allotted as an inheritance for your tribes all the land of the nations that remain—the nations I conquered—between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. The Lord your God himself will push them out for your sake. He will drive them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the Lord your God promised you. “Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them. But you are to hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have until now. “The Lord has driven out before you great and powerful nations; to this day no one has been able to withstand you. One of you routs a thousand, because the Lord your God fights for you, just as he promised. So be very careful to love the Lord your God. “But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, then you may be sure that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the Lord your God has given you. “Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed. (Joshua 23:1-14)

# Introduction

Some of us, in our work environment, are struggling to make a stand for God. While some of us, in our marriages, are considering divorce; or we may be dealing with rebellious children and teenagers. Then there are some of us who may be struggling with a certain sin. Some of us may have been serving faithfully in ministry but yet we are struggling in things in our lives. You may have been attending cell groups but are looking for a new one and wanting to give up. Stay on course.

Joshua’s name in Greek means ‘God saves’. It points towards the forthcoming of Christ and His redemptive works.

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It is easier to ….. but hold fast to a steadfast God.

# It is easier to stray than to stay… but Hold Fast

We tend to stray away from instructions, even from the Word of God.

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. (Romans 7:15)

We learn from history, but we do not have to be defined by our past. Instead, we should be refined by our learnings from history.

“Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them. But you are to hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have until now. (Joshua 23: 6-8)

**Who do you associate with?**

God is clear as to who we associate with, as there has been a history of contamination. Anything that is contaminated brings about deterioration, and eventually, death. For example, if you drink contaminated water you contaminate your body. Continual drink of that water will most probably lead to illnesses or even death.

God is holy, holy, holy. What does it mean to be holy? Being holy means to be set apart for a purpose. Holiness is not determined by your association although it can be affected by it. Our holiness is determined by the purpose for which we are set apart. We hold fast to Him as we embrace our purpose in Him. Don’t pull back from your calling that you are set apart for, but hold fast to Him.

# It is easier to forget than to remember… but Hold Fast

We forget things and must be told many, many times. Remembering results in purposeful thoughts and actions. In Genesis 40, after Joseph had interpreted the butler’s dream; all Joseph wanted was for the butler to remember that he was still in prison, in order to get him out of the prison. There was a need to remember as there was a need for an action to take place.

**Remember – it involves both thought and deed**

God is also described as remembering His promises, because when He calls it out, He acts on it as well.

God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. (Exodus 2:24)

We need to remember and to act on it.

You yourselves have seen everything the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the Lord your God who fought for you. Remember how I have allotted as an inheritance for your tribes all the land of the nations that remain—the nations I conquered—between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. (Joshua 23: 3-4)

Some of us need to remind ourselves what God has done for us since day 1. Remember God through the Scriptures. Remember His goodness and faithfulness since day 1.

# It is easier to take credit than to give it up… but Hold Fast

Every day we are met with opportunities for us to say ‘I did that. We want acknowledgment and praise who for our ideas and work. Joshua attributed success and continuously gave God the glory.

You yourselves have seen everything the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the Lord your God who fought for you. Remember how I have allotted as an inheritance for your tribes all the land of the nations that remain—the nations I conquered—between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. (Joshua 23: 3-4)

Ask God for ideas and creativity, because everything originates from God who is creative. Follow Joshua’s example; give God glory, because He is the One who gives us the grace to flourish.

# Conclusion

**It was God!**

**We can only HOLDFAST to the One Who is STEADFAST**

**How** can we holdfast to something that is not steadfast?

**Who is this steadfast God?** 

All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant. (Psalms 25:10)

May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ (2 Thessalonians 3:5)

This God is holy and is interested in us to transform our lives through Christ. The Promised Land is not just about heaven, but about being holy, Christ-like. The main course that we all are on is about being holy.

As we hold on to a steadfast God, we know that this God fights for us. We know that He is on our side, but we need to also be on His side. We are on His agenda.

Stay on course – hold fast to a steadfast God

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:2)

The Christian life is not an easy one, but it is a fulfilling one when we stay on course.



Sermon summary contributed by May Ng.

Prayer items by Michelle Wong



SERMON : Stay on Course

**Pray:**

* All the people of God will understand that they can overcome their struggles only by staying on course with God’s way and not their own way.
* God’s people must remember to hold fast to His steadfast promise and act on it.
* We will not easily not give up.
* We must be humble and give glory to God.
* People of God will persevere in faith and not quit obeying Him.

***“May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ” (2 Thessalonians 3:5)***

**MINISTRIES & EVENTS: 3 DAY FAST & PRAYER /CHURCH MORNING PRAYER**

***11 – 13 OCTOBER 2016***

**Pray:**

* God will convict the hearts of His people to fast and come together in prayer for a time as this.
* God will raise up the new believers to be bold and step up to gather in prayer for our nation.
* God will enable the people to come and seek His hand over their daily lives.
* God will instil the spirit of team unity and humility, compassion and love for a special encounter with the Lord through fasting and prayer.

***Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. (Joshua 23:6)***

MALAYSIA MY NATION: Parliamentary Sitting

-FREEDOM OF RELIGION & WORSHIP

**17 OCT-24 NOV 2016 – Dewan Rakyat**

**5 DEC – 21 DEC 2016 – Dewan Negara**

**Pray:**

* God will convict the hearts of all believers in Malaysia to fast and pray for all the members of Parliament in both Houses to stand firm in the belief of freedom of religion for all individuals.
* People of God will pray for the restoration of authority to the Royalty with regards to their advocate for the rights of all individuals according to the Federal Constitution to be maintained.
* People of God will fast and pray that all members of Parliament are aware of the potential consequences of wrong bills being passed and make the right decision.
* All people of Malaysia will be convicted in their hearts to love and respect Malaysia as it is a land where everyone has freedom of worship.

***“I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.”(Ezekiel 11:19)***

* **A TRANSFORMED WORLD: SYRIA**

***RESTORATION OF PEACE & STABILITY***

**Pray:**

* God to raise up among the remnants in Syria a leader who will reconcile the divided factions in bringing peace and stability to the nation.
* The people of God who had been displaced to be restored to their homeland and be able to glorify God through their sharing and care for others.
* God’s strength, comfort and protection upon those who have lost loved ones due to the violence.
* People of God will return and create an ongoing presence of Christ’ church in Syria.
* God to open the eyes of those who live in darkness to see the light through dreams, visions and hearing from the Holy Spirit.

***Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. (1Thessalonians 5:16-18)***