

You cannot live today on yesterday's obedience. See, yesterday's prayer won't replace today's prayer. Yesterday's surrender won't replace today's surrender.

THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT!

JOSHUA 8:1-2; 18-22

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY 9.27.26

THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT!

JOSHUA 8:1-2, 18-22

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY

9.27.26

Title: This Time Will Be Different: From Failure to Restoration in God's Next Chapter

Sermon Summary: What happens when we fail after a great victory? Joshua 8 takes us into one of the most honest and hopeful moments in all of Scripture. This sermon explores the journey from defeat back to victory as part of a broader series called "From Promise to Possession." Israel had just experienced the miraculous fall of Jericho, but overconfidence led to a stunning defeat at a much smaller city called Ai. Yet God did not abandon them. He restored their courage, revised their strategy, and led them back to face the very enemy that had humbled them.

The pastor reminds the congregation that winning can sometimes be more dangerous than losing, because success can breed arrogance, prayerlessness, and carelessness. Using the contrast between Israel's defeat at Ai in Joshua 7 and their victory in Joshua 8, the sermon demonstrates that God does not cancel those He corrects, and that past failure does not have to become permanent identity. God restored Joshua's courage, revealed a new strategy, and released a conquest that used the enemy's own assumptions against them. The sermon calls believers -- especially young people -- to understand that God can take the painful chapters of life and use them as part of a greater strategy. Just as Jesus

rose from what appeared to be a final defeat, God has the power to write another chapter for anyone who trusts and obeys Him.

The central lesson is both convicting and liberating: we cannot live today on yesterday's obedience. Every new season requires a fresh dependence on God. Success has a way of making us feel self-sufficient, causing us to stop asking God what He wants and start telling God what we plan to do. But when we return to humility and genuine trust, God meets us there. The same Ai that defeated Israel became the place where God demonstrated His faithfulness all over again. Our failures do not have to become our permanent identity. They can become the very ground where God writes our most powerful chapters of restoration.

Chapters

Chapter 1: From Failure to Another Chance

We are introduced to the series 'From Promise to Possession' and reminded that our worst moments do not have to become our permanent identity.

Chapter 2: The Courage God Restores

God addresses fear and discouragement directly, restoring courage so we can face the same challenges that once defeated us.

Chapter 3: The Command God Reveals

God gives a fresh strategy for the same battle, teaching us not to cling to old methods and to trust His voice over every other source of intelligence.

Chapter 4: The Conquest God Releases

The same enemy, the same city, but a completely different outcome -- God turns our chapter 7 failures into chapter 8 victories.

Key Points:

- Winning can be more dangerous than losing because success can lead to pride, carelessness, and a failure to depend on God
- You cannot live today on yesterday's obedience; every new season requires a fresh dependence on God
- God corrects but does not cancel; there is a difference between conviction, which draws you back to God, and condemnation, which drives you away
- Your worst moment does not have to become your permanent identity; failure is not final
- God does not always remove the challenge; sometimes restoration means God gives the challenge a different, wiser, more humble version of you
- God is not obligated to repeat His methods; a fresh word is needed for a fresh season
- Artificial intelligence can provide information, but only God can provide revelation, wisdom, purpose, and true discernment
- God can take the enemy's knowledge of your past failures and use it as part of your next victory
- Chapter 7 moments of failure are not wasted; God uses them to build wisdom, humility, and dependency for chapter 8
- The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate proof that God always has another chapter

Scripture Reference:

- Joshua 8:1-2 and 8:18-22, in which God commands Joshua to return to Ai with a new strategy, restores his courage, and delivers the city into Israel's hands through an ambush

Stories:

- The biblical account of Israel's defeat at Ai in Joshua 7 contrasted with their victory in Joshua 8, used to illustrate the danger of pride after success and the grace of God in offering restoration
- The story of Moses being commanded to strike the rock in one season and speak to the rock in another, used to illustrate that God's methods change and believers must remain attentive to fresh instruction
- A personal childhood memory of flying kites in Florida, where the kite would rise so high it became invisible in the sunlight, yet an occasional tug on the string confirmed it was still there, used as a metaphor for trusting God's presence even when it cannot be seen
- A reference to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, framed as a chapter 7 and chapter 8 narrative, in which Friday's death appeared to be a final defeat but Sunday's resurrection proved that God always has another chapter

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Cited

Joshua 8:1-2 — God commands Joshua not to fear or be discouraged and gives instructions to attack Ai with an ambush strategy.

Joshua 8:18-22 — Joshua holds out his javelin toward Ai; the ambush rises, captures the city, and Israel surrounds and defeats the men of Ai.

Joshua 7 — Israel's defeat at Ai due to disobedience; referenced throughout as "chapter seven" representing failure.

Joshua 6 — The fall of Jericho through obedience; referenced as the victory that preceded Israel's pride.

Joshua 1 — God repeatedly commands Joshua to be strong and courageous; referenced in the discussion of God's early preparation of Joshua.

Romans 8:1 — There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17 — Anyone in Christ is a new creation; old things have passed away and all things have become new.

John 15:5 — Christ is the vine and believers are the branches; apart from him, nothing can be accomplished.

Numbers 20:8-11 — Alluded to in the reference to Moses striking the rock instead of speaking to it, illustrating an old method applied to a new command.

Isaiah 43:19 — "Behold, I am doing a new thing"; referenced in the contrast between AI predicting patterns and God's ability to do something new.

Psalms 23:5 — God prepares a table before his people in the presence of their enemies; quoted directly in concept.

Hymns and Songs Referenced

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" — Referenced to illustrate God's daily, fresh provision and mercies.

"Love Lifted Me" — Alluded to in the imagery of sinking deep in sin and the Master of the sea lifting the drowning person.

"If It Had Not Been for the Lord" — Referenced repeatedly as a congregational theme throughout the sermon.

QUOTES

Your worst moment does not have to become your permanent identity.

You cannot live today on yesterday's obedience. See, yesterday's prayer won't replace today's prayer. Yesterday's surrender won't replace today's surrender.

Sometimes the goal of restoration is not always to give you a different challenge. Sometimes restoration means God gives the challenge a different you.

AI can give you information, but only God can give you revelation. AI can generate an answer, but only God can give you wisdom. AI can help you write a paper, but only God can write God's purpose for your life.

The enemy said you failed. But God says, learn from your failure. The enemy says you are finished, but God said, get your behind up.

God took Israel's algorithm and used it for their good against AI. Some of y'all missed that. God can take your bad algorithms and turn it for your good.

AI may know your history, but God knows your destiny. AI can recognize your pattern, but God can break the pattern. AI can predict your future based on what has been, but God can do a new thing.

Don't tear chapter number seven out of your story. Just don't live there. Look through the windshield and glance through your rearview mirror because your past is not bigger than what God wants to do in your future.

Maybe Jericho had given them a little too much swagger, but AI gave them surrender. Jericho taught them, look what God can do, and AI taught them, look what we can't do without God.

You are more than your worst decision. You are more than your bad grade. You are more than one bad semester.

THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT!

JOSHUA 8:1-2, 18-22

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY

9.27.26

From Promise to Possession: A 5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Day 1: Courage Restored After Defeat

Reading: Joshua 8:1-2

Devotional:

Defeat has a way of leaving two things behind: fear and discouragement. Fear asks, "What if it happens again?" Discouragement asks, "Why should I even try?" God addressed both with Joshua directly before changing a single circumstance on the battlefield. Notice that God did not remove the enemy before restoring the man. Before God changes the battle in front of you, He often deals with the battle inside of you. Whatever failure you are carrying today, hear God speaking the same words He spoke to Joshua. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. The same God who watched you fall is the same God calling you forward.

Reflection: What fear or discouragement has a past failure left inside of you, and are you willing to let God speak to it before you return to the battlefield?

Practical Application: Write down one area of your life where fear or discouragement has caused you to stop moving. Spend five minutes in prayer today specifically asking God to restore your courage in that area.

Day 2: Fresh Obedience for a New Season

Reading: Lamentations 3:22-23

Devotional:

The mercies described in this passage are not recycled from yesterday. They are new every morning. God did not give Joshua the same strategy He used at Jericho when he faced Ai. He gave him something fresh. This

is a critical lesson for anyone who has experienced a season of spiritual success. Yesterday's prayer cannot replace today's prayer. Yesterday's surrender cannot replace today's surrender. Yesterday's faithfulness does not excuse today's disobedience. Success has a dangerous way of making us assume we already know what God is going to do next. Stay close enough to God to hear what He is saying right now, not just what He said before.

Reflection: In what area of your spiritual life have you been relying on what God did in a previous season rather than seeking a fresh word for where you are today?

Practical Application: Before making any significant decision this week, pause and ask God specifically, "What do you want me to do in this situation?" Resist the temptation to assume the answer based on past experience.

Day 3: God Does Not Waste Your Chapter Seven

Reading: Romans 8:28

Devotional:

Romans 8:28 assures us that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. This promise does not exclude your failures, your embarrassments, or your worst decisions. In fact, God used Israel's previous defeat at Ai as the very foundation of their next victory. The enemy assumed Israel's history made them predictable. God used that assumption against the enemy entirely. Your chapter seven, the chapter you wish you could delete, is not wasted in God's hands. He can take what broke you and build something greater

from it. Do not tear that chapter out of your story. Just refuse to live there permanently.

Reflection: What painful chapter in your life have you been tempted to view as only a loss, and how might God be using what you learned there to prepare you for what is ahead?

Practical Application: Identify one lesson you learned from a past failure or painful season. Write it down and thank God specifically for that lesson today, trusting that He has not wasted that experience.

Day 4: Your Past Does Not Have to Predict Your Future

Reading: Isaiah 43:18-19

Devotional:

Isaiah 43:18-19 calls us to stop fixating on former things because God declares He is doing something new. The people of Ai studied Israel's past behavior and concluded they knew exactly what would happen next. They were wrong. God is not bound by your history, your family's history, or the patterns the enemy has observed in your life. No algorithm, no data set, and no track record can contain what God has planned for you. The enemy may know your chapter seven, but he cannot read your chapter eight. When God enters the equation, past patterns do not have to determine future outcomes. God specializes in new things.

Reflection: What narrative about yourself, perhaps rooted in repeated failure or family history, have you accepted as permanent that God may be calling you to release?

Practical Application: Find one promise in Scripture that speaks directly against a lie you have believed about your future. Write it somewhere visible and read it aloud each morning this week.

Day 5: The Ultimate Chapter Eight -- The Resurrection

Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

Devotional:

The greatest chapter seven in history looked like the cross. Betrayal, suffering, death, and a sealed tomb all appeared to signal that the story was finished. Every enemy of God believed they had won. But chapter eight arrived early on a Sunday morning, and with it came the defeat of death itself. First Corinthians 15:54-57 declares that death has been swallowed up in victory and that the victory belongs to us through Jesus Christ. Because He rose, you can rise from your failures. Because He got up, your family can get up. Because there was a chapter eight for Jesus, there is a chapter eight for you. The story is not over. God is still writing.

Reflection: How does the reality of the resurrection change the way you view your current struggles, setbacks, or seasons of waiting?

Practical Application: Share with one person this week the truth that their story is not over. Speak life into someone who may feel stuck in their chapter seven and point them toward the God who always has another chapter.

THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT!

JOSHUA 8:1-2, 18-22

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY

9.27.26

Small Group Guide

"This Time Will Be Different" | Joshua 8

Before You Begin

Open your time together in prayer, asking God to give your group anointed ears and hearts to receive what He planted through His Word. Invite members to share one word that describes where they are spiritually right now.

Sermon Overview

Drawing from Joshua 8, this message traces Israel's return to Ai after a humiliating defeat in Joshua 7. God restored Joshua's courage, revealed a new strategy, and released a conquest that turned Israel's previous failure into the very instrument of their victory. The central truth is this: your worst chapter does not have to become your permanent identity, and God is not finished writing your story.

Key Takeaways

- 1. You cannot live today on yesterday's obedience.** Yesterday's prayer, surrender, and faithfulness do not excuse today's disobedience. Every new battle requires a fresh dependence on God.
- 2. Winning can be more dangerous than losing.** Success has a way of making us stop listening to God. When Israel won at Jericho, their confidence became carelessness, and little Ai defeated them. Humility before God is not just for desperate seasons.
- 3. Restoration does not always mean a different challenge.** Sometimes God gives the challenge a different you. The goal is not always to remove

the difficulty but to send a wiser, humbler, more dependent version of you back to face it.

4. God does not waste your chapter seven. God can take the very thing that embarrassed you, broke you, or humbled you and use it as part of your next victory. The enemy uses your past to predict your future, but God uses your past to position you.

5. Your history does not have to predict your future. The men of Ai thought Israel's algorithm was set. They assumed the past would repeat itself. But when God enters the equation, patterns can be broken and new chapters can be written.

Discussion Questions

Opening (Getting Honest)

1. Without going into more detail than you are comfortable sharing, can you think of a time when a personal victory made you careless or overconfident? What did that season teach you?
 2. The pastor said, "Sometimes winning can be more dangerous than losing." Do you agree? Why or why not?
-

Going Deeper (Into the Text)

3. In Joshua 8:1, God addresses Joshua's fear and discouragement before he addresses the battle. What does that order tell us about how God works in our lives before he works through our lives?
4. The pastor drew a distinction between conviction and condemnation. Conviction says what you did was wrong, so come back to God. Condemnation says what you did is who you are, so

stay away from God. How have you experienced the difference between those two voices in your own life?

5. God did not move Ai. He sent a different Israel back to the same place. Is there a challenge in your life right now where God may be calling you to return, not because the situation has changed, but because you have changed? What would it look like to go back wiser and more dependent on God?
6. The pastor noted that God used Israel's previous failure, their pattern of running, as the very strategy for their next victory. Ai expected Israel to run, and that expectation became a trap. Have you ever seen God take something that embarrassed or defeated you and use it for your good? Share what that looked like.

Personal Reflection (Getting Practical)

7. The pastor addressed young people directly, saying, "Your worst moment does not have to become your permanent identity." Who in your life, whether a young person or someone of any age, needs to hear that message from you this week?
8. The sermon challenged us not to get so attached to what God did that we miss what God is doing. Are there any areas of your faith life where you may be holding onto an old method when God is giving a new command? What might a fresh word from God look like for your current season?
9. The pastor said, "Don't tear chapter seven out of your story. Just don't live there." What is the difference between learning from your chapter seven and living in it? How do you know which one you are doing?

Practical Applications

Choose at least one of the following to practice before your group meets again.

1. Write Your Chapters. Take time this week to privately write out your own chapter seven and chapter eight moments. Identify one season where you failed or fell, and then write what God taught you through it or how he brought you through it. Come prepared to share as much as you are comfortable sharing with the group next time.

2. Pray a Fresh Prayer. The sermon reminded us that yesterday's prayer will not replace today's prayer. Set aside time this week to pray specifically about a challenge you are currently facing, not from memory or habit, but as a fresh conversation with God. Ask him for a fresh word for your current season.

3. Speak Life to Someone in Their Chapter Seven. Identify one person in your life who is in a season of failure, discouragement, or shame. Reach out to them this week with a word of encouragement. Remind them that their worst moment does not have to become their permanent identity and that God is not finished writing their story.

4. Examine Your Algorithms. The enemy uses patterns from your past to predict and limit your future. Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal any area of your life where you have accepted a false narrative about yourself based on past failure. Write it down, pray over it, and ask God to replace it with what he says about your future.

5. Return to Something You Quit. Is there a calling, a relationship, a discipline, or a commitment that you walked away from after a defeat? Pray this week about whether God is calling you back to it, not in your own strength, but with a fresh dependence on him.

Closing Thought

The men of Ai thought they had Israel figured out. They looked at the data, recognized the pattern, and assumed the outcome. But they did not account for God. Whatever data the enemy has collected on you, whatever patterns your past has established, and whatever predictions have been made about your future, none of it accounts for what God can do when he enters the equation. This time will be different, not because the enemy is weaker, but because you are walking with God.

Closing Prayer

Close your time by inviting each group member to share one area of their life where they are believing that this time will be different. Pray over each one specifically, asking God to restore courage, reveal his command, and release the conquest he has already promised.

Scripture references for further study: Joshua 6, Joshua 7, Joshua 8:1-2 and 18-23, Romans 8:1, John 15:5

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The sermon draws a distinction between conviction and condemnation, suggesting that conviction draws us back to God while condemnation pushes us away -- in what ways have you experienced one or the other after a personal failure, and how did it shape your next steps?
2. The pastor argues that 'you cannot live today on yesterday's obedience' -- how does this challenge the tendency to coast on past spiritual victories, and what does it look like practically to maintain a fresh dependence on God each day?
3. God did not remove the city of Ai but instead sent Israel back to face the same enemy with a different strategy -- what does this reveal about how God uses our past failures as preparation rather than disqualification?
4. The sermon suggests that sometimes restoration means God gives the challenge a different you rather than giving you a different challenge -- can you identify a moment in your life where you returned to a difficult situation changed, and what had God worked in you between the two encounters?
5. The pastor warns that success can be more dangerous than failure because it tempts us to stop seeking God's direction -- in what areas of your life are you most at risk of letting achievement replace dependence on God?
6. The sermon draws a provocative parallel between AI the ancient city and artificial intelligence, arguing that technology

can make us more informed without making us more wise -- how should followers of Christ think about the role of technology in spiritual discernment and decision-making?

7. Joshua chapter 7 represents failure and chapter 8 represents restoration, yet both chapters are part of the same story -- why is it important not to tear chapter 7 out of your narrative, and how can past seasons of failure actually serve your future testimony?
8. The pastor emphasizes that the men of Ai predicted Israel's behavior based on past patterns, only to be defeated when God intervened -- how does this speak to the danger of allowing other people's expectations, or even our own self-perception, to define what we believe is possible for our future?
9. The sermon closes by connecting Israel's story to the resurrection of Jesus, framing Friday's crucifixion as a chapter 7 and Sunday morning as chapter 8 -- how does the resurrection serve as the ultimate foundation for believing that no personal failure, loss, or defeat has to be the final chapter?
10. The pastor calls out 'holy amnesia' among adults who have forgotten their own seasons of failure and are slow to extend grace to younger generations -- how can the church cultivate a culture where both accountability and grace are held together, giving people room to grow without excusing harmful behavior?