



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

SERMON TEXT: Joshua 9

KEY POINT: God’s people should be vigilant against deception, even from within themselves and the Church.

FOR LEADERS

- **Attendance!:** We’re asking ALL of our Communities to take attendance on Emergence Connect this season. Please be sure to make a note of who attended your group this week, and input that on your weekly event in EConnect! If you need any assistance with this we’re happy to help!

GETTING STARTED

- [1] Communities Video:** Watch this week’s community extras video!
- [2] Icebreaker:** Where would you recommend someone go for the best pizza in the world?
- [3] Opener:** What was one takeaway you had from the sermon this week?

ATTACKS FROM WITHIN

Ask for a volunteer to read Joshua 9:1-15.

So far in our story of Israel, we’ve seen them battle against the cities of Jericho and Ai. This week the battle comes from within, where a group of people called the Gibeonites deceptively make peace with Israel and corner them into a position where they cannot fully carry out the commands of God. Ironically, the thing that undermined their mission was not their enemy’s hostility, but Israel’s own susceptibility to compromise.

- [1]** In what way(s) is Israel’s mission under Joshua’s leadership similar to the Church’s mission under Jesus’ leadership?
- [2]** Where do you think are some ways in which the Church could be susceptible to assault or deception, either from within or otherwise?

Leaders: Some of the reasons why the Gibeonite deception worked on the people of Israel are the same reasons why the Church is vulnerable today – not because we are necessarily being attacked by enemies of the Gospel, but because we have the same human weaknesses which can damage our integrity as the people of God.

FLATTERY

Pastor Ryan warned us this week about the danger of flattery and noted that we should be mindful of areas of our lives that are most susceptible to flattery – as they are often indicative of idols in our heart.

- [3]** How would you define flattery? In your experience, where do you find flattery most often being used?
- [4]** Where do you see the Gibeonites using flattery to manipulate Israel in our passage this week?
- [5]** What are some visible signs that we might be falling victim to flattery, and how does a healthy relationship with God help guard us against flattery?

Ask for a volunteer to read Romans 16:17-20.



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

- [6]** Have you ever observed a similar situation as to what Paul is warning us about in this passage? Explain.
- [7]** How does the prescribed combination of wisdom and innocence (v.19) help guard us against people trying to manipulate us?

LACK OF DISCERNMENT

In the sermon, Ryan emphasized that we need to be discerning in who we allow to serve in specific ministries within the church. This correlates to Israel’s lack of discernment in hastily establishing a covenant with strangers whose true intentions were not appropriately vetted.

- [8]** Why is discernment so important in ministry? What could happen if we fail to be discerning in our ministry roles? Give examples if you can.
- [9]** How do you think trustworthiness should be established within the body of Christ?
- [10]** Was there ever a time in your own life where you regretted either not first seeking the Lord’s will or not being discerning in your decisions?
- [11]** What does it look like, practically, to seek the Lord’s will and exercise discernment in our decisions?

In 1 Timothy 5:22, Paul warns Timothy not to be “hasty in the laying on of hands.” Ryan went on to explain how focusing only on a person’s skill and knowledge can blind us to other “yellow flags” which should urge us to proceed with caution before placing a person into leadership.

- [12]** What are some of the flags that we should be aware of before appointing someone to a position of leadership?
- [13]** What are some areas of your own life where you would like to see change to be a better minister of the Gospel?

Leaders: For more on the topic of discerning God’s will, check out previous Summer Sessions on Emergence’s Youtube page!

PRAYER

- [1]** Pray that the Lord would make you secure in Christ so as not to be susceptible to flattery.
- [2]** Pray that God would continue to enable our church to discern the Lord’s will and appoint appropriate, discerning leaders to the ministry.
- [3]** Pray that God would give you a heart to seek His will in *all* things.

