

Be Faithful to God

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[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to Joshua 21. Joshua 21, we'll start at verse 43, and we'll read through chapter 22.

So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers.

Not one of their enemies withstood them. The Lord handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed. Every one was fulfilled.

Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, and said to them, You have done all that Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded. You have obeyed me in everything I commanded.

For a long time now, to this very day, you have not deserted your brothers, but have carried out the mission the Lord your God gave you. Now that the Lord your God has given your brothers rest, as he promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you on the other side of the Jordan.

[1 : 14] But be careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you. To love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and serve him with all your heart and all your soul.

Then Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their homes. To the half-tribe of Manasseh, Moses had given land in Bashan, and the other half of the tribe Joshua gave land on the west side of the Jordan with their brothers.

When Joshua sent them home, he blessed them, saying, Return to your homes with your great wealth, with large herds of livestock, with silver, gold, bronze, and iron, and a great quantity of clothing, and divide with your brothers the plunder from your enemies.

So the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh left the Israelites at Shiloh and Canaan to return to Gilead, their own land, which they had acquired in accordance with the command of the Lord through Moses.

When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan.

[2 : 41] And when the Israelites heard that they had built an altar on the border of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them.

So the Israelites sent Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the priest, to the land of Gilead, to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. With him they sent ten of the chief men, one for each of the tribes of Israel, each the head of a family division among the Israelite clans.

When they went to Gilead, to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, they said to them, The whole assembly of the Lord says, How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this?

How could you turn away from the Lord and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now? Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin, even though a plague fell upon the community of the Lord.

And now are you turning away from the Lord? If you rebel again, if you rebel against the Lord today, tomorrow he will be angry with the whole community of Israel.

[4 : 00] If the land you possess is defiled, come over to the Lord's land, where the Lord's tabernacle stands, and share the land with us.

But do not rebel against the Lord or against us by building an altar for yourselves, other than the altar of the Lord our God. When Achan, the son of Zerah, acted unfaithfully regarding the devoted

things, did not wrath come upon the whole community of Israel?

He was not the only one who died for his sin. Then Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh replied to the heads of the clans of Israel, The mighty one, God, the Lord, the mighty one, God, the Lord, he knows, and let Israel know, if this has been in rebellion or disobedience to the Lord, do not spare us this day.

If we have built our own altar to turn away from the Lord and to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings or to sacrifice fellowship offerings on it, may the Lord himself call us to account.

No, we did it for fear that someday your descendants might say to ours, What do you have to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? The Lord has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you Reubenites and Gadites.

[5 : 22] You have no share in the Lord. So your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the Lord. That is why we said, Let us get ready and build an altar, but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices.

On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow that we will worship the Lord at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices, and fellowship offerings.

Then in the future, your descendants will not be able to say to ours, You have no share in the Lord.

And we said, If they ever say this to us or to our descendants, we will answer, Look at the replica of the Lord's altar, which our fathers built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.

Far be it from us to rebel against the Lord and turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices, other than the altar of the Lord, our God that stands before his tabernacle.

When Phineas, the priest, and the leaders of the community, the heads of the clans of the Israelites, heard what Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. And Phineas, son of Eleazar the priest, said to Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, Today we know that the Lord is with us because you have not acted unfaithfully toward the Lord in this matter.

[6 : 52] Now you have rescued the Israelites from the Lord's hand. Then Phineas, son of Eleazar the priest, and the leaders returned to Canaan from their meeting with the Reubenites and Gadites in Gilead and reported to the Israelites.

They were glad to hear the report and praised God. And they talked no more about going to war against them to devastate the country where the Reubenites and the Gadites lived.

And the Reubenites and the Gadites gave the altar this name, a witness between us that the Lord is God. Let's hear the word preached.

Well, when Jesus saves you, he turns you against the world and the flesh and the devil.

He turns you and he makes you their enemy. And that means the Christian life is war. There's no way around that. And sometimes that's a direct conflict, but other times it's much more subtle.

[7 : 59] Instead of coming at you with a sword, the devil can come at you with merely a needle. And both are dangerous in their own way.

The devil can come as a phlebotomist, someone who takes blood, takes life. And what he wants to do is hook that needle into your vein and just slowly drain the blood out of you.

Weaker little by little, day by day, until you're barely crawling. Or you can picture it another way. If you make some bread dough and you put it in a bowl and leave it on your countertop there, at first it's soft and flexible.

But leave it there long enough and sort of this crust, this thick, hard, crispy part develops over the top. And you leave that dough there long enough and the hardening goes deeper and deeper and deeper.

And so the deeper the carelessness goes. The deeper the heartlessness goes. And that really is the constant danger of the Christian life is that subtle creep of carelessness, of heartlessness, of lovelessness.

[9 : 24] And that's where the book of Joshua comes in. Believe it or not, the book of Joshua was written for just that problem. That subtle creep of carelessness and lethargy.

Now, the book of Joshua can be divided into basically four sections. And entering the land, that's chapters 1 through 4. Taking the land, that's chapters 5 through 12.

Then possessing the land, actually coming into ownership and controlling it and dividing it up, that's 13 through 21. And then the last three chapters, 22 through 24, is keeping.

Keeping what God has given you. Keeping the land. Now, we've just come to that last section of keeping the land. And the thing that we have to be notice here is just because they were in the land didn't necessarily mean that they were going to keep it.

It wasn't an automatic thing. And so, listen to Deuteronomy chapter 30. If your heart turns away and you are not obedient and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed.

[10:42] You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. You won't live there long if your heart's drawn away. A few verses later, Moses goes on, choose life.

That sounds like Joshua in a couple chapters, but Moses says it here. Choose life so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God. Listen to His voice and hold fast to Him for the Lord is your life and He will give you many years in the land He swore to give to your fathers.

And so, what's the key to keeping the land? Well, it had to do with their hearts. Did you hear all the heart words in that little passage? If you're drawn away, that's a heart condition.

If your heart turns away, listening to His voice, holding fast, those are all heart words. The great danger was the subtle creep of lovelessness, carelessness, wandering away.

And that's where the book of Joshua comes in because it was written, it was no mere history, instead it was this plea, a theological plea, for Israel to be faithful to God, to stay close to God, to keep their hearts close to God, to be faithful to Him.

[12:04] And so, it was a record of God's faithfulness to them. That's what we've seen. It's a record of how God was so faithful to them. But in these last three chapters, the book goes to the heart and says, now you, you need to be faithful to God in return.

So, God's faithfulness, that's that last little bit that we read. Every promise, every good promise, the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel, none of them failed, every one was fulfilled.

And then, now you have these last three chapters, and these last three chapters, together, they form this plea for faithfulness. The Lord has been faithful to you, He's kept His promises to you.

Now you, you be faithful to God. Stay close to Him. Don't let your life be sucked away. Don't let your hearts be hardened like that dough left out on the counter.

So, the original audience of Joshua, the original audience, you can imagine, they hear this book, they read this book for the very first time.

[13:14] It was probably those first few generations after Joshua and the elders that were alive in Joshua's time, after they had died. And, what happened?

Well, after Joshua comes Judges. And, after Joshua, Israel quickly, quickly started going astray.

And, into that context of these wandering hearts, of these people's hearts that are now drifting from the Lord and drifting from a love for Him, the book of Joshua comes and it says, God was faithful to us.

He gave us this land. He kept all of His promises. Now, we need to be faithful to Him. So, chapter 22 is the very first word about that. And, it's about these eastern tribes going home.

and you, just in this chapter, you see three examples of faithfulness to God and what that looks like and how that plays out in a people's real life.

[14:19] And, the whole thing is encouraging the first audience and it's encouraging us to be these kind of people, to be a faithful people to our faithful God.

Now, the first example of these three is, you see it in these two and a half tribes in their faithfulness to do what they said they were going to do.

You see it in their faithfulness to do what they said they were going to do. Their faithfulness to keep fighting for God and for their brothers. Now, you remember, where were their families?

Where were their farms? Where were their livestock? Where were their sons and daughters and wives? They were across the Jordan. And, they went with their brothers and they kept fighting until their brothers had won the land.

But, the deal was, you can have that land if you continue to fight for your brothers. And so, most of them or many of them, probably not all of them because some needed to stay, but many of the men left their families, their farms, their wives, their children and they went across and they fought and they kept fighting for seven years and now you see verse 3, Joshua says, for a long time now to this very day, you have not deserted your brothers, but you've carried out the mission the Lord your God gave you.

[15 : 48] You didn't desert them. Now, that word is repeated several times in Joshua. It's the idea of you didn't break covenant with them.

You weren't faithless towards them. Joshua 1.5, God says to Joshua, I will be with you and I will never leave you nor forsake you.

That's the word, desert you. I'll never desert you. I'll never forsake you. I won't desert you, Joshua. In chapter 24, the people say, we won't forsake the Lord. We won't forsake God.

We're not going to desert Him. We're not bailing out on Him. And so, do you get the feeling or do you get the lesson here? That these two and a half tribes, they were showing their faithfulness by not deserting their brothers.

And so, they were faithful to God because they did what they said they were going to do. They kept their word even when it hurt. And that meant, and that means, doing what you've said even when it's inconvenient.

[16 : 58] Completing the mission God gave you even when it's not easy. So, they were away from their families. And men, if you travel for your job, you know, it can be very difficult to be away from your family.

But these, or if you've served in the military, difficult to be away from your families. And these men were away from their families. They're risking their life and their limb for their brothers. Their families are at home.

Their farms are at home. Their animals and children and everything else. Everything that they hold dear, they're at home. And so, this isn't easy, but they kept their word. They kept their word.

And they carried out the mission God gave them. And that's the lesson for us. And so, what does giving God your heart look like? What does staying faithful to God look like?

Well, sometimes it's extravagant. sometimes it's martyrdom. Sometimes it's something extreme. But many times, it's keeping the promises that you've made to God.

[18 : 08] Keeping the promises you've made to God and to His people. It's carrying out the mission God gave you. The two and a half tribes' obedience and faithfulness was not just done in chunk, in a big seven-year chunk.

It was day after day after day of faithfulness. And so, husbands, that means loving and cherishing our wives.

Not in word alone. Anyone can love their wife when the minister says, repeat after me and they're throwing rice and you're going on a honeymoon or times are good.

But men, keeping your promise that you made to God, before God, to that person, carrying out that mission that God gave us. And what was that mission? Husbands, love your wives just like Christ loved the church.

And that's not easy. That's not convenient sometimes. But brothers, we don't, we don't want a milkshake easy life, do we?

[19 : 17] We want blood sweat, sweat, that kind of love. Where I love and cherish her and I sacrifice for her. It's costly love.

That's what faithfulness to God looks like. It's keeping on when it's inconvenient. And wives, it's honoring and respecting your husbands. Not just when they're Prince Charming, but when they're not.

It's guarding your heart when you're, when other people's lives are looking better than yours. It's keeping faithful when day after day it can be dull and repetitive.

And you're in the trenches. And so, shall we sail to bed, to heaven on beds of ease? The two and a half tribes show us a better way.

They show us faithfulness and action. They show us men who are faithful to God and carrying out the mission God gave them. And what about us? I mean, maybe you're not married and so what about you?

[20 : 21] Well, if you're a church member, we've all made promises and commitments to one another. Things that we said before God that we would do to submit to Jesus, to submit to the elders, to love one another, to be here, to be faithful in attendance.

So Wednesday night can be a difficult night to come out and pray, but, and I know it can, in the winter especially, and you've worked hard and it's dark, it's hard to come sometimes.

But what did the two and a half tribes do? They were faithful even when it was hard. They kept their word. And that, and the point is not, that's not some sort of legalistic requirement.

It's a question of, where is your heart? Where's your love for God? That you, you keep your word, you do the things that you said you were going to do, even when it's hard.

Love and passion for God will do those things. And it is about keeping that love burning for Him.

Because the devil is always going to be trying to get that line into your vein.

[21 : 29] to just subtly suck the life out of you, suck the resolve out of you, suck the joy out of your life. And so it becomes harder and harder. And so this is an example.

What does it look like to be faithful? Well, it's keeping your word even when it hurts or when it's hard. Well, we have to keep on moving. The two and a half tribes, they've done very well and Joshua sends them home with commendation.

He praises their efforts. He affirms what they did was so good. And I just want to say, just because I'm talking like that to you doesn't mean that there's nothing that I can't commend each and every one of you.

If we had a lot of time and we could do this personally, I could sit down and commend so many of you for so much of what you've done. But we all need the warning. We all need this encouragement.

And so the two and a half tribes, they go home and they're loaded down with all sorts of good things. And their hearts, you can imagine, their hearts are full of joy. Their hearts are full of praise.

[22 : 32] They have camels and horses and donkeys and all sorts of good stuff that they are bringing home. Their hearts are full of passion for the Lord. They're revived. They're encouraged.

They have that sense of satisfaction of we did what God said it for us to do. And so they're walking home. And they're ready to serve God at home, just like they did away.

They're looking forward to getting back to their families. They're ready to look to, they're ready to serve God there. And then we come to the second example of faithfulness. And you see it in their hearts as they build this altar.

Now this altar causes almost a civil war. But we want to look at what was going on in their hearts. Why did they build it? Well, at the side of the Jordan River, a scary thought hits them.

Now, why was it the Jordan River? Why was it here that all of a sudden they thought this anxiety started to grow on them? Well, why now? Well, I think it helps to realize that when you think of the Jordan River, you shouldn't think of something that was easy to cross.

[23 : 40] You shouldn't think of the Yellow River or any sort of small river with a gentle bank that you could somehow manage to get over fairly easily. It wasn't a little river with a little bank.

The Jordan River Valley is more of a trench and a rift in the ground than a valley. Listen to how one person put it.

There may be something on the surface of another planet to match the Jordan Valley. Now, I don't know if that person had never seen the Grand Canyon. I don't know what's going on. But there may be something on the surface of another planet to match the Jordan Valley, but there's nothing on this one.

No other part of our earth uncovered by water sinks to 300 feet below sea level. And here we have a rift more than 160 miles long and between 2 and 15 miles across, which falls from sea level to as deep as 1,300 feet below sea level.

And another one called it this colossal ditch. This colossal ditch. And so they reach this colossal ditch. And there's no bridges. This colossal ditch.

[24 : 52] Their hearts are full of love for God. They're ready to serve God. And it was at the side of the Jordan River that a scary thought and anxiety came upon them.

And it was, what if in the future the other tribes who live on the other side start to think that we're outsiders?

That we don't belong? That our children aren't part of the people of God? What if they cut us off from the sanctuary? What about if they say, we can't worship God in the sanctuary anymore because we're not a part of God's people.

We're not in God's land. What about our children? What's going to happen to them? We want our children to worship God.

And it's going to be so easy for them to say, you're on the other side. You don't belong to us. And our God isn't your God. And so gripped with this fear, this anxiety, they build a huge altar, a great altar.

[26 : 01] The same word is used when Moses saw the burning bush. He said, I have to go and see this great site, this stunning, amazing site. So they build this altar.

It's the sixth monument in the book of Joshua. There's going to be another one for a total of seven. And pretty much each one of these monuments, these pillars, are about God's faithfulness. Or they have to do with faithfulness. God's faithfulness, Israel's faithfulness, Achan's unfaithfulness. And this one, as we're going to see, is about being faithful to each other as we're faithful to God. That we're going to be faithful to each other and we're going to be faithful to God that the Lord is our God. And so what do they want more than anything?

What do they want more than anything? They want themselves and they want their children serving the Lord and loving the Lord. That's the heart behind this.

[27 : 09] They want their children to worship the Lord. And so they cared about themselves. They're caring about their children. They never wanted to stray. And so they built this imposing altar.

Well, the other tribes didn't know that. The other tribes didn't know why they were doing that and what it all meant. And that's where we see the third example of faithfulness, of this zealous faithfulness for the Lord.

And so when everyone hears about it, when all of Israel hears about it, they jump to the wrong conclusion. And they think the two and a half tribes are building this altar in order to offer sacrifices as sort of like another sanctuary.

And that was something that God strictly had forbidden. It was something that God said, absolutely not. There's only one altar. There's one sanctuary where you must come and offer your sacrifices. There wasn't multiple altars because multiple altars were going to lead to multiple gods. Multiple altars were going to lead to multiple different ideas about who this God is.

[28 : 23] And that just drifts off into each area having their own God. And so there was this centralized altar with this centralized priesthood where the central doctrine can be taught.

And so the one sanctuary was to protect Israel from going astray. And so from the other, from the nine and a half tribes, or the ten and a half tribes, their perspective, they see these two and a half tribes are now taking the very first steps towards idolatry, towards unfaithfulness.

And now their own fear, their own anxiety kicks in. And so they say, what are they doing? They're leaving God already?

They're already? They're going to worship idols already? They're deserting? They're rebelling against God? And so they saw the two and a half tribes as just an infected, gangrene-like arm. And so they put on their swords and they're ready to amputate these two and a half tribes rather than let that idolatry spread. It was a misunderstanding.

[29 : 38] But you still see their faithfulness. You still see their zeal. Their zeal for the Lord.

And you see their vigilance. Their care. You see how serious they are. This is not, they're not taking anything lightly.

But before they go to war, they send a group, an envoy, a group of men to talk first. And who was in the lead?

It was Phineas, son of Eleazar. And his appointment was significant. He's probably now sort of like the second highest priest in the land after his father.

But it was significant for another reason. Because you know in negotiations, when companies meet or countries meet, who you send, how they come, the protocol, those things are all very important.

[30 : 45] Because everything that you're doing in this negotiation, you're sending a message. So when two, a president and a prime minister meet, you know that this is very serious negotiations.

It's reached the highest level. If you're talking junior age down here, you know that this isn't such an important deal. But here is Eleazar Phineas. And his appointment is significant because his appointment is sending a message loud and clear to these two and a half tribes.

And what is the message? The message is, this is serious and we are not taking any unfaithfulness lightly. You better have some good answers for what you've done.

Yeah, better have something good to say. Well, why Phineas? Why is he such a powerful statement just in being there? Well, years earlier, a younger Phineas, Phineas is a young man, had seen a group of Moabite women come into the camp and begin to seduce the men of the camp into unfaithfulness, into sin.

And where did these Moabite women come from? Well, Balaam had come up with this idea. You remember the Balaam who had tried to curse Israel and he couldn't.

[32 : 00] He ended up blessing them. But Balaam wasn't done. He said, well, if we can't do it that way, what we'll do is we'll have a second way. Instead of having God directly curse them, we'll get Israel to bring down God's curse on themselves.

And so what we'll do is we'll send in these Moabite women and as they commit sexual immorality and they commit idolatry, they'll bring God's curse on their own heads.

Their own faithlessness will destroy them. And that's the sin of Peor that Phineas is talking about that we read about.

And so God's wrath started breaking out against Israel that day in Peor. And it only ended when Phineas grabbed a spear, barged into a tent, and thrust the spear through a man and a woman, killing them both.

And the Lord said about Phineas, and this is such a wonderful witness and a wonderful testimony to Phineas. The Lord said about Phineas, he was as zealous for my name as I am.

[33 : 13] Whoa. He's as zealous for my name as I am. And so it's Phineas who's in the lead as they come to the two and a half tribes.

And so they mean business. They're zealous for God's name. They know that if there is sin in the camp and it's just allowed to go on, God will turn against them.

And so in faithfulness, they go and they want to clear things up. So how can we as a church, how can we as individuals be faithful to God?

Well, you see it here. We're faithful to God when we take sin seriously in ourselves and in others. Now there was no sin on the part of the two and a half tribes in this situation.

There was just the thought that there was. But you see it. They don't even want the appearance of deserting God. And so where you see a hard heart, a hardened, lifeless church, always shows itself when everyone is light on sin and there's no church discipline.

[34 : 31] When we aren't serious about sin in our own lives and we don't care about sin in our brother or sister's life. you already know the devil has got a grip on that person or that church.

But faithfulness to God is having a phineous heart. Zealous. Zealous for God's name. And it looks like Israel saying get that sin out of the camp.

Get it out. We don't want to bring God's wrath down upon us. And so why do we sit back afraid to say anything? Why do we sit back and say, well, that's just the way it is.

Isn't that a heart problem? Isn't it a heart problem? I'm not talking about, and I'm not talking about nitpicking here.

and I'm not talking about going on graceless witch hunts, but where there's no warning, where there's no admonition, where there's no rebuke or church discipline, not just from the pastors, but none of that is going on within the congregation.

[35 : 48] No zeal, no faithfulness. Satan is already winning. He's already got the needle in the vein. The blood is going.

The dough is hardening. Truth without love is dangerous and heartless and it kills and love without truth becomes useless. Well, Israel has warned, they have admonished the others, how can you do this?

Why are you doing this? Haven't we been through enough? Didn't Achan sin teach you anything? It wasn't just Achan that died. You saw what the Lord did and now the two and a half tribes respond and they basically say no, no, no.

And they call down God as a witness. They call on God's name three times, the mighty one, God, the Lord, and then they repeat it, the mighty one, God, the Lord, he knows, he knows our hearts.

He knows our hearts. He knows why we did this. He knows it wasn't because we were being unfaithful. It wasn't because we were turning away. We're not deserting God. It's not that at all. God can call us into account and we will, he knows.

[37 : 04] And if it's not what we're saying, then may God take us in hand and hold us to account.

This altar isn't an altar to worship at. It's a witness to you. It's a witness to both of us that we belong.

And you see how it ends, how chapter 22 ends. This altar is a witness between us that the Lord is God.

So instead of this altar being something that was designed to point them away from God. This altar was a confession.

We are one nation. Yes, divided by a Jordan River Valley, but we are one nation, one people under God. Our God's been faithful to us and we want to be faithful to him.

And so we've seen these three examples of faithfulness. It's faithfulness in doing the mission that God gave you. You see it in a heart that says, I want to be faithful to God and I want the same thing for my children.

[38 : 19] And then you see it in the other Israelites and they're saying, I'm going to faithfully pursue my brothers when it seems that they're straying. Now, just three very quick applications and then we're done.

Well, how do we apply this? First, it's good to begin by examining God's faithfulness and examine God's faithfulness. That's how Joshua 21.45 isn't that true in your life?

Has any of God's promises failed for you? Has God been faithful to you? has he ever broken his word to you?

Has he ever deserted you? He promised, if you're a Christian, he promised you life in Jesus and he found it.

When you came, he found life. He promised forgiveness in Jesus and when you came, he found it. no one's ever come to Jesus with all their heart and been turned away.

[39 : 26] God is faithful. He promised to never leave you and he's never left you. Day by day, moment by moment, he's carried you.

He's helped you. He stood by you. It's that word of God's unfailing love. His love has never failed. He's faithful. And so first, examine God's faithfulness. Remember it. See it again in your life. And then in the second place, examine your heart. That's what Joshua is calling us to, to examine our own hearts.

It's our memory verse this week. Let us examine our ways and test them. My ways, how am I walking? Where am I going?

What direction am I heading? In two months, where am I going to be if I keep walking this way? Am I walking closer to God or is my heart drifting? It's Proverbs 4.23, above all else, guard your heart.

[40 : 33] So examine God's faithfulness and then examine your own. Examine your own heart. Is carelessness creeping in? Does the devil have that needle in your vein?

Or maybe you are faithful. Every self-examination doesn't have to end up with you convicted. Sometimes it can make you feel, you can realize, I am obeying. Things are well, and so I'll do better. But, then three, last, and this is for all of us, whether upon examination we find our hearts have wandered, or upon examination we find that, you know what, we are closer to the Lord, we are going the right direction.

And the third is recommit to God and to his people. That's what the book of Joshua is pushing the first audience to do.

Remember, God's been faithful, it's time for us to recommit ourselves to him. God has been faithful to us, let's not wander away anymore, let's come back to him.

[41 : 47] That's how the first people, the first audience would have read it. And so carelessness was creeping in, and God inspired a man to write the book of Joshua. And said, look at God's faithfulness, now let's be faithful to him.

And so recommit to him. Recommit your heart to him. Recommit your love to him. Just practically, what does it take to recommit?

Well, surely it starts with confession. Confession of our own cold heart. And then it's doing the things that you did at the beginning.

Remember the height from which you've fallen and do the first things. And really it is recommitting your heart. Saying again, Lord, here's my heart.

heart. I'm following you again. Help me to begin again to be a Christian. So you give him your heart again. Well, let's do that, brothers and sisters.

[42 : 51] God's been faithful to us. Let's be faithful to him. Let's pray. Amen. our heavenly father.

Father, we thank you for this word. Our Lord Jesus, we thank you that you're so faithful to us that you kept your promises even when it took you to a cross and to the grave.

God's And you gave God your heart again and again. You gave him your heart in the garden of Gethsemane. And you were faithful to cling to us and to cling to your God.

And so we pray that you would put that same heart and same spirit in us that would say not my way, not my will, but your will be done.

Father, thank you that even now you are in faithfulness calling sinners to yourself and mercy and pity. You're saying come and believe and thank you that everyone who comes, you don't turn away any of them, but you receive them as you said in Jesus Christ.

[44 : 12] Thank you that you are this unchangeable God. So help us to go with our hearts clinging to you, wanting and longing to be closer to you.

And I pray this in Jesus name. Amen.