



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
June 2, 2022
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Photo: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Ones,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”
(Matthew 26:41)

Did You Know?

AUTHOR

Traditionally attributed to **Joshua** himself, except for the final five verses (24:29-33), which describe Joshua's death and legacy.

DATE

Approximately 1375 BC

IN TEN WORDS OR LESS

The Israelites capture and settle the promised land of Canaan.

UNIQUE AND UNUSUAL

Joshua is one of few major Bible characters who seemed to do everything right – he was a strong leader, completely committed to God, who never fell into recorded sin or disobedience. Only one mistake mars his record: Joshua's experience with the Gibeonites, one of the local groups he should have destroyed. Fearing for their lives, they appeared before Joshua dressed in old clothes, carrying dry, moldy bread, claiming they had come from a faraway land, Joshua and the Israelite leaders “*did not inquire of the Lord*” (9:14) and agreed to a peace treaty. When Joshua learned the truth, he honored his agreement with the Gibeonites – but made them slaves.

QUOTABLE

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (1:9)

SO WHAT?

Joshua shows over and over how God blesses his people.

(Know Your Bible; Barbour Publishing)

Personal Insight

I can relate to the life experience in the Scripture passage and the meditation below. Can you? How many times did it happen that we went after our own heads, and as Joshua 9:14 puts it “did not inquire of the Lord”? Speaking on my behalf: the results had never been favourable.

I agree so much with Corrie Ten Boom's quote: “*Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?*” Should we “inquire of the Lord” more often and use prayers as means of guiding principle, we would be exposed to less need for emergency assistance from the Holy One. So, let us remember Apostle Paul's words: “**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**” (Philippians 4:6)

Grace and peace to you all,

Rev. Maria



PRESSING PAUSE TO PRAY

[They] did not inquire of the Lord.

Joshua 9:14

READ Joshua 9:7–15

The fire hydrant gushed into the street, and I saw my opportunity. Several cars had splashed through before me, and I thought, *What a great way to get a free wash!* My car hadn't been cleaned for a month and the dust was thick. So I fired it up and headed into the deluge.

Crack!

It happened so fast. The sun had already beaten down on my black car that morning, heating its glass and interior. But the water from the hydrant was frigid. As soon as the cold gush hit the hot windshield, a crack struck like lightning from top to bottom. My "free" car wash ended up costing me plenty.

If only I had "pressed pause" beforehand to think or even to pray. Ever have a moment like that? The people of Israel did, under far weightier circumstances. God had promised to help them drive out other nations as they entered the land He'd given them (Joshua 3:10) so they wouldn't be tempted by false gods (Deuteronomy 20:16–18). But one of the nations saw Israel's victories and used stale bread to trick them into believing they lived far away. "The Israelites sampled their provisions *but did not inquire of the Lord*. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace" (Joshua 9:14–15, italics added), unknowingly circumventing God's instructions.

When we make prayer a first resort instead of a last, we invite God's direction, wisdom, and blessing. May He help us remember to "press pause" today.

By **James Banks**

REFLECT & PRAY

Thank You, Father, for giving wisdom "generously" and "without finding fault" (James 1:5) to those who ask. Please help me to pause more to talk to You. Amen.

What decision have you rushed into instead of talking it over with God? What do you need to discuss with Him today?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

The account in Joshua 9 is known as the "Gibeonite deception." The story is rather obscure, but the caution not to rely on our understanding but to seek counsel from God is seen in other Scripture passages. Proverbs 3:5–6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." The Hebrew word translated "understanding" in this passage refers to limited human discernment. Solomon's prayerful posture is instructive as well. On the threshold of governing God's people, he asked for a "discerning heart" (1 Kings 3:9). God's answer? "I will give you a wise and discerning heart" (v. 12). - By: **Arthur Jackson**

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