

Learning to Pray with Impact - Part 2

The boldest prayer in the Bible

In this series, we are learning how to pray with impact. Today we are going to study one of the most impactful prayers in the Bible

Text: Joshua 10:12-14

Context: As Joshua continues the conquest of the promised land, 5 Amorite kings came against him. Verse 5 says that they came with “*all their armies*”.

These were not some small, unsophisticated, tribal-type armies. The Amorites were a very advanced civilization by 2000 BC. The code of Hammurabi (a compilation of their laws) is still studied in Law schools today. The museum of the Louvre contains more than 20000 tablets with writings from those days.

God helped Joshua in that impossible battle. However, in order to ensure a complete victory, Joshua needed more time to pursue them. As the end of the day approached, the enemies could escape in the dark of the night. Something miraculous would have to happen, like time standing still!

What would you do if you were in a battle and that not only the odds were stacked against you (5 to 1) but you are also running out of time?

There are 4 very powerful things Joshua did:

1. Joshua spoke to the Lord

V.12a says, “*Then Joshua spoke to the Lord*”

Prayer is how we respond to the assaults of the enemy, how we respond to pressure, how we face the adversities of life.

As we saw last week in **James 5:13** – “*is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray*”. The prayer of a righteous man avails much, “*makes tremendous power available, dynamic in its working*”

Joshua spoke to the Lord. Speak to the Lord!

2. Joshua spoke to the elements

V.12b - “*Sun stand still over Gibeon, and Moon over the valley of Aijalon*”

There is a time to pray to God and there is a time to speak to your circumstances. Many speak to God but never to their circumstances. This is an element of prayer carried throughout the scriptures.

Jesus spoke to

- a fig tree that withered,
- storms and they ceased,
- a dead man like Lazarus, by saying “come forth”,
- He rebuked the fever in Peter’s mother in law, etc.

Jesus taught us to do the same:

Mark 11:20-24 ²⁰ Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. ²¹ And Peter, remembering, said to Him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.” ²² So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. ²³ For assuredly, I say to you, whoever **says** to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he **says**. ²⁴ Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

What we say is so important. In Daniel 10:12 we read how an angel said “because of your words I was sent to you”.

There is a time to speak to God but then there is a time to engage our circumstances:

Exodus 14:15-16 - And the Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

3. Joshua spoke to spiritual entities

The sun and the moon that Joshua spoke to were not just the star at the centre of our solar system or the little planet visible from the earth.

The Amorites worshiped the sun and the moon. To them, they were spiritual entities and deities – the deities they relied upon for victory in battle.

The Amorites had monthly charts with different positions of the sun and the moon, which corresponded to different omens – some pointing to ‘good fortune’ some not. These omens determined whether a battle should be done in a certain day or not.

Joshua interfered with the position of both sun and moon, he short-circuited their omens.

V.13 – “So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day”.

Joshua’s command not only allowed success in the battle but demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the demon-gods of the Amorites.

a) There was a physical battle going on but it was also a spiritual battle.

Most battles we face in the natural are often also spiritual battles. The way we fight these battles is in prayer.

Ephesians 6:10-18

v. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Principalities – *Archae* – highest ranking

Powers – *exousia* – delegated authorities

Spiritual hosts – *Kosmokrateros* (this word was used in antiquity to picture a camp where soldiers are trained to become an army)

Wickedness - *Poneiros* – *bad, vile, vicious.*

For instance, in Daniel 10 we see how these demons tried to oppose and delay the answers to Daniel's prayers.

b) Jesus has given us authority to deal with these entities

Luke 10:19 – *“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you”.*

1 Cor. 10:4-5 – *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,”*

4. Joshua spoke the most audacious prayer ever prayed by a man, up to that point

Sun stand still over Gibeon [east]; and Moon, in the valley of Aijalon [west]”!

Joshua had no idea that his command slowed down 6.6. Septillion tons of spinning gravel and water, just to give Israel victory over their enemies.

What a great encouragement for you and I about how our prayers touch God.

Dr Robert Boyd wrote:

“It is interesting to note that parallel accounts in the records of other nations show that the incident of "Joshua's Long Day" is not an isolated one. There is indisputable evidence from the modern science of ethnology that such an event occurred as Joshua records. In the ancient Chinese writings there is a legend of a long day. The Incas of Peru and the Aztecs of Mexico have a like record. There is a Babylonian and Persian legend of a day that was miraculously extended. Herodotus, an ancient historian, recounts that while in Egypt, a priest showed him their temple records, and that he read of a day which was twice the natural length of any day that had ever been recorded” (Robert Boyd, Boyds Bible Handbook, pp. 122,123).

One last thought

Let us look again at **verse 14**:

“And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel”.

- a) No day like that! This was an extraordinary day. God can give us extraordinary days and extraordinary weeks and extraordinary years – if we pray bold, faith-filled prayers!
- b) This was a day worth recording in the Bible so that God’s followers of all times could believe big like Joshua.

Romans 15:4 – *“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”*

- c) *“There has been no day like that before or after it ” ... well, only up to the time when the book of Joshua was written. Because in **2 Kings 20:10-11**, it happened again:*

And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees. So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz."

Once God does something, He sets a precedent of blessing for future generations to appropriate.

Conclusion

In this series, we are learning how to pray with impact. Today we learned about one of the most impactful prayers in the Bible. Today we saw that

- **Joshua spoke to God,**
- **Joshua spoke to the elements**
- **Joshua spoke to spiritual entities**
- **Joshua spoke the most audacious prayer ever prayed.**

... So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.