**Getting the Job Done Right**

Text: Judges 1:22-36

Theme: As good soldiers of Jesus Christ we must do our best to accomplish our Commander’s goals and purposes.

Introduction: Our text concludes chapter 1 of Judges. It lays the foundation for all that follows. Therefore, we can learn how important it is to establish good foundations. Friendship Baptist Church is laying a foundation at this time. I would like us to consider from this passage some things we can do now so that later a great building can be put on top of this foundation.

Everyone here should be excited about the future. Few Christians ever get to be part of a brand-new church. Most people get saved through the ministry or through the testimony of an established church. Very few are ever there when the foundation is laid.

The generation of Joshua was there when the foundation of the nation of Israel was laid. Perhaps we tend to think there was a great deal of time between Joshua and Judges. After all, 2:10 says a whole new generation arose which knew not the Lord nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. But that really does not demand many decades. I’ve noticed that there seems to be a new generational designation just about every ten years or so.

In our previous studies we considered some of the things that that generation of Israel did wrong. Today, I would like us to consider the things that we could do right now that would help us lay a solid foundation for a great future. Perhaps someone might be tempted to think, “Why is this necessary?” After all, don’t we believe that our Lord is coming soon? We do absolutely believe that the Saviour could return at any moment. But His expectation for us is to watch and occupy till He comes. It is not to serve ourselves, the world, or anything else.

Perhaps Israel’s great failure was not a failure in defeating idolatrous enemies whom God had cursed. Perhaps it was a failure to correctly identify themselves. We can only have the correct measure of ourselves if our perspective is heavenly. Our goal should always be with eternity having the precedence. That doesn’t mean we have to give everything we possess or spend all our time soul winning. God’s Word has given us clear instruction about this. We owe God a tithe of all we possess. That means 10% of our treasure, 10% of our time, and 10% of our talent (by talent I mean the spiritual gifts given each of us when we were born again).

It is as simple as that! He lets us keep 90% for ourselves, though in reality it all belongs to Him. Even the breath in our lungs is lent to us by His gracious providence. So, let’s consider a few things suggested by our text that can help us build a solid foundation for this church. Even if we ourselves are not the ones who build upon this foundation, those who come after us will thank us for getting the job done right!

Laying a Solid Foundation in Recognition (22-26).

I think the first thing that we should do is to build by laying a solid foundation in recognition. In recognition of what you ask? Notice our text in verse 22. “And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Bethel.”

*In Recognition that we are not alone in our warfare.*

Previously, the warfare accomplished by Judah and Simeon had been related. That passage ended with the complete failure of the Benjaminites to drive out the Canaanites from around Jerusalem, which was in their territory, but which bordered the territory of Judah. Bethel was also in their territory and bordered Ephraim’s territory.

We are all in this fight together. Sometimes brothers and sisters don’t get along very well. No matter how much you may dislike another brother or sister in Christ, and no matter how many times they have offended you, they will be there with you in eternity. The concern should not be our feelings, no matter how badly they were injured. Our concern should be to accomplish the will of Christ Jesus.

Despite Benjamin’s failures, the tribes around them recognized that the job had to be done. If we don’t do our job right, then God will have to use another to get it done. Our potential rewards will become theirs. Our potential victories will become theirs. It is vitally important that we remember God uses those who make themselves available for His use. God’s work will always be accomplished through us or in spite of us.

Let me also say that God’s work is not best accomplished by those who the world applauds. God loves working through a small righteous remnant. In that day, it was not all accomplished through Judah and Simeon. Some of God’s will was accomplished through the house of Joseph. I know the tendency is to think the churches with the biggest buildings, and the largest attendance are the ones God is blessing the most. That has never been the case! In my experience the biggest churches usually have pastors who unusually skilled in manipulation and coercion. That is why those churches typically collapse after their dynamic pastor leaves or dies. God nearly always works through a small righteous remnant.

*In Recognition of who enables us to win any victory.*

Go back to verse 22 and see the end of it. “And the Lord was with them.” What a foundation for success! The Lord was with them. They didn’t get the victory because they bigger or had more resources than others. They succeeded because the Lord was with them. They Lord always blesses those who are with Him.

It is tempting to think that God loves beautiful, talented, wealthy people because they seem to have it all. Maybe that is why the Book of James strongly rebuked the church at Jerusalem for showing favor to wealthy visitors while looking down on poor visitors (James 2:1-9). When my wife and I were in Bible College, a man who started a new church in Virginia spoke in one of our chapel services. During service he denied that passage in James. He stated rather emphatically that to start a new church in middle class America, you had to concentrate on reaching wealthy people because even if you filled a building with poor people, they couldn’t help you build a nice building. His theory for church planting was logical and also worldly. It involved sight and not faith.

I know another church in Arizona that focused on reaching the poor through a food bank ministry. That church was built on faith, and God has blessed it mightily! That is the foundation I hope we can build in our church. We are not going to ignore wealthy people, or people with high positions in society, but we are not going to treat them like God loves them more. Remember that Jesus never said it is easier for a poor man to go through the eye of a needle than it is for them to enter the kingdom of heaven. Most problems in churches are caused by those who overestimate their importance to the work of the Lord.

*In Recognition of what God has Said.*

There is a third important thing for us to recognize. God blesses and honors them who remember His Word. After telling us that the house of Joseph also fought, and that the Lord was with them, an incident is related as how a victory was won in the battle against the Canaanite stronghold of Bethel. That is the place where Jacob had once used a rock as a pillow, and where he received the vision of angels ascending and descending from heaven on a ladder. After his weak prayer, he named the place Bethel or house of God.

Shouldn’t anything associated with the house of God be done strictly according to what God has said? But that is not how they managed to obtain victory. They made a deal with a man. Some might point out Rahab and say a deal was made with her in order to gain the victory at Jericho. But that is not the case. Nothing Rahab did gave Israel any advantage. Whether the two spies lived or died would not have made a difference in the destruction of Jericho. God wrought that victory all by Himself. Rahab had simply recognized who was the righteous side of the conflict and decided to go against her own people because they were not righteous. She deserved mercy.

The man who showed the men of Joseph a secret squirrel hole into the city was not concerned with God or righteousness. As soon as he could, he fled to another idolatrous region and even took the name of the place he had betrayed with him! God was with them so they did not need to make deals with unbelievers! When God is with His people, they don’t need to violate His Word to get the job done.

That God was not pleased with what they had done is obvious. Notice how verse 27 begins. “Neither did Manasseh.” That conjunction “neither” makes what follows it equal to what came before it. The house of Joseph, which in this case probably means largely Ephraim, though perhaps with the portion of Manasseh whose inheritance was west of Jordan, did not please God any more than did the rest of Manasseh who failed to drive out the Canaanites from the towns in their territory. Even though Ephraim won an apparent victory, God was not pleased because violated His command.

We need to build the foundation for our church scripturally. We should not do what is politically correct or what popular voices are advising. We should do what the Bible says.

Laying a Solid Foundation in Resolve (27-33).

It is never fun to read about the failure of God’s people. They had so much going for them but still failed. Though some would disagree, I think they failed because they resolved to right no matter what the cost. Calvinists generally hold to the bondage of the will. That simply means they only did what God preordained they would do from before the foundation of the world. Since I cannot, and will not ever, accept that God is responsible for man’s sin, I think we have the freedom to choose to right or wrong as believers. No rash, angry words that have ever come from my mouth found their source in the eternal purposes of God. The Lord Jesus died to pay my debt for those sinful words, but God was not behind them. He was above them! Notice some things our text suggests about our resolve.

*In Resolve to be His Witnesses.*

*In Resolve to be His Workers.*

*In Resolve to behold His Wonder.*

Laying a Foundation in Rejoicing (34-36).

*In Rejoicing for the victories He has wrought.*

*In Rejoicing for His presence among us.*

*In Rejoicing that His Purposes include us.*