

Sermon title: Consequences of not seeking God

Sermon text: Josh 9:16 – 18

Introduction

1. Christians must make life-changing decisions in their lives.
2. Many Christians think that due diligence itself is sufficient to make these structural decisions in life.

3. Today's exhortation is applicable to those who are making key decisions in life:
 - a. seeking life partners
 - b. seeking jobs or changing mid-life careers
 - c. seeking University course
 - d. making high value purchases (i.e. houses/properties etc)
 - e. contemplating company re-locations or migration to another country

Introduction (cont'd)

4. All these life changing decisions have **two** common features:
 - a. you need to conduct Due Diligence **AND**
 - b. the consequences are enormous and are not easily reversible

Sermon Outline

1. Israel discovers the ruse/deception (9:16 – 17)
2. The congregation blames the leaders (9:18 – 20)
3. The leaders settle for a poor outcome (9:21 – 23)
4. Fear drives the Gibeonites decision to deceive (9:24 – 25)
5. Joshua confirms the poor outcome (9:26 – 27)

¹⁶ Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. ¹⁷ So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim.

Observation

1. After 3 days the ruse is discovered.
2. The Israelites discover the ruse which escaped them during the due diligence.

Application

1. At some point in time, the ruse will be discovered.
2. This is the limitation of due diligence. There are factors which are hidden from the due diligence.

¹⁸ But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel.

The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, ¹⁹ but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the LORD, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. ²⁰ This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that God’s wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.”

Observation & Application 1

The congregation blames the leaders for the oath. When things go wrong, people engage in the “blame game”. No point in engaging in the blame game because it is simply too late; the situation cannot be reversed.

Observation & Application 2

Because the leaders did not inquire of the LORD, they are bound by their rash oath. This is the consequence of walking by sight alone. The consequences cannot be reversed.

Example A (Marrying a non Christian)

Earlier - Why so rigid? Why must be Christian? I can marry this person because this person has a stable job, a high salary, a decent house.

He is funny and sensitive. When my father passed away, all my friends deserted me and he comforted me.

Later - they decided to separate. Every one in the family was in pain.

Example B (taking a scholarship)

Part 1 – Ti-Jay : Took a govt scholarship to IVY league University.

Part 2 - Later, decided to break the bond, risk “name and shame” and repay the govt.

Example C (Imbuing an ungodly value system)

Earlier – (Jeyson Young & Peni Young) Put child in top school in Singapore. Alumni and within 1 km. Always top results in PSLE, O Level or A level or IB. Everyone knew that students in this top school had wealthy families and embraced ungodly values.

Later – After Pri 1 to JC 2 in that school, picked up all the ungodly values (rude to parents, wild lifestyle, et) in the school. The parents could not reverse the situation.

You can take the child out of the school but you can't take the school out of the child.

Gen 19:17, 26 - Lot's wife – can take her out of Sodom but can take Sodom out of her.

9:21 – 23

Observation

When Israel defeated Jericho & Ai (9:3) and Sihon & Og (9:10), Israel took over the riches of the land of those inhabitants.

Now, because of the leaders' and Joshua's oath, the congregation of Israel could not take over the land of Gibeon (see 10:2). The best the Israelites could do was to subjugate the Gibeonites.

Israel was forced to settle for a poor result.

9:24 – 25

²⁴ They answered Joshua, “Your servants were clearly told how the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. ²⁵ We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you.”

Observation 1

Based on YHWH’s earlier actions against Sihon & Og, Jericho & Ai, the Gibeonites believed that YHWH would support Israel and destroy the Gibeonites.

Application 1

The **one and only** thing the Gibeonites did correctly was to believe God’s warning.
Ps 95:8 – “Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts”.

Observation 2

The Gibeonites did the best under the desperate situation; they submitted themselves to the Israelites and Joshua.

Observation 3

The Gibeonites knew that the Israelites could not destroy them because of the oath the Israelites had sworn before God.

²⁶ So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them. ²⁷ That day he made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the assembly, to provide for the needs of the altar of the LORD at the place the LORD would choose. And that is what they are to this day.

Observation

The Israelites and Joshua had forfeited a much better outcome and had no choice but to settle for a much poorer outcome.

Application

When we don't seek God's guidance, we, consequently, foolishly trade "down". We foolishly exchange lasting, invisible spiritual benefits for temporal physical benefits.

Summary

1. The Israelites and Joshua performed extensive and intensive due diligence. But, due diligence cannot reveal hidden points. Due diligence without God's guidance leads to poor choices in life.
2. When our foolish decisions go wrong and we are confronted with the consequences, the "blame game" starts. There is no point in the "blame game" simply because the decision cannot be reversed.
3. The Gibeonites heard and believed God's destruction of Israel's enemies. Ps 95:8 "Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts"
4. Once we rashly & foolishly commit ourselves, we cannot reverse the consequences of our decisions.
5. When we decide not to consult God in critical life's decisions, we often foolishly trade "down".

