

The Historical Books

God's Plan in Scripture

By Rob Green

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Faith Church

5526 State Road 26 E

Lafayette, IN 47905

Website: www.faithlafayette.org/church

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/faithlafayette

Well, today continues our series on God's Plan in Scripture and the first week, Pastor Viars encouraged us to think about the Scriptures and a couple of different phrases. The first one is, there's a sense in which all of the Bible is about Jesus, everything is about Jesus. And then the second thing he encouraged us to think about, is that the plotline of the Bible can be thought about through the words "creation," "fall" and "redemption." And last week, Pastor Aucoin helped us think about God's plan through those grids in the first five books of the Bible, that is the Pentateuch. And today, I have the privilege of taking us on a journey through the historical books, of God's plan in the historical books and I have to say, when Pastor Viars assigned this to me, I was totally pumped. It's one of my favorite sections in the Old Testament. So, are you ready? You're alive, awake, enthusiastic? Yeah, alright, we'll go with that.

So, let's start with this definition to make sure we understand what it is we're talking about, the definition of the historical books is the books from Joshua through Esther. Joshua through Esther. That is: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, 233 pages in the Bible. Now, thankfully, Titus cut a song out so we can start reading in Joshua 1. That would take us a little long.

These books recount for us the history of the nation of Israel from the death of Moses roughly in 1405 BC all the way to the return of the exiles and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple in the mid 400s. So, we have 1,000 years of biblical history here. And just to put this in somewhat of a context, Pastor Aucoin was sharing for us the story of the Pentateuch and Abraham, we were taught about Abraham, and this promise that God made to him for land, seed and blessing. And that promise was roughly made in 2165 BC. So, now we're fast-forwarding 700+ years, so that promise was carried to Abraham and then to Isaac and then to Jacob whose 12 sons became the 12 tribes of Israel. Israel moved to Egypt and it was Moses who wrote the Pentateuch, who led them out. Now, we come to this place some 700 years later.

You might be thinking, "Man, 1,000 years of history. I bet these books are so boring. I mean, I hate history." That's not true, by the way. But I hope that by the time we're done, you're thinking, "Man, I can't wait to read those books again." By the time we're done with this sermon, you're thinking, "Man, here's what I gotta do today, I gotta call my Dad, that's the first thing I gotta do. And then after that, I gotta open up the Word of God and read through these historical books 'cause they are way cool!"

In fact, let me just give you a preview. Here are some of things that you'll find: you'll find suspense. Things like this: the nation of Israel walks around Jericho like for seven days and you're thinking, "What in the world is going on there? I mean, what are they, training? I mean, what is going on that they're walking around for seven days?" Well, they're surprised. You know, the nation at first, Samuel 8, says, "God, give us a king so we can be just like all the other nations." God says, "No, you don't really want one." They're like, "Yeah, we do, we want one like really bad." "No, you really don't want one." "Yeah, we do want one!" "Ok, fine, I will give it to you." And that reminds us that sometimes we beg God for something that God says we really shouldn't want to have. So that we can see just how dissatisfying when we get it, it really is.

There's action. I mean, David's life, all through Samuel and Kings, David's life is full of action. I mean, he's off fighting war here, war here, war here. In fact, David has a category of guys, they're called his mighty men. And if you wanted to be a mighty man of David, you had to kill like 1,000 people with a toothpick. Now, I realize that's a little bit of an exaggeration, but not much. Listen to this, "These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite; he was chief of the three. He wielded his spear against eight hundred whom he killed at one time." I mean, Darth Vader couldn't get that done. I mean, 800 people at one time, that is like crazy.

Well, there's hopeless romance. David kills Goliath and Saul says, "Alright, well, here's what I'm going to do, I'm going to offer David my daughter. And so that way, he can get killed. 'Cause here's what I'm going to ask for, I'm going to ask that he brings 100 Philistine foreskins." Now, you didn't get those by asking for them. You got those by killing people for them. And so, David and his men go out to the Philistines and they don't bring back 100 they bring back 200, more than what Saul had even asked. Man, I can't wait to share this story with the first boy that wants to date Mackenzie.

There is dedication against all odds. I mean, we have Nehemiah and Ezra who are just on one hand after another after another, there are roadblocks and obstacles and yet they are saying, "No way. With God's help we're going to get this wall built. With God's help we're going to rebuild the Temple because we want to have a covenant relationship with God re-established."

There's irony, there is good irony. I mean, there's irony like Queen Esther who is an orphan girl who becomes, by God's grace, the Queen and the protector, the rescuer of the nation of Israel. That's not bad irony. You know, Solomon, for example, who is described as what? The wisest person. What does he do? He gets 300 wives. What was he thinking? I mean, it's hard enough to deal with one, let alone 300. I mean, how do you get that? Man, it's hard to fulfill your role as a husband with one woman, how do you do it with 300?

Then there's just flat-out craziness. I mean, Gideon, for example. I mean, here they are, they're going to attack the Midianites and he screams, "For God and for Gideon!" Well, like I get the "for God" part, what's the "for Gideon" part about? Well, what is going on

there? Then you read about Samson and Samson's got serious issues. Then if that wasn't bad enough, then you read about Jephthah and you think that guy had to have been on crack to do what he did. I mean, by the time you get done, you're just like amazed at all of the craziness that's going on here. I mean, let's be frank, the Harry Potter books aren't this good.

I hope you walk away from this morning thinking, "Man, I gotta read those. I didn't know all that stuff was in there. I gotta go home and read 'em. I need to study them. There is a tremendous amount of value in them."

Well, I've also provided in your program this morning, a little insert that looks like this and it gives a short paragraph on every book of the historical books from Joshua all the way through Esther just to provide a little quick glance at the content of them as you're reading to help you.

Now that I've covered some of the basic content, hopefully encouraged you to think about it and read them later on, I'd like us to talk about some of the themes of the historical books, are there some really significant ones? And while there are more than three, I'm going to highlight three of them and then I'm going to try to illustrate those themes through some text in the historical books.

The first one is this: focusing on the Lord brings blessing while forgetting the Lord brings ruin. Focus on the Lord brings blessing and forgetting the Lord brings ruin. Over and over again we find this. I mean, as Brent mentioned last week, God is holy, there is no rival to him. He is the sovereign Creator and Redeemer. And what we find in the historical books is that when God's people will recognize God's character and live in light of that, then they experience his blessing. However, when they act pridefully and when they attempt to live independent of the Creator Redeemer God, they experience ruin.

This is illustrated dozens and dozens and dozens of times. But, here are two stories to highlight that. The first one is the city of Ai and the importance of holiness in holy war. Joshua is an exciting book, there are few events that are more exciting than the story of Jericho. It's one of the high points for the nation. Jericho is one of those cities that has to be taken and as you read about the significance of the wall you think, "Boy, how many Israelites are going to die taking that city?" And, in fact, God gives them without a casualty. And we love this story in church. I mean, every children's ministry program is filled with this story. We even have cool songs about it, right? "Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho...and the walls...came tumbling down." You all know it, don't you? I mean, everybody knows the story of Jericho.

What happens next, however, is given ten times more energy and effort in the Word of God. That is, ten times as much of the Bible talks about the city of Ai than it talks about Jericho. Why is that? Well, because we have a couple of things going on. Here's the first one: "Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, 'Go up and spy out the land.' And the men went up and spied out Ai. And

they returned to Joshua and said to him, ‘Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are few.’” Now, we already know, having read through this, that a man named Achan had also taken some things from Jericho. In other words, there was sin in the camp and what this passage highlights for us is that the attitude of the Israelites was, “You know what, holiness isn’t all that big of a deal. I mean, we can take stuff that God says we can’t take. It’s alright. God will be ok with that. And then, we can even have a little bit of arrogance about us, too. A little pride. You know, we don’t need to send everybody. I mean, don’t send everybody up there. I mean, after all, it’s just a waste of time. I mean, we’ve got this covered. This is a piece of cake. Just send a couple thousand and we’re all good.”

So, here’s what happens. ‘So about 3,000 men went up there from the people. And they fled before the men of Ai, and the men of Ai killed about thirty-six of their men and chased them before the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them at the descent. And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.’” Why is that? Because one of the things about Joshua is it’s not about war, it’s about holy war. Not just about war, it’s about holy war. And in order to engage holy war you have to be holy. You have to be holy. If you’re not holy, the God removes his hand of blessing and you experience ruin.

So, Joshua says, “You know, it’s time for a new plan. And here’s the first thing that we’re gonna do, we’re gonna deal with sin in the camp. We’re gonna take Achan, we are going to deal with the sin that’s in the camp right here, right now. Here’s what else we’re gonna do.” So, Joshua rose with all the people of war, not just 2,000, not just 3,000, all the people of war to go up to Ai and Joshua chose 30,000 men, valiant warriors and sent them out at night. No more pride, no more arrogance, no more, “God, we’ve got this handled. Like, just don’t worry about it. Take a nap for all I care. We’re good.”

Then he says this, “Then the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand.’ And Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. For Joshua did not withdraw his hand from which he stretched out the javelin until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.” What is he expressing? Dependence, is he not? God says, “Look, I want you to stretch out that javelin toward the city and I want you to hold it there.” I mean, it just begs the question, How long did he have to hold the javelin? Hours? All day? And he was committed, he was absolutely passionate about living for the Lord here. And he says, “Fine, if you want me to do this, this is what I’m going to do.” And what do they experience? Victory and blessing because Joshua leads the nation to deal with its sin and to deal with its pride.

You know friends, the Bible tells us that our battle, your battle, my battle, is not against flesh and blood but it’s a spiritual battle. There is holy war going on in our hearts. And in order to engage it effectively, holy war requires that you are...holy. Can I ask you how you’re dealing with your sin? Do you ignore it? Do you minimize it? Do you act like it’s not a big deal? Do you tell the person who’s confronting you that it just doesn’t really matter, you’re going to do whatever you want anyway?

Fathers, remember we took some time to pray for all of us today. And Janet was praying and as she was praying she described our spiritual war. Whether or not we are going to live as godly men who choose to follow after the Lord and acknowledge him as opposed to doing it our own way. How we work is a spiritual battle. How we live out our marriage is a spiritual battle. How we raise our children is a spiritual battle. How we deal with our friends and our neighbors is a spiritual battle. And we can either have an, "Yeah, I've got this covered," attitude or we can be like Joshua who deals with sin through repentance and who deals with pride by dependence. If the Spirit is bringing conviction on your life, please don't ignore it. Let the historical books teach you a lesson here.

A second example of this same category is the Judges generation and the northern kings. At the end of Joshua, the nation occupies a significant portion of the land that was promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They have, for the most part, eliminated the inhabitants of the land. However, we're not very far into the book of Judges until we find this text, "All that generation also were gathered to their fathers and there arose another generation after them." Let's read this part together, "who did not know the Lord nor the work which he had done for Israel." What is up with that? I mean, are you kidding me? They just were the wilderness generation, they'd just seen God deliver them in incredible fashions. For the last 25 years they'd been conquering people, conquering people as they have engaged in holy war and now what happens? They rise up a generation who does not know the Lord nor the works which he has done in Israel.

I can imagine it now. At the dinner table, there's more discussion about the baseball averages than there is about the Lord. There's more discussion about bedtime, about the games that people play than there was about the Lord. That when they were suffering in the world, the conversations went to, "c'est la vie. Such is life," rather than thinking about the Lord and what he might be wanting to do in the midst of that suffering. When the crops were successful and the industry was improving, the discussion turned out about how wise and insightful and smart the person was, rather than on the gracious Lord that was giving that person wisdom and health and strength to accomplish it.

So, what happened? The theme of Judges is: everyone does what's right in his own eyes. There's total anarchy. Sin runs rampant and innocent people suffer. The reality is, as soon as you take the Lord out of the equation, there weren't very many motivations for caring about other people. I think we see a measure of this in some Christian homes today. There are no conversations about the Lord, there's not a focus on the Lord. And so, what happens? Everybody starts doing what's right in their own eyes. Which is why there is no interest in serving, there's no interest in praying, there's no interest in study of the Word, there's no interest in reading. There's just interest in finding as many ways to live life pleurably as possible.

Well, after this period of anarchy, the nation actually gets a king, around 1050 BC. But, that really doesn't solve matters either because 100 years later, in 931 BC, that's an important date, there's a split of the kingdom between the north and the south. And here's what happens when the northern tribes follow a particular person. Jeroboam is going to be the king of the north, then ten tribes on the northern side. And here's what the Word of

God says about him. In 1 Kings 12, “Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the Ephraimite hill country and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel. Jeroboam then thought to himself, ‘Now the Davidic dynasty could regain the kingdom. If these people go up and offer sacrifices in the Lord’s Temple in Jerusalem, their loyalties could shift to the former master, King Rehoboam, of Judah. And they might kill me and return to King Rehoboam of Judah.’” Well, you can almost hear it? “Man, I might lose my position so I’ve gotta figure out what to do in order for people to stay with me.”

And here’s what he does, it’s absolutely insane: after the king had consulted with his advisors, he made two golden calves. Are you kidding me? We’ve already been down this road before. The golden calves, he makes two golden calves and then he said to the people, “It is too much trouble for you to go up to Jerusalem even though God told you to. Look, here are your gods who brought you up from the land of Egypt.” Really? Really? He put one in Bethel and the other in Dan and this caused Israel to sin and the people went to Bethel and Dan to worship the calves. He built temples in the high places and appointed as priests people who were not Levites. Jeroboam inaugurated a festival on the 15th day of the 8th month like the festival celebrated in Judah, like the right one. On the altar in Bethel he offered sacrifices to the calves he had made. And in Bethel he appointed priests for the high places that he had made. In other words, what he does is he creates an entirely different system of worship.

Now, what’s the theme we’ve been thinking about? Focus on the Lord brings blessing, forgetting the Lord brings ruin. So, what happens? Guess what he does? His son follows his way and his son follows his way and his son follows his way and his son follows his way. He sets a dynasty in motion of people and the nation forgets God. And Fathers, if that’s not a screaming call to us, I don’t know what would be. A screaming call.

Because here’s what happens: in 722, 200 years later, the nation of Israel is wiped out. They are conquered by the nation of Assyria and sent into exile. You see, one of the lessons that the historical books just scream out for us, is the significance of actively and aggressively pursuing a deep and meaningful and obedient relationship with the Lord. We, like the nation of Israel, have tendencies to wander, we have tendencies to create idols of our own making, we have tendencies to want things our own way. And God has provided the historical books to help us recognize that 24/7 needs to be about Jesus. We need to worship him in our work. We need to worship him in our families. We need to worship him in our hearts and in our thoughts. Then we can experience the blessing of God, the blessing of walking with the Creator Redeemer. When we limit our thoughts of the Lord to Sunday morning and maybe not even all that faithfully at that, then we miss out on his blessing, we experience the ruin side of the equation.

Well, that’s not the only theme we find in the Scripture here. Another theme is that a fully human ruler or king can never fully satisfy the needs of the people. Much of the historical books introduce us to important figures. People like Moses. People like Joshua, like Saul, like David, like Solomon. They are the best of the best. And here’s what we find: Moses struck a rock when he was told to speak to it; Joshua made a deal with the Gibeonites when God told him not to; Saul sacrificed when God said not to; David took

another man's wife and had him killed; Solomon multiplied wives to himself. And these are the best of the best. What about the others? Far worse than that.

The irony is, that the book of Deuteronomy had introduced us to the idea of a king before. And it describes what kind of character he's supposed to have. "When you come to the land the Lord your God is giving you and take it over and live in it and then say, 'We'll select a king like all the nations surrounding me,' you must select without fail a king whom the Lord your God chooses. From among your fellow citizens you must appoint a king, you may not designate a foreigner who is not one of your fellow Israelites. Moreover he must not accumulate horses for himself or allow the people to return to Egypt to do so for the Lord has said, You must never again return that way. Furthermore, he must not marry many wives lest his affections turn aside." Oops, Solomon forgot that one. "And he must not accumulate much silver and gold and when he sits on his royal throne he must make a copy of this law." Who has to make the copy of the law? The king does, with his own hand. He might think, "Well, I'm way too important, I need to get a servant to do that." Wrong. This was his job, he writes his own copy. "And to do so on a scroll given to him by the Levitical priests." Why? The priests need to check it out to make sure he copied it right. Then, any king that did that, "it must be with him constantly and he must read it as long as he lives so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and observe all the words of this law and these statutes and carry them out."

There is no one that can do that. No one. Joshua couldn't do it, David couldn't do it, Solomon couldn't do it. None of them could do it perfectly. So, that leaves the question, Who's going to rule? Who's going to be the king that rules forever? Who's going to be the one that we can look to for guidance and for encouragement and for instruction? And the historical books make us long for Jesus. For Jesus. For Jesus. He's the one that we can rely upon.

You know, sometimes in our ministry, we serve people who are having a hard time trusting each other and for good reason. And while we want to rebuild the trust, and we want the shadow of doubt to stop looming, please listen, there is only one who is perfect. There is only one who will never hurt you. There is only one who will love you consistently. There is only one who can satisfy the desires of your heart. Everyone else is a work in progress. So, please don't expect your husband or your wife or your son or your daughter to give you what only the Lord Jesus can provide. Love the Lord as the one who is the only one who can bring about this kind of satisfaction.

A third theme that's find in the historical books, this series, after all, is called "God's Plan in Scripture," and one of the things that you see over and over again is God is active in the midst of our chaos to move his plan toward completion. Yeah, without question, the historical books highlight the struggle with holiness, they highlight the fact that people run away from God rather than to him and even the best of the best fail. They also do this, that God is still at work. God is moving his plan, he's orchestrating it, he's moving it along just as he designed. God is a Redeemer God. He has a plan for history and that plan is wonderful. He's not giving up on his creation. He didn't write us off. He

didn't choose to ignore us. He didn't destroy us. Instead, he is in the midst of taking our failure and making something beautiful out of it.

Again, I can highlight this in a whole host of ways: the provision of Joshua himself, the raising up of Judges, the provision of a little orphan girl named Esther or a foreigner like Ruth, the provision of two godly exiles named Ezra and Nehemiah who seek to help the nation re-establish the covenant with God. Maybe the most important is the covenant that God makes with David. God had covenants before, he made one to Abraham and said, "I'm going to give you land and seed and blessing. I will promise you that." He also makes a covenant to Moses through the law, through the nation. And then he makes one to David. And listen to the words of the commitment that God makes, "So now say this to my servant David, this is what the Lord of hosts says, I took you from the pasture and from your work as a shepherd to make you leader of my people Israel. I was with you wherever you went and I defeated all your enemies before you. Now I will make you as famous as the great men of the earth and I will establish a place for my people Israel and settle from there. They will live there and not be disturbed anymore. Violent men will not oppress them again as they did in the beginning and during the time when I appointed judges to lead my people Israel. Instead I will give you relief from all of your enemies and the Lord declares to you that he himself will build a dynastic house for you. When the time comes for you to die I will raise up your descendants, one of your own sons to succeed you and I will establish his kingdom and he will build a house for my name. And I will make his dynasty permanent and I will become his Father and he will become my son. When he sins, I will correct him with the rod of men and with wounds inflicted by human beings but my loyal love will not be removed from him as I removed it from Saul whom I removed before you. Your house and your kingdom will stand before me permanently, your dynasty will be..." what's that word? "permanent." Permanent. It's a commitment that God makes to David and to his line that he will establish that kingdom forever.

Just think about that. David had failures, so did his sons. And yet, here's the covenant, the commitment that God makes to David and to his line. "I'm going to establish your kingdom forever." Forever. And who's going to be the king that rules on David's throne forever? Jesus. Praise God for that, huh? Praise God that when he makes a plan he doesn't renege, he doesn't change his mind, he doesn't make excuses. He stays true to his Word. Jesus is going to rule forever. So, I hope as you think about this commitment that God makes, that just encourages you to love the Lord all the more because you know that God's plan is fully intact, there are no threats to it, there are no concerns with it. He is the Creator Redeemer God.

See, the historical books aren't just about Israel, they're not just entertaining. They are incredibly practical. The themes rely and impact us on a daily basis. When we choose to act like we don't need God, we experience ruin. When we place too much hope in a human being, we are ultimately disappointed. God is active in moving his plan towards completion and he's not thwarted by human foolishness or sinfulness.

Well, that kind of brings us to our last point and it's a point I've been highlighting kind of along the way and that is: how do the historical books point to Christ? And the first one is Jesus is the perfect king. Jesus is the perfect king. All the other kings, the best of the best, nevertheless, failed. I think that's why the Bible in the New Testament encourages us to please him, encourages us to glorify him, encourages us to proclaim his excellencies. And, you know, tomorrow BBS starts. And that means we're going to have about 500 kids running around this place and I think it'd be pretty exciting to proclaim the excellencies of Jesus to those kids. What do you think?

So, if you're coming to serve, serve with an excited attitude like, "Yes, man I get to proclaim the excellencies of God right here to these kids because I understand that they need Jesus more than they need anything else in the world. I get the privilege of doing that." Some of you yesterday participated in the Race for Hope. Some of you ran, some of you walked, some of you served, some of you gave and I'm happy to report that both of the goals were met. Praise God for that. And, you know, here are some pieces of that, people did it because they wanted Jesus glorified because here's what they thought, they thought, "You know what, every time there's a young lady who moves to Lafayette, Indiana to deal with some of the sin and suffering issues that she has been facing and she learns to process those and to deal with them in a way that brings God honor and glory, Jesus glorified, Jesus praised. I want to be part of that.

The seminary, two guys we have been praying about, one is from Brazil and another is from the Dominican Republic and we just got word, you know, it's kind of hard bringing international students here for a period of time and we have to deal with the immigration laws in our nation and those don't always go as we would like, but praise God, that he's decided to allow both of those guys to be here. And so, in the next month, they're going to be moving here and we're going to have an opportunity to meet them and serve with them. And then there's a few American guys that we can probably get excited about as well. Why is it that we would support those things? Because it's going to bring God honor and glory, that's why.

Some of you decided that, you know, the most God honoring thing to do over the last couple of weeks is to go landscape at Faith West for a little bit. And you're thinking, "Man, I want to do this not because I enjoy landscaping necessarily, but because I enjoy bringing honor and glory to God and I want God to get the glory."

What about in our homes? I hope that you are seeking to live out your role as a biblical person. Husband, wife, child, parent, person in a way that would bring God honor and glory because Jesus is the perfect king. He's the perfect king and he's our king. And, you know, if you're here this morning and you say, "You know, I'm not sure Jesus is my king." One of the messages that the historical books are just screaming out at us is that we need a perfect king. And the Bible describes it this way in Acts 4, "There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." And so, I'm here to tell you that you have to have that king. In order to experience heaven and to be saved, you have to have that king. You have to repent of

your sin and trust in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is the perfect king.

The other thing it highlights for us is that Jesus is the one who establishes a perfect, never ending kingdom. The covenants to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David don't just simply come from human origin and they're not fulfilled in human origin. That's why when you first turn the page into the New Testament, you find these words, Matthew 1:1, "This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of..." David? "The Son of...Abraham." He's putting these things together. The Abrahamic covenant is going to be fulfilled by Jesus and so is the Davidic covenant. So, if Jesus is establishing a kingdom, then doesn't it make sense to be a part of kingdom building? Wouldn't we want to be interested in building that kingdom? Being excited about the kingdom that Jesus is building? And here's what he says right now, he says, "I am building my church and the gates of hell will not stand against it."

So, here are a few ways to kingdom build right now. You know, if you're not part of an ABF, and adult Bible fellowship, you're missing out. You're just missing out. That's the bottom line. You are exchanging maybe a little bit of sleep for a blessing and the blessing is this, that you have the chance to minister to people and you have people who are ministering to you and you have that opportunity to build relationships together that would actually result and encourage you in kingdom building. You can encourage others. Others can encourage you so that all of us would learn the lessons from the book of Judges. Let's not raise up a generation who doesn't know the Lord nor the works that he has done.

Another way, maybe in Faith. Maybe you've been here for a while and been thinking, "You know, it's probably time for me to join." But, you just haven't done it yet, there's always been something in the way. I want to encourage you, July 10th, Wednesday night, begins a new Introduction to Faith class. And it's an opportunity to learn a little bit more about the church, get your questions answered so that you can choose to invest and to plant right here so that you can seek to serve and to build the kingdom in which Jesus is building. Then there's going to be opportunities to serve, all sorts of things going on. Praying for VBS, helping out with Faith West as it finally finishes up.

Well, let me close with just a couple of take-aways. The first one is that I want to encourage you to skim read Joshua through 2 Kings. You haven't done it for a while, I hope this message encouraged you to read it. That there's content there that you need. That it would be so helpful for your spiritual walk. You know, there's 150 chapters in those sections. Five chapters a day gets you done in a month. Then, invest in the kingdom that Jesus builds. You know, there is opportunity to do that? Lots of ways to serve, lots of ways to invest. I encourage you to do that. And then to rejoice, to be encouraged in your heart in God's plan and in God's power which enables him to keep his plan even in the midst of human failure.

Let's stand together for prayer.

Father, I'd like to thank you for your amazing grace. I'd like to thank you for the privilege of these books of the Bible. And you've told us that all Scripture is profitable and so one of the things we have seen this morning is that the historical books are profitable. Not simply because they're entertaining, but because they're incredibly practical. They remind us of just how desperate we are, that even the best of the best fail and so we are in dire need of knowing Jesus as our Lord and Savior and in dire need of living for him and passionately pursuing a meaningful relationship with Christ.

Lord, they also remind us that when we choose to ignore that and we choose to follow our own path, then what we experience is ruin. We have marriages that fall apart, we have families that are falling apart because everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes, that's where it leads. So, Lord, I pray that you would help us if we're in that position to repent and to begin to deal with things in our own hearts and lives.

Lord, we thank you, as well, that you have a plan that you are orchestrating throughout history. And today we have a glimpse of the covenant that you have made with David, that you promised him and we know that it's going to be King Jesus that fulfills that. That he will sit on the throne of David forever because you have promised it.

So, Lord, I pray that you would encourage us, that you would challenge us, convict us and help us to live this week as if Jesus really is alive and significant. And, Lord, I pray that you would help us to magnify the name of Jesus during Vacation Bible School this week. That the kids, as well as their parents, would see just how much a relationship with Jesus really changes a person.

We ask for your help in Christ's name. Amen.