



The Altar of Altercation

JOSHUA 22:1–34

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WELCOME:

Fixing Our Focus

Suggested icebreaker:

Let each GG member share a time they ran into a misunderstanding with someone where both they and the other person had good intentions. Allow each GG member to share what both sides were arguing for and how the situation de-escalated.

WORSHIP:

Adoring Our God

Suggested songs:

- [1000 Tongues](#)
- [Reconciliation Song](#)

WORD & WALK:

Understanding & Applying the Word

LESSON AIM

1. GG members will realize the importance of obeying God's commandments and the gravity of sin and its consequences.
2. GG members will desire to strengthen the unity of their community of faith, recalling Christ's desire for the Church to be one.

INTRODUCTION

The last land to be apportioned in Israel was the cities and pasturelands for the tribe of Levi. Because the Lord was their portion, they had no singular territory and were scattered throughout the land of the other tribes. Now that all of the people in Israel had received their territory, they could all rest and return to their homes.

Joshua blessed the eastern tribes as they returned to their land (vv. 1-9)

The eastern tribes who had helped the rest of the people of Israel conquer the Promised Land were sent home from Shiloh to their territory east of the Jordan by Joshua upon being blessed by him.

1. Recall what the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh promised to Moses. (cf. Numbers 32:16-27)
2. What did Joshua charge the eastern tribes to remember before they returned to their territory? Why do you think this charge was significant for the eastern tribes? (cf. Deuteronomy 11:13-17)
3. What spoils did the eastern tribes return to their territory with? What did Joshua command them to do with their spoils?

Application

Scripture teaches plainly that there are rewards for those who live in obedience to God. As the eastern tribes received their rewards for being faithful to their promise, today we are assured that faithful followers of Christ will also receive their rewards (2 Corinthians 5:10). What are some practical ways we can urge one another in our church today to observe God's commandments, to cling to Him, and to serve God with all of our being, just as Joshua urged the eastern tribes?

WORD & WALK:

Understanding & Applying the Word

The people of Israel confronted the eastern tribes regarding their altar (vv. 10-20)

Upon returning to their territory, the eastern tribes built an altar. This moved the rest of the people of Israel to confront them for fear of sinning against the Lord.

1. How was the altar that the eastern tribes built described in the passage? How was it perceived by the rest of the people of Israel, and how did they react? How did they confront the eastern tribes?
2. What were the previous events in their history that moved the people of Israel to react the way they did? (cf. Numbers 25:1-9, Joshua 7:1-26)
3. Do you think the reaction of Israel was justified? Why or why not? Take time to discuss this with the group.

Application

One of the realistic and felt consequences of sin in a community of faith is hypersensitivity to the future potential of sin. In the case of the people of Israel, their past experiences at Peor and with Achan influenced their reaction toward the altar of the eastern tribes. Healing and restoration as a spiritual community, therefore, is critical. What previous encounters with sin, whether personal or communal, do you think you are still healing from? What steps are you taking in pursuing restoration?

The eastern tribes made a defense and remained united with the rest of Israel (vv. 21-34)

After being confronted by the people of Israel, the eastern tribes swiftly defended their construction of the altar by the Jordan. The rest of Israel received their explanation, and their unity as a people was affirmed.

1. How did the eastern tribes begin their response? What does this reveal about their position in the arguments of the people of Israel?
2. What was the purpose of the altar the eastern tribes built, according to them? What about their explanation relieved the tension between them and the rest of Israel?
3. How was the defense of the eastern tribes received by the rest of Israel? What did the people of Israel do in response? What did the eastern tribes decide to name the altar, and why?

WORD & WALK:

Understanding & Applying the Word

Application

Many tense situations are often resolved through clear communication and gracious understanding. Listening is a powerful tool in preserving unity, a value that has always been one of the most important in God's community of faith. Indeed, Christ Himself desires that His believers would be one as God is one (John 17:11). What are some of the ways we actually contribute to disunity in our church that we need to repent of? What can you do this week to affirm another believer's belongingness in our community of faith?

PRAYER ITEM

Dear God, the Mighty One, You are One! You are the One I worship and adore. It is Your unity within Yourself that leads me to desire to experience unity within my community. I pray that I will never forget the gravity of sin, how it offends You, and how it affects those around me. Make me zealous and passionate for righteousness, and make me gracious and understanding towards my spiritual community, for we are all in need of Your mercy and lovingkindness. May the world see that the Church is one so that they would believe in Jesus Christ. This I pray in Jesus' Name. Amen. ■



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Know Christ and Make Him Known

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