**The 25th Hour**

*Josh 10:6-16*

*And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.*

*So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.*

*And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.*

*Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night.*

*And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter*

*at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.*

*And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they*

*whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.*

*Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the*

*Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.*

*And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.*

*And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.*

*And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.*

*But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.*

 We are living in very stressful and changing times, and if we are not careful in walking with the Lord and keeping fresh revelation and insight, we can easily become overwhelmed by circumstances and situations around us. It's not hard to become so involved in kingdom building that we who are in the kingdom begin to wither, wilt, and fall apart. The real tragedy is, if we are withering, we are intimidated by our environment from being able to say, "Help!" "I've fallen, and I can't get up!" Because if we would say that to anybody, they would question the authenticity of our experience. The church has become filled with some of the greatest actors and actresses the world has ever known. If Hollywood would ever become hard-up and desperate and need some "extras," I know a place where they could get some real well trained, equipped, qualified, experienced actors, because we have become professional at pretending. But we need to take off the mask today!

 When the Lord created man, He created him from the dust of the earth, breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul. God gave him power to be in His likeness and image, to be fruitful, to multiply, to replenish, to subdue, to have dominion, to have authority, out of that ability to have dominion. to have territory, to have rights, to have leadership, to have control, he began to speak to all the subordinate kingdoms and to name them, and to bring them up under his reign and feet. It was at that point that God began to notice something about man, that it was not good for him to dwell alone, that man is intrinsically communal by instincts, and needs a feeling of being a part, connected to, united with, like species. Not only in regard to marriage, but in regard to friendship, relationship and covenant. We just need people. When terrorists and enemies would capture men, one of the greatest tortures that they could do to a man was to throw him in a hole by himself. Without cutting, abusing, beating, or badgering him in any physical way, just darkness and isolation is torture enough within itself because instinctively, we just need to have somebody to talk with, laugh with, rap with, to have community. And that is good if we do not worship at the altar of other people's opinions. Because then we begin to allow ourselves to hold people in such high esteem that it becomes idolatry instead of community. It breaks down our individuality. I refuse to allow anybody to intimidate me to the point that I cease from being who I am. You have to have a vested right to be yourself, and to understand that fellowship and community does not mean duplication, that we can have inspiration and communion without me having to become a carbon copy of you in order to be in your graces!

 I think that one of the great problems that attacks us when we reach out for community, is sometimes it becomes manipulation. We begin to yield our members, selves, minds, thinking, and opinions, over to other people, not because they are God's anointed or appointed, but just because they are strong willed, stubborn, ruthless, and dominate enough to always express their opinion about everything we are going to do! And after a while we are just overwhelmed by their ideas! It puts you in a dilemma, and that is where I really want to begin to talk.

 When I consider this tribe, this little nation called the Gibeonites, they were in that kind of dilemma because they were tied into a group of people that were destined to be destroyed. Somehow they had the insight to recognize that they were on the wrong side. It is a dangerous thing to be so stoic and so staid that you cannot change. Sometimes you just need to break down and change. In spite of criticism, and even at the risk of ostracism, you have to be willing to change. They didn't know how to go about it, they basically were heathenistic and had not been taught the concepts of serving and worshipping Jehovah, but they had enough discernment to understand, "I'm on the wrong side!" " I can tell by the way that things are going, that everybody that opposes this God goes down, so maybe if I would line up with Him, instead of trying to get Him to line up with me, then perhaps I could get the victory over my dilemma and circumstances!" They went about a radical, ruthless, unorthodox, unnecessary, method of crossing over, but sometimes when you get ready to break bands and ties, you don't know how to get away, and instead of being cut away, you tear away, and you get away any way that you can. When you get tired of being up under somebody else's control, there is a spirit of escapism that comes upon you! When you get ready to escape, you become ruthless! When you really get to a breaking point, and you come to the end, you just get away any way that you can! That's how the Gibeonites were. They just wanted to get away so they could attach themselves to the Israelites and serve the Lord.

 There are times that you have to make changes, and do things that bring about great criticism, but you have to do them so that you can line yourself up into the perfect will of God. One of the things that is killing this generation is that we are wanting to move without criticism. One of the major things that God is teaching me in this hour, is that if you are going to serve Him, you have to become accustomed to criticism. You have to get to the point that it just doesn't disturb you, doesn't nag at you, doesn't have sitting up at night, you have to be acquainted with grief and say, "Here comes my old friend again." You have to know how to take a licking and keep on ticking!

 The Gibeonites, when they made certain moves and began to break away, they came up under a spirit of criticism and frustration. They went and attached themselves to the Israelites, and when they entered into the relationship they came into a position of servitude. There is something that you ought to understand; when God delivers you from a near death situation, when you have come hell and high water, and you finally get over into the kingdom, you are not worried about prestige, position, or politics. They were in there serving water, sweeping the floor, cleaning windows, cleaning out cabinets, doing whatever servants did in the Bible days. It's not so much because you are ignorant or that you don't see or understand, not that you are a 'flunky' or anything like that, but when you know that if it had not been for the Lord that was on your side, it just changes the whole aura of your worship and your ministry, and you are just glad to be here! Do you know what it is like to just be glad to be here? Whether anybody celebrates you, recognizes you, honors you or anything else, when you remember where you came from, you are just glad to be here! No check came in the mail, no new car pulled up in the driveway, no promotion on the job, just glad to be here! It creates a spirit to where you can become comfortable to be a servant! The Gibeonites were serving the Lord!

 I think that it is dangerous when we take people into the ministry and kingdom, and immediately promote them into position. I think that it is healthy to come up through the ranks. I think that it is healthy that you clean the pulpit before you preach in it. It doesn't hurt you at all to go through a little training, an little ice-breaking experience so that you don't forget that every job in the kingdom is servanthood! The only opening that God has on the application is "slave." It is the only position that is available, and if you are not a servant, then there is not an opening for you! Where did we get this Hollywood spirit that is taking over the church where we have spiritual celebrities?! We are called to lay our life down!

 The Gibeonites were serving. The enemy doesn't mind you being a part, as long as you don't serve. You can come, sit up, look important, be dignified, prolific, profound, inspiring, just as long as you don't function, he is not intimidated by your presence in the building! But the moment that you begin to serve the Lord, because he knows the benefits of serving the Lord, you are going to come into a level of criticism that you did not expect. In fact when you get past the barrier to understanding it, you can become encouraged through criticism. Sometimes I would not have known that I was doing anything effective if the devil had not have fought me like he did! When he started fighting me, I said, "I didn't know I was doing anything effective for you to fight me like this, I'm encouraged to fight you some more!" So if you are on the "hit list" you must be somebody! Nobody puts a "bag-lady" on the "hit list!" Nobody puts a "streetwalker" on the "hit list!" If they have a contract on you, then you must be somebody!

 There was a contract out on the Gibeonites and all of the kings began to get together. It's amazing how that people will get together to kill you! You can't get them together for anything else, but if they have somebody that they want to victimize, somebody that they were not speaking to last week, they will unite their forces with, and have meetings, and drink coffee, and have each other over for dinner! There was some sort of league, or posse for the destruction of the Gibeonites that developed out of these kings getting together. By the Gibeonites being new to the movement, they were intimidated and afraid, and being concerned they sent for Joshua to come and give them some assistance. Let me tell you; I don't care how anointed you are, there are going to be some times in your life that you need some help! I don't care if you speak greek and Hebrew or even Swahili, there are going to be some days when you just need to pick up the telephone and tell someone, "Hey, I'm going through some changes and tough times, and I need some help!" "Is there any Word from the Lord?" "Encourage me!" "Break bread with me!" "Let's eat lunch and talk about hard times!" "Let's drink some kool-aid and talk it over!" It helps just to know that there is somebody with you! There is power in holding community! *".......If two or three are gathered....."* I know that you think you are awesome all by yourself, but if you will let somebody help you.....? If you don't mind touching the person next to you, do so and tell them, "I think I need you!" I might need you! I'm up under attack! I'm under siege! Legions of adversity are coming against me and I think I might need you!

 Joshua was a seasoned soldier. He did not depend on his reputation, skill, or his resume. When he understood that he was needed for battle, before he consulted his sources, and looked among his men, and checked his equipment, he fell on his knees and talked to his God! You are only mighty when the anointing of the Lord is on you! If the Spirit of the Lord is not on you, you may have got the victory, and did awesome exploits on one occasion, and come into total disgrace on another occasion, because you got to understand that we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of God, and not of us! So Joshua says, "Lord, I don't want to fight without you!"

 I am concerned because I think that we are attempting to many things without God! Depending on our reputation, resources, books, principles, manuals, steps, three steps to get it done, five steps to a miracle, ten steps to get a marriage going, ten ways to get your house, ten ways to get your children through college: *We have fallen in love with the principle but we need to fall in love with the Prince!* *Whenever Jesus is on your side, He will make a difference in your life!* *There are some attacks, when I face them, I don't need anybody's book, tapes, or anything else, I need the help of the*

*Lord!*

 I want to jump over a little distance and draw your attention to something else. Do you remember when the Israelites left Egypt? They left in the night! Contrast that to when Pharaoh told Moses that he would chance one more night with the frogs! When the Hebrews decided to leave Egypt upon obtaining the Pharoah's permission, they elected to not spend one more night in bondage. I want you to know that when I heard that I could go free, I decided that I would not spend one more night with low esteem, not another night with unnecessary burdens, confusion and turmoil! I refused to be miserable any longer! *"He whom the Son hath set free, is free indeed!"*

 It's the same principle that God did with Israel. He allowed the Egyptians to pursue them. And it is terrifying when you think that something is over, and you find out that it isn't. It is terrifying when you think you got away and you really didn't! It is terrifying when you find yourself between two mountains and the Red Sea in front of you and you hear hoof-beats closing in behind you! You think, "Oh God! Here comes bondage again!" But I want you to remember that God orchestrated this thing! He intended for Pharaoh to pursue Israel. It looked like Israel was going to be ambushed, but it really wasn't Israel that was going to be ambushed, it was the enemy! *Somebody in here tonight needs to understand that even though past enemies are chasing you again, that God is setting you up for one of the greatest victories that you have seen in your life! He's setting you up! He could have let them accept you, like you, take you in, Sometimes God doesn't intend for you to be in the clique or in the club, He is setting you up! Look at your friend and tell them;, "It's a set-up!"* *"You can't break up under pressure! It's a set-up!"* God said that He was not going to leave your enemy living! I am going to take you through something that he can't go through! So that when you get to the other side of it, I am going to let you look back and see him go down, so that you can settle in your mind that that was then and this is now! You have got to know that it is over! You can't really be free until you know that it is over!

 So God began to rock Joshuas enemies. He began to send hailstones against the enemies of the Gibeonites. Joshua had come to a crucial point! He was right on the verge of the victory when he realized that he had another enemy! It was not just the league of kings that he had to be concerned with; *HE WAS RUNNING OUT OF TIME!*

 I am on the verge of getting it together, but I am running out of time! I finally see the light, I know my direction, my purpose, my calling, but time is failing me. The whole system and order of events is fighting me, and if I just had more time! I am close to it, but I am running out of time! Then Joshua prayed a crazy prayer! In this last hour you are going to encounter men that are going to pray crazy prayers! They are going to pray things that have not been prayed before! They are going to ask God for things that they don't have any previous point of reference for! It's easy to ask God to do what you have seen Him do before, but you are going to find yourself in situations that you are going to have to ask God to create a way! Not to repeat a way! But to create a way! It's not going to be what I saw you do for John, or Sue, and now I want you to do it for me too! Sometimes you are going to find yourself saying, "God, I have never seen you do this for anybody before, but I need you to do this for me!" Crazy prayers! Prayers that don't make any sense! Prayers that you can't even tell anybody that you are praying because they would criticize you and tell you that you have lost your mind! But God is able to answer a crazy prayer, something that is so ridiculous that if your friends knew what you were asking for they would laugh you out of the church, but God is able to answer ridiculous, secret, moaning prayers! God is able to answer the prayers of a barren woman and leave her pregnant with a child! God is able to raise up a dead man that is stinking in the tomb! Crazy prayers!

 So he prayed a crazy prayer! He said, "Lord, stop the sun!" Nobody had ever said something like that to God before! They had asked Him to stop the Red Sea, droughts, send bread from heaven, but nobody had ever asked Him to stop the center of our solar system! A star, 186,000 miles in diameter, 93,000 miles away! "I can't reach it God!" "I am fighting everything that I can reach down here, but there is something fighting me that I can't reach!" "God, if you will reach what I can't reach, then I will reach what I can reach!" "Stop the Sun!" "Arrest the Sun!" "Stop the thing that controls the whole system, whose gravitational pull holds all the planets at bay!" "I am not asking you to stop the earth, I am asking you to stop the sun!" "If you can stop the sun, then you can stop it at its root, and everything is going to freeze!" You know we are so good at asking God to do something about the leaves, but we need to learn to ask Him to deal with the root of the thing! Stop the sun, get a hold of the thing at its origin, and bring about deliverance!

 God is able to deal with the thing at its source! Stop the sun! 75 percent hydrogen, 25 percent helium, flaming, burning, gaseous star! The whole cosmos is controlled by the sun, now God, stop it! God is going to arrest some things for His people that you thought couldn't be stopped! When you are fighting, and things are set in motion against you, and the whole system is against you, and the whole circumstance is against you, there are more things against you than you can reach or deal with, come to grips with or have access to, my purpose in preaching tonight, is to tell you that if you will reach what you can reach, God will reach what you cannot reach! He can put a cog in the wheel of the enemy! He can stop the whole thing! He can freeze the whole plot of the enemy! He can deal with the adversity and the dilemma! Why freeze it?! Because I just need a little more time! Because I am on the edge of a massive victory, because I have almost got everything up under my feet, all I need is a little more time! I am calling this extra time, THE 25TH HOUR!

 Extra time! Time you wasn't even supposed to have! Time you had no right to ask for! Time that you needed, because you wasted the time that you had, and now you've got to ask for it, "THE 25 HOUR"!

 When you look back and see how many days, and how many weeks, and how many years, you wasted in vain living, now you're trying to redeem the time! *Sometimes you have to ask him for extra time! I need more time! I've wasted time fighting people, when I should have been fighting the Devil! Give me a little more time! I wasted time feeling sorry for myself, when I should have drew my sword!! Give me just a little more time!*

 God knows how to stop the whole system, and theologically you wouldn't call it the 25th hour, you would call it grace! *"GRACE" "GRACE"!* We can come boldly to the throne of *"GRACE"* and obtain *"MERCY*" and find *"GRACE", THE 25TH HOUR TO HELP, IN THE TIME OF NEED, WHAT IS GRACE, WHAT IS THE 25TH HOUR, IT'S WHEN THE FACTS ARE AGAINST YOU, FACT IS 24 HOURS, BUT THE 25TH HOUR, GRACE IS, WHEN GOD DOES YOU A FAVOR!!!!*

 *Have you ever had God do you a favor, when the facts were against you, and God just did you a favor! Something you didn't earn! Something you didn't deserve! You couldn't write a book, and say it was my prayer life! It was my righteousness! It was my conviction! You couldn't claim it! You couldn't explain it! You couldn't authenticate it! He did something supernatural for you! He blessed you over and in spite of the facts, the circumstances, and the situations! You know, you ought to tell your enemies about the 25th hour! Some of them can't figure out how you got what you got, but God, when God gets ready to bless you, can't nobody curse you! When God gets ready to raise you up, can't nobody put you down! When God gets ready to bring you out, can't nobody hold you under! He will put a cog in the wheel! He will stop the whole system, in order to bless you!*

 He is saying, "I know there is still a few things that you haven't got together, I'm going to give you a little time!"

 When you are dealing with people who are living in the 25th hour, you will find that they have a different mentality than those who are still living in the 24th. Those whom God has blessed don't have time to be arrogant! They are so happy about the favor, while you are sitting around trying to look wonderful, they have their hands up in the air praising God! they know that if it had not been for the Lord on their side, Where would we be!