Israel had known many battles, many bad days, and yet they had many wonderful victories!

Now they had reached a relatively peaceful time, a time when they could enjoy the blessings of the Lord.

They were enjoying a time of rest, a time when they could reflect on their labors and thank the Lord for his wonderful provisions.

They had to a certain extent possessed their possessions.

It is often during peaceful times that we can become lax and slack, our commitment and devotion to the Lord can slip.

There is the danger in the midst of spiritual blessing to forget about the Lord.

Moses had warned them about this in Deut 8:13-14:
The Danger of Complacency

and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied,
then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (Deut 8:13-14, NIV)

Joshua called together the leaders of the nation here in chapter 23.

He has some advice for those in authority, but all of us would do well to listen to Joshua’s admonitions here.

Joshua was not a pessimist but a realist, he recognized the danger of complacency.

I. He reminds them of God’s Faithfulness.

After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then old and well advanced in years, summoned all Israel-their elders, leaders, judges and officials-and said to them: “I am old and well advanced in years.
You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the LORD your God who fought for you.
4 Remember how I have allotted as an inheritance for your tribes all the land of the nations that remain—the nations I conquered—between the Jordan and the Great Sea in the west. (Joshua 23:1-4, NIV)

A. We need to be reminded of how God has blessed us.

2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—(Psa 103:2, NIV)

3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,
5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. (Psa 103:3-5, NIV)

B. Our tendency, like Israel, is to forget.

1. What have you done for me, lately?

2. Have you noticed how easy it is for us to remember the bad things of the past, and to forget the good things?

3. Joshua reminded the nation that God had done so much for them, and that He would do more!
The Danger of Complacency

5 The LORD your God himself will drive them out of your way. He will push them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you. (Joshua 23:5, NIV)

II. He reminds them of God’s Unchanging Standards. v6-11

A. Concerning the Book of the Law (God's Word)

6 “Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. (Josh 23:6, NIV)

1. What was Joshua told at the beginning of this book?

7 Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.
8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Josh 1:7-8, NIV)

2. Moses had instructed them also.

32 So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. (Deut 5:32, NIV)
The Danger of Complacency

B. Concerning their Walk with God.

7 Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them.
8 But you are to hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have until now. (Joshua 23:7-8, NIV)

9 “The LORD has driven out before you great and powerful nations; to this day no one has been able to withstand you.
10 One of you routs a thousand, because the LORD your God fights for you, just as he promised. (Joshua 23:9-10, NIV)

1. They were to bind themselves to the Lord.

2. The word used here is “cleave” and it means to stick close or adhere.

3. Joshua encourages them to stick close to the Lord, don’t let anything come between you and the Lord.

4. He was especially concerned about the false gods of the nations (v. 7).

5. Nothing should come between us!
6. This is the same word that God used concerning the relationship of a husband and wife… NOTHING …and NO ONE should come between us.

7. This is great advice for us, we need to stick with the Lord!

C. Concerning their love of God. v11

11 So be very careful to love the LORD your God. (Josh 23:11, NIV)

1. Joshua feared that the love they had for the Lord would grow cold.

2. He recognized the danger of complacency.

3. It happen all the time…

   a. Husbands and wives.

   b. Friends and family

   c. God and the church

   4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
The Danger of Complacency

5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Deut 6:4-5, NIV)

III. He warns of the Consequences of Complacency. v12-13

12 “But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them,
13 then you may be sure that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the LORD your God has given you. (Joshua 23:12-13, NIV)

A. Loss of position.

1. If they neglect these things they will soon find themselves in the wrong company.

2. Next there will be marriages among them.

3. The nation of Israel will lose it’s distinctive character of being God’s people.
The Danger of Complacency

4. How could they teach God’s Word to a lost world if they didn’t know the truth?

B. Loss of power.

1. God had blessed them with much might and power.

2. He had fought their battles.

3. They had experienced the power of God working in and through and for them.

4. But if they neglect the things that Joshua had mentioned, they will become powerless, & weak.

C. Loss of peace.

1. Instead of the freedom and liberty that they now enjoyed…

2. They once again would find themselves in bondage, just like they were in Egypt.
3. Sin would master their lives and they would become ensnared and trapped.

4. He knew what complacency could do to the nation.

IV. He gives them a Solemn Farewell.

14 “Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.
15 But just as every good promise of the LORD your God has come true, so the LORD will bring on you all the evil he has threatened, until he has destroyed you from this good land he has given you.
16 If you violate the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, the LORD’s anger will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land he has given you.” (Joshua 23:14-16, NIV)

A. Death will come to all.

1. Not something that we like to think about, but it is true.
2. When it is all said and done, and our life has come to an end…

3. What will we leave behind as a legacy?

4. An example of faithfulness or failure?

B. Joshua reminds them that God has never and will never fail.

1. Certainly they will fail, but not God.

2. That is true of each of us…

3. Not a reason to give up, but a reality of living in the flesh.

4. We will fail God, but He will never fail us!

C. Joshua warns of what will come to pass.

1. Although we do not think of Joshua as a prophet, he certainly was on the mark with this.
2. History records
   how the people began
   to become influenced
   more and more
   by the nations
   around them
   until they became
   just like them!

3. As a result
   God judged them
   and brought against them powers
   who would carry them away
   from this land in captivity.

4. In Joshua’s words…

   “Therefore it shall come to pass…”

Conclusion

Today we have been reminded of God’s faithfulness,
of His unchanging standards,
and warned of the danger of complacency.

It is easy for us to forget the Lord
and what He has done for us.

It is so easy for us to get so caught up
in what’s going on in the world around us
that we forget there is a world to come.
There is so much to lose
when we neglect the Word of God…
when we neglect our walk with God…
when we neglect our love for Him.

We all need to heed the warnings today!