



JOSHUA: THE LORD SAVES

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Libin Abraham 0:01

Well, today we're wrapping up a series called Renamed that we've been in for the last five weeks, and I love the fact that our church, we take time in every baptism Sunday to celebrate every story, because every story is a renaming, every story is of someone who's gone from death to life, someone who was away from God, but now belongs in the family of God. You have that story too. And today I want to consider one last person who went through a renaming. So far in the last five weeks, we have been talking about how God rewrites our identity before he changes our circumstances, God has a way of speaking ability before of speaking identity before ability, that He sees in us what we often can't even see in ourselves. So He comes and invites us into a new name, a new identity, even before our circumstances change. So we've looked at the story of Abram, who became Abraham, this man who was childless into his old age, is called Abraham, the father of nations, and God will be faithful to make him the father of nations. We looked on that same week, week one, the story of Sarai, who became Sarah, Sarah, who was barren and even took matters into her own hands, and ended up being more frustrated. God was faithful to make her the mother of nations. Then we studied the story of Jacob, whose name got changed to Israel. Jacob, who spent his life out manipulating anybody else he could, out maneuvering himself to be blessed by God would find himself wrestling with God at the river Jabbok, and there God would rename him Israel. It was a moment of surrender, even through struggle. Then we looked at the story of Ben Oni, a child born into tragedy, and he was first named Ben Oni, which means son of sorrow, because he was born into pain, and yet in that same moment at his birth, his dad renames him Benjamin, not son of sorrow, but son of stress, not a name via the lens of pain, but a name via the lens of promise. In the last week we looked at the story of Gideon. He is hiding in a wine press. His country has been oppressed for seven years by the Midianites, and God comes and finds a man hiding and calls him a valiant warrior. Eventually, he would get the name Jeroboam, because he would tear down the very altars and idols that his own dad had set up, and then one act of courage after another. God would rebuild in him strength, because he would know that God is present with him. Today, we're going to look at the story of how Joshua was renamed. Joshua, he went through a renaming story as well. I saved Joshua's story for the end, because his story, his new name, is a prophecy that will come true 1300 years after he was renamed, and in the name Joshua, we find a powerful gospel thread that would take us all the way to Jesus, so we pick up the story in Numbers 13, where Israel has been rescued from Egypt, they've crossed the Red Sea, they've received the law, and now they're standing at the border of the Promised Land, and as they're standing at the border, Moses has recruited 12 spies to go into the promised land and scout out to go check it out and see what it's like, but before he sends the 12 spies into the promised land, he does a little renaming. So here's verse 16 of Numbers 13. These were the names of the men Moses sent to scout out the land. Moses renamed Hoshea, son of Nun, Joshua. So we know Joshua, the man who would lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, but before he was Joshua, his name was what Hoshea now, as we read that in the English language. Okay, that sounds kind of similar. What's the big deal, Hoshea to Joshua? But actually this is a significant moment of renaming, perhaps the most powerful, meaningful renaming of all. The name Hoshea means salvation. Salvation, salvation is a good name. Salvation is a beautiful thing to celebrate. Hosea, next slide means salvation, but Hoshea salvation carries the idea that you can save yourself, even that you. Can achieve salvation by your own ability and strength and merit.

Libin Abraham 5:04

Hoshea is the idea of salvation, but notice what the slight difference means with Joshua. While Hoshea means salvation, Joshua means the Lord saves, or literally Yahweh saves, so while Hoshea puts up from the idea the notion of salvation, Joshua puts a focus on who is doing the saving. Joshua is an explicit, powerful proclamation that you cannot save yourself, that it takes someone external to you, namely Jehovah or Yahweh, God the Lord, who has to save us. So this is subtle, but

it's significant, because this difference makes all the difference. I would say that in our modern culture, we love the idea of salvation. We just think we can save ourselves. The modern gospel is Hosea, just be good enough, try harder, be more enlightened, be nice to people, do acts of justice and good things, because maybe you can save yourself. And we hear the same message in different versions. Live your truth, follow your heart, hold yourself together, believe in yourself. It's a story of the fact that people can try and save themselves, and some people may think, well, it's going to be politics that saves us. Others will think it's education that saves us. Others may even think it's good religion and good law keeping and good moral performance that saves us, that's Hosea, the modern gospel. Tim Keller put it like this: the essence of self-salvation, or the essence of sin, rather, is self-salvation. The heart of sin is you doing whatever you can, trying in whatever way you can to save self, thinking it's within me, I can muster up enough courage or things I can do to save myself, but friends, that is not the Christian gospel. The Christian gospel isn't a mere gospel that you can save yourself. The Christian gospel is Joshua, which means the Lord saves. It takes God entering our story to save us. You go to a bookstore, and oftentimes the self-help section is larger than the Christian section, because we all know there's things to improve and be transformed by, and even to save or fix within ourselves. We acknowledge the need for salvation, it's just we disagree on who does the saving. The modern gospel, Hosea would say you can do the saving, try harder, be better, and you can save yourself, but the Christian gospel says you cannot save, but the Lord saves. I think it's interesting when Hosea is renamed as Joshua. It happens right before the 12 spies are sent into the Promised Land, and if you know the story, they'll go in, scout out Canaan, and 10 of the 12 come back really discouraged, even afraid. They come back talking about the giants and the hurdles and the problems, but two of the 12, Joshua and Caleb, they come back with a positive report. They come back not full of fear but full of faith, and I wonder if it's because Joshua's name began to seep in and it began to penetrate his soul every time he saw a giant and he saw a problem and he saw a hurdle, he was actually reminded of his new name, I'm Joshua, not because I can save, not because the mighty army of Israel can save, but because the Lord saves, and he began to believe the very meaning of his name, so much so that as the 10 come back, bring in a negative report, and saying, "Hey, we should just turn back and go to Egypt, because we cannot occupy this land. Notice what Joshua said in Numbers 14, verse six to nine, Joshua, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Jephunneh, who were among those who scouted out the land, tore their clothes, and said to the entire Israelite community, the land we passed through and explored is an extremely good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and give it to us. Says he goes on and says, only don't rebel against the Lord, and don't be afraid of the people of the land, for we will devour them, their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us. Don't be afraid of them. What a difference, what a contrast.

Libin Abraham 10:18

And really, the only difference between those who are led by fear and those who are led by faith, is what are you fixing your attention on? The 10 fixated their attention on the hurdles, the giants, and said, we cannot, we got to turn back. But Joshua and Caleb, they said, the Lord is with us, He saves, our eyes are on him. Surely they were overwhelmed. Surely they were afraid, but they trusted in the Lord who saves. A few years later, Moses was getting ready to die, and God would invite Moses to hand over the leadership to Joshua, and you can imagine how giant of a task this says, no pun intended, but how massive of a task to assume leadership from Moses, the one who met with God face to face, received the commandments, the law, the 10 commandments, who confronted Pharaoh and led the people of God through the Red Sea and led them for 40 years, Joshua feels the intimidation, but God comes and visits Joshua, and here's what God would say to Joshua in Joshua one nine: Haven't I commanded you, be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Just like Gideon found courage not in himself, but in the fact that God was with him. Joshua, in this moment of leadership transfer, is invited to find courage in God, who is with him. Look up at verse seven. God tells him, "Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you, I imagine Moses, through those few years that they were doing ministry together, was handing down to Joshua instructions on how to lead the people of God faithfully, but I can't have to wonder. I wonder if there was a moment where Joshua or Moses told Joshua, Joshua, if you get afraid, just remember your renaming story. Remember that you are no longer Hosea, but that you are Joshua. Remember that you're not the savior of these people, you can't save them, but the Lord can save. Remember what your name means, that it is God, and God alone. When you feel overwhelmed, when you feel like you can't keep going, remember the Lord saves. Here is the most important instruction for you to carefully observe. It is not you who saves, but the Lord who saves. A few weeks ago, you heard from Cynthia Yanoff, who delivered a powerful message to our church body, and Cynthia mentioned at the end of her message about how her and her husband, Mike, they adopted JB, who's 10 years old. JB was born to a 15 year old mom who, in two months, within two months, recognized she could not raise this child, so she made the heartbreaking and difficult decision to hand him over to someone else who perhaps could, but before she gave him up for adoption, she had named him Joshua Beau. Here's a picture of Joshua JB Joshua Beau,

perhaps she didn't understand the full significance of naming him Joshua that day as a 15 year old mom, but she named him Joshua, which means the Lord saves, and 10 years ago God saved that little boy by bringing the Yano family to foster and then adopt him. They came, they took him in, they fought for him, they loved him, they walked alongside of him, showed him the love of Jesus. And 10 years ago, God physically saved this boy, JB, by bringing the Yano family. But what's beautiful about this story is that JB Joshua Bo got baptized today on the day we're talking about Joshua from the Bible. Today he was baptized at this service 10 years ago. God saved him physically, but today we're celebrating the fact that God has saved him spiritually and eternally. 10 years ago, God gave him an earthly family, but today God has given him a spiritual family, the family of God to come alongside of him. That 15, that 15 year old mom had no idea all the ways that God would save him in every way down. God was going to show up in his life in every season because God was writing a story that proclaimed to the world the Lord saves, He saves.

Libin Abraham 15:11

So I was talking to Cynthia this week, and she, like any parent, has moments of being overwhelmed and questions about the unknown and questions about the future, but she said the Lord has kept reminding their family that God is the ones, God is the one who has saved JB, and He will be the one who always will be savior for JB, and maybe you feel overwhelmed at what you're going through in your family, in your health, in your career. Can I just remind you, God doesn't just save us one time and then leave us a fend for ourselves. He is our Savior. He saves us. He is saving us, and He will save us. We have a God who doesn't give up on our story. We have a God who's faithful, not just to save us to heaven, but save us from addiction and temptation, to save us to Himself. He is faithful, he is good. The Lord saves Joshua. The Lord saves. Every time I think about the story of the Israelites, it always seemed unfair to me that Moses, who led the people from Egypt and put up with him, honestly, for 40 years, didn't get the joy of entering the promised land. Does anyone else feel that? That was a little unfair. God, you used him to do all this. Why not let him be in the promised land? And we know the part of the story is because Moses, as good of a person as he was, he could not keep the law of God perfectly. He disobeyed God and went. God invited him to speak to the rock to bring water out of it. He instead struck the rock, and as a judgment for that, God says, 'Moses, you'll get to see the Promised Land, but you won't get to enter it. But I think the real story is connected to that, but it's bigger than that, it's deeper than that. So, here's why I think Moses wasn't able to enter the Promised Land. Moses represents the law, he received the 10 Commandments. God established the legal system of Israel through Moses. He represents the law, and the law is good. The law is holy. The law is necessary. The law exposes our sin, but the law can never save us from our sins. The law can bring us to the edge of the promised land, but the law cannot make us enter the promised land. The law can show us our flaws and how far we fall every day, but the law cannot forgive us of our sins, cannot save us from our sins. So Moses, representing the law, could only bring the Israelites to the edge of the promised land, but it had to be Joshua who could bring them into the promised land, because while the law, while Moses represented the law, Joshua represented grace, because his name means the Lord saves, as in it's not the law that can save, it's the Lord, and the Lord alone who saves, the law can bring us to the edge, but it's the Lord and His grace and His mercy that has to bring us in. So John 117 would say the law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through the Lord Jesus. The law exposes our sins, but it had to be Jesus and the grace that came through him that could bring us into this new covenant relationship with God. So many of you may not know, is that Joshua is a Hebrew word, Yahushua, which means the Lord saves, and guess who has the exact same name, Jesus. Jesus, the Greek name, means Yeshua, which also means the Lord saves. The law could bring us to the edge of the promised land, but it could only be Jesus who could bring us into the promised land? Every time they spoke the name Joshua, they were whispering a prophecy that the Lord was coming to save us. He's coming because the law can't save us. Moses couldn't even keep the own law that God gave. He could not obey perfectly. It's an example. The law could never save, but the Lord can save. Every time they spoke Joshua's name, it was a whisper, a prophecy that Jesus was coming, that grace was coming. Joshua could save the people of God from earthly and. That means, but only Jesus could save us from our sin.

Libin Abraham 20:02

Only Jesus could deliver us, not through the Jordan or the Red Sea, but deliver us through death itself, and bring us into an eternal union that would be never separated from God. Joshua was able to lead the people of God into an earthly inheritance, but Jesus gave us an eternal inheritance that would never fade or perish away. Joshua could lead the people of God to earthly temporary rest, but Jesus leads us into a forever eternal rest. This is exactly what the writer of Hebrews would say in Hebrews four verse eight to 10. For if Joshua had given them rest. God would not have spoken later about another day, meaning the rest, the very rest, and the peace that the Israelites would enjoy in the Promised Land was temporary. And God kept telling them, there is a better Joshua coming, there is a better rest coming, a rest that the law

cannot give you, but only grace can give you. Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people. The next verse says, for the person who has entered his rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from his. So we don't just have a story from Moses to Joshua, not even just Hosea to Joshua, but really Joshua's story is taking us from Joshua to Jesus, letting us know that we cannot save ourselves, our performance cannot save us, our law keeping, rule keeping, even with the best intentions, all it can do is bring us to the edge of the promised land, but it had to be in the grace that came to us through Jesus that would allow us to cross from being outside of the covenant relationship with God to being in it with Him, and sometimes today the law may look for people as moral goodness or doing enough justice-oriented thing, and as good as our intentions are, as bad as they are, it is only the grace that comes to the person of Jesus that can truly save us. And can I just tell you that on the cross on Golgotha, what Joshua's name prophesied, Jesus fulfilled. Jesus would carry the Roman cross, and for six hours he would hang on a cross, because this is how the Lord chose to save us, not by overthrowing his earthly enemies, but by surrendering his life to him, not by carrying a sword, but by carrying a cross, through humility and sacrifice, Jesus would be nailed to the cross, because this is how the Lord saves, and this is how, where it's not just Abraham or Jacob or Ben oni or Gideon or Joshua who gets a renaming. This is how you and I are renamed. Second Corinthians five would say, like this, in verse 21 He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. This is our ultimate renaming, that our old names of sin and rebellion against God, and enmity to Him, of being hell-bound and away from God. All of that will be placed on Jesus at the cross, because we can't save ourselves, it had to be him, and he would take on all the names we rightfully wore. That's why the cross is heavy, that's why it's intense, that's why it's gruesome, because he was swearing our own names. He became sin, so that in that moment there would be an exchange, he wore our names, and we would, for the rest of eternity, wear his name, the righteousness of God, no longer a sinner but a saint, we would wear the name forgiven, beloved sons and daughters of God, the inheritance of God alive in Christ. This is your new name. Amen. We can praise God for that. The old is gone and the new has come. Paul will go on to say, in the same chapter and verse 17, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. You've been renamed, the old has passed away. And see, and I want you to see, some of you are going to see for the first time that you are new in Christ, alive in Christ. Forgiven in Christ, but this could only be possible because the Lord saves. The Lord saves when we can't save ourselves. The Lord saves when we cannot perform enough, be good enough, or religious enough.

Libin Abraham 25:16

It had to be Him doing the saving. It's beautiful about this renaming theme, we're not done with all the renaming. In fact, there's a new name that you will know that we have yet to know. And here's what Revelation says about that day when we cross across the shores of eternity, and we're face to face with Jesus. He cannot wait to give you a new name, Revelation 217 says, I will also give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name is inscribed that no one knows except the one who receives it. So today you carry certain spiritual new identities and new names, forgiven, loved, redeemed, whole saint, all that is true about you, but when you meet Jesus face to face of the billions and millions of people there in heaven, he will look at you and he will say, I've been waiting all this time to give you a gift, and the gift is a white stone. In first century, the white stone was significant when a jury was determining whether a person on trial was guilty or innocent. If they determined that this person was innocent into the jury box, they would throw a white stone. The white stone represented innocent, not just a representation, but a declaration. Innocent is who you are, not guilty, but innocent. Also, in first century, if you were invited into a ceremony, they would give you a white stone as your admission ticket. Apple wallets weren't quite available at that time, so they would say, 'Here's your white stone, bring it, this is your entry. So people who were invited to special exclusive ceremonies, they would come and show the white stone. That's how they had all access, full entry. So imagine this: Jesus is saying, "When you meet me, you're coming with a white stone. I'm giving you it's the declaration of your innocence that you have full access to all that I am and all that I prepared for you, and on that white stone, there's a special name that only Jesus and you will know how personal, how peculiar you get a new name. Hope my new name is better than Libbon. I don't know what it will be, but I can't wait to find out. I hope it's not Greyhound, but it's something else. But there's a new name, because heaven isn't just about being saved. Heaven is about being fully and personally known face to face. That'll be the last new name you receive. All this because Jesus would go to a cross, take our old names, give us a new name, a new inheritance. We're going to participate in communion to remember the cost, to remember that our freedom, our new name, our righteousness came at the cost of the Son of God giving His life as a ransom for us. So, would you stand with me? We're going to sing the song about the blood, because this is what it took to save us, and there are some of you who need to be declared innocent, but only happen through the message of Hosea, can only happen through the message of Jesus, or even Joshua, the Lord saves, so if you've been trying to save yourself. Make sure your good works are out doing your bad works. Make sure you're feeling morally good. Friends, today could be your first communion. And I pray that some of you is the moment, this is a moment where you cross over from death to life, and you'll recognize that

God, I've been trying to save myself by all of these means, but today I surrender. I'm trusting in the finished work of Jesus, and I'm going to receive the gift that God saves me to the cross, where Jesus would, in exchange for our sin, give us the gift of righteousness. Would you ready your hearts, maybe for someone today? Would you surrender your life at the feet of Jesus as we sing about the cross in the blood of Christ.