

# Sermon Study

War Stories - Keep Fighting  
Joshua 11:1-23

May 13, 2018

## vision

Eastview  
Christian  
Church is a  
fearless church  
of Christ  
followers whose  
ridiculous love  
and dangerous  
witness are  
irresistible.



## AUTHOR'S NOTES (summary of key points for this study)

*Sometimes it seems like there are always more battles to fight, like the struggle will never end. You win one fight, only to discover another fight waiting for you. After battling the kingdoms of the south, chapter 11 finds the Israelites still camping at Gilgal when Joshua learns that 110 miles north, all the northern armies are now teamed-up and waiting to fight them. In this study, you'll discuss this idea of 'constant fighting,' and how that meshes with the truth that the larger victory has already been won.*

## Gather (your group getting to know each other)

Share a light-hearted event in your life that took "forever" and seemed like it would "never end." Maybe a meeting, or a bad date, or a travel delay...something that just dragged on and on. How did that experience feel?

**Go**  
(your group on mission)

Verse 18 touches on the idea of making war for a long time. Consider this possibility as you continue your outreach to nonbelievers, especially as it relates to your patience and resolve. Often, the mission to which you and your group are called is not a quick one. Are you prepared for a long war?

**Grow** (your group growing as Christ-followers)

**Key Scripture:**

“Joshua made war a long time with those kings...” (Joshua 11:18, ESV)

**Discussion:**

1. Have someone begin the discussion time by leading the group in prayer, then read Joshua 11:1-23 aloud.

2. Verses 4-5 highlight the vast size of this enemy army, calling it a great horde, like the sands on the seashore. Coming off victory in southern Canaan (Joshua 10), how do you think the Israelites felt upon learning that a new battle lay ahead of them, and that it was a horde larger than any they could possibly imagine? Can you relate? When has it felt like the next army lining up against you is massive...as though the enemy off in the distance just keeps getting bigger? Share that time with your group, and what that looming expectation of eventual battle felt like.

3. Again, God first tells Joshua not to be afraid of them (v.6). Why? Why do you think God keeps returning to this idea first and foremost? What role does fear (and its cousins: anxiety, worry & doubt) play in fighting God's battles?

4. The “great horde,” while imposing, is not a great strategy. You'd only gather a vast army in one congested place, without any room for maneuvering, if you were hoping that Israel would see the sheer size of your alliance, panic, and then be easily defeated. It's a strategy that depends on your opponent being afraid and intimidated. How many of your battles depend on *your* fear? Are you easily worried, quickly daunted, and predictably fearful? If so, why?

5. The Israelites were neither afraid nor intimidated. Verse 7 says Joshua “came suddenly against them,” and the tables were turned. The “great horde strategy” was to cause fear and panic, but now *they* are the ones afraid and panicking, even though they were larger, on their home turf, and had better weapons. How does this idea work its way into your life? How can you turn the tables on your bigger, badder 'enemy'?

6. Verse 6 also shows a quick timeline. Joshua learns of the horde, then God says “tomorrow at this time” this battle will be pretty much over. No time to stew about it, or dwell on it, or for the soldiers to overthink it or psyche themselves out about it. What role do you think time and procrastination play in your battles? Are there battles you should have fought by now, but you've been stalling? Discuss the advantages of quickly facing your battles and the disadvantages of letting them linger.

7. For Israel, their largest battle is the last one. In what sense might that be true for us? Do we tend to think our battles should get easier and smaller as we grow? Why?

8. In this study, maybe you've discussed your ongoing battles in terms of situations (job insecurity, illness, etc) or ideas (anxiety, worry, etc.), but of course, sometimes we can also see our battles as being against other *people or institutions*. What is the Christian view on this? In other words, spend some time on this question: who is the enemy you're constantly fighting today? (Read Matthew 5:43-47, Romans 12:14-21, and Romans 13:1-7 to see who it *isn't*, and read Ephesians 6:11-13 and 1 Peter 5:8-9 to see who it is.) How does this challenge you?

9. Once Israel defeats the great horde and wins their biggest battle, we're told the land had rest from war (v.23). Compare this to 1 Corinthians 15:22-26 and v.54-57, and then also Ephesians 1:20-23. As you close, focus on Jesus saving the biggest enemy for last, conquering it, and then reigning over a land at rest from war. What do you think this means in light of the 'battles' and 'skirmishes' we still face today? How can the victory be won, yet there still be battles for us to keep fighting?

**Give**  
(your group serving each other)

Serve your group this week by acknowledging (either in prayer or conversation) the ongoing nature of their battles. Most are likely dealing with something that feels like hopping from one battle to the next, so find ways this week to make sure they know they're not alone.