**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | Jesus, the Sinner’s Refuge |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Joshua 20:1-3 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #2471 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. All of the Bible is about Jesus.
      1. Sometimes people will ask, “Have you read the four Gospels?”
         1. But there are sixty-six Gospels.
            1. They are all about the Lord Jesus Christ.
   2. Jesus is the hero of the Bible; salvation is the theme of the Bible.
      1. We find Jesus standing somewhere in the shadows in all of the Old Testament, if we study it carefully.
      2. God wants us to be saved, and He wants us to love Jesus.
         1. So, He has tucked away illustrations, even in the Old Testament.
   3. God instructed Joshua to provide six “cities of refuge”.
      1. Joshua 20:1-3
      2. Back in that day, if someone were guilty of manslaughter, then there was a person who was a family member of the dead who was called “the avenger of blood”.
         1. He had the right and the responsibility to track down the killer and to slay him.
         2. The Lord realized how this could be abused and misused.
      3. The Lord took six cities and made them cities of refuge.
      4. The six cities of refuge are highly symbolic and teach us a wonderful lesson.
   4. In today’s message, we will look at these cities of refuge and the wonderful lesson that they teach us.
2. the saving nature of these cities (joshua 20:1-3)
   1. There were cities into which a person who was fleeing from justice could go and be safe.
   2. These cities refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.
      1. That is what the writer of Hebrews talked about.
         1. Hebrews 6:18
            1. It speaks of those who have fled for refuge.
            2. This is a reference to the cities of refuge.
   3. They represent Christ, our Savior and Lord, who is our place of refuge.
3. the significant names of these cities (joshua 20:7-8)
   1. There were six cities of refuge.
      1. They pictured the Lord Jesus Christ by their very names.
      2. Kedesh:
         1. Joshua 20:7
         2. “Kedesh” means “holiness”.
            1. It was a place of holiness.
         3. For us to be saved, to know salvation, and to have eternal life, we must come to the sinless, stainless, spotless, and holy Son of God and let Him make us holy.
            1. We can never make ourselves holy.

Do not try to get better so you can be saved; et saved so you can be better.

* + - 1. Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness.
         1. Bring your sins, your weaknesses, your failures, and your faults to the Lord Jesus Christ.
         2. Don’t try to clean up without Jesus.
         3. He is a sinless Savior.

We cannot wash clothes and make them clean by washing them in dirty water.

* + - 1. There is no one else who can save.
         1. Mohammad cannot save.
         2. Confucius cannot save.
         3. Allah cannot save.

Only Jesus saves.

* + - 1. Kedesh speaks of Christ our Savior.
    1. Shechem:
       1. Joshua 20:7
       2. Shechem speaks of Christ our strength.
       3. The very name “Shechem” means “shoulder” and “support”.
          1. Jesus is our support; Jesus is our strength.
       4. Jesus is the one who carries us on His shoulders.
          1. Isaiah 9:6
          2. In the parable of the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd goes out and finds the one lost sheep.

“*He layeth it on His shoulders and brings it back to the sheepfold*.”

Luke 15:3-5

He went back because of Christ our strength.

* + - * 1. Don’t get the idea that we must live the Christian life.

The Christian life ought to be lived, but it is Jesus Christ underneath with His strength carrying us on His shoulders.

Were it not for the strength of Jesus, we never would make it.

* + 1. Hebron:
       1. Joshua 20:7
       2. The word “Hebron” speaks of fellowship and of Christ our satisfaction.
          1. Hebron was a place to which the Bible gave the name “fellowship”.
       3. Not only are we saved by a holy Savior and not only does He carry us through, but He also brings us together that we might have fellowship with one another and fellowship with Him.
          1. 1 John 1:3
       4. We come to a holy Savior.
          1. He is Christ our Savior.
       5. We lay our burdens upon Him.
          1. He is Christ our strength.
       6. We enjoy Him.
          1. He is Christ our satisfaction.
       7. What our heart yearns for is fellowship with God and fellowship with one another.
    2. Bezer:
       1. Joshua 20:8
       2. “Bezer” means “stronghold” and “fortification”.
       3. When we come to Jesus, the holy Savior saves us. And when He carries us in His arms and we enter into sweet fellowship with Him, then we will learn the security that Jesus alone can give.
       4. Jesus Christ is our security.
          1. We don’t keep Him; He keeps us.
          2. If it depended upon us living the Christian life, then we never would live it.
       5. Give your heart to Jesus Christ today, if you have not already done so.
          1. He will be your strength and your fortification.

Proverbs 18:10

* + - 1. If you sincerely trust Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, then not only will He save you, but He will also keep you all the way.
         1. We have a high priest who is able to save us to the uttermost.

This means that He will save us all the way through.

He will keep you.

He will save you instantaneously.

He will be with you continually.

He will keep you eternally.

* + - 1. “Bezer” speaks of Christ our security.
    1. Ramoth:
       1. Joshua 20:8
       2. The Bible word for “Ramoth” means “exalted”.
       3. It speaks of Christ our sovereign.
          1. He is the one high and lifted up.

Isaiah 6:1

* + - * 1. Acts 2:33

He is exalted by the right hand of God.

* + - * 1. Philippians 2:9
      1. The glory is that we are seated in the heavenlies with Him.
         1. He is exalted.
         2. He died for us.
         3. He rose for us.
         4. He ascended for us.

And we are co-enthroned with the Lord Jesus Christ on high.

* + - 1. Many Christians have never realized the privilege that they have:
         1. Being saved by His holiness.
         2. Carried by His strength.
         3. Sweet fellowship with Him.
         4. Secure in Him.
         5. Worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.
    1. Golan:
       1. Joshua 20:8
       2. Golan speaks of separation.
          1. It speaks of Christ our sanctification.
          2. The word “Golan” means “separate.”
       3. When Jesus saves us, we do not remain the same.
          1. 2 Corinthians 5:17
       4. Sanctification literally means “to be sanctified” or “to be separated”.
       5. Golan means “separated unto joy”.
       6. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18
          1. We cannot have fellowship with God and truly worship Him if we are dabbling in sin.

He will strengthen us, but He will not strengthen us to sin.

He will strengthen us to live right and righteous.

1. the strategic nearness of these cities (romans 10:6-9)
   1. God wanted people to have safety and refuge.
   2. He put these six cities in strategic places throughout Israel.
      1. He put some in the north, some in the south, some in the east, some in the west, and one in the center that was very near to everyone.
      2. The cities were spread out.
   3. The roads to these cities were always open and clearly marked.
      1. At a crossroads, there would be a sign pointing in the direction of the city of refuge.
         1. If someone was fleeing, then he would not wonder which way to go.
      2. These roads, as much as possible, were level so that there would be no impediment or blockades.
         1. Stones and trash were removed.
      3. The roads were wide.
      4. The priests would go out and examine these roads to make certain that they were fit.
      5. These roads were clearly marked and always near.
   4. Our city of refuge is Jesus, and He is always near.
      1. Romans 10:6-9
         1. We do not have to make a pilgrimage into Heaven, appear before the throne, or ask God to send us a Savior.
            1. Jesus has already come.
         2. We do not have to go down into the netherworld and ask for Jesus to be raised from the dead.
            1. He has already been raised from the dead.
      2. Romans 10:8 shows us just how near Jesus is.
         1. Jesus is in your mouth, and He is in your heart.
            1. How does Jesus get in your mouth and in your heart if you are not saved?

“*The word of faith which we preach*.”

When someone preaches, he put, God’s Word in your mouth and in your heart.

You are not saved yet, but the Word is there.

* + 1. Romans 10:9
       1. Then, if you believe with your heart and confess with your mouth, you will be saved.
       2. Jesus is closer to you than the person who is sitting next to you.
          1. He is in your mouth and in your heart.
       3. You must believe in your heart and confess with your mouth to be saved.
    2. No matter how close you are to being saved, no one is almost saved.
       1. To be almost saved is to be altogether lost.
       2. You cannot say that you didn’t have an opportunity or that you never heard.
          1. Romans 10:8

This is the strategic nearness of these cities.

* 1. There was a man who was so near to salvation, but he missed it.
     1. 2 Samuel 2:17-23
        1. The avenger of blood would come and chase a man, and the man would run into the city of refuge and be safe.
        2. There was a man named Abner, and Abner killed a man name Asahel.
           1. Abner didn’t want to kill him.
           2. In a battle, Asahel pursued Abner, and Abner killed him.
     2. Asahel’s brother was Joab.
        1. Joab was the commander-in-chief of King David’s armies.
        2. Joab was also an avenger of blood.
           1. He had been looking for a time and a place to slay Abner.
     3. Joab and Abner were just outside the city of Hebron, which was one of the six cities of refuge.
        1. Joab, in a friendly way, beckoned Abner to come to him.
     4. 2 Samuel 3:27
        1. Right at the very gates of the city of refuge but on the wrong side of the gate, Abner died.
     5. When David heard about the death of Abner, he began to lament.
        1. 2 Samuel 3:32-34
        2. 2 Samuel 3:38
        3. David said that Abner did not have to die.
           1. Abner was not in chains.
           2. It was his choice.
           3. David said that Abner died like a fool.
        4. David told everyone that Abner was a great man.
           1. He was a prince, and he died.
     6. Where did Abner die?
        1. He died right at the gate of the city of refuge, but he was on the wrong side of that gate.
           1. He never stepped in.
     7. We read in the New Testament of Judas who kissed Jesus.
        1. He kissed the door of Heaven and went to Hell.
        2. Mark 14:44-45
     8. There are some people who can be so close.
        1. Romans 10:8
        2. They are right at the threshold of salvation, but they are on the wrong side.
  2. David said that a great man, a prince, had fallen.
     1. 2 Samuel 3:38
     2. Some very successful people are going to miss Heaven.
        1. In the eyes of the world, they may be a great person.
        2. The Bible tells of a rich man who died; and in Hell, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.
           1. Luke 16:19-31
           2. Can you imagine his funeral?

Someone would make a speech, stating that he was a man of great influence and prestige.

A great man in the eyes of the people, but his soul was in Hell.

* + 1. People like this are victims of a cunning deception.
       1. They don’t realize how important it is to deal with their souls.
       2. They deal with their bank accounts.
       3. They deal with their golf game.
       4. They deal with their family.
       5. They deal with all of these things, but they don’t deal with God.
    2. You may be a prince in a city, but if you don’t give your heart to Jesus Christ, then the Bible teaches that you are a fool.
       1. Jesus said to a wealthy farmer who thought he had it all made, “T*hou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee*.”
          1. Luke 12:20
       2. It does not matter what else you are doing.
          1. If you don’t give your heart to Jesus Christ, then you are very foolish.

Mark 8:36

* 1. When you compare your soul to other things, what is more valuable?
     1. A bank account?
     2. A career?
     3. Your sports?
     4. What is more important?
     5. Mark 8:36
  2. Abner was the victim of a cunning deception.
     1. Joab acted as if he was his friend.
        1. Joab put one arm around him; and with a dagger, he stabbed him under the fifth rib.
     2. Abner died on the threshold at the steps of Hebron.
        1. No wonder David said that he died like a fool.
        2. He didn’t have to die that way.
           1. He should have known about Joab and what Joab wanted to do.
  3. David wept over Abner.
     1. It is time that we weep over lost souls before they die.
     2. All the tears of David could not bring Abner back nor rescue him.
  4. One of these days, it will be too late for tears.
     1. If we are going to weep over our loved ones, then weep for them now.
     2. We have friends, neighbors, and relatives who are being deceived by the devil.
        1. They are going to die and go to Hell.

1. CONCLUSION
   1. What can we learn from this?
      1. If you are already inside, then rejoice in the Savior.
         1. Thank God for Christ our salvation.
         2. Thank God for Christ our strength.
         3. Thank God for Christ our satisfaction.
         4. We are blessed if we are inside that city.
      2. If you are not inside the city of refuge, if you have not yet received Jesus Christ, then come in today.
         1. Proverbs 27:1
         2. If you have not yet come into the city of refuge, if you have not yet turned to Jesus and asked Him to come into your heart and forgive your sin, then do it today.
         3. You can be a great man and a prince, but you can die like a fool.
      3. We need to warn and educate our friends.
         1. We need to tell them about the city of refuge (the Lord Jesus Christ).
         2. We need to tell them about the deception of the devil.
            1. Your children are sitting ducks for the devil.
            2. The devil is a liar and a deceiver.
            3. He puts his arms around us and acts like he is our friend, but there is a knife that is coming under the fifth rib.

He does not want us inside that city.

* + 1. We need to weep for the lost before they die.
       1. Jeremiah 9:1
       2. Someone has described the modern church as a dry-eyed church in a Hell-bent world.
          1. When was the last time you shed a tear for some soul who was mortgaged to the devil?
  1. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
  2. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
     1. Romans 3:23
     2. Romans 10:9-10
     3. Romans 10:13
     4. Acts 16:31
     5. John 3:16