

**Sermon Series: *Joshua: Power of God* Sermon Title: *The Compassion, Justice, and Wisdom of God* Scripture: Joshua 20-21** Pastor Chris Fritz Sunday, June 28, 2020

**INTRODUCTION**

**I. THE CITIES OF REFUGE: THE COMPASSION & JUSTICE OF GOD**

*WHAT is a “City of Refuge”? And WHY were there six of them?*

1) As created in the IMAGE OF GOD, every human life MUST BE ESTEEMED AND VALUED.

***Genesis 9:6; Deuteronomy 19:11-13; Joshua 20:9 -***

2) God takes matters of JUSTICE seriously, and SO MUST WE.

***James 2:8-9; Galatians 3:26-29 -***

Let us strive to be a people…

* who are quick to hear (quick to listen) and slow to speak.
* who refuse to become defensive and angry when challenged (or when called a name). Instead, let us continue to speak and act in ways that are kind, truthful, and gracious.
* who refuse to give any place to bitterness in our hearts.
* who resist the temptation to bash or demean people (people made in the image of God) who may think differently than us.
* who continue (no matter what!) to make much of Christ and His Gospel.

***Numbers 35:33-34; 1 Peter 2:13-17 -***

3) JESUS is the ultimate City of Refuge.

**II. THE LEVITICAL CITIES & PASTURELANDS: THE WISDOM OF GOD**

In chapter 21 we see that the Levitical Cities & Pasturelands are…

* Claimed in Faith (verses 1-3)
* Determined by Lot (verses 4-8)
* Listed by Name (verses 9-40) - And there’s a lot of them… 48 cities and pasturelands!

1) The Levites were to be scattered throughout Israel as teachers and guardians of the truth.

***“They shall teach Jacob Your rules and Israel Your law; they shall put incense before You and whole burnt offerings on Your altar.” (Deuteronomy 33:10)***

God’s people in the Old Testament needed helpful teachers and reminders AND God’s people in the New Testament need helpful teachers and reminders:

* This is why we’re told to not neglect meeting together (Hebrews 10:25).
* This is why God blessed the church with the gift of teaching (Ephesians 4:11).
* This is why Paul told Timothy to train up other men who could teach the truth (2 Timothy 2:2).
* This is why, in part, Peter wrote the book of 2nd Peter, to “stir” us up to remember the truth we’ve been given in Christ (2 Peter 1:12-15)

2) The Levites were to specifically remind the people of God’s perfect faithfulness and righteousness.

***Joshua 21:43-45 -***

**Questions for Further Study, Reflection, and Application…**

1. Why were the Cities of Refuge so important? What do they teach us about the value of life created in the image of God? What do they teach us about God’s heart regarding justice?
2. What does it mean to “show partiality” (James 2:8-9)? In what ways are you tempted to show partiality? How can you combat and repent of this sin?
3. What does Galatians 3:26-29 teach us about the basis of our unity in the Body of Christ?
4. In what way is Jesus our “City of Refuge”?
5. Why were the Levites scattered throughout Israel? What were they to do?
6. What points/themes/ideas does Joshua 21:43-45 drive home?