We're continuing to talk about the covenants God has made with us today. We're talking about the covenant that God made with the people of Israel through Joshua. Hearing what Ginny read to us today, it sounds like a wonderful covenant. They're living in houses that they didn't have to build. They're taking care of land that's already been groomed for them. It's a great thing. It's a great opportunity. God has given them a wonderful, wonderful things. But God's done this before for the people of Israel. He saved them many times. He's giving them wonderful land. He's promised them all of these things. And each time something happens, something changes, something gets broken in the Covenant.

We don't talk about the Book of Joshua a lot. It's a very interesting story. It's the continuation of the people of Israel out of Egypt. Moses led them out. We know about the plagues. We know about The Ten Commandments, the parting of the Red Sea, how they got to where they are. But now, Moses isn't leading them any longer; Joshua is. Joshua has taken his place. and the people that he's leading are not the same people that came out of Egypt. It's their children and their grandchildren because they broke a covenant with God again. Moses broke a covenant with God and Moses and God said, I'm done, you're done. You're going to stay here. You're never going to see the promised land, and they don't. But Joshua does. Joshua gets to lead all of these people out, and they cross and they build their stone towers. And they get to celebrate through the love of God. And they get to do it in a wonderful way. They get to kill people. They get to take over and destroy every city they come upon. They get to slaughter and take everything that's left, all in the name of God. I wish you could all see the look Sue was giving me right now because she does not believe wonderful would be fitting in that sentence. I can tell, but that's what the Book of Joshua is about. The entire book is the massacre that they do in the name of God. To get this land, they justify everything that they do because they are the chosen people of God?

That doesn't happen anymore, right? You can't turn on the TV right now without hearing about how one party is better than the other because God chose them. How one race is better than the other because God chose them. How everything that we do is okay, because God justified it. When I was in Cleveland at the national setting, I got to hear justification of things that we do around the world, because it's okay, because God thinks it's okay. God's given us the right to do that.

If I went downstairs and asked the girls what can we do because God says it's okay, I know they would say we can be good to one another. We can treat people the way we want to be treated. They would probably throw something in about eating whales and fruit snacks, but they understand The Golden Rule. They know to love God above all else, and to love one another as we want to be treated, as we want to be loved, as we want to do. Nowhere, no time, will any of them say I can beat this person up because they go to a different church. Nowhere will they say, I don't have to be friends with this person because they are a different color. When you all heard them on world communion Sunday, standing up here, talking about what it means to be a friend and what their friends look like, and they talked about how great the differences are. More so, than the similarities.

So, it's perplexing. If we agree to all of these things, if we agree to be what God intends us to be, then why can all of these bad things happen? Why can we do these bad things and justify it? At the end of the reading, Joshua says that they're uninformed because Joshua knows that all of this has happened before He sees it.

One of the chapters that we left out in the readings was how Joshua made them all be circumcised again. That's an old covenant between God and the Jewish people, but they stopped doing it at some point. A very easy one to remind them of God's love and attention every day, but they just decided to stop doing it. And Joshua knows they're going to decide to stop doing it again. Their grandparents witnessed so many wonderful miracles by God's hand and still they decided to worship Baall one day because Moses was gone a little longer than they expected, and started to worship other gods because the harvest wasn't coming in as fast as they wanted it to. Worship to other gods because the water wasn't right.

Joshua knows this opportunity is probably going to happen again. Now, when it says that he wrote it in the Book of Revelation, it's not the Book of Revelation that we're used to. It isn't the very end book written by John. It's actually the beginning. In the old days, it wasn't called the Old Testament or the New Testament. We know that, right? But there was a book called The Book of Yashir, and that was originally the first Five books. Can we name the first five books? I really wish my confirmands were here. Yes, we got them in the back corner, but it was all of those. And then the Book of Joshua was written out in a different way. So Joshua wrote it down. He added it to the story so that the next generation would see it, knowing that they would fail because we all do.

We're human. We focus so much on Earthly things. Sometimes we forget, and we justify it in Earthly ways because we forget. But God's love is continually there. Every time we make a mistake through there to pick us up and lift us up and say it's okay, We know You can only do so much. We know that we will fail, but it's okay because of the love that they have for us, because sometimes we'll pick ourselves up and we'll remember the love that we have, the love that we were given, the promise and hope. Because that's the important part not to focus on the bad, not to focus on the things that we've done wrong because we do that too often. Tomorrow is a new day. We don't have to worry about what we did. We shouldn't forget what we did, but we don't have to dwell on what we did because God doesn't. That's why we have the rainbow.

Remember, God made the rainbow so that they will always see and remember their love for us and that we're only human. That's the important thing to remember is that their love is undying and will never change, no matter what we do, no matter what our friends do, no matter what happens around the world. As long as we continue to love each other, we will make a better place.

Let us pray.