

Possessing Our Future

When we talk of possessing our future you have to think about the children of Israel.

They were given the promise of an inheritance in the land of Canaan.

Canaan, the land of promise, represents several things:

1. A better future unknown to the people of God (Ex. 3:8; Deut. 33:28).

So I have come to rescue them from the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own good and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey. Exodus 3:8

2. A new revelation of God's ways, presence, power and promises (Deut. 11:10-12).

For the land you are about to enter and occupy is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you planted your seed and dug out irrigation ditches with your foot as in a vegetable garden. It is a land of hills and valleys with plenty of rain--a land that the LORD your God cares for. He watches over it day after day throughout the year!

3. An entering into all that was promised to the fathers (Deut. 1:8).

I am giving all this land to you! Go in and occupy it, for it is the land the LORD swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to all their descendants.

4. The realization of the fruit of the faith of those who had gone before.

The Moses generation had laid the foundation for the future. The Joshua generation had to possess that future.

Receiving the promise of the land is one thing, but possessing the land is quite another. The Book of Joshua is the story of the Israelites (God's people) possessing their land of promise. The Book of Joshua was written for our learning.

The main theme in the Book of Joshua is Conquest. It presents to us the natural process of possessing God's promised inheritance. In Joshua we learn that there is a difference between an "inheritance" and a "possession."

1. Inheritance is "that which is given by promise to one's heirs" (Josh. 11:23). It is that over which someone has legal right.
2. Possession is "that part which is actually claimed or appropriated. In this case that part which was actually taken by force, if necessary, and occupied (Josh. 21:43-45).

⁴³So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. ⁴⁴The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. Joshua 21:43-45

3. God has promised us an inheritance in Christ, but we must possess that inheritance, because there a spiritual enemy who will contest it.

The story is told of a homeless man who was related to a man of wealth. He lived out of a shopping cart and slept on the streets. The wealthy man died and because of the relationship, the homeless man was included in the will. When the estate was settled they tried to find this man who was named in the will to give him a notice of his inheritance. Finally they found him and gave him a copy of the will in a sealed envelop. The man took the envelop, but never opened it. Because he never opened it, he never claimed it. He was a millionaire, but he was still living in poverty.

Today, I want to talk to you about possessing your future—your Canaan. I am sure that you all have a personal Canaan to experience, but as a church you have a corporate future that God wants you to walk into.

_____ years is a great history for a church. Twelve years is a wonderful milestone for a marriage. But the story is not over.

God brought you out this far to bring you into your promised land.

For the People

In this context I have a message for the people.

How did they position themselves for conquest in the Book of Joshua?

If the Children of Israel were to possess their inheritance three things needed to be in order.

1. They had to possess their inheritance in **proper relationship to the Lord**. This involved three things:
 - Celebration of Passover (5:10-11)
 - Circumcision of the New Generation (5:1-5)
 - The Ark of the Covenant (Presence of the Lord) Leading the Way (3:11). SEPARATION TO GOD/HOLINESS
2. They had to possess their inheritance in **proper relationship to each other**. They came out harnessed, by ranks of five, in battle array with everyone in their place (Ex. 13:18 with Joshua 1:14). UNITY

But you shall pass before your brethren armed [harnessed, ranks of five, battle array], all your mighty men of valor, and help them... Joshua 1:14

3. They had to possess their inheritance in **proper relationship to the leadership**. God's chain of command was the same as it had been with Moses. SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY
 - God spoke to Joshua (1:1; 5:13-15).
 - Joshua spoke to the officers of the people (1:10).
 - The officers spoke to the people (1:11).

The question is, "Are you ready for your future?"

For Joshua

Joshua was in the leadership role because he had a servant spirit under Moses. He had been a good warrior, a faithful co-worker, a lover of God's presence, and a man of faith and vision. He was not intimidated by the giants in the land because he knew that he was serving a God who was greater than the enemy.

Joshua was a little hesitant about the future after the death of Moses, but the Lord came to him and encouraged him in his spirit (Josh. 1:1-7).

After the death of Moses the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, 2 "Now that my servant Moses is dead,

you must lead my people across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. 3 I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Everywhere you go, you will be on land I have given you--4 from the Negev Desert in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and all the land of the Hittites.' 5 No one will be able to stand their ground against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you will lead my people to possess all the land I swore to give their ancestors. 7 Be strong and very courageous. Obey all the laws Moses gave you. Do not turn away from them, and you will be successful in everything you do. 8 Study this Book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed. 9 I command you--be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

For Pastor _____ and the leadership of this church.

1. The Lord desires to speak to you personally and directly—today, now (vs. 1). Today if you will hear His voice.
2. The time is now to arise and go over your Jordan to seize the future (vs. 2). The foundation is fully laid.
3. The land is for the taking but you must walk forward and God will do the rest (vs. 3). You must take big steps of faith.
4. The boundary lines for your ministry have been set by God not by man (vs. 4). Do not say because we are small in number, because we live in a poverty area, because we have few resources...etc.
5. The resistance will fade as you stand in your rightful place (vs. 5). God will not fail you or abandon you.
6. The attitude of faith and courage will be necessary to claim the future (vs. 6).
7. The Word of God will be your compass in every decision and every conflict (vs. 7).
8. The blessing of success and fruitfulness will be yours as you obey the Word (vs. 8).

9. The ever-abiding presence of God will destroy fear, discouragement and opposition (vs. 9).