

Abraham and the Possession of the Land

Introduction and Theme Verses

Joshua's Call and the Original Promise

We will read one of our theme verses, Joshua, chapter one, and verse eleven. Yesterday evening our brother Jerry took huge chunks of bites out of my notes. We will start in chapter 1, verse eleven. "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess it.'"

Then if we could turn back to the original promise, which is in the book of Genesis, in chapter 15. Genesis, chapter 15, verse 5-6. Genesis 15, verse 5-6: "And He took him [Abraham] outside and said, 'Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."

Verses 7-10: "And He said to him, 'I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.' He [Abraham] said, 'O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?' So, He said to him, 'Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, and a three-year-old female goat, and a three-year-old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.' Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds."

Verses 13-16: God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

And then verses 17-18: "It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day, the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land.'"

The Faithfulness of God's Promise and the Response of the People

And then, if we could turn to Hebrews, chapter 10. Two verses about promises. Chapter 10 and verse 23: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." Verse 36: "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."

And then, if we could, this is the last portion I would like to walk us through—the story that our brother already covered yesterday evening, but we will start in Numbers,

chapter 13. And I apologize for reading a little bit more this morning, but I think it will give us the needed context.

Chapter 13, verses 1-3: "Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying, "Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them." So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel."

Verses 17-20: "When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. "See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. "How is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? "How is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes."

Verses 30-33: "Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. "There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.'"

Chapter 14. We will read verses 6-9. "Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.'"

Finally, if we could turn to Joshua 14, verse 6, 38 years later as they came back, "Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea."

Let us bow for a word of prayer.

Lord, we thank You this morning that we can gather together in Your presence. And we thank You, Lord, for all the things that You have already spoken. And Lord, we pray this morning that You would continue to speak. Lord, we pray that You will guard us against all of the things of the flesh, of our own stubbornness, our own weakness. Lord,

we sang the words of the song that, Lord, the battle belongs to You and You must have the victory. Lord, this morning we pray that You might have the victory among Your people. Lord, please guard Your word as we share it. And Lord, may Your Spirit speak to our hearts. Lord, glory to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Challenge of Possession: From Mind to Heart

The Challenge of Moving from Head to Heart

Brothers and sisters, by this point I think we are familiar with the theme verse, and through the messages that the Lord has already spoken, we know that He is at work to recover us to Himself, and to recover us that we might possess all the things that He has for us.

The charge that the brothers gave to me was to share what this might mean to us in our daily lives and in our regular comings and goings. I found this measuring tape in my bag when we got here. I decided I am going to measure fourteen inches from my brain to my heart. It is fourteen inches for all of us that are filled with booby traps and obstacles. For such a precious topic, the enemy would have no greater desire than for everything that we hear from what our brothers have shared and what the Lord will continue to share, for those things to remain dormant and in every recess of our mind.

The charge to us is how, of what we hear and read in the Bible, of the deeper things, can they become real in our hearts, in our beating hearts, that they become a part of who we are and they become alive and grow every day. These things are so important, not only for us, but they are so important because this is the instrument by which the Lord has chosen in His mercy and in His wisdom to accomplish what He is hoping to accomplish.

Now, the challenge of this. What did I say? Fourteen inches is an ancient challenge. For so long, there are things that may remain in our minds of what we have heard that do not actually become planted into the soil of our heart.

Possessing the Promise: Lessons from Joshua and Abram

In our theme verse in Joshua chapter one, there is a classic picture of possession. The Lord is charging Joshua to take possession of the land, that wherever their feet will fall will now belong to the people of God. It is a classic picture. We shared on the original promise of when the Lord first put this into the minds of His people in Genesis chapter 15.

But as we read in Genesis chapter 15, even Abram, at the time that he received the promise, was unsure. The Lord told him, and He brought him outside to look up into the stars and said, if you can count the stars, which will be the number of your descendants. Abram knew fully at the time that he had no offspring. How could it be that an old man with no offspring could have descendants like the stars of the sky?

Then the Lord told him that not only will you have offspring, but they will occupy this land, for I have taken you from your homeland and to this land. This land will be your new home, and it will be for you and for your descendants. Abram, at that moment, asks the Lord, how am I going to possess this land? How do I know that it will happen? It is one thing for You to tell it to me and it lodges in my mind, but how does it go from my mind into my heart that I can fully believe what You are going to do and live my life according to that promise?

Brothers and sisters, what Abram was asking is so alive today. How do we know that we are able to possess what the Lord has put before us as a possession? It is like He wants it for us. He has given it to us, but He puts it there right in front of us. We, by faith, need to step forward and claim it.

The Double Promise and the Link Between Possession and Promise

The Covenant Tradition and God's Response to Abram

The Lord responds to Abram in a wonderful way. For reference, if we could turn to Jeremiah for a moment and read this, an example of this human tradition, which is in chapter 34 and verses 18-20, Jeremiah, chapter 34, verses 18-20. This is just an example of human tradition.

“I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not fulfilled the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts— the officials of Judah and the officials of Jerusalem, the court officers and the priests and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf— I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. And their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth.”

This is a picture of the tradition of when men would make their highest covenant to God. That was that they would take an offering and they would cut it in half. They would separate the two halves, and the men would walk between the offerings as a promise to the Lord that this is what we are going to do. If we do not do them, we read the consequence that we will become like them, that we will die.

When Abram came and told the Lord, “How am I going to possess what You have given me to possess?” Because Abram was like us. The Lord did something amazing. He took a human tradition, and He lowered Himself that we might understand the fullness of His promise to us.

He said that you prepare these offerings and separate them. Abram did so. Then in the night, a smoking oven appeared that put up the smoke and a flaming torch so that you would see what was going to come. The smoke and the fire and the two passed between the offerings. Because the Lord was saying, I am coming down to you and I am letting you know that not only what I have given to you to possess have I promised, but I

am promising you that I will empower you and prepare you to possess. It is His promise to us.

He made a double promise: I will restore, and I will enable you to possess. What do we see here in this moment, when Abram did not know what to do, just like us, what does this mean? The Lord showed him that to possess is linked directly to His promise, that you are not in this alone. If I do not help you, God says that He is committed to the same outcome as would result if men failed in the covenant. This is the level of His dedication to us, that we might be able to possess what He has put before us. Possession is linked to promise.

Gravitational Promises: Foundations for Possession

Now there are 8,000 or more promises in the Bible, or Google tells us. They are all important. There are promises that are personal and there are promises that are corporate. There are daily promises. There are promises for moments when we are in trouble, and they are all precious. I believe, brothers and sisters, that every promise is unto possession. But there are five to ten, and the way the Lord gave it to me, there are five to ten gravitational promises. They are promises of such weight that they absorb all of the promises. They are promises that span history. When we put them in order and we look at them, we are able to see direction, a roadmap, and a means towards the purposes and the purpose that is in His heart. The promises that we are to possess shine a light into His heart deep. They are the things that are important not only to us, but they are the matters that are important to Him.

Some of these gravitational promises. The first promise which we just read to Abram. You need to leave your homeland. You need to come to this new land. In this new land, your descendants will become a nation. They will occupy this land that I have prepared for them. They will become My people. This promise was substantial in that it spans from Genesis throughout the entire Old Testament and into the New Testament. It paints a broader picture of His promise. It was precious that the land, which really had no name at that time to them, to Abram, became known forever since then as the Promised Land. It was defined by promise.

A second promise was made to David the king, because David had a heart for God to be among His people. The promise made was that there would always be a son of David, a Lion of Judah, eternally on the throne. We see this promise from the Old Testament all the way to the last book of the Bible, and in fact, the last chapter of the Bible. It is a promise that spans throughout history, and its fulfillment and the possession of it will define His people.

A third promise, gravitational. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. It is a promise by which all of us have laid claim. It is each one of our hopes.

The fourth promise, in John, chapter 14, verses 16 and 17, the promise of the Holy Spirit: For He lives with you and will be in you. He will lead us into all of these things.

A fifth in Matthew, chapter 16, the Lord said, “On that day I will build My church.” It is a gravitational promise.

Finally, a sixth. There are more. These are the ones the Lord gave me in preparation for today. But a sixth in Acts chapter one and John chapter 14, when the Lord said that I will come again.

Brothers and sisters, there are these boulders, B O U L D E R, these promises that are weight-bearing, which are foundational, that trace a path through the Bible from the beginning to the end. When the Lord told Abram that you will possess the promise, what He was telling us is the weight of the importance of this possession, to be able to understand not only, I do not mean in a small way, His faithfulness to fulfill His promises to us individually, but that we would begin to see that He will fulfill His promises to us corporately as a church, and that the promises are not only for us, but the promises are for Him. Brothers and sisters, possession is linked to promise.

The Role of Faith and Endurance

The Faithfulness of the One Who Promises

Now, how does this help us in our need to be able to know what it is to possess, to recover? There are two verses that are helpful in Hebrews chapter 10, about how promises help us to approach seeing eternal things, and also how we ought to live according to those eternal things. We read them. The first is in verse 23: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” The first point is that He who promises is faithful, and that the knowledge of the one who has promised is so important to us—to know Him, that He is the one who has promised. The second is in verse 36: “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.”

Sorry, brothers and sisters, I have to take a drink of water. It is warm here. Can we bow for a word of prayer for just a moment if we could? *Lord, we just put ourselves into Your hands and ask for Your strength. Lord, we thank You. You are faithful in Jesus' precious name. Amen.*

Brothers and sisters, we see here in verse 36 that what the Lord is telling us and reminding us of is not only that we ought to know the will of God, but in verse 36, it reads that we ought to do the will of God. If we are to do the will of God, then we will receive what is promised.

The Corporate Nature of God's Promises

Now, in order to illustrate this, we would like to use today the two Old Testament promises that we had mentioned. The first is about Abraham and the possession of the land. The second will be my second message, which will be regarding David and the king on the throne. They are wonderful promises, and they are occupied with many amazing characters.

This was an area of interest for me because in the theme verse from Isaiah, chapter 11, the Lord brings to mind that He will restore a remnant. Then He talks about how He will restore two tribes, particularly the tribe of Judah, the tribe of Ephraim, that they will stop butting heads. In both of these stories, it is a story of how the Lord takes the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Ephraim. He brings them together and He makes them more than each of them themselves. It is a wonderful story about faithfulness, about oneness, about seeing each other together.

In the end, this is one of the key important points the Lord is making to us. That when we understand possession, as my brothers have all mentioned, this is a corporate promise, and it requires a corporate response. That is, for those of you who do not understand all of our Christian lingo, what it really means is that it is not just a promise for one person. It is a promise for each of us that cannot be fulfilled alone. It can only be fulfilled together.

The first is to claim the land, and the second is the king on the throne forever.

Today we would like to look at the promise of the land and how we might be able to engage in its possession. We would like to focus on verse twenty-three of Hebrews, chapter 10, which is that He who promised is faithful. It is the story of the One who promises upon whom we can learn to be able to fully experience the possession.

The Journey from Promise to Possession

The Promise to Abram and the Growth of a Nation

So, our brother yesterday evening, here is where I am seeing Jerry's bite marks into my notes for the first time. And he already went through it. And we do just like to review again. Abram left his family home in Ur of the Chaldeans, and he was brought to this land of Canaan, where a promise was made to him. He was a stranger in a strange land. The Lord says to him, and He brings him outside, and he looks up at the sky and there are all these stars. He says, so shall your descendants be. In that promise, the impossibility of it, Isaac is born. Isaac bears Jacob. We remember that Jacob then had twelve sons.

Now those twelve sons become, of course, eventually the twelve tribes. But before that could happen, the Lord had to find a safe place to nurture and grow the nation. In all of His wisdom and all of His outside-of-the-box thinking, the Lord had Joseph, the second to youngest, sent off to Egypt, where, in a series of miracles, he becomes the prime minister. In a series of visions, he knows a famine is coming. He prepares. For seven years, they prepare and collect all the grains. When the famine comes, Egypt becomes the richest country on the face of the planet.

In this moment, the sons of Jacob hear that there is food in Egypt. They decide, in a variety of ways, they end up all down there. They land in Goshen, which is, of all places, the place where the Egyptians do not want to be because they do not like shepherds.

The Lord protects them by casting them out. They stay there and they grow. In the grace of God and in the sunshine of His life, they become a nation.

Exodus, Sinai, and the Border of the Promised Land

At the proper time, after the exact number of years that the Lord prophesied to Abram, Moses comes forward and tells Pharaoh, "Let My people go." Again, through a series of miracles, they leave. Their first journey, as our brother reminded us, was two hundred miles. If you can walk about ten miles a day, which sounds like a lot, but you can do, it would be a three-week journey. They took two years. It is excusable. They stopped along the way.

At Mount Sinai, they received ten commandments, which became the backbone for thousands of years of morality. They learned how to build a tabernacle, which was a housing complex that was mobile and would allow God's presence to be among them. They learned how to build an ark. The ark was the ultimate seat of holiness. It was upon this ark that the presence of God would come to be close to His people whom He loved much.

Then in these two years, they learned about Him: many stumbling, much faithlessness. They ended up coming to the very border of the promised land, at a place, as my brother shared yesterday, called Kadesh Barnea. There, on the cusp of where they were supposed to land, they sent out twelve spies.

Now, these twelve spies, they were all leaders of their respective tribes. They went in for 40 days after receiving instruction from Moses. Moses told them, "Go into the land, take a look at the land, take a look at the fruit. Take a look at the people of the land. Are the cities, are they fortified? What is it going to be like?" You can see in Moses' heart a little bit of trepidation because he was not sure what was to come. They went into the land, and they saw all the fullness of the land. They saw the riches; they saw the land flowing with milk and honey. They saw these grapes, and they were large that they had to put them on poles and carry them between them. After 40 days, they came back. You can imagine everyone was sitting there, waiting, waiting. On the horizon, coming down over the hill country, they saw these spies that they had sent out. They all stood up with some degree of anticipation. When they came, they told them that the land is exactly as we heard. It is so full. It is so rich. Then they began to describe all of the impossibilities, all of the obstacles, how large the people were. The report in the end was, "We cannot take it."

This is where the lessons begin, where the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Ephraim came together. Because of the two leaders of the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Ephraim. This is where some lessons begin about what might prevent us from being in possession and what might enable us to possess. They speak of that He who promised is faithful. Without knowledge of that one, it becomes very impossible.

This next point is completely not related to the message. It is only a way by which we can maybe remember. The little mnemonic is, the Lord Jesus suffered for the youth. I

say it because it is true. The Lord suffered for the youth. But today it will be suffer. S U F F R and on Saturday morning, it will be the youth. Y O U T. I could not fit the H in, to be honest. There is no E in suffer either, but it is close.

SUFFR: Keys to Possession

S: Seeing as the Lord Sees

The first point that we would like to share is S. This is my brother's second big bite mark. Actually, Dana's bite marks are here too. S is to see. Now, brothers and sisters, to know the one who promises is to know that He sees differently than we see. When we were coming here, we stopped for our layover in Colorado. The airport in Colorado is a place where everyone is waiting. They finished their first half of the journey, and they are waiting for the second half of the journey. I was walking to the restroom, and I saw an older gentleman who looked tired, and he was sitting in a wheelchair. I saw him sitting there, and I did not think much of it, and I continued to walk. Then I saw his wife next to him. His wife was standing next to him, and she leaned over and she began to comb his hair with her hand. When I saw that happen, I realized that she has a different vantage point of her husband than I do. Even though with my eyeballs, we were seeing the same thing, she saw him differently, and she loved him with a different love. I was a little—I knew he was tired, but hers was a different connection.

When the spies went into the land, the twelve of them, they saw objectively the same thing. They saw the grape was fifteen inches tall, ten inches wide, it had this much turgor. Is that the word for it? They could define it. Whether you were of the tribe of Naphtali or the tribe of Judah or the tribe of Ephraim, you would have said the same thing. The objective view was the same. The sons of Anak, they were six foot eight inches tall, probably weighed 280 pounds or whatever it may have been. They measured the same objectively. But the Lord sees things differently. Joshua and Caleb, for a moment they were able to glimpse with the eyes of the Lord. They saw it differently.

To the other ten it became a cost-benefit analysis. The cost was we were like grasshoppers in our own sight. We looked at them, and they were huge. They even said it. We became that in our own sight, and that is who we became. The benefit, they saw all of the riches and all of the milk and honey, but they saw the benefit only as what the blessing to us would be. The cost to us would be we would get creamed by these guys, and the benefit would be that we would have blessing.

They compared it to another cost-benefit analysis. Well, if we return to Egypt, we become slaves again, but the benefit is, well, we will have meat and we will have food and we will not die. In this cost-benefit analysis, they chose the latter. Some of them said, well, why do we not just choose a new leader and let us go back to Egypt? But Joshua and Caleb saw it differently. They said that their protection is gone. They are going to become our food. The benefit is not only the blessing to us, but it is that the Lord God will receive what He desires, which is a people who are His possession.

They saw the cost-benefit differently because they saw it corporately, and they saw what the Lord wanted in the church. So many years later, the Lord Jesus would say in His last prayer before He would go to the cross, He prayed that they might be with Me where I am. This was in His heart. Joshua and Caleb, in some miraculous way, saw it. In the cost-benefit analysis, they were able to say, this is what He wants. Because what they saw was the love of God. When we see the fullness of the love of God, we begin to see that His purpose is entirely occupied and driven by something that we cannot know if we have not seen that.

To see the challenge of possession through His eyes and how much He truly loves us. The objective is unto His purpose. This is so important. But when the momentum began to build, for the other ten, they tore their clothes and they begged them not to go forward with what they were saying. They picked up stones to stone them. It was an epic failure. They could not see the land of promise had become for them the land of curse.

If we do not see brothers and sisters, that moment, no matter what our intentions are, how good, if we do not see as the Lord sees, the moment is lost. The first matter that we have to understand about possession is that we have to see as the Lord sees. That, brothers and sisters, requires a revealing. You cannot read a book, even if you hear the exact words and I hear the exact words in a message. It takes an earnest heart to understand it. That we ask, Lord, help me to see the land as You see the land, and help me to see what You have us to possess as You see it. Without that, brothers and sisters, there is not even a first step.

The first is S, for the Lord Jesus suffered for the youth S.

U: The Unit of Promise: The Church

The second is U, the unit of promise. It speaks of the object of His affection. Now, brothers and sisters, there are promises that are made to each one of us. I hold them very tightly. Some of mine, some of the promises that have been made to me have carried me through many hard times. He will never leave me nor forsake me. They are never to be forgotten.

But brothers and sisters, there are some promises that are made to a different unit. They are made to something bigger than us and each of us alone. There are promises that are made to His church that are not made to us as individuals. They do not apply. I know that sounds a little bit heavy, but it is simply the truth. These are the gravitational promises that are made to us corporately. If we do not receive them that way, they are not understood the way that the Lord intended them.

What ended up happening was that it was an epic failure. The result of it was that no one older than 20 years would be able to make it into the land, so that they would all die in the coming journey. What ended up happening was after this moment, when Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes, they had to set out backwards, and they were heading in the wrong direction.

Now, could not the Lord have spared the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Ephraim? When we think of these two tribes, the Bible tells us that the tribe of Judah was 75,000 people, and the tribe of Ephraim was 40,500 people. The tribe of Judah and Ephraim combined that is 115,000 people. That set out in reverse. Could the Lord not have built up a people for Himself from 110,000 people? As far as we can tell, when they were heading out in the wrong direction, there was no suggestion by Joshua or Caleb or any of the members: Lord, we really want to go in as two tribes according to Your grace. Can we do it? We have seen it. We know how precious it is, and we know how precious we are to You. It would be a logical conclusion if we looked at it from a selfish point of view.

They did not do that because they saw something of immense importance, and that is that the unit of possession is the church. She is precious to Him. In His design, all will be made ready, all will be prepared, and all will enter as one so that there is no separation. He is waiting for us.

Well, to be honest, it was also made easy because Joshua and Caleb would have seen that the ark went backwards. The ark was going with His people. It is the greatest testimony of this corporate possession that the ark stayed with the people. To go backwards, He would not abandon. He would have to correct, and He would have to change the generation. He was not going to separate because the church is possessed as one. None of us, none of us can He be without.

The hope that we have in the possession is together. He sees us as one. He sees the church as precious.

Now, brothers and sisters, this is so hard for us because, over time, what we begin to see with our human eyes is that all of us, all of our heroes, are flawed. Sometimes we come to a point where we look and see, how can we take possession? We notice it. We notice it in one another, and we notice it in ourselves. And our self and our flesh are everywhere. It creates all of these stumbling places. We are so full of pride that we have no way to be released from those things.

I always remember that I would sit and I would listen to our brother Stephen as he was sharing about this. He always had this hope. It was remarkable when he talked about all of the things that were happening, but he had much hope. What it really is, is that we see the magnitude of the love that He has for the church, this enduring, this never letting go, that the ark will go backward and will go forward, and that there are those who have seen who see the same thing.

Now, brothers and sisters, if there is one thing that the Lord put on my heart, it is that to understand possession is first to understand that we are not one. I am sorry, we are not individuals. We are one church. To understand that and to see the Bible through those eyes—before we see that, we will not understand. It opens the Bible to us to read it differently, to see it differently; it changes the way we think of one another. It changes and it enlarges our capacity for patience, for love, for endurance. It is so critical that without that, there is nothing else.

It is that the unit of salvation for possession is the church. Let me say that again. The unit of possession is the church. In whatever threat would come against her or one of us, whatever threat would come, we are all there together. We have to see this in order to move forward, that she is worth enduring for, that we are one. This is the U that the unit for possession is the church.

FF: Following Fully

A third learning lesson, which is the F and the F, which is in suffer, which is to follow fully. Now, I think we may not have read this verse together, we ought to. Numbers 13. It is Numbers 13. Let me see here. Numbers 13. Actually, let me take a look here at my typewritten notes for a second. Numbers 13 and verse—I am sorry, Numbers 32, verse eleven. Numbers 32, verse eleven. This is the Lord's—I am sorry, this is Moses speaking. "None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully except Caleb." I am sorry, this is the Lord speaking through Moses. That is what I meant to say. The "Me" is from the Lord, "Except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD fully." Here is an important feature for possession, and that is to follow fully. This was the Lord's own testimony of Joshua and Caleb.

Now, there are a variety of ways to consider our positioning before the Lord. Our position speaks of where the Lord is and where we are. I will give you some examples. This has been much of my life, that the Lord follows me. Let us just be honest, it is true. I chose where I go. I choose daily what I do. Sometimes that choosing leads me to trouble. It is probably, for many of us, the most common positioning between ourselves and the Lord. I remember in 2011, there was this moment when I felt like I was so lost, and I remembered that the Lord, like, shook my life. Then I turned around and He was right there. It was a moment where I realized that He had been following me all this time and, in all of my misdirection, that He never left and He was right there. He was close. That is the first positioning between the two of us, which is probably, unlikely, how many of us live.

There is a second positioning, and that is that rather than the Lord following me, I follow Him. Hopefully, the distance is the same. Like if we were to—boy, this thing is turning out really useful today—that the distance between the two of us remains the same. But it is a question of direction, brothers, and sisters: who is determining the direction?

Even in this positioning, we will come up to a line. In the case of our story, the line was Kadesh Barnea. Our own loyalty and our own dedication always have a limit. We will walk up to that line, and we will not be able to cross it. The ten tribes had good leaders. They may not—I mean, we always think of them potentially as cowards or failures, but it may have been that they were just looking with their own eyes to think, is it worth it to us that our elderly will die or our children will die, or that our families will die at the

hands of these giants. We do not know necessarily the full extent of what all ten of them may have been thinking, and they may have been afraid, which they probably were.

But brothers and sisters, the point is that our loyalty and our dedication will only carry us to a point. To step over that line, to follow fully, there is something else. Up until that point, we tend to follow others. We tend to make Christianity a lifestyle or follow a creed or a tradition. At times, maybe it is for the reward or the recognition. But brothers and sisters, those things for sure might be able to bring us to the line. But to step over the line, there is really only one thing, and that is to know the Promiser; we have to know the Lord Jesus. Nothing artificial is going to do it. Everything for us which is non-genuine will be exposed.

Brothers and sisters, if we stand in the light of the Lord, we will know in each of our hearts that there is much that is not authentic, and it cannot be made more authentic by trying harder with our own flesh. As our brother shared last night, it is that there is a secret relationship that begins to build for us, all of us. As our brother Kenny shared, the Bible becomes what it really is, which is a testimony about a person. It is as much our intention to obey that person as it is our reluctance to be separated from Him. That will allow us to step over the line, to follow fully, brothers and sisters, just to follow, follow a person fully. As the Lord testified, they followed Me fully, and this becomes one of the key criteria of being able to possess.

I learned this about my children: that children would rather be with their mom in danger than without them in safety. I did not say to their dad, but I know for sure that they would rather be with their mom in danger than without their mom in safety. It tells us something about a childlike heart, that to be near to Him and to know Him will allow us to follow fully. There is nothing that replaces that. We cannot make it up.

The other great challenge to following fully is, as our brother mentioned yesterday evening in Luke chapter nine, that there is self-life in us that will not, almost by definition, and cannot step over that line. That self-life is pulling us in the backwards direction. Until we are able to say no to that life, like truly in secret, when no one is watching but the Lord Jesus, say no to that self-life, it will be a barrier for us to be able to follow Him.

I do not remember the exact wording of what our brother was saying about that particular translation, but it was precious, it is that we will not be able to stay near to Him, following behind Him. If self-life is still in governance, it will not allow it. Which is why the Lord gives us the instrument of His cross, that we can learn to die to that self.

To follow fully speaks of to follow Him and to deny ourselves. When we come to the boundary of the promised land, what we will see is not only what He promised, but it is to know the one who promised that will allow us to follow fully. This is the double Fs. Sorry again, this is a very silly mnemonic, but I just wanted it so that maybe we could remember it.

R: Remembering the Promise

Then the last one, remember, you got to skip the E. This is like how license plates are written. Skip all the vowels. The last one is when Caleb and Joshua, after 38 years, came back. They were the only two that were left. Caleb says something to Joshua that is precious. He basically says to him, remember what He promised to us. I remember it and you remember it. I have never forgotten it was a promise made to them.

The R is to remember what He promised us. It is that Caleb and Joshua, they had grown old. I am sorry, they did grow old, but the people around them had really grown old. But the remembrance of the promise to them made them grow young. They—and we will share about this more on Saturday—it is the Y, young. But they grew up young together because they remembered what was promised to them.

Caleb watched as Joshua became a leader, that Joshua was called to replace a legend in Moses. We do not know if Caleb interfaced with Joshua because the Bible is relatively silent about it, but you could imagine that it would be logical that they would. If they could see each other, they would probably have a bond. They were the last two of their generation. They were the last two who had seen the land.

When they came into the land, as we mentioned, Caleb came to Joshua and said, “I want Hebron.” Now, this is where all the giants in the land were, the sons of Anak. This was the one that caused everyone to fear. But it was precisely the land that Caleb wanted. He came back to Joshua and he told him, “I know you remember it.” You remember it, and I remember it. I want this land. It was granted to him. Why? Within the land that Caleb wanted was the cave of—and I do not know how to pronounce it exactly—but Machpelah. Machpelah, which is where all of the patriarchs were buried. Abraham had purchased the lot for Sarah, and they were all there. It was, at least geographically, the core of all the promises. All the promises were represented, at least geographically, there. It was also meaningful to God for what was to come.

Caleb probably had a sense of that. Maybe not all the details of what it would mean in the coming centuries, but he knew it was precious land to the Lord, and he knew that the Lord had a plan and a purpose for it. It also represented all of the promises. This, after all, was the promised land. He came and asked for it. Joshua knew. He knew why Caleb asked, because they had seen with the eyes of God.

This is the fourth or fifth bite mark from Jerry's message, which is that they were bound together by a promise that was made to them. It is more than a promise made to one; it was a promise that was made to them.

I remember the first time I came to the CFC, and when I went home, I was telling my wife about it, and I said, there are these responsible brothers. I said one of them, when he makes announcements, I cannot tell if he is insulting or making a joke about the other three or four. I said, I just cannot tell. They are all different from each other. They are really funny, but they are connected.

It is not just them. There is a whole group of them that have been on some version of a journey together since the year I was born, I think, and it has been a long time. What I was telling her was it is something else. Because they are bound together by a promise that was made to them. It is different. It draws us out of ourselves, and it causes us to think on a higher plane. He slays the flesh in us for something better, for something bigger.

Now, to be honest with you, brothers, and sisters, I am so thankful because I have that too. There are some brothers whom the Lord put in my life that I have been on the journey with together, that I do not have to talk to for like six months. When I talk to them, it is like we never miss a beat because something was promised to us together. It is like a bond that cannot be broken because you cannot live the same. Once you have seen the promise, it allows you to erase all the impatience and judgment, and discernment changes. Everything changes.

One of the things that changed my life was when I heard my brother. This was not even that long ago. Maybe I kind of had a glimpse of it, and I knew it a little bit. But my brother shared that we have to see the Lord Jesus standing among the lampstands. What it means is we have to see Him among His church, how He sees us. It is one thing that saves us, to see Him with us. That is so precious, it is, in many ways, always the first step. That is always the first step.

At some point, He brings us along to understand why and for what He is possessing. To see that, it changes, even fundamentally, what our salvation means. Now, please understand what I am saying.

The other thing is, if we read in the verse that our dear brother was sharing earlier, from John 3:30, when John was saying that He must increase and I must decrease. What John was saying was in his own mind's eye: I was standing next to the bridegroom, the groom, and I heard Him speak to the bride. He must increase and I must decrease. It changes us to hear Him speak to us, that there is a different perspective and a larger holding on to something larger.

It changes us to see that the promise is for us. To hear Him together and to see Him together, it binds us, and to be honest, brothers and sisters, then the small things that separate us really become faded out. It allows us to forgive and to love because it is a promise made to His people.

It was in that context that old Judah Caleb came to old Ephraim Joshua, and he said, "Give me the land that He promised to us. I know you remember, and I know you understand why I want it."

Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, recovery, and possession, they are linked to His promises. His promises are not just for us; they are for Him. They are new forever to each generation. I mean that almost from the dictionary definition of generation, that every group of us, it

is new and it is real. It is a calling to possess for everyone. He knows exactly who we are, exactly how we are wired, what the world is like, what technology is like. He is not suggesting that Gen Z has to become like Gen X and then possess. No. There is a possession for every one of us that binds us together, that makes us one. That we might see as the Promiser sees, that we would understand that His unit of possession is the church, that we might know Him that we can follow fully, and we can remember what He has promised to us as the church. That these might be able to draw us into the land.

Let us bow for a word of prayer. *Lord, we thank You for how faithful You are, that He who promised is faithful. Lord, we ask that You might continue to show us more of who You are in our lives. Not only in our lives, Lord, but in the whole spectrum of the amazing things that You are doing. Lord, change our lives for You. We thank You, Lord. All glory to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

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