

Possessing Your Possession

Introduction: God's Sovereign Purpose in Desperate Times

The Lord is in Charge

Good evening, brothers, and sisters. Good evening. Hallelujah. He is in charge. I do not know how you feel about things, but He is in charge. Brothers and sisters, nothing gets past our Lord that He does not know about in our lives, personally, in the church, and what He is doing in His work these days.

Brothers and sisters, as I was before the Lord about this message tonight, the words of Ezekiel came to me. Ezekiel 40, verse four. And if you might remember the background, Ezekiel was in captivity along with the whole nation of Israel. The temple had been destroyed, and they had been taken captive to another land. Brothers and sisters, it was a desperate time. The testimony of the Lord was almost totally obliterated, except in the hearts of a few of His people. It was desperate times, brothers and sisters, and the Lord, with all that was going on, did not give up. He sought to recover His people. And He appears to our brother Ezekiel in a vision. It is a tremendous vision. Read it if you have not yet. It is a wonderful vision of this Lord of glory that appears to our brother Ezekiel. He says, "Son of man, behold with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart upon all that I shall show you. [Set your heart on all that I shall show thee.] For you have been brought here with the intention that they might be shown to you."

Setting Our Hearts on What He Shows Us

Brothers and sisters, these words are ancient, but tonight they apply directly to what the Lord is doing in our midst. He says to us, look, behold with your eyes. It was not just a matter of opening his eyes. He was to behold this vision of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was to hear with open ears what the Lord wanted to say to him, to encourage him and the whole nation. And He said, My words. I want you not only to see Me, behold Me, and hear My words, but I want you to set your heart upon all that I will show you.

Brothers and sisters, I do believe that you are not here tonight of your own providence, of your own will. I believe you are here tonight, including all of our young people and our children, by Divine providence, that the Lord can reveal to you what He is trying to do in this last hour in recovering all that He needs to bring in that glorious bride for His Son. Brothers and sisters, we need to set our hearts upon what He shows you this week. Not just take it in and write it in a notebook, but may it be engraved in your heart. He has brought you here with a purpose, and He wants us to set our hearts on what He has to say to us.

As our brother Dana said, "It is sovereign." The sovereign right hand of the Lord has brought you here. And now His left hand, that hand of the Holy Spirit, wants to work in your hearts, in your lives, to make real what He wants to say to you in your life.

Lord, we just come to You tonight. We thank You that You have brought us here with a purpose, Lord. You are not just teaching us the Bible, You are trying to get it into our hearts. What is on Your heart, Lord, that recovery work that will go on until You finally have that bride for Your Son. Lord Jesus, we want to respond to what You have to say to us. Lord, give us grace tonight. Open our eyes that we can behold You. Lord Jesus, open our ears, Lord, that it sinks deep into our hearts. And Lord Jesus, oh by Your grace may we be found setting our hearts upon what You show us. Because what You really show us is who You are. And we thank You, Lord Jesus, for this privilege that we have.

Now, our brother Dana has talked about the sovereign move of the Lord, His right hand and His left hand. We are already seeing something of that. Our brother Kenny talked about the Lord gaining that possession for His own—a people for His own possession to be a testimony to Him, to be ones who can lift up our Lord Jesus, the one in whom He is building up to be the bride of Christ. Brothers and sisters, it is a tremendous work. And these days, that work, I think, has been greatly restrained. Sometimes we lose our vision, sometimes we lose our first love. And though we still know the Lord and have a relationship with Him, brothers, and sisters, we are not actually moving on with Him as He would have us do.

The History and Meaning of Possessing the Promised Land

Our Possessing Our Possessions

It is on my heart tonight to share my part in this—our possessing our possessions. Now, brothers and sisters, this is a two-sided coin. We are to be His possession, but He is to be our possession. That is the only way the recovery work can ever be accomplished.

Let us begin tonight with scripture from Joshua: Joshua 1:1-3, Joshua 1:9, and then Joshua 1:11. And I will read it now.

“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.”

Now verse 9: “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD, thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

Now, verse 11: “Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.” Let me read it again, “Ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.”

The Journey to the Promised Land

I want to give you a little bit of history leading up to this point. Right before they crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, Abraham, if you remember, Abraham, was promised this land. The Lord gave it to Abraham and his descendants: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Abraham went into the land and dwelt there. And when he was a hundred years old, because of his faith in the Lord Jesus, the Lord touched the womb of his wife, and he had a son called Isaac. And the Lord was with Isaac. And from Isaac, Jacob was born. And he had twelve sons, from which came the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now, one of Jacob's sons, Joseph, at the age of seventeen, because of the jealousy of his brothers and their hatred of him, was sold into slavery to the Egyptians. But God was with Joseph, and he rose to become the second in power in the mightiest nation in that era, Egypt. And he was second to the Pharaoh himself.

Twenty-two years after he was taken into captivity, a famine came upon the land. But if you remember, Joseph had advised the Pharaoh, "Look, we need to get prepared for it, for it is coming." It affected the land where his father was staying. And they needed to go down to Egypt to get grain, to survive. And you remember how they came down. And finally, Joseph was reconciled, with his family. His brothers were recovered; his father was recovered. Because the Lord had worked sovereignly through Joseph and was with Joseph.

It was a wonderful place. The family had grown into a big family of seventy at that time. When he brought them down to Egypt, he brought them to Goshen. It was a wonderful place, actually. It was a land with grazing for their cattle and rich soil so they could grow their crops. A place where they could grow into a nation. It was wonderful. But it was not the Promised Land, brothers, and sisters.

The way the Lord had to get them to leave the Promised Land is He had to bring them under the oppression of following Pharaohs that did not know Joseph if you read your word. They began to cry out to the Lord. They were basically in slavery. And for four hundred years, they cried out to the Lord. And finally, He brought them out through Moses, who led them out of Egypt.

Where did He take them? Into the desert, of all places. And after two years in the desert, the Lord brought them up to that Jordan River. And you remember, He sent in the spies. And the spies came back and said, "Look, it is a great land. Look at all the riches we found, the grapes and the fruit. It is marvelous."

"But!" This is it. You always are careful when you see the word "but" in the Bible. But there are giants over there, and they refuse to go in. They refuse to obey the Lord. The Lord, under the disciplined hand of the Lord, they wandered in the desert for 38 more years.

Then the Lord brought them back up to the Jordan River. That is where we are now. In the scriptures that I just read, they came back to the same place in the Jordan River. Now the Lord, through Joshua and Caleb, is trying to encourage them.

What is this promised land? Actually, they were really happy in Goshen, but that was not the promised land. That was not where the Lord wanted them. He eventually got them out of there, marched them in the desert for 38 years until that original generation passed away. A new generation, and I am looking at them tonight, a new generation He raised up to prepare to go in and take that promised land, brothers and sisters, a land full of milk and honey. The Lord said, "I give it to you to possess."

It is interesting. In Leviticus 25:23, it says, "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine." Now, this is extremely important, brothers and sisters. Do not ever forget it. The Lord Himself said, "This land is Mine."

Now it is interesting to me that the whole world is the Lord's, all the universe is the Lord's. He has all that. But, brothers and sisters, He says, this place is Mine, you are to regard it as special. It had a special place in God's heart. He set it aside for this people, the nation of Israel, to live in, to prosper, to experience His full thought that He had for His people. He wanted to bring them into His full thought. It could only be experienced in the Promised Land.

They had lived in the desert for 40 years, and the Lord had taken care of them. Their sandals did not wear out. They had manna to eat, food, and water followed them through the rock. Brothers and sisters, they were taken care of. Their needs, their basic needs, were taken care of.

We all need to learn that desert lesson: that the Lord is the one we have to trust in, the one we have to go to for our everyday needs, for our life. Brothers and sisters, but there is so much more. The Lord did not want them to stay the rest of their lives in that desert, living that way. Brothers and sisters, He had much more for them. He says it is over here in the promised land.

The Lord made Abraham an unconditional promise. He said that all the land of Canaan is yours for an everlasting possession. Brothers and sisters, if you really get behind this, you see that this is something of His eternal purpose. An everlasting possession where they could all possess all that God desired for them, all that He wanted of them. It was a promised land. It was God's full thought for His people. We know that the promises He gave them were mostly physical blessings.

But brothers and sisters, we all enjoy the blessings of the Lord. But He wants us to have much more than blessing. He has full thoughts for us. That is what we are trying to share with you this week. He has a full intention for you, for your life. Young or old, brothers and sisters, every generation. Our brother said there is really one generation. That is the generation of those brothers and sisters that will follow the Lord.

We read in. Well, the question arises. They had promised land. Do we today have a promised land? Do you have a promised land where you can enter into God's full thought?

Christ as Our Promised Land

Christ Is Our Promised Land

Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Verse 11: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." Brothers and sisters, Christ is your promised land. That is where God's full thought for you can be found—in Christ.

But brothers and sisters, it is up to us to go in to possess Christ, to possess our promised land—all the riches in Christ. He wants us to experience and to grow into that full-grown man in the stature of the fullness of Jesus Christ. This is His thought for you. We have been redeemed. We are the chosen ones. We have been foreordained in Christ for this very purpose, brothers, and sisters.

You have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. Our charge is to go in and possess them. We just cannot lay back and have it poured out on us. But we have to be active spiritually; we must discover Christ—not just the doctrines. We must discover Christ Himself. We must experience some of that fullness.

Brothers and sisters, I think that that will take an eternity? And even beyond, if there is a place beyond where we need to experience our Christ to be conformed to His image. Brothers and sisters, it is all Christ. It is all about possessing Christ.

A Personal Journey to Revelation

I wish I had grasped this earlier in my Christian life, young brothers, and sisters. It took me a while. The Lord brought me in contact with a crazy charismatic called Kenny Pittman. He has already shared some of our stories with you, but he had a profound effect on my life because the Lord was alive in our brother, and I could not resist him. I could not resist it. We have had wonderful days, I do not know how many years now. It has been over 50 years together in the Lord.

In those early days, I remember we worked at the city hall, and there was a park, a state capitol park, across the street. We started getting our lunch, and we would go over to the park, and we would share about Christ. It was wonderful. This Pentecostal and this hard-shell Baptist, we were just sharing Christ. It was not about the doctrine; it was about Him.

We shared some of Brother Nee's books together. I remember so clearly that day when Kenny came up to me and he said, "Jerry, it is all Christ. It is not I; it is Christ. It is not me; it is Him." Brothers and sisters, what a revelation my younger brother got in those very early days. I think he had been saved just maybe six months, but what a revelation to start out with. It is all about Christ.

The point I want to make is that the Lord revealed that to Kenny, and it came to me as well. I had to think in my own heart what my brother was talking about, and thank the Lord, He showed me. But it is by revelation, brothers, and sisters. It comes by the Spirit of God showing you, not just teaching you. Do you remember the little song about the robe of righteousness? It says, He does not see me as I used to be. He sees Jesus. It is all about Jesus. It is all about Christ. It is not about me. It is not about us. He never desired to improve your old man or to strengthen it, brothers, and sisters, not at all. He has done away with this old man in Christ, and He wants us to be completely obsessed with Christ, not ourselves. Brothers and sisters, thank the Lord He was crucified on the cross of Calvary.

I want to quote from Miles Stanford, a brother in the Lord. He said, "What becomes us now is to have the Lord Jesus before us, not the correction of our old man. The snare of trying to improve oneself is very common, and it is important to see that however well-meaning it may be, it is really a denial that our old man has been crucified, and it only revives that which has been judged in the death of the cross. Has God revealed that to you yet? Or is it a doctrine that you know? Brothers and sisters, we need that glimpse, we need that revelation of the Lord Jesus, of what the Father has given us in His Son. Everything. Brothers and sisters, we can come into our possessions because you are now in union with Christ. He does not just give these things to you as little Christmas packages. Brothers and sisters, it is because you are in union with Christ that you can experience this promised land."

Experiencing Christ, Not Just His Gifts

Sometimes we say in our life, I want wisdom. I said, Lord, I need wisdom. I have done it. I need discernment. I need your blessing, Lord. I need faith. Those all may be true. You say, I want to overcome. Then we find, at least I have, in my experience, it did not happen all the time. In the beginning, the Lord was merciful. But He wanted me to see something.

You cannot have wisdom apart from Christ. You cannot get help apart from His Son. You cannot even have faith apart from His Son. You certainly cannot overcome apart from His Son. It is because you are in Him, in union with Him. I hope we have discovered that the life we have been called to is the life of Christ Himself. He is your wisdom; He is your blessing. He is your overcomer.

Brothers and sisters, we all want to overcome. I struggle with it. I admit it. I am now, well, coming up on eighty-three, and it has been a struggle on and off in my life. The Lord keeps saying to me, "Jerry, you keep on struggling, you are not going to get anywhere. You keep on doing that, I am not going to strengthen your old man. So you can feel good about yourself? No, you need to lay hold of My Son, Jesus Christ. He is your overcomer. Keep your eyes on Him, not yourself."

You never get any spiritual blessings. Never see something of the great promised land outside of Christ. Yet, brothers and sisters, I think most of us would confess we have

not come into all that fullness in our lives yet. What is the issue? You must choose to possess Christ. We cannot continue just to live a life in the desert. I call it hand to mouth, being taken care of. The Lord does want to take care of you. He wants you to bring everything to Him. I thank Him for that. But that is like living in the desert. He wants much more from all of us, for all of us. He does not want us to live our entire lives in the desert. They lived 40 years until that original generation passed away. Brothers and sisters, may we not pass away living our entire lives in the desert. The Lord is saying that there is more. There is more than this life in the desert. It is a necessary part of your growth. But it is certainly not where I want you to end up. It is not where I want you to dwell.

Pressing On to God's Full Thought

Look, brothers and sisters, may the Lord give us a heart and set our hearts on saying we will not settle for less. I think of the apostle Paul, who looked at all the great things our brother saw, all the great revelations he had. He had that wonderful vision on Damascus Road, being lifted into the third heaven of all things, brothers and sisters, tremendous revelation. He was taken into paradise. He saw things there that, brothers and sisters, God would not even allow to share with us. What a revelation our brother had, how much vision our brother had. But towards the end of his life, his cry was that I might know Him. Oh, I need more revelation of Him. Oh, how given our brother was to Him. But the revelation never stopped, it kept growing and growing. That I might know Him.

Brothers and sisters, I think most of us have tasted of Christ. Do not lose that taste. You need more and more every day. We need it. My challenge tonight to all of us, including me, is to lay hold of God's full thought for you. God's full thought for the assembly that you are in. God's full thought, not yours. Give us a heart not willing to settle for less. May He show us all that He desires. Do not settle down. Do not be satisfied. Brothers and sisters, the older I get, the easier it is for me to say, Lord, it is time to just settle down. These knees are weak and my body's a little weak. It is not cooperating with me like I would like. But brothers and sisters, in the Spirit, just like the Apostle Paul, we should never settle down. We should never just sit on the curb and watch life flow by.

I remember the great example of this is the two and a half tribes of Gad, Dan, and the half tribe of Manasseh. When they were east of the river, they looked at the land and they said, this is a good land for grazing our cattle, it seems to have everything we need. This is what we want for our possessions. They did not cross over the Jordan River. Neither did they enter into God's full thought for their life because they became satisfied with where they were. Brothers and sisters, as I thought about this, it was a bit frightening to me because the Lord did not rebuke them. He did not warn them. He did not say that you are making a big mistake. You need to get up on your haunches and get in here and let us cross this river. He did not encourage them in any way. He just said, "If that is what you want, if that is what you are satisfied with, I will bless you." Brothers

and sisters, amazing, they never entered into God's full thought for what He had for them.

Overcoming Giants: Faith, Unbelief, and the Flesh

Do Not Be Afraid nor Dismayed

Joshua, chapter one, verse nine. "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." The key words are, do not be afraid nor dismayed.

You remember the first time they came to the Jordan River, and they sent in the spies, and they came back with a great report, but also a bad report. The good report was, the land was full of riches and food and honey and grapes. It was wonderful. They all recognized that. But the bad report was, this is not for us, because to go in there, we have to take on these giants. He said, "We are like grasshoppers compared to these people."

Even though they had a good report, the bad report discouraged the people, and they did not go in to possess their land. It was a negative report, and it brought fear and dismay upon all of Israel. It did not just affect the spies. The fear and dismay spread among the people, and they would not go in.

What a tragedy that fear and dismay, which is fundamentally the sin of unbelief, brothers and sisters, bring into our lives. As you know, only Joshua and Caleb actually entered in, out of the first generation that was there, they were the only two. After coming out of Egypt, they finally entered in.

The Secret of Joshua and Caleb

What was Joshua and Caleb's secret to being so bold, not coming under fear and dismay? Their eyes, brothers and sisters, were not on the giants. Their eyes were on the Lord. It is such a simple truth that we fail often when circumstances do not look good. When we face a giant of some kind in our life, we tend to fall, and we get dismayed, and we turn our eyes away from the Lord to the problem, to the issue. Brothers and sisters, their eyes were upon the Lord.

Secondly, they trusted His words. They said, look, the Lord has given this to us. We can go in and take it. Yes, there may be giants there. I know there are giants there. But the Lord is with us. We can take it. It is ours. We need to go in and possess it. In other words, brothers, and sisters, this is a marvelous point. If any of us, as Christians, can learn, they simply believed what the Lord said to them. Do you get that? They simply believed what the Lord had said to them. That was it. They trusted the Lord. They had no doubts, no fear, no dismay. Unbelief is a real giant, brothers, and sisters,

I want to give a quote. Once there was a brother that had a sin in his life that repeatedly defeated him and he could not overcome it. Most of us have probably experienced something like this in our lives. One day he read Romans 6:14: "For sin shall

not have dominion over you.” He prayed to the Lord. He said, “Lord, your word says sin shall not have dominion over me. But my situation attests to the fact that sin does have dominion over me. Nevertheless, today I believe your word. Therefore, I declare I have already overcome my sin.” He simply believed God's word. That is so simple, is it not? That is why they were so victorious. Later on, he said when the same temptations came, he would still fall if he looked at himself. But whenever he trusted the Lord, looked at the Lord and trusted His word, and said, “God, your word cannot be untrue,” he experienced victory. He simply believed God. That was Joshua and Caleb's secret. Their eyes were not on the giant. They recognized them, but they were really on the Lord. They believed what the Lord had told them, brothers, and sisters.

Oh, faith. Brothers and sisters, we thank the Lord. We make it complicated, but He makes it so simple. He said, just believe Me. Believe in My word. Brothers and sisters, there are times when we are all confronted with giants. Sometimes it is difficult circumstances, cares of life, and we become dismayed. It is a giant. It is kinds of force that comes against us from the outside. But there is also a giant inside. It is not only unbelief, but it is the great Goliath: self, the flesh. Brothers and sisters, self is always concerned about self, more than God's word, more than God's heart, more than God's desire. It does want God's blessing. Remember Jacob, that fleshy brother of ours. Thank the Lord, he was finally delivered. But it took quite a few years. He was concerned about himself. He wanted that blessing. Remember, he wanted the blessing, and he fought for it. He was deceitful. It was the flesh, the life of the flesh. That is the way it is. It was a giant. It was the big giant in his life. But thank the Lord, the Lord was faithful.

The Danger of Dismay and the Power of Faith

Brothers and sisters, when you get dismayed—I think Oliver Green said this, I am not sure—he said, “When you get dismayed, it is really you are dismayed with yourself. You expect something of yourself instead of the Lord.” Brothers and sisters, what deliverance there is from being dismayed when we can just simply say, Lord, you are the one that I need. You are the one that I look to. The Lord has done away with self on the cross. We all know that. But the Lord would say to us, when we get dismayed, you need to get your eyes back on Me. At the cross, I triumphed. I was tried, I was victorious over your flesh. I put it under My feet. When self rises up, brothers and sisters, in your life, and want to run your life, do not attempt to use willpower, because that is the flesh as well. It cannot fight itself. What you do is declare the truth. You can say to your flesh, you have been put under the Lord's feet. Therefore, in the name of the Lord, you are under my feet. That is faith—not to believe you can do anything, but to believe in His completed work. That is faith—not to believe that you can do anything, but to believe in the completed work of Christ.

When we get dismayed, faith vanishes. it is like putting a hole in the boat. Eventually, the boat will sink. It might be slow, but eventually it will sink. It renders us spiritually helpless, brothers and sisters. Beware of dismay because it renders you incapable of possessing the promised land, of possessing God's full thought for you. The answer, I think, is obvious. These things are particularly dismaying because I have dealt

with them in my life. I know these things. It creates a veil on your heart. Do you know that? Have you ever felt that distance when you are in dismay? There is like a veil, and there is a veil on your heart, and it is a lack of faith, a lack of believing in Him. But the scripture says if you turn to the Lord, the veil will be taken away. Let me read that. That is II Corinthians 3:16: “Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.” That is the way the veil is removed. There is only one simple way, brothers, and sisters, to overcome: it is to be occupied with Christ and believe His word.

Now, brothers and sisters, Brother Sparks has meant a lot to me over my lifetime. He said, “You need to understand that God's satisfaction is His Son, Christ.” That is His only satisfaction, brothers, and sisters; He can be satisfied in you only because He is satisfied in the Christ in you. That is what He is satisfied with. Do not present yourself, the old man, before the Lord. There is no need to do that. You present His Son, Christ, before Him. When you come before the throne in prayer, do you just walk in there? No, brothers and sisters, you are in there because of the blood of the Lamb. You recognize His Son and His work. Brothers and sisters, get Him as your satisfaction in your life as you are before God. The secret is not focusing on us, but really on the Lord Jesus. It is a fundamental requirement. Simply have faith in Him, to abide in Him, and to believe His word.

I thought about this word, about abiding in Christ. To me, it means to be occupied with Him, to dwell in Him, to rest in Him, to gaze upon Him, and to behold Him. Abiding in Christ, brothers, and sisters, how will the veil be taken away? To be occupied with Christ—that is the answer. He is your land of fullness. He is your promised land, and you need to possess Him. He is your full thought. He is what God is bringing you into.

Brothers and sisters, there is another thought, and it brings me to that. In our spiritual life, we need to have a purpose in our hearts. Remember Daniel when he was in captivity; he said he purposed in his heart that he would not eat the food of the king but just eat vegetables. Actually, he got healthier and better than all the rest of the children that they were training at that time simply because he believed in the Lord.

I cannot pass on until I just say this one more time. Let us not become like the two and a half tribes of Israel, being satisfied east of the Jordan River. Lord, we need You to help us to go into that promised land.

Entering the Promised Land: The Way of the Cross

Crossing the Jordan River: The Power of Death and Resurrection

We need to talk about their entry into the Promised Land. How am I doing on time? What? Good? I am good. All right, thank you. I praise the Lord, sometimes I lose track of time. That is a wonderful thing.

Have you thought about crossing the Jordan River? Now they had to cross the Jordan River. The interesting thing was the Jordan River, when the Lord brought them there, you would have thought the Lord would have kind of dried it up or at least had a

little stream. It does become a small stream at times, and you just walk over it. But it was at full flood stage. Obviously, the Lord was trying to show them something about possessing their possessions, about entering the promised land, about obtaining God's full thought.

What does that Jordan River at the full flood stage represent, brothers and sisters? It represents the full power of death. Brothers and sisters not only are there physical death, but there is spiritual death. There is even death within us, brothers, and sisters. There is the enemy pressing us with an oppressive spirit. Death all around us. You may not realize, I do not want to get you depressed, but, brothers and sisters, the Lord does not want us to be naive.

When we go into that promised land to possess Christ, the full force of hell is going to be against it, brothers, and sisters. He wanted them to see that, and He wanted them to learn the way through the enemy's oppression.

If you remember, the priests stood with the ark on their shoulders. That is Christ. As soon as their feet touched the water, the water stood up and backed up, and the river became dry and they crossed over. Brothers and sisters, the mighty power of the ark, of our Lord Jesus Christ, of His victory, is the only thing that can overcome death. This full force of death that we find against us in our spiritual life. But, brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus overcame death. He wants you to learn that in your spiritual life and learn to depend on it. Lord, you have overcome this death that oppresses me, that is against me. He took on death. He overcame it. He put the enemy in open shame, it says, brothers and sisters. He is now our victor, and He is our resurrection life.

Brothers and sisters, this Jordan River crossing over, it does represent the fundamental work of God's Son on Calvary's cross. But there is more. If you remember, as they were crossing the river, the Lord told them to take twelve stones out of the river and put them on the other side of the river as a memorial that they could always remember. Then take twelve other stones and put them in the river. Then they all crossed over and the water flooded back over the twelve stones in the river. Brothers and sisters, this represents Christ's work on the cross. That is the fundamental work of Him, your being crucified in Christ. Then there are the twelve new stones on the other side? You are raised in Jesus Christ.

Have you possessed that work of the cross in your life, brothers, and sisters, knowing that you have been raised with Christ, you have been crucified with Him? That is why you do not have to worry about that old fellow anymore. Brothers and sisters, you have been raised with our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the power that we need to go in to possess the promised land, to possess our possessions. Brothers and sisters, it is identification with His death, burial, and resurrection. That is the life that we live. Brothers and sisters, your natural life, your natural abilities—it is done away with on the cross. You have to have that new spiritual ability out of the resurrection life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Necessity of Circumcision: Dealing with the Flesh

But there is still more. I hope you all do not get too tired tonight. There is still more. Those twelve stones, when they were put up, were at Gilgal in the Promised Land. Do you remember what the Lord asked them to do? He asked them to circumcise all the children. Every male had to be circumcised. We know that circumcision was God's covenant with His people. All the time they were in the desert, nobody was circumcised. Now it was necessary for them to be circumcised.

What does this represent, brothers and sisters? It represents our flesh being taken away. Brothers and sisters, your flesh is the life of your soul. It is your soul life. It is the life that dwells in your soul. That soul of yours needs to be transformed through the work of the cross, brothers, and sisters, so that your soul becomes filled with the life of Christ instead of self.

Brothers and sisters, our flesh is very interesting. I just mentioned Jacob. Brothers and sisters, the flesh can desire the things of the Lord. It can try to latch on to the things of the Lord. Jacob is a perfect example of how he deceived his father. How he tried to trick his brother. He did all—he did not try, he did it. Brothers and sisters, which is the flesh.

In Romans 7, we see Paul saying, the things that I want to do, I cannot. But the things I do not want to do I am doing. It is the flesh at work, brothers, and sisters. It wants everything for itself, even things of God. The flesh desires for itself its own fulfillment.

One thing about our flesh: it is not capable of possessing the land. It is not capable of coming into God's full purpose for your life; he will never bring it in, brothers and sisters. Oh, if you want to know the fullness of Christ, His full purpose for your life, it has to be His life. It has to be that resurrection life.

The Daily Walk of the Cross

Let me read Luke 9:23. This is the Phillips version. I kind of like this version.. Brothers and sisters, in possessing our possessions, we have to daily walk the way of the cross. Let me read the Phillips translation. "If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, carry his cross every day and keep close behind me." If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, carry his cross every day and keep close behind Me. Brothers and sisters, this is a daily walk of the cross. The King James version says deny yourself, does it not? Deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow Me. It was a commandment. It is not a request like it is optional. He wants us to take up our cross daily and follow Him. Deny yourself, He said. That is the way the flesh comes under the control of the work of the cross.

Denying self—and you need to be very clear about this—denying self is not self-denial. Self-denial or self-control is really self controlling your life. I hope you got that. It means you are still in control. Trying to control to deny self is not that. What does it

really mean? It means you refuse to recognize self in your life when the self-life expresses itself and its desires. You say, "Now who are you? I do not know you anymore. You have been crucified. I do not know you. I do not know who you are. I have no reason to gratify your desires. I have no reason to yield to your temptations. I do not know you at all." This is a challenge, but this is our responsibility. Once again, this is not self-control, denying yourself of things and pleasures. It is just not recognizing yourself at all and yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, we need to come to the place in our lives where we truly can say, not my will, Lord, be done, but Your will be done. We have to learn to really be adjustable to the Lord Jesus Christ with those same words of our Christ on the cross of Calvary: Not my will, Lord, Yours be done. Oh, this is a difficult thing for me, Lord, but Your will be done.

There are times in our lives, the Lord said, "This is My will. This is what I want you to do." You say, "No, Lord, it is not my will. My will is kind of crosswise Your will at this point." Brothers and sisters, what do you do when you get to this point? Because it will stop you from possessing your possessions if you are not willing to do His will.

Brothers and sisters, when we come before the Lord, we do not want Him to look at us and say, I had so much more in mind for you. I had so much more in mind. You did not enter My full thought. You could have had it all. I had so much more. Brothers and sisters may not have those eyes burn through us at the judgment seat, because He wants us all to enter into His full thought.

Willing to Be Made Willing

That brings me to the point. Not my will, but Thine will be done. When you find yourself struggling with doing the will of the Lord, brothers and sisters, and you find it very hard, what do you do? Philippians 2:13: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The Lord works in you. You cannot work it up, but you can go to the Lord, and you know what you need to say. Lord, I am not willing right now. But, Lord, I want Your all. I want everything, Lord. I am willing to be willing. That is a big secret in the Christian life, to be able to just go to the Lord. Lord, this is a difficult struggle for me, but I am willing for You to make me willing. Brothers and sisters, I have had a few experiences with this. He is faithful. He will do it.

I remember the story of Corrie Ten Boom. She was in one of the prison camps in the war where six million Jews were taken into these camps. Basically, many of them died in the gas chambers. She was there in one of those camps, and her sister was with her. Her sister eventually did die in the camp.

Brothers and sisters, after she was freed and came back and was in the Lord, one day, the Lord brought her face to face with one of those guards in the prison camp. Strangely enough, the Lord had saved this guard. He had become a Christian; he was the Lord's. He brings him face to face with Corrie Ten Boom. The Lord said to Corrie, "Corrie, you have to forgive him. You have to forgive him."

Brothers and sisters, I cannot comprehend what was in our sister's heart. I am sure all the awful things that this guard had done came before her. She looked at the Lord and she said, "I just cannot do it, Lord. I cannot forgive him." Then she said, "But, Lord, I am willing to be willing."

She reached her hand out to this guard. As she did, the Holy Spirit just filled her whole being. Brothers and sisters, she came into something of the fullness of that promised land that day. It could have been done no other way except through the work of the cross. The real secret was, I am willing to be willing.

The Warrior Spirit: Taking the Land by Faith

The Warfare of Possessing Christ

I am getting close to the end. I hope you can bear with me. Brothers and sisters, I mentioned it before, but there is a great warfare in possessing Christ.

It is interesting scripture. In Matthew 11:12, it says, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Such strange words. When we, brothers and sisters, think of the kingdom of heaven, we think of being at peace and at rest. The Lord said, the violent take it by force.

When they came into the promised land, remember, they were immediately faced with what? The wall of Jericho. Impenetrable. There was no way they could assault that enemy's fort and take it down. But they had the Lord. The Lord did this strange thing. He marched them around once a day for six days, and on the seventh day, seven times. When they finally made that last lap, they shouted the name of the Lord. The walls fell down.

Brothers and sisters, it was all God's work. This enemy's fortress was broken into. That was the way they began to possess the promised land, brothers, and sisters. It was that warrior spirit that they had in their hearts. They did not fight with flesh and blood, but they fought with the mighty hand of God, brothers, and sister.

The Warrior Spirit and Our Inheritance

There is always resistance in the Promised Land. Violence characterized their entire time possessing the Promised Land. They needed a militant warrior spirit, brothers, and sisters. What is that? It is a militant determination to possess all of your inheritance in Christ—all of God's full thought for you. That warrior spirit: "Lord, I have to be diligent. I am militant about this, Lord. I have to have it. Lord Jesus, I will not be satisfied with less."

Brothers and sisters, my dear brother Sparks once said, "God is not satisfied with us yet, but He is bringing us into that promised land." He talked about violence, and he talked about the warrior spirit. This was his thought that so touched me: the warrior spirit, it is that you desperately mean business with the Lord. You desperately mean business. Lord, I am desperate about this. I will not fall short of what you want from me. Lord, I have to have it—what you want for me.

The Lord brings us into those places, and you need to say, Lord, I need to possess that. This is something new for me. You are showing me something new, a new revelation of Yourself. I need to possess that thing, Lord, I really need You. I need Your discernment; I need Your wisdom. But, Lord, He says, look, I am your discernment. I am your wisdom. I am your overcoming power. I am the victor. Every place you put your foot down; I will give it to you.

Brothers and sisters, revelation alone is not enough. We have to put our foot down on it and say, this is what you have shown me, Lord, this is mine. I will not back off of this ground that you have given to me in Your word. The Lord will make you a warrior. Brothers and sisters, are you desperate tonight? Is the Lord showing you something? You are saying, Lord, I am desperate for that. I need much more of You than I have ever thought. Lord, I need to possess my possessions in Christ. I need to come into Your full thought for my life, for this assembly that I am in.

The Corporate Possession: The Body of Christ

Which brings up one more thought that I do want to share with all of us. Mostly, what I have been talking about tonight has been more on a personal basis, your possessing of Christ, which is needed. But brothers and sisters, you do not just possess Christ individually, you possess Christ as an army. You go in, it is the church, in Ephesians 6, you see what that warrior, that warrior is a corporate warrior. It is not just one person.

Brothers and sisters, you need to see that in possessing this land, it will take more than you. It will take you and your brothers and sisters working under the Lord's headship as one. Brothers and sisters, I want to say this, and you can disagree with me, and that is okay, but I do not think anyone really ever comes into the fullness of what God wants for them without your brothers and sisters, without being a real, living part of the body of Christ, a functioning member.

Brothers and sisters, a joint of supply in the house of God. Brothers and sisters, we are not just to be receivers, we are to be givers, and doers, brothers, and sisters, in the house of God. This is what church life is all about. Possessing the full thought that God has, brothers and sisters. Our brother Kenneth shared that the Lord possesses peculiar people. He possesses His church. That church will eventually mature into the bride of Christ. That is what we are all about. That is His full purpose.

When you come to the book—I am sorry, I am preaching again—when you come to the end of the book in Revelation, you see God's full purpose there. What do you see? You see the heavenly city, coming out of heaven, down as the bride for the Lamb. Brothers and sisters, this is His heart. This is what you are made to be a part of. Brothers and sisters, it requires that each one of us come in and possess our possessions in Christ. Because that is the way not only you are matured, but the church is matured into the fullness of the stature of Christ. It says, “Christ is the head of the body.” The fullness of Him, that is all in all. Brothers and sisters, how critical it is that we not only grow individually, spiritually, but also, we grow as the body of Christ.

Lord, we just came tonight. Lord, I think You have a full thought for everybody in this room—Your full thought for them, Lord. Lord, You said earlier, our brother said that “You have begun a good work in us; You will complete it. That is Your word to us, Lord, Your word of encouragement. If we just yield to You, oh Lord Jesus, we come to You. We want to be those who keep our eyes on Thee. We want to be those, Lord, who believe—simply believe Your word. O Lord may Your grace be upon us for the rest of this conference. May You bring us into the fullness of what You intended for this very hour that we are in. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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