

The Promises of God

The Promises of God and Possessing Them

Brothers and sisters, can we start today by reading first from the book of II Corinthians, just a verse in chapter one. II Corinthians chapter one, just the first portion of verse twenty. II Corinthians 1:20, the first portion: "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes."

Reading from Hebrews

And then, if we could turn to the book of Hebrews, chapter 10. Today we will read verse thirty-six, Hebrews 10:36. Why do not we read first verse twenty-three, which was from yesterday. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." And then for today, verse 36: "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."

Acts, chapter 13, verse 22: "After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.'"

And then, if we could turn to the Old Testament, please, the book of Isaiah, we will read the end of chapter 40. We will read in verse 31: "Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary."

I Samuel, chapter 15. I Samuel, chapter 15. We will read verse 22: "Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice."

And then finally, can we please turn to—I am trying to choose between so many good verses which we will get to—but maybe we can turn to Psalm 132. Psalm 132:10-12: "For the sake of David Your servant, Do not turn away the face of Your anointed. The LORD has sworn to David A truth from which He will not turn back: "Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne. If your sons will keep My covenant And My testimony which I will teach them, Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever.'"

And I am sorry, brothers and sisters. Revelation, chapter 22, verse sixteen, the last book of the Bible: "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

Opening Prayer

Let us bow for a word of prayer. *Lord, we thank You this morning that we have the chance to be together before You. And Lord, we pray that You might be able to melt and soften all of our hearts, the speaking, and the listening. So, Lord, that we might be able to hear what You are trying to say. Lord, we pray that You would protect Your Word, the*

preciousness of it. And Lord, we know that You are doing something wonderful that we can hardly imagine. So, we pray that Your Word would have the liberty to do that today under the cover of Your precious Spirit. So, we thank You, Lord, have all the glory, and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Promises, Possession, and the Question of Response

Brothers and sisters, when I was in sixth grade, I learned a lesson from a classmate whose name was Michelle Kawamoto. We had an English teacher; his name was Mr. Sharp. We were reading Milton's "Paradise Lost." I remember Michelle, in the middle of a heated discussion—as heated as sixth graders get about "Paradise Lost"—she asked, "Why does, when God gives us something, why does He not just force us to take it? Why does He want us to do something for it? Or, to borrow from Kenny's words yesterday, why does He want us to respond? Would it not be easier if, when He had something really great, that He just forced it on us and we had no choice but to take it?"

And I remember vividly the question. She was sitting on the left side of the room, maybe four rows back, and I was sitting on the right side, maybe 10 rows back. And I remember just thinking what a good question that is. And I think through the years, we all begin to realize that the second portion of that question, the possessing of what He has promised, hidden in it are all the lessons of life, of why we do things and how we do things that end up influencing not just a moment, but an entire lifetime, how we respond to the promises. Do we choose in our heart to take possession?

Abram's Question: Believing the Promise, Struggling to Possess

And it was reflected, you will recall, as we shared last time, when in Genesis chapter 15, the Lord brought Abram outside and He told Abram to look up into the sky and to see all of the stars. And Abram at the time, of course, did not have a child of his own. And the Lord told him, "Do you see the stars? If you can count them, that will be the number of your descendants. And not only that, but the land upon which you are standing, this will be the land that I will give to you." And Abram believed, the Bible tells us, but it is so interesting, he believed what God said, but then he asked a second question, which Michelle asked, which is, "How will I possess it?"

It was as if he believed in the promise of God, but in some way, he did not believe in himself that it could become real to him. And this is so like all of us that we at times have faith that the Lord is good and He is doing good. But when we see ourselves, we wonder, is it in my capacity to be able to possess what He has for me to possess? Now, sometimes, brothers and sisters, it is the opposite, and it also warrants caution. That is, that we may not believe God, but we believe in ourselves.

That we are so fiery about our own giftings that we think, oh, we can always do it. Either way, in both of those cases, we need the Lord. We become incapable of possessing what He has for us to possess. And so, the Lord responded to this concern from Abram by adopting a human ritual, which was He told Abram to go and gather some offerings. And He asked him to separate them. And so, he did. He separated them

and put them side to side. And as we read in the book of Jeremiah, when one walks through the offerings, he is basically committing, making a promise that this will happen.

And so, in His wonderful grace, the Lord that evening comes down. He becomes a smoking oven and a flaming torch, which of course represents the pillar of smoke and the pillar of fire. And He, in front of Abram's eyes, walks between the two portions of the offering to tell him that not only am I promising you that your descendants will be like the stars of heaven and that you will occupy this land, but it will be My promise that you might be able to possess. It becomes a dual promise.

Great Promises and “Small” Daily Promises

Brothers and sisters, the Bible, some scholars have told us, has over 8,000 promises. And they are of every assortment. We shared about six that the Lord put on my heart that were significant gravitational promises: the promise that was made to Abram that we just read, a second promise that He would make to David, “That you will always have a son of David on the throne.” He made the promise to all of us, “That if you believe in Me, the Lord Jesus, you will be saved.” He promised, “After I leave, I will send a helper to you, and He will lead you and show you all of the things about Me.” And that, of course, is the Holy Spirit.

We remember the wonderful promise that He made at Caesarea Philippi, that “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against her,” and the promise that “I will return and bring you to Myself.” Brothers and sisters, these are huge promises, and they are weight-bearing promises. But He also made a number of small promises to us. And what I mean by small, not that they are daily promises. Right? They are promises that allow us as His followers to live to fight another day. Sometimes we may think, oh, they are little things. But each one of these promises is unto the opportunity to further possess what He has given to us. And so, He carries us on, day by day, so that we may possess the promises.

Two Helps from Hebrews: His Faithfulness and Our Endurance

How did the promises help us to take possession, to take possession of them? In the Book of Hebrews, we read two verses, and each one kind of gives us a picture of it. The first, which was in verse twenty-three, is that in order to possess the promises, we need to see that the One who promised is faithful. That is to say that without Him, we cannot do it; with Him, He guides us along the way so that the moment will come when we will be able to take possession of what He has placed. The second was in verse thirty-six, which we will talk about today. And that was that we need endurance. We need endurance to do the will of God. And if we do the will of God, we will be able to possess the promises. And we would like to share about that today.

Now, Abram in his life, to possess for his descendants to possess the land. We, and I am so sorry for this, brothers, and sisters, we adopted a little mnemonic or an outline which is not spelled correctly, and that is that. But it is true. The Lord Jesus suffered for the youth. And it has not much meaning to the message except for the fact that it is so

true. And so yesterday, I am sorry, two days ago, we shared about that Abram and his descendants needed to know the One who is the Promiser, that He is faithful. That we needed to see as He sees. So that is “S,” that we needed to see that, to understand that in His heart the unit of possession is the church. That is the “U.” That in order for us to follow fully, that is “FF,” which is the testimony that He gave of Joshua and Caleb, the follow and the fully, that we have to know Him. That no amount of discipline or training or learning will allow us to come to that line at Kadesh-Barnea and step over unless He is with us. So, we have to know Him, the One who is the Promiser.

And then the last was when, 38 years later, they came back and Caleb came to Joshua, his old friend, and said, remember the word that He promised to you and me. He was sure he remembered it. And it was a binding force that the Lord gave them, a promise together that they were going to possess. And so, it is remembered what He promised, that is “R,” to us. It was not simply a promise to one, but it was a promise to the church, and I shared yesterday. And, brothers and sisters, every time I see our dear brother come up to lead songs, every time we remember that the Lord has shown something to us that binds us together to something bigger than ourselves, that we live life not because of the promises that He just made simply to me, but there is something larger that He is doing that can only be fully appreciated and sought after together.

And so, this was the first portion that we needed to know, the One that the One who promised is faithful. And in knowing Him, we might be able to possess what He has put before us. Now, today we would like to share on the second power of the promise, and that is in verse thirty-six of chapter 10 of Hebrews. When we do the will of God, we are able to possess the promises.

Promises for God, Not Just for Us

The Power and Purpose of God's Promises

Now why, brothers and sisters, are these promises so important? Often when we think of God's promises, we think of them feebly. We think of them because we align them with our desires or our prosperity. They are so fully true in that context; He does know what is best for us. But it only is able to be a flicker of what the power is within the promises. We sometimes become so sloppy with it that we only pick the promises that are aligned with what we hope we are going to get. And so, we selectively look. And then, of course, we basically minimize their power in our life.

We can see that for one of us, we might pray for rain, and another might pray for sun, or we might pray for one job versus another. Or we might pray that we receive a job and a brother or sister would not receive that job, at least inadvertently. So, we might pray for one political candidate versus another political candidate. We might pray that the Grizzlies win the NBA championship when someone else is praying for the Knicks. You see all of this kind of limited, a limited look at the promises. But, brothers and sisters, promises, they are for us. But the promises that the Lord made are for Him.

And in the search for the promises, He draws us to what is in His heart in order to possess the promises. This very act draws us away from ourselves. It has the power to cause us to look at things differently, to see things deeper. And they can only be possessed through going on with Him deeper in order to seek what pleases Him. And so, brothers and sisters, when we look at the promises of God and we read them in the Bible, they are for Him. And the heart to possess them will draw us out of all of the power of the world and into something far greater.

David, the Promise, and Doing God's Will

Today's application of the promises is from that second promise we had mentioned about David and the promise made to David that his offspring would always be sitting on the throne. So let us take a moment and look at it together.

II Samuel, chapter seven. And we will read the promise itself, which is in verse 16—well, let us start with verse one:

Verses 1-2: "Now it came about when the king lived in his house, and the LORD had given him rest on every side from all his enemies, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains."

Verses 5-7. "Go and say to My servant David, Thus says the LORD, "Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle. Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'"

Verse 16: "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."

And then we read in Psalm 132, which Dana shared from yesterday as well, that it is repeated, the promise that was made in verse 11: "The LORD has sworn to David A truth from which He will not turn back: "Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne.""

Now, brothers and sisters, in the book of Hebrews, we read that in order to possess such a promise, the criteria were that we would do His will. And so, if we could read again in the book of Acts, chapter 13, the testimony about David, we read here in verse 22: ""After He had removed him [that is Saul], He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.'" So, brothers and sisters, what we see here is that the heart to do the will of God is linked to possessing the promises.

Now, the question of doing His will. Sometimes, if we think about ourselves, we think, maybe I do try to do His will. And so, when I was preparing for the message, I thought about it, boy, if I could quantify in my own life the denominator of the choices

that I make, and in the numerator, the number of times I ask Him, “Lord, what do You think I ought to do about this?” I would suggest that it is probably not that high. Maybe before I have to give a message, because of sheer fear, it goes up a little bit. But brothers and sisters, the truth of the matter is we probably, if we are honest with ourselves, live life in order to almost instinctually move towards the survival of ourselves. And that is when we begin to realize that this charge to us of what may allow us to possess possessions, and that is to do His will, this becomes actually something larger, something that we probably ought to learn about.

David, Samuel, and the Will of God

David: A Man After God’s Own Heart

Now the king, when David became the king, his story actually begins with Samuel, who came to his father's house to search for the new king. Because the Lord had told him that, I want you to go to the house of Jesse to anoint the next king. Samuel had been given a hint. He had been told that this one would be a man after My own heart. And so, Samuel, who was a priest who lived in the land of Ephraim when he grew up, came to the tribe of Judah, to this home. And the Bible tells us that if you were to live in a house and you looked out the peephole of your door and a prophet was coming, something not good was coming. And so, Jesse's family, they saw, they heard the knock, so to speak, and they looked out the peephole of their door, and it was Samuel. So, they were wondering, well, why is he here? And so, Samuel told them, well, I am here at the Lord's command, right, because he was coming to anoint the next king.

So, of course, we remember the story. They brought out the oldest, and the second, and the third, and they were all good-looking and, on the outside, you thought, wow, this must be the one. And then they ran through all of them that were in the house, and it was none of them. The Lord had not told Samuel, “He is the one.” So, Samuel, at the end, in relative confusion with everyone—because they did not say there was another one—said, “Are these all your boys?” And he said, “Well, no, there is another one, the youngest; he is out in the field tending the sheep.” And so, they brought him in. And when Samuel saw him, the Lord was very clear: “He is the one.” Samuel already knew: the one the Lord tells me is the one—he is a man after God's own heart. So, Samuel saw him, the young man, and his face was reddish and ruddy, and he had a light sparkle of life in his eyes. And the Lord said, “He is the one.” And Samuel knew: a man after God's own heart. And so, he anointed him. And the Bible tells us, from that day on, the Spirit powerfully came upon him.

So, brothers and sisters, this was the beginning of his story. But then, of course, as you remember, there was a journey that happened. And when he became king, he immediately, in II Samuel, chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, he immediately sought to do three things. Now, I do not know if they were already in his mind, but he was after the Lord's heart. He was going to do all of His will. And so, the first thing he did was he went and he captured Zion. He knew the preciousness of this mountain. And so, he captured Zion first. And then the second thing he did was he went and he brought the Ark back home,

and he put the Ark in Jerusalem. And then the third thing he did, one day after he was sleeping in his fancy home with his paneled cedar walls, he was looking around and he said, I am sleeping in a house of cedar, and the Ark of God is resting in a tent. And something came into his heart of the Spirit. I am going to build a house for the Lord.

The Will of God and the House of the Lord

And so, he told Nathan the prophet what his plans were. And Nathan went to pray. And the Lord came back and said, in all the years I never gave a commandment that someone ought to build Me a house. And here, brothers and sisters, is where we learn something really wonderful: that the will of God is greater than the commandments of God, that the will of God is larger, and that the commandments of God form a subset of what is in His heart. Now, if the commandments of God were all, well, then we could write it all down and we would know what to do. But there is a portion of it that requires searching and connection to know what He is thinking and for what He is longing.

And so, in that, if you think of the diagram, the commandments being here and the will being here in this portion, was where David was resting that day, looking at this house, thinking, "Something, something is not right." And so, the Spirit came in and planted something of eternity there. And so, he mentions it, right, and the Lord comes back, and it is from this heart. Four chapters, chapter four was the being crowned. Five, six, and seven: Zion, the ark, the house. In this will of God, it is from that that the Lord said, there will always be a descendant and offspring of David on the throne of the kingdom.

And then, of course, we remember that Solomon was born, and then his descendants. But we remember, because of so much of the drama of sin and the influence of self, that there was so much calamity that came. And the kings eventually were lost to history. And over time, prophets came and prophets went, and messages came, were lost. And then eventually the book of Malachi. And then after that, there were four hundred years of silence. There was quiet. There were no prophets. There were no messages. After so many generations, the thought long-ago promised, a people for God's own possession, long gone, the thought to possess our possessions was a faraway thought.

In the places of religious authority came a new group, the Pharisees. They were a new brand of leader. And in their teaching, we remember it was a teaching of outward lifestyle with a lack of any inward life. The temple became a place of tradition and performative religion. And God was so far away from their hearts. And maybe it may not be too different from where we find ourselves today. The people no longer knew that they belonged to God. And God did not belong to the people.

And in this world, one day, Mary and Joseph brought our Lord Jesus into the temple, just a baby. And we remember this old man who was there, Simeon. He had been given two promises also. The first was that he would not die until he sees the second promise, which is My salvation, the Messiah. And so, he, in one way or another, was waiting. And

then on that day, Mary and Joseph brought our Lord Jesus in as a baby. And Simeon took Him into his arms. And what we realized at that moment was that while the people had forgotten the promises, God had not.

Christ, the Fulfillment of the Promises

The Fulfillment of the Promises in Christ

This Child had been sent forth from the highest glory to recover His people to His own possession, and to recover us to His purpose. For all of the promises of God in Him, they are yes. And when we think through each of those six promises of weight, weight-bearing, that to Abram was promised a land full of the richness of God and in his inheritance.

When we saw that, that Child born to us, we realized that all of the riches of God are now available to us. And when we think about David, that there would always be a king on the throne, a son of David, and we saw Him (and we will share about it in a moment) as He lived His life, what we see is the promises are yes, that He would come and take my place and be nailed to the cross.

So that every punishment that was owed to me would be remembered and ferociously paid for would become true. That He would clean out a portion of my heart. So that the Holy Spirit, which was hovering, waiting for a place to land, could come down and find a landing spot in my heart that He promised us, which He is still doing and will do. I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not win. And I will return for you, brothers, and sisters. In Him, the promises were yes.

The King, the Cross, and the Scroll

And as people met Him, it was usually the ones who probably you would not think of as the ones looking, but they were the ones in need. They were the blind; they were the common masses. They were the Gentiles, the women, the ones that the high and mighty thought had no enlightenment. Well, it was those who, when He would come by, would call out to Him, the Son of David, because they saw that He was the fulfillment of the promises, and they heard Him speak, and they latched on because there was something about Him that was so different. And three and a half years later, when He would come into the city which He loved so much, they would lay palm branches down, the masses, the nobodies, and they would say, "Hosanna to the Son of David." They saw the king who would be on the throne, who was the fulfillment of the promise.

Pilate saw Him and asked Him, "Are You the King?" And the soldiers created a crown for Him of thorns, which they impaled onto His head. And they gave Him a robe, and they gave Him a mocking scepter, which they eventually took and beat Him on the head with. And, brothers and sisters, He died for us even as He was mocked. And in the mystery of time, John was in the throne room of heaven. And sitting upon the throne was the King on the throne, the Father. And He had in His hand a scroll with seven seals. And this scroll, what we know of it is if no one is able to take it and to break its seals,

there is no moving on to the things that He wants in His heart. And he is calling out, and they are looking out for someone who can take the seal and do what needs to be done so that His will can move forward. And no one is able to do it.

And then someone comes to John and tells him that there is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Son of David, who can take the scroll and break its seals. And so, John looks, “Who is this one?” And there he sees Him, the Lion of Judah. He is a Lamb, as if just slain. So somehow, in the mystery of time, the Lord Jesus, mocked on the cross as the King of the Jews with the placard over His head, to this moment, we see He is truly the Son of David. And He takes the scroll, breaks its seals. And then we read at the end, at the end of all things, when the church, His bride, is made ready, and there is the pronouncement of the King, the bridegroom. He says of Himself, “I am the offspring and the root of David.” He is the King forever.

A Heart to Do His Will

And so, what we see here in the fulfillment of the promise is that it began. It began because there are those who desire to do the will of God. And what we see here is that the promises can transcend time, but they are linked to a simple heart that seeks His will to do His will so that we can possess the promises. What is the power of a heart seeking His will? It is the power to dive into a place far away from the surface, things that are controlled by our pride. Just like our theme verse from Obadiah, who surrounded by the pride of Edom, the Lord would allow His people to possess His possessions, that we would leave behind our own ambitions to search for what is in His heart. And this search, brothers and sisters, is the light of the world that those who do not know Him will see, a people searching for something larger that will have a residual brightness and a shining of the sun into this world.

It is in this story that we would like to see what was learned. And old Samuel, who was old Ephraim, and David, who is Judah. And so, we would like to look at four lessons from their lives that allow us to see what it is to live a life to do His will, which is a lot harder, more elusive than we think it is in our life. Now, you will recall I mentioned the S U, F, F, R. And today it will be for the youth. And as I mentioned, I could not think of an H. The Lord did not give Me one. So, it is Y O, U, T. And maybe you can put h in lowercase. Okay. For the youth.

Y – Young: Waiting on the Lord

Waiting on the Lord and Seeking His Will

All right, so we will start, brothers and sisters, with Y, which is young. Now, let me explain how the Lord brought me there in Isaiah, chapter 40. The chapter ends with a really wonderful challenge and statement. He says to us that for those of us who wait on Him, hope for His word, hope for His direction in our life—for those who wait on Him. That is the challenge, and that is the instruction.

Now, we know in our life that there are many moments when God's will is not clear to us. And we want to know His will. And so, we seek His will and we pray. Now, there is always a temptation to take matters into our own hands. And we remember that there was a time when Saul was chasing David from cave to cave. And one day David and his mighty men were in a cave, and Saul comes in to relieve himself. Now it is a very vulnerable position.

And so, we are in the cave. And his men tell him, "Now is our chance." We no longer want to run from cave to cave. This is our moment. But David seeks the Lord's will, and the Lord has not given him the timing to do it. So, he does not do it. He was waiting. He was seeking the right time. The temptation was, all of the circumstances are pointing that maybe this is it, but he would not.

Now, Saul, in contrast, was a man who could not wait. He saw the world. He saw the—there was a moment when he saw the—the moment dispersing where he had a chance to strike and everyone was leaving. He was supposed to wait for Samuel to come to make an offering. He decides, "I am going to lose the moment. I am going to make the offering myself." Saul lived in the instantness of the world. The credit that he gave to himself that needed for him to move before God. And so, it stole something vital from him, which was a chance to know the deeper things. And so, the question of learning to wait and learning to pray is put before us.

I think the Spirit has introduced many moments to us like this. I think many brothers and sisters can share about when I want to know where I ought to go to college, or what job I should take, or should I ask her out, or how do I raise my kids? Where should I meet in the Lord's presence on Sundays? These are questions that draw us to wait on Him. Now it is very easy for us to analyze the external circumstances and the power of those influences on every one of us, but to seek His will. Because before we can do His will, we have to seek His will. David gives us a hint of his heart, which is in Psalm 40. And if we can turn to it together, it is really precious. Because in the end, the testimony is then transferred to the Lord Jesus in Hebrews. But in Psalm 40, David says, and again later adopted to the Lord. In verse one, David says, "I waited patiently for the LORD." He was waiting. He wanted to know the way to go. "And He inclined to me and heard my cry." So, David is telling us that in his life he learned to wait.

The Delight of Doing His Will

And I think I might. Should I skip ahead? I should skip ahead. Okay. And then in verses 6-7, he says, "Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me."" And then in verse eight, "I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart." So here what he is saying is, I waited for You because, Lord, I want to know what Your will is, because somewhere deep inside I want to do Your will.

Now, if we turn to Hebrews chapter 10, prophetically, is that right? In reverse, there is the testimony of the Lord Jesus, and it is in chapter 10 and verse nine. "Then He said"—this is the Lord— "Then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.""" Actually, we should read from verse five. I should start in verses 5-7. "Therefore, when He [the Lord] comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME; IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'"" It was the nature; it was who the Lord was. He always sought to do the will of His Father. They delighted to do His will. Now it starts, brothers and sisters, with waiting.

Now there are times, I think, for all of us, we have experienced this. Maybe some of you have experienced it, like within the last couple of days, where something is so important, a decision upcoming. And we pray and we read, and then we read and then we pray, and then we think for a moment that there is trust. And then suddenly we are not so sure. And then we repeat it again and we pray and we read and we read and pray. And we still are not quite sure what the Lord wants us to do.

And to be honest, brothers and sisters, we may not want to do the wrong thing. We do not want to disappoint Him. And this struggle is to wait and not move until He lets us know sometimes it can last for a period. And what we do not realize, brothers and sisters, is that the Lord has already won. Because when we have a heart like that and we want to know what He wants us to do, He has already won. Because something in us knows that His way is the right way.

So, some of us go through this and we wonder, Lord, why are You just telling us? We do not realize that He is so full of joy and He has planned perfect. What is perfect is coming. What happens to us when we learn to wait like this? We are going to now go back to Isaiah 40, and you will know why or where the Y came from. The letter Y came from. And that is, when we wait for the Lord, we grow young. That we will renew our youthful strength, that we will take up wings so we can fly into His Spirit, that we might be able to run where He runs. Brothers and sisters, when we wait for Him, we grow young.

Growing Young in His House

Now, some of us have been following the Lord for some time, and some of us have a lot of mileage. What can happen over these periods of time is that there becomes a decaying. In medicine, we call it a disease. It is a terrible name. It is a disease of senescing, meaning getting old and dying, right? That can come into us when our life is based on what I want and trying to arrange the world and arrange God's will, so it feeds what I want. But when we decide, "Forget about that. I am going to do, Lord, what You want. And I am going to cast off what the world tells me I ought to do or what I need to do in order to be whole or great. I am going to follow You, and I am not going to move until I know what You want me to do." Brothers and sisters, we are beginning to grow young.

Samuel knew what it was to grow up young in God's house. We read in I Samuel, chapter 3, verse three, that he was a boy sleeping on the ground in the holiest place in the world. And it was like his home. And then in the morning, when the light came up, he would get up, and with his little legs he would run to the doorway of the tent of meeting, because he was a doorkeeper. He would run, and he would skid to a stop and open the door, and the light would come in, and the fragrance of the Lord would come out into the world. And so, everyone near would sense, as our brothers have so wonderfully shared, they would sense the presence of the Shekinah. Brothers and sisters, he knew what it was to be young in His house. And that is stolen from us when God's will is not part of the equations of our life, right?

And so, David, too, grew up young in God's house. He grew up not in the tabernacle. He grew up out in the stars. And he would look up at night and see all the stars. And he would write psalms about the majesty of God. He was young, and he was dependent on God. And there was nothing wrong with that. Nothing. The lion or the bear would come, and he learned trust. He trusted, and he saw the world through his Lord's eyes. And on that day, when he heard Goliath taunting in all his worldly strength, David heard him differently. He said, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he is taunting the armies of the living God?" He saw the world differently. He saw it young, dependent. He saw that Goliath was not fighting against him. When he ran down into the valley, Goliath was fighting against God, and he had no chance. He saw the world young.

And so, brothers and sisters, what is it to be, to have heart young in God's presence? It is to have a simple heart, pure in reverence, the sense that nothing is impossible, that we are unafraid to learn, and that we are enthusiastic because of what the Lord is going to bring that day. And so, brothers and sisters, these things can be lost to us. When the will of God is not in a part of our life, to seek to do His will, to wait for Him, it creates in us that dependence, that waiting for what is next. And these two, they saw themselves small in the greatness of God and allowed themselves to be able to live for what was coming, to be childlike. The Lord Himself said, as we remember, that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Now, I remember some of the things that happened to me when I was in high school or in college, in that period of time. And sometimes I wondered what happened to that young man, that child-like heart. What happened to him? Got all mature and worldly wisdom, or the rigor of life. But brothers and sisters, those same experiences, when looked at with a different point of view, create and they make us young in His house. So, brothers and sisters, the first step towards possessing, to having the strength and, as our brother said, the passion for it is to wait for the Lord. O. I forgot the mnemonic again. Young is the "Y" in youth.

O – Obedient: To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice

"O" is obedient. Now, there is a story in I Samuel, chapter 15, which I think some of you probably are thinking of. When Samuel asked Saul to go to fight for the Lord against Amalek. Amalek was the enemy of God. When the people were walking through the

land, their tactic was to strike from the rear. They would hit the elderly, they would hit the weak, they would hit the children, right? It is really like the tactic of the devil, right? He does not fight by rules, it is just destruction. And so, the Lord told Samuel to tell Saul, "Utterly destroy them, leave nothing."

And so, Saul went to war with them. And you will recall the story, he did destroy 99%, but he brought back Agag, the king, and the best of the flock to plunder, and the ox. And so, we remember when they brought them back, Saul did something. He built a monument. Not an altar, a monument. And the monument was built to himself. And then Samuel comes and finds him and confronts him. He says, "Why did you do this? You were told to utterly destroy them." And in Saul's mind, he said, "I did do that," because he saw it through his own eyes. He said, "The only thing I brought back were the great things so I could offer them to God. To your God." Right? And so, in this moment, Samuel says something super profound. He says that to obey is better than sacrifice. Obedience is what the Lord is looking for.

The difference between sacrifice and obedience

Now, what is the difference here, brothers and sisters? Now, there are two ways to look at it. Sacrifice is to give something to the Lord that I possess in my life. That was not what He wanted originally. Now what does that mean? That means that there is an instruction, a command, and we are charged to follow His commandment. And we are not able to. And so, to make up for it, we bring something of ours that I possess. So, I was not able to possess what He possessed, what He wanted me to possess. Instead, I bring to Him something that I possess and give it instead.

Now, you can see that sacrifice throughout the Bible, of course, is necessary and it is logical in that way. But you see, the Lord is drawing us to something deeper, that we can live a life full of sacrifice. And the greatest sacrifice ever, of the Lord Jesus dying for me, I will always lay claim of that sacrifice, the power of it, the wonder of it. But behind it, the Lord Jesus is saying, will you obey Me? It is what He is longing for us to possess: a heart willing to do His will. And so, this is the first example of the difference between sacrifice and obedience.

Now, the second is that sometimes there is something that we possess, and the Lord is asking for something, and we see it as a sacrifice or something that was mine and I give to Him, right? So, on the outside, it looks like the same thing. So, my brother Philip brought me this water because he was worried that I was going to faint. And so, if I am to give this to someone, if the Lord, on the one hand, if there is an obedience, the Lord says, you need to give what you have to somebody else. And I give it. Right. The other side of it is that I hold this as mine, and I feel like I am doing Him to some degree a favor. It is really subtle, but, brothers and sisters, we know our own heart and the little difference there, but it is real. Right? So, you see the two examples of sacrifice versus obedience.

Christ's example of doing the Father's Will

Now, to be honest, in order to do His will, we already shared about waiting for His will. But to do His will we need to obey. Let us look for a moment at John chapter 8 to see how the Lord thought of doing His will. John chapter 8, verse twenty-nine. John chapter 8, verse twenty-nine. He says in the second half, "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." That is what it is to do His will. I always do the things that are pleasing to Him. It is not sometimes. This was the Lord Jesus all the time. I always do the things that are pleasing to Him. Now, you can see that He was one who never needed to offer sacrifice. Why? Because He always does the things that are pleasing to Him. Now, we need sacrifice. There is no doubt about that, right. But what He is saying is, in addition to that, that if we seek to do His will, it is to learn what is pleasing to Him and chase that down.

In Luke chapter 22, we remember so famously when the Lord was at His hardest moment because my sins and your sins were piled upon Him. He said, "Not My will, but Thine be done. I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." Now, one day we are all going to stand before the judgment seat, and there we will see our Lord Jesus. He is the Son of Man, scarred because of His offering for us. Are we really going to stand there and say, "Do You not know what I sacrificed for You? Did You not record all the things that I did for You that were a sacrifice to me?" Are we going to see Him there with what He gave to us?

And do you think we can do that? That is the difference, brothers, and sisters. Obedience is just not recorded that way. It is just who He was and who we all hope to be. So, obedience is better than sacrifice. This is a lifelong journey, but if we hope for it, at least we have a fighting chance that we might be able to possess the promises that He has made, right? To know that this is how He was. Maybe He can make me like Him. That is the "O," in the word youth. Oh, boy, am I running out of time. Five minutes. Oh, a lot of time. Oh, good. Phew. All right, good.

U – Under His Spirit

The Holy Spirit and the Will of God

"U," and this is exactly how the Lord gave it to me: to be under His Spirit. Now, our brothers have shared a lot about this already. Just really wonderful that the Spirit is so essential to doing the will of God. The areas we were talking about earlier, outside of the commandment within the will, which is all in the leading of the Spirit. And the marvel of it is that there is so much growing in that space.

We remember that Saul wanted to—when Saul wanted to kill David, there was a moment in chapter 19 when David runs to find Samuel again. And Samuel was at home in a town called Ramah. And so, David runs there, and the prophets are all there, and they are all prophesying in the Spirit, and it is like normal. It is just, you get there and that is what they are doing. And David comes in, and we remember when he was anointed, the Spirit came down upon him already powerfully. So, he comes in as he is normal, it is all normal. He walks in, and they are prophesying, and he is able to

fellowship and tell Samuel what is happening. And the Spirit's presence is part of the environment.

Well, Saul learns that he is there, so he sends three groups of servants to capture him. The first come, and the Spirit comes upon them, the Bible tells us, and they fall down, they begin to prophesy, and they cannot arrest David. The second is the same, and the third the same. And the lesson that we are seeing here is that the Spirit overpowered them because they were coming not as part of the will of God. And what we begin to see is that the Holy Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit, is always towards the achieving of the will of God, the increase of God's heart; that is what He does. And if someone comes against that, it becomes this thing upon them, arresting them from the intention outside of that will. And thankfully, we know that the Spirit has stopped us before as well.

The Holy Spirit is the administrator of His will. And so, what we saw here is that these were not alignment. And so, the way the Spirit came upon them was to stop them. But for those who were living according to the will, or at least trying to, as in David's case, you could walk like life, in and out, and it was to some degree normal. The Holy Spirit cannot counter God's will. That is an impossible thing to do. The two are so, they are one. They are aligned. And so, Saul, when Saul heard about the three servants who could not make it, or teams of servants who could not make it, he decided to come. And the same thing happened to him. Saul was a man of flesh. And to come under the Spirit, it was a resting of what he wanted to do.

So, what we see here, and the point that we would like to make, is in order to do the will of God, it cannot be done without the Holy Spirit in our life, the daily intervening and guidance of that Spirit. We remember in the book of Galatians that the Spirit is not simply aligned with the will, but the Spirit is set against the flesh. And so, we see it in this picture, right, that He protects us. He guides us, and He protects us. And it allows us to learn how to enter into His will. Because all the things He does are unto the things, things of the Lord Jesus' heart and God's heart. So, He brings us in. And if the things of the Holy Spirit are fully aligned, driven by the will of God, you can see how the Holy Spirit is building the church. And without Him we cannot possess the promises.

The Holy Spirit Foreshadowed in Genesis 24

Now, yesterday, Kenny shared this big portion of my notes from Genesis, chapter 24, which is really just a lovely, wonderful picture of the story that our brother already shared, that Abraham wanted to find a bride for his son. And there are four characters in this story. There is Abraham. There was the son of His promise, Isaac, and there was a servant. And the servant, the Bible describes, was the oldest servant in the house. And the servant was in charge of all that he owned. So, he was responsible. He was the administrator of his will. And there was a girl, Rebecca. And so, Abraham charged the servant, "I want you to find a bride for My son. And that bride needs to come here to be engaged in all the promises that I have promised him." He was the son of promise, the

inheritor of the promised land. And she is going to be drawn out of the world so that she can possess all the things that I have promised him.

And so, the old servant, the Holy Spirit is okay if we refer to Him in this context, who is in charge of all that he owned. He travels to this outside land, and he has a plan which our brother shared, that I have my ten camels with me. And if a woman comes and gives me something to drink and waters my camels, well, she is going to be the one. And she is. And then he brought with him some of the riches of his master's house: two bracelets, a gold ring, and he gave them to her. And she is given the choice: Will you leave this world and come to this land of promise and take possession of it with your groom? And she says, I am willing. I will go now.

Brothers and sisters, it is a story of the Holy Spirit. It is a story of all of us and our God, but it is a story of a picture of the things that are in His heart. And so, she comes out, and while they are journeying back, Isaac is in this place as Beer-lahai-roi. And they see him. And then she asks him, "Who is that?" And he tells her, that is the one. And she gets down; she makes herself ready. Brothers and sisters, it is a wonderful story about possessing our promises and the role, which is critical, of the Holy Spirit. It is His work, so to live under the Spirit.

T – Together in the Church

And then lastly, "T." Because again, I apologize, there is no "h." "T," together in the Church is the will of God. So let us turn to Hebrews, chapter 11. One last reference to David and Samuel. This is in verse thirty-two. After going through all of these dear faithful saints, we get to Rahab in verse thirty-one, and the writer of the Hebrews is saying, well, in verse 32-38, "And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy)."

So here is a last reference to David and Samuel. And they are almost mentioned as afterthoughts in this wonderful chapter. Grammatically they are put together as one unit. Go through all these: Samson and Barak and Jephthah. And then it says, and David and Samuel and the prophets. And so, what we see here is that the two of these were put together, and they are mentioned with a whole list of brothers and sisters who sought to do the will of God together. It is bringing us back to one of the things that many of us have mentioned this week, which is that there is a togetherness in the church. Without that perspective, the fullness of the topic cannot be appreciated. The

church, we know, is nurtured personally by the Lord. He said that He would build her up, He would save her, He would present Himself to her, that He would cleanse her with the water and the Word, and she would live because of His life. And because of that life in us, there is the potential for glory. And when we are made ready with no spot or wrinkle, that glory that manifests and reflects and has the capacity to engage with the glory of the Son of God, that will be released.

The Church, as our brother shared, is made up of living stones. That is, in rocks like us, where the life of Christ has landed. Now, if you took a look at us, we would just be like rubble. Like all of us in our own life, in our own way. We are all shards with no ability, no compatibility, no matching. Like a concave and a convex side. It just—we do not fit. We are all jutting sharp angles that injure one another when we get close to each other. But by the Spirit, when life comes into us, He begins to chisel. He breaks us at times; He molds us so that we fit together. And you can imagine in the house of God that there might be one area of living stones that are composed of a saved one from the church of Antioch in the year 50, bordering next to a sister from Germany from the 16th century, a martyr from Turkey, or a young man from CFC in 2026, that in the bringing together of all of the different precious parts that He has done, He has carved and chiseled, that we begin to see the preciousness of the house of God.

And in Hebrews chapter 11, the church is described in some of our actions. Now, if we had asked Jacob, it says here, have you ever shut the mouths of lions? Jacob would say, no, I have not. But that is okay, because David has shut the mouth of lions. And if we asked David, have you ever, from weakness, become strong, like physically weak became strong? He would say, well, there might have been this example, but nothing so obvious. Well, they would say, but that is okay, because Samson did. And over the years, some were tortured because they would not deny His name. Some escaped the power of fire. And someone may ask me or you, did you do these things? And I would say, no, I did not on my own, but yes, I did in the lives of my brothers and sisters. Because in the church, we are one, and we are so fiercely honored to be counted together. The church has done these things, and He is raising her up that she might be able and made ready to fully reflect the glory of her Lord. Never individually, only together as one. A living organism built up by her Lord, outside of time and space, outside of language and culture and any other man-made division. His life flows in every place.

She does not grow because of common interests, because of common age groups, or because of similar preferences. In fact, the church defies these things. She grows in the life of God by doing the will of God. And she will take possession of all the possessions. So, brothers and sisters, the church is together, and we seek the will of God together, so that we together might claim the promises.

Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, the Lord suffered for the youth to see the Promiser as faithful and to see as He sees too. To know the One who promises that He sees the unit of possession as His Church. That in order to follow fully we need to know Him, not just

about Him or the rules. We need to seek Him out and know Him and to be bound together. Because we might say to others, "Remember what He promised to us, the youth, that in order to claim the promises we ought to do His will. That we may wait for His will together, so that we can grow young and be strengthened for His heart's desire, that obedience is greater than sacrifice. That we might live under the Spirit, under His headship and the Church together. Praise the Lord.

Let us bow. *Lord, we thank You for all the things that are in Your heart and that somehow You have made those things accessible to people like us. Lord, we pray that You would find in us Your house, that we want to follow You wherever You go, and, Lord, to love with anticipation the things that You have laid before us to possess. So, we thank You, Lord. Glory to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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