

Place: Lurgan Baptist 9:11:2010

## THE VICTORY OF FAITH ( Joshua )

Reading: Joshua 1:10-18

### 3. GETTING READY TO GO

Stanley William McKenna Walker was the son of a wealthy British shipbuilder. At the age of 50, he was heir to a \$4 million dollar estate in England. But this man had become a wino on Chicago's skid row. For many years, he barely survived by eating left over garbage and sleeping in run down hotels. When his millionaire father died, the authorities searched throughout the saloons of Chicago trying to find him to inform him of his new inheritance. *When they finally located him, they discovered that he had just died the night before in the doorway of a Chicago rescue mission. He failed to possess his possessions. Is this not the theme of the book of Joshua ?* You see, God had promised to Moses and Joshua that the land of Canaan belonged to them. In one sense the Lord had already given it to them. It was theirs. All they had to do was to take possession of it. As believers the Lord has given us many blessings. Yet too many Christians don't apply their faith and take possession of the things God has already given to them.

I heard about a man who decided to sell one of his many houses. He went to an estate agent and had him write a description of the property, then list it for prospective buyers. But when the owner read about the shady trees,

the beautiful swimming pool, the renovated estate on the land he realized that it was a better place than the one in which he was living. *So he took the property off the market and moved in. You see, he already had the possession of the perfect place, but he needed to take repossession of it.* Now Canaan represents **The Victory of Faith**, the possessing of our possessions. Canaan is what God redeemed Israel for, just as victory is what God saved us for. What is presented *Historically in Joshua*, is applied *Spiritually in Ephesians* the exchange of a life of defeat in the desert, for the joy, rest and fruitfulness of life in the Promised Land. Do you ever think of what Canaan meant for Israel ? It meant,

#### (1) LIBERTY INSTEAD OF BONDAGE:

They well knew the harsh treatment meted out to them in Egypt. But now freedom. Who but a slave can appreciate the full meaning of liberty and freedom ? What Canaan promised to this nation of slaves, God promises to us. Paul says, *“for sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law but under grace.”* He continues, *“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”* ( Rom 6:14:18) (1)

#### (2) REST INSTEAD OF WANDERING

For years they had endured the blinding heat and the weary wanderings of desert existence. Now they were to go into the land to stay. At long last they would have homes they could call their own. One of the key words in the book of Hebrews is the word *“rest.”* Indeed the writer mentions two different

“rests,” that are found in Old Testament history.

(1) God's Sabbath Rest:, when He ceased from His creation's activities. ( Gen 2:2 Heb 4:4 ) (2) Israel's rest in Canaan. ( Deut 12:9 Jos 21:43-45 Heb 3:11 ) These are illustrations of our spiritual experiences today. The Sabbath rest is a picture of our rest in Christ through salvation. The Canaan rest is a picture of our present rest as we claim our inheritance in Christ. ( Heb 4:11-13 ) The first is the rest of salvation, the second is the rest of submission.

### **(3) VARIETY INSTEAD OF MONOTONY:**

In spite of their constant complaining and murmuring, God never allowed His people to suffer want. Never once did the manna cease or the water fail. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell during the forty years in the desert. ( Deut 8:3-4 ) But the monotony of their life and the sameness of their diet caused them to murmur and long for the delicacies that Egypt could supply. “ *Our soul loatheth this light bread,*” was their complaint. ( Num 21:5 ) But think of what Canaan offered. A land flowing with milk and honey, a land of luscious clusters of grapes and pomegranates and figs. Do you know how the New Testament describes our Canaan ? Love that passes knowledge, joy unspeakable and full of glory, peace that passes all understanding. Oh, (1) (2) (3)

### **(4) POSSESSION INSTEAD OF PROMISE**

God's promise to Abraham ( Gen 13:14 15:18 17:7 ) which for centuries had remained unrealised, was at last within reach of fulfilment. The nation had only to take a daring step

of faith and all this glorious prospect would become reality. Is it not the same for us when we step out in faith ? Step out of the spiritual desert and enter Canaan. Promises are turned to facts, doctrine into experience. Christ said, “ *According to your faith be it unto you.*” ( Matt 9:29 ) This is what Canaan meant for Israel.

### **(5) JOY INSTEAD OF DEPRESSION**

For it was God's intention that when his people entered the Promised Land, they should be joyful and leave the depression of the depression behind them. God said, “ *And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God ... because the thy God shall bless thee.*” ( Deut 16:11, 14-15 ) Do you recall the words of the Saviour ? “ *These things have I spoken unto that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.*” ( Jn 15:11 ) Do you not long for all that Canaan represents ? Now here was Israel on the edge of the Promised Land . God had brought them out of Egypt and it was His intention to bring them into Canaan. ( Deut 6:23 ) Therefore he says to Joshua, “ *Moses my servant is dead, now therefore arise go over this Jordan thou and all this people.*” Joshua was to take the lead and the people were to follow. Did you know that when geese fly south they do so in a V formation ? It seems that by flying in a V, the whole flock adds about 71% greater flying range than if each goose flew on its own. When a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and returns to formation, taking advantage of the life provided by the goose just in front of him.

When the lead goose tires, he falls back in the formation and another goose flies point. When a goose gets sick, wounded

or falls, two other geese will fall out of formation and stay with him until he's able to fly again or is dead. Geese provide a fitting illustration of what happens when people follow the leadership and plan before them. Here Joshua is the lead goose and the other geese are about to follow him into the Promised Land. That's why I have called our study "**Getting Ready to Go.**" Now it seems to me that there are three words that summarize this passage this .... !

### (1) ENFORCEMENT

Joshua is going to give instruction to his people based on the authority that God has invested in him. Look if you will at ( 1:9 ) "*Have not I commanded thee, ?*" (1:10 ) "*Then Joshua commanded the officers,*" and in ( 1:11 ) we see the officers are told "*to pass through the host and command the people.*" God commanded Joshua, Joshua commanded the officers, and the officers commanded the people. But the authority was from God. As Joshua was willing to act on that authority God blessed his leadership. ***These days nobody seems to want authoritative leadership.*** Everybody wants consensus not direction. Yet God's plan has always been through a man. The Lord has always used leadership to accomplish His Word. Paul wrote to Titus, "*These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.*" ( Titus 2:15 ) When Christ was on earth, those who heard Him and observed Him said, "*He taught them as one having authority.*" ( Matt 7:29 ) God allowed Joshua to be the leader and Joshua passed his authority down through the officers and they passed it down to the people. Now we don't need a dictatorship, but we need men who speak

with authority when God has declared His Word. There is a place in Christian service for godly counsel, but a committee report is no substitute for the clear commandment of God. Now as we examine this commandment several things emerge. Notice that contained in this command there was,

### (a) A NEW DIET:

Look if you will at ( 1:11 ) The Hebrew word for "*victuals,*" is a translation of a Hebrew word that literally means "*game.*" The term is applied to meat obtained by hunting. Lias, says that, "*here the word speaks of food, of any kind, but especially animal food.*" Now that's interesting. Here is an entire nation, possibly three million people, about to cross a flooding river, and what is the first thing they are to prepare. **A bridge ?** That would seem reasonable. **Boats ?** No. *Not a bridge, not boats but beef.* You see before you cross Jordan and do battle the first thing you need is proper nourishment. An army travels on its stomach. You can't be a good soldier if you've got an empty stomach so here is Joshua saying, "*prepare proper food.*" Now do you recall what God provided for Israel during those wilderness wanderings ? Manna. ( Ex 16:15 ) They had manna for forty years. Now, if you're stranded in a desert with no other food manna is all right. It was a coarse, dry hard bread, but it was not steak and chips. The problem with the manna was this it **sustained them** but it did not **satisfy them.** Now get this. The diet that was adequate to maintain life in the desert would not nourish combat troops conquering and settling into a new land.

Now let me challenge you. *Are you still on a desert diet ?* Listen, if you want to move into the Land of Promise and experience daily victory you must upgrade your diet and increase your intake. What am I talking about ? The time you spend in prayer and in the Word. Is this not the most important factor in consistent Christian living ? *How much time have you spent alone with God today, on your knees before an open Bible ?* You see if you're serious about a victorious life, then determine right now that whatever the cost you'll establish that daily time with God. I heard about an old Arab who got off his camel one night and sat down in the desert. He lit his lamp and took out three dates to eat them. He opened the first date and there was a worm in it, so he threw it over his shoulder. He took the second date and opened it and there was a worm in it and he pitched it over his shoulder. He took the third date, blew out his lamp and ate it.

Now do you know what happens so many times ? When the light of God's Word shines upon our desert diet and shows us what it is, rather than obeying the Word of God we blow it out and keep on eating the same old thing. My .... are you going to hear the Word of God ? I tell you if you want to possess your Canaan you had better "*let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.*" ( Col 3:16) Contained in this commandment was (a) Then there was,

#### ***(b) A NEW DELAY:***

Look if you will at ( 1:11 ) Now this part of their preparation is even more surprising than the first. There would be a three day delay. They were anxious to get on

over there and get what was theirs. But God has a way of letting us wait. "*But why this delay, we've been delayed forty years already and now we're ready to go.*" But God said, "***wait.***" One of the things I have learned about God is, that He never hurries. The toughest thing I have to do is wait, and I hate it. I hate waiting for decisions. I hate waiting in traffic jams. I hate waiting on a plane. I wait all the time for Catherine. I mean we're accustomed to instant gratification, instant credit, instant comfort, and instant coffee. Our cry is, "*Lord give me patience, right now.*" But God never wastes time and every delay plays an important role in His plan. God used this delay to accomplish some things: You see this was,

#### ***(1) A TIME OF OBSERVATION:***

Look if you will at ( 3:1-2 ) Here they were camping on the banks of Jordan for three days and what did they do during that time ? They watched the swollen river surging over its banks. You see Jordan was at full spate, it was a raging torrent. ( 3:15) *Do you see what God was doing ?* God brought Joshua and Israel to the river-bank, so as to see the impossibility, humanly speaking, of this challenge to which he was called, and learn that he must come to an end of himself and trust wholly in the God of the impossible. "*We're going to cross that ?*" they may have whispered to one another. "*But there's no bridge, no boats. It can't be done.*" That's the point exactly. God was letting the impossibility of the task sink into their minds Has God ever dealt with you that way ? He was with me. He has plopped me down beside the Jordan of my life and forced me to look at it.

The longer I looked, the more impossible the situation became. I could see no boats, no bridges, no way of getting through the situation. After awhile I would know that apart from God there was no solution. And it's when we're convinced that only God can get it all together, then we're ready to move. Are you facing a situation that has you sitting down on the banks of the Jordan River, and you think there is no way in the world, you're going to be able to cross it? *May I remind you that while your goal may be impossible, you have a God who is incredible, who specializes in things that no other can do.* (1)

### **(2) A TIME OF CONFIRMATION:**

Forty years earlier, twelve spies were sent out from Kadesh-barnea. ( Num 14:1 Deut 1:19 ) It was their faithless report, blurted out in front of all the people that caused them to turn back and forfeit the land. This time Joshua sent out two spies ( 2:1 ) who spent these days scouting the land. Their report brought privately to Joshua ( 2:24 ) declared that God was surely with them, indeed the inhabitants of the country were terrified because of them. ( 2:10-11 ) *You see, God used the waiting period to confirm His promise.* During those frustrating delays, if we keep our eyes and ears attuned to God, He will give us one evidence, after another that He is capable of handling our situation. A time of, (1) (2)

### **(3) A TIME OF DEDICATION:**

Look if you will at ( 3:1-5 ) “ *Sanctify or consecrate yourselves.*” The word “ *consecrate,*” means “ *to purify,*

*to sanctify, to make something holy by setting it apart for special use.*” There is a sense in which God sanctifies us and another sense in which we sanctify ourselves. You see by virtue of our salvation, we are all sanctified, set apart for God's special use, every Christian is a saint. ( 2 Cor 1:1 ) But the Bible also commands us “ *to cleanse ourselves, to purify ourselves.*” ( 2 Cor 7:1 1 Jn 3:3 ) And this is a must for the life of victory. Let me suggest you pray through the last two verses of ( Ps 139 ) “ *Search me O God and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*” ( Ps 139:23-24 ) So we see, contained in this command (a) (b)

### **(c) A NEW DETERMINATION:**

“ *Pass though the host .... for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan.*” ( 1:11 ) Now Joshua had made a similar speech forty years before, but that generation of leaders would not listen. ( Num 14:6-10 ) Now that generation was dead, and the new generation was ready to believe God and conquer the land. It's unfortunate but true that sometimes the only way a ministry can move forward is by conducting a few funerals. *Think of the funerals that Moses, Joshua, and Caleb had to conduct during those wilderness wanderings.* I heard about a pastor who pleaded with his office-bearers to give the Sunday School which was bursting at the seams a new complex. One of the long time office-bearers, who was a prominent businessman in the city, said to him, “ *You'll do this over my dead body.*” And they did. For a few days later this office-bearer had a heart attack and died and the church

moved ahead and built that much needed complex. You see the older we get, the more danger there is that we'll get set in our ways and become "*sanctified obstructionist's*," but it does not have to happen. Caleb and Joshua were the oldest men in the camp and yet they were enthusiastic about trusting God and entering the land. How I thank God for the "*senior saints*," who have become a part of my ministry and have encouraged me to trust the Lord and move forward. (1) Now in ( 1:12) a new kind of subject is introduced and the word that summarises this section is,

## (2) ENLISTMENT

Look if you will at ( 1:12-15 ) You see, it seems that this three day period was spent, among other things in speaking to the Reubenites and Gadites and to half the tribe of Manasseh. Now this requires a little explanation and to get the explanation we need to turn back to ( Num Ch 32 ) and this will give the entire picture. This chapter give us the background of the incident mentioned here. Look at (Num 32:1-5 16-19 ) Now look at ( Jos Ch 1 ) and see that Joshua is asking them to,

### (a) REDEEM THEIR PROMISE:

Look at ( 1:13 ) Now where did Moses command them ? ( Num 32:20-22 ) You see, they had said to Moses that they would come armed with the others of the children of Israel and go into the land and help them fight their battles, and then they could return across the Jordan to the east side and settle down. Joshua is simply reminding

them of their promise and asking them to redeem it. God has given to us some wonderful promises, but what about the promises or vows we have made to Him ? Do you recall the words of the psalmist ? "*I will pay my vows now in the presence of all His people.*" (Ps 116:14 ) Do you need to do that ? What about the vows you made at your conversion ? When you said to the Lord, "*Lord because you've saved me I will serve you, I'll live to your glory, I'll seek first your kingdom.*" Do you need to redeem them ? What about those promises you made to the Lord in the crisis of life when you were ill, at death's door, at wits end corner ? "*Lord if only you will deliver me I will ....*," What, what did you promise ? Tell me, does your heavenly Joshua the Lord Jesus have to say to you, "*remember your vows, redeem your promises.*" They had to (a) But notice they had to,

### (b) RELIEVE THEIR BRETHREN:

Look if you will at ( 1:14) Now its interesting that the record shows that the two and a half tribes had 136,930 men available ( 26:7 18: 34 ) But only 40,000 actually crossed the Jordan and fought in the Promised Land. (4:13) The rest stayed to protect the women and children in the cities the tribes had taken on the east side of Jordan. ( 32:1-5 16-19 ) The keyword in ( 1:14 ) is "*help them.*" They were to relieve their brethren. Is this not a principle that ought to pervade the church of Christ ? Look at ( 1 Cor 12:25-31 ) "*Helps.*" You see, Paul has spoken here of *Speaking Gifts, Sign Gifts*, but "*helps*," is a *Serving Gift*. Perhaps you're asking, "*how can I be a help ?*" Well listen, you can,

### (1) HELP GODS PEOPLE SPIRITUALLY:

Paul writing to the Galatian believers says, “ *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.* ” ( Gal 6:1 ) Do you know some believer who has gone astray, grown cold, and become indifferent to the Lord ? Could you help them spiritually ? You say, “ *That’s the work of the overseers.* ” Is that what the text says ? No. “ *Ye which are spiritual.* ”

### (2) HELP GODS PEOPLE PRACTICALLY:

John was very practical when he wrote his first epistle. He says, “ *whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?* ” ( 1 Jn 3:17 ) How practical are you when it comes to meeting the needs of others ? Turning on the lights, taking care of many of the behind the scenes arrangements ?

### (3) HELP GODS PEOPLE VERBALLY:

For like Barnabas you can be a son of encouragement. (Acts 4:36 ) “ *Helps.* ” Thank God for those of you who have that gift in this assembly and I would encourage you to continue to exercise it. These tribes were to (a) (b) but I there is something else here we must not miss. They were to,

### **(c) RECOGNISE THEIR LIMITS:**

Why did these tribes want to live outside the Promised Land ? Well, they liked the land there because it was “ a place for cattle.” ( Num 32:1 4 16 ) Apparently their first concern was making a living not making a life. They would rather have big flocks and herds than dwell with their brothers and sisters in the inheritance God had given them. They were far from the place of worship and had to erect a special monument to remind their children that they were citizens of Israel. ( 22:10 ) My .... this incident is packed with spiritual instruction. But the main truth is this. **God lets us choose the level of our Christian experience.** Did you get that ? **God lets us choose the level of our Christian experience.** You see, there are those who are content to remain on this side of Jordan because they like the land, they like the conditions, and God accepts the limits that they themselves place on their whole-hearted consecration. God says, “ *all right if that is what you want, you have that.* ” God blesses them too, within the limits that they set Him.

My .... God forces no-one to enter into victory. If the wilderness is what you want, the wilderness is what you’ll get. *Tell me, are you like these tribes ? Are you a borderline believer ? Are you more interested in the material than the spiritual ?* Yes, you’ll help with the fighting, with the finance, you’ll support the pastor and elders, you’re willing to serve the Lord and help your brethren for a while but when your appointed task is finished, you’ll head home to do what you want. Is that you ? Oh, beware of sitting on the fringe of Gods work. Do you know something ? Centuries later when the Assyrian empire came rolling like a juggernaut from the

east, these were the tribes that first felt the brunt of the enemy and were swallowed up and heard of no more. For when the real testing comes, the first to falter and fail are those who choose to live on the wrong side of Jordan. So we see here (1) (2)

### (3) ENCOURAGEMENT

Look if you will at ( 1:16-18 ) What a new leader needs is not advice but encouragement. “ *To encourage,*” literally means, “ *to put heart into.*” General Andrew Jackson said, “ *one man with courage makes a majority,*” and he was right. What encouragement Joshua received. Did you notice that he was,

#### (a) ***ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD:***

It was the Lord who said to Joshua, “ 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 ....,” ( 1:9 ) Wherever we have Lord written in capitals, it’s the term Jehovah. Can you see here,

#### 1. The Eternality of His Person:

For the name Jehovah means “ *the self-existent One, the eternal I am.*”

#### 2. The Deity of His Person:

For this was the redemption name of Deity, for the first revelation of Himself by his name Jehovah was in connection with the redemption of Israel from Egypt. ( Ex 3:13-17 ) 1, 2,

#### 3. The Fidelity of His Person:

For this God, Jehovah is the God who fulfils His covenants and keeps the promises He made to Abraham that He would give Him and his descendants this land. ( Ex 19:3 20:1-2 Jer 31:31-34 ) “ *Joshua, don’t be afraid, the Lord thy God is with thee.*” My .... are you embarking on a new venture ? Are you apprehensive, fearful, and timid ? Do you need to get the eye of your faith on the person of God ? He will be with you, in the battles, in the trails, in the defeats, in the daily humdrum tasks, with you in your weakness, with you when you fail. With you when souls are swept into the kingdom, and with you when the going is tough. (a)

#### (b) ***ENCOURAGED BY THE LEADER:***

That God had been with Moses was certain. Now with all the experience behind him, Moses turns to Joshua and encourages him to trust this faithful God. He says, “ *Be strong and of a good courage for thou must go with this people unto the land .... and the Lord he it is that doth go before thee, he will be with thee, he will not fail thee ....,*” ( Deut 31:7-8 ) Isn’t it wonderful when leaders can pass on the baton with joy ? That’s what Moses did. There was no professional jealousy between these two men. Joshua

was God's choice and God encouraged him through the retiring leader. He was (a) (b)

***(c) ENCOURAGED BY THE LEADERSHIP:***

The pronoun “*they*,” in ( 1:16 ) probably refers to all the officers Joshua had addressed. What an encouragement they were to their new leader. Notice that they encouraged Joshua by,

*(a) Submitting to Him:*

Look at ( 1:16 ) They would obey all his commands and go wherever he would send them. Here were people who declared their allegiance to him. He would be able to work with a willing people. Do you know one of your responsibilities in relationship to the eldership ? Its obedience. The Lord says, “*Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.*” ( Heb 13:17 )

*(b) Supplicating for Him:*

“*Only the Lord thy God be with thee as he was with Moses.*” ( 1:17 ) Do you know something ? The best thing you can do for those of us who are leaders is to pray, and ask God to be with us. Now remember Joshua was a trained man with vast experience, but that was no guarantee of success. For no Christian worker succeeds apart from prayer. Corrie Ten Boom asked, “*is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire ?*” When Joshua did not pause to seek the mind of God, he failed miserably

and so will we. ( Jos Ch's 7 & 9 ) They encouraged him by (a) (b)

*(c) Standing with Him:*

Look if you will at ( 1:18 ) You see they took his leadership and their responsibilities seriously. Later, Achan didn't take Joshua's orders seriously and he was killed. ( 7:25 ) Do you recall our Lord's searching words, “*Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say.*” ( Lk 6:46 ) Let's be honest. We obey the Lord's orders if we feel like it, if it's convenient, if we can get something out of it. With soldiers like that, Joshua would never have conquered the Promised Land.

**Getting Ready to Go.** Are you ? Are you weary of the wilderness ? Do you long to possess your possessions ? Does your heart cry out for much more of Christ ? Above everything else do you want to know Christ in all His fullness ?

