

Take the Land - Joshua 23:6-8 9-5-99

Any priests here this morning? Any ministers – diakonos – deacons - people who serve the Lord here? What makes you so special? (Christ in us the hope of glory) Can the HS inspire you to share something with the body of Christ? So lets hear some of that inspiration or revelation you've been getting this week...

Now these things we have heard have been shared by the saints in light. We all stand as adopted sons and daughters of God – that is those of us who trust only in what Christ suffered in our place. We were rebels against God and servants of darkness but we received grace and mercy because of the blood of Christ. Not only did the King commute our death sentence but He made us full Sons and Daughters that is Princes and Princesses. Not only was the slate cleaned and your debts cleared but Christ's righteousness was credited to your account. Col 1:21,22 You were an enemy without access to God but now through the atoning sacrifice of Christ God sees you as holy – YOU – without blemish – free from accusation.

Ro 8:17 You are a co-heir with Christ! Wait now – don't pass that Word by glibly because Christ is the heir of all! ALL! And if that isn't enough – hold on now – You will share in Jesus' glory!!! Yes – YOU Heb 12:22-24 You've been made a part of the heavenly city. He's the cornerstone and you are a part of the whole – that radiant city of God.

Like the Children of Israel you made it into the Promised Land and are entering your inheritance, now. Yes, the full reality of it is stored up for you in heaven. But right here and now you are beginning to walk in it. Joshua's words in verses 6-8 are for you today. When he spoke those words the conquest of all enemies was not complete. There were still Canaanites and Philistines in the land God had given them. And this word of instruction says keep going forward...keep holding fast to the Lord.

Have you been delivered from your enemies? Do some still lurk in the corners and borders of territory God has given you– maybe even in the high places, ones like pride, greed, self righteousness? Still some enemies to be conquered?

VS 6 – Be very strong! Col 1:9-12 'strengthened with all power according to his glorious might' ! That is VERY strong! The might of the Lord Jesus! Instead of saying "I'm feelin my wheaties" we should say, "I'm feelin His word alive in me!" Go ahead son or daughter of God, say with the authority of an heir – "Get behind me Satan! I'm feelin His Word alive in me! The Lord is my Light and my Salvation. The Lord is the strength of my life!" That is VERY strong.

6b Be careful to obey ... no longer the words of Moses for those were nailed to the cross... but now the Word is alive in my heart. Wash me Lord with your sweet words. Now I am talking about Rhema. Those words we talked about

when we opened. That inspired voice of the HS that whispers to you the will of God for you today. That is the word I need to be careful to obey, those words He has written on my heart...without turning to the right or the left. It is a very straight path the Lord has for us and if I turn to the right or the left I end up polluting what He is doing by mixing my own ideas and efforts with it.

VS 7 Don't associate with these nations that remain among you. 2Cor 6:17 Be separated, be holy – a clean and clear line of difference in your words and your actions. A life that is all for Another, that is holy.

I was in Phx. Friday on a shopping trip. As I sat in the Mall I thought, "the flesh that parades itself there is kind of like I imagine Moses seeing Egypt. – flaunting wealth, fulfilling appetites – the temporal is on display to attract your every sense." Joshua elaborates on don't associate, 'do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them' – Mammon – We invoke the name of Mammon when we see our dreams fulfilled by winning the lottery – POWER BALL 21 Million! Name brands at twice their value – we swear by them. "You must not serve them or bow down to them" We serve them by giving up our time with Christ in the word and prayer to earn the extra dollars it takes to buy them. We bow down before them when we proudly display them. It is not the things that are evil but the attitude of our heart toward them. Do all to the glory of God. Is that too radical? Is that too out of touch with the world? I hope so.

Let me explain lest you think I am just down on the "abundant life" as some would call it. Right there is the problem. Christ wants us to have a life that is so rich and deeply satisfying in an eternal sense, but the carnal nature is looking for that lasting satisfaction in temporal things. You would think after 20 or 30 years of temporary satisfactions we'd get the picture but we keep looking, and some even give up and decide the little temporal thrills are what life is about. What a gazillion miles short of what God has for us! Cheap substitute for the real thing! One of the common threads in many of the fellowships of history that did not have hierarchy and were led by a plurality of elders was a devotion to simplicity. It is certainly a theme of some of Jesus' teaching and Paul's letters.

[Someone recently asked Blackaby what he thought was in store for the Nation. His response was JUDGEMENT – We have so many Bibles and so few are read.] The Church by and large is indistinguishable from the world. It's abortion rates, divorce rates, suicide rates, gambling addictions, are nearly identical with the world. I would add to Blackaby's observation of the polls - my own personal opinion that we - the church in America - have a lust for entertainment in theater or pulpit. "Don't convict me, make me laugh and feel good, shed a tear and leave upbeat. Don't share your convictions that challenge mine!"

The blood of millions of innocent lives cries out to God for an end to the injustice. The Mall is filled with faces that look like they have it all. But behind the counselor's door - in the living rooms late at night there is a cry of lonely desperation. The pain of sin's consequences shreds the souls of man. Be different by the grace of God. How will they know to ask if we look the same, if we blend in? We are surrounded by need that mocks us with smiles from temporal satisfaction. Those pseudo smiles claim the need is in us. Don't invoke the names of their gods or swear by them.

VS 8 But you are to hold fast to the Lord your God as you have until now. They did, all through the lives of the elders that served with Joshua (24:31). But it only takes till chapter two of the next book, Judges, for the compromise with the world to begin. It's the type of compromise that says, "I can control it. Yes God asked me to rid it from my life but – it's OK I'm not tempted."

The rest of Josh 23 is a warning what will happen if they intermarry and ally themselves with the ones God said to drive out. Vs 11-13 "Snares and traps" Compromise with the world ends up a trap. "Whips on your back". Once you are trapped in compromise sin drives you like an Egyptian task master. Sin is relentless and always demands more than you expect to pay and takes you further than you want to go. "Thorns in your eyes" Last week we talked about setting our eyes on the temporal which captures your mind which soon overcomes the heart.

Is the NT any different in its warning of this New Covenant Promise Land we've entered in Christ? Every verse we read from the NT earlier is followed by a condition. Every passage is followed by an "if". The little two letter word we'd like to ignore. Hold fast. Be Very Strong. Dare to be different by the power of Christ working in you. Be different in words and actions to the glory of God.
Heb 10:19-25