



GO AND POSSESS
YOUR LAND

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Introduction

Before you start reading this book, please get out your Bible and turn to Joshua chapters 1-8. This section of scripture is the foundation for this book. It is important when you read this book (and any Bible based book) that you have your Bible handy. If you match the Word of God with the words of the author, you know that they are true. You can digest them into your heart, mind, and spirit. Also, if you study out the scriptures along with the book that you are reading, that brings an added bonus in itself. God's Holy Ghost will anoint your reading and He will open even more of His Word to you. In my books, I try to focus on scripture. I can write beautiful, flowing words of a good philosophy and they will give you a warm fuzzy feeling. I can write theology or doctrinal stands and cause you to rise up in their behalf. Or I can write about God's Word with His Word as the main focus. His Word and His anointing will change your life. So as you read this book, please, make it an active participation. In other words, get out your Bible. Look up and read each scripture as you come to it. Allow God to write it on your heart. Then be a hearer of the Word and not just a doer. James 1:22-25, "But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." It is my prayer that through reading this book, you glimpse God's truth, apply it to your life that your whole life may be changed.

Chapter 1. Why Read This Book?

The children of God stood on the edge of claiming their long-awaited Promised Land. Now, remember, this was the second time that they had been in that position. Numbers 13 and 14 tells us about the first time that they stood on that side of Jordan. (Remember, it won't do you any good just to read the reference. Get out that Bible. ☺). The first time that the children of God stood on the edge of their Promised Land, they wound up wandering in the desert for forty more years. They were there. They had made it. Doubt and flesh got in the way. They refused to go in and possess the land that God had promised them. The second time, though, things had changed. They had changed. For one thing, this was a whole new generation. This generation was ready. They marched on in and claimed their Promised Land in victory.

Just what was the difference in the two times that they stood on the edge of the land that God had promised them? That is what this book is all about. Through this book, we'll be talking about what makes the difference between victory and defeat when we begin to possess the land that God has promised us. We'll talk about ways to prepare yourself so that, when you march in to claim your land, no enemy (not even the powers of hell) can stand in your way. We'll discuss how you as a child of God have a right to your Promised Land. And we'll talk about what your Promised Land can be. If I had to give this book an alternate title, it would be *Victory, Victory, Victory*. That is what you'll read about here. Not just about the victory Israel was given when they took their Promised Land, but about the victory that God has for you.

What is your Promised Land? You may not be standing on the edge of a physical piece of property that stretches from horizon to horizon like the children of Israel, but you do have Promised Lands to claim that are just as real. Some of them may be physical Promised Lands. Some may be spiritual Promised Lands. Some may be Promised Lands that you claim for others.

That you claim for those you love. Just as real as the promises that God has for you are the enemies that you have to face to be able to possess your land. Your enemies may not be Amalekites, Amorites, or Canaanites, or the inhabitants of cities like Jericho, or Ai. But your enemies are just as real. Many times, they surround your Promised Land so that you can't enter in. One enemy, of course, that will hinder you is satan. Another one is yourself, your flesh and its crazy way of thinking that will hinder you from being able to accept and claim God's promises. Another is this world and the system that it has. Those people around you who refuse to do it God's way will also hinder you. Yes, just like Israel, we have our enemies. Just like Israel, we are promised the same victory over them all. Often we'll have a Jordan in the way. A circumstance that seems just too deep to cross over. One that prevents us from even seeing that we can go that way and claim that land. Through these pages, and most of all through the Word of God, it is my prayer that you see that the Jordan in your way can be rolled back. That you see that you are given victory over the enemies there at your Promised Land just like the victory Joshua and the children of Israel had when they possessed their land. It is my prayer that you are encouraged in God's Word and that you go in and possess your land.

The first step in any journey is getting up out of your chair and deciding that it is time to start. Many times we settle for a lot less than God's best, less than His Promised Lands for us. The devil rocks us to sleep in a settled state. We get content to go for half way. What is scary about this half way state is that it is too close to where we came from.

For Israel, halfway was still fairly close to Egypt. Halfway was still in the middle of the desert. They would have been prey to the things that they were running from that were in Egypt. There they would be too close to the enemy and his territory to gain safety. Had they settled there in the middle of the desert, they would have run out of God's protection and His covering. God's cloud to shield them by day and His fire that warmed them at night would no longer have been there for them. It would have moved on to shield and protect those who decided to go on. His presence that guided them would no longer have been with them.

They would have wandered in circles until they died. His hand that had kept their clothes and shoes from wearing out would have been lifted. His cleansing that had kept them spotless from the filth of the world around them would no longer have cleaned them. That life-giving manna from heaven would no longer have fallen. That water from the rock would not have flowed to quench their thirst. That water flowed for the obedient. Their needs would no longer have been met, because those promises moved on with those that moved on. In summary, if they had settled for halfway, eventually they would have died in the desert. The devil can try his best to convince us that settling for halfway in our walk with God is OK. But how is it any different than what would have happened had the children of Israel settled in the desert? The desert, without God, is a deadly place. It is empty of God's presence and protection. It is empty of God's promises and His strength. It is empty of that water that He sends to quench your spiritual thirst, and the manna that He sends to strengthen the Spirit Man inside of you. When you settle in the desert (outside of the place where you walk with God in an every day, all day relationship with Him), then you are walking in disobedience to Him even if it seems that at the time, you aren't. God told Israel to go and possess their Promised Land. He had His best in store for them. If they had stayed in the wilderness, they would have been disobedient to God and His Word, and all the promises there that He had for them. If you settle for less, then you too are guilty of disobedience. All too often we do the same in our relationship and our walk with God. The devil can rock us to sleep in an easy chair of compromise and complacency and we don't realize that we are asleep. To possess our Promised Lands, we have to get out of that chair, and push the enemy back so that we can see our Promised Lands. Then we have go forward.

In order to get up and head for our Promised Land, we have to be able to see what those Promised Lands are. We have to know that it is worth starting out in our journey. That Promised Land has to be so written in our minds and hearts that we are willing to go through whatever the desert holds to be able to claim it and walk in it. It has to be just as real to us.

It has to be as real as the territory that we are crossing on this side of Jordan. In this next chapter we'll talk about what our Promised Lands are as children of God. We'll talk about how to claim them. Just where will I get my information? How do I know what the Promised Lands are that you can claim for your own? How do I know that this will work for you? I guess by now you know the answer to all those questions. Through the pages of the Word of God. Hey, it works for you too. God's word was written for you, too. Get ready to go in and possess your land.

Chapter 2.

The Promised Land

When the children of Israel left Egypt, I'm not sure if anyone that started the crossing had ever laid eyes on the Promised Land. They may have heard details from others who traveled through. I doubt it though. After all they were slaves there in Egypt. Can't imagine a lot of travelers passing through visiting them. In Exodus 1:6 we read, "And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation." This new generation had been confined in Egypt as slaves. They weren't allowed to visit their homeland, I'm sure. Many of them had no idea just what the Promised Land was. Certainly not the true account of how plentiful it was. If they had known, they wouldn't have been surprised when Joshua, Caleb, and the others who were sent out the first time to explore the Promised Land came back with their account. They had not heard of the grape clusters that took two men to carry. They had not heard of that sweet land flowing with milk and honey. I'm sure that many of them had no idea what the Promised Land was for them. They only knew that it was an escape from the slavery that they were in at the time. It is quite possible that the first time that some of them heard about the Promised Land was through the words of the prophet, Moses that God had sent to them. Moses had been born in Egypt. We read this in the first part of Exodus chapter 2. How did he know about the Promised Land? He came in their midst speaking to them about it. His words were enough to cause them to overcome their suspicion of him as a man. Remember, he had been a son of a pharaoh. His words were enough to cause them to leave all they had to travel through a wilderness in search of this promise. God told him about it. He told the people. And those words had the power to change the direction of the lives of all concerned.

Isn't that a lot like the Promised Land of salvation? Before we were saved we had no idea what it was really like. Through the Word of God and those who speak His Words, we learned about it. I Corinthians 1:21 tells us, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Oh, how wonderful it was when we heard the Word of God preached and crossed over that first Jordan into God's Promised Land. That Jordan was pretty swift and deep for a lot of us. I know, for me it was. I had grown up knowing God's Word, but lacking a real and personal relationship with Him. When I went away to college, I learned a lot that wasn't in my textbooks. I came away from that time in my life far from God and filled with a lot of scars that sin brings. I had a deep Jordan that separated me from God's love. I heard the Word of God preached and it restored me and led me home to the Promised Land that I had heard about from my youth. This time it was mine. It was real and it belonged to me. It wasn't a Promised Land that I heard about from going to church when I was a child. It wasn't a Promised Land that I heard my mother teach us about, or heard my grandmother praise the Lord for. It was mine. I found a relationship with the Lord that was real and it was for keeps. Do you remember when you got there and you knew that it was real? Of course the devil is there still at times to try to make you think that this Promised Land of salvation isn't real, and that you haven't found it at all. He did this especially when you first got saved. Remember how he tried to make you doubt that this was it at all. When the Israelites got to Canaan the first time, they doubted that they were there so much that they even turned around and walked away from it. Then that next generation came back and stood there where their parents had stood. On the edge of this Promised Land that the Lord had led them to, I'm sure many of them thought is this it? Is this really it? This generation had crossed the desert all of their lives. The desert was all they knew. I'm sure that most of them had what we might call a "desert mentality". I'm sure that the devil was there to turn them around just like he had done with their parents forty years before. I'm sure they heard things that he whispered in their minds like, "Hey, this isn't it. You aren't there really. This is just all in your mind. This is a mistake. If you go in there, you are really going to get clobbered. God isn't here with you. You'd better not take that chance. Remember, your parents turned around. Who do you think you are?" Sound familiar. The devil is the world's biggest brat. He will try to destroy you in every way he can.

He'll make you doubt that something physical that you have in your hand that you can see and touch is even real. He certainly tries to make you doubt the spiritual things that you reach for. He'll try to make you doubt your salvation experience is real. He'll try to convince you that you don't deserve God's Word. The devil will try to convince you that all those promises surely aren't for you. He'll try to make you feel so condemned that you dare not reach out to do the things that the Lord is leading you to do. He'll make you feel like everyone around you thinks that you are the worst, and cause you to hide away from obeying God. He'll cause you to feel so down on yourself that you think how could you do anything special. He'll try to convince you that the promises of God that you see others reach out for, you'll never see for yourself. He'll even make you doubt that God's love is as rich and real for you as it is for all of His other children. He'll make you feel separated from that love. He'll point out every spec of flaw in your character and say, "If you have anything from the Lord, why is that still there?" He will remind you of every sin, mistake, or weakness that you have had for the last fifty years and ask how you can think that you will ever be able to do anything for the Lord. He'll put you through a battle so hard that he will even harass you in your sleep and in your dreams. Then he'll step back and say, "If you were really saved, why do you have all those bad thoughts." He was the one that brought them against you to start with. Does all this sound familiar? No, we don't have giants in our land like those that Joshua and Caleb and the others reported seeing who are standing between our Promised Land and us. But we do have a giant that can stop us just as well. One that specializes in hiding the Promised Land so that we can't even see it. One that knows exactly how to turn us around when we have started toward it. When you read in God's Word that He promises you health, the devil is there to say, "No, that isn't for you. You have too many afflictions in your family line. You are too sick." When you hear God promise financial prosperity, the devil says, "That isn't for you. You are too broke." The Word of God promises peace. The devil says, "That isn't for you. Look at all the turmoil in your life." Most of all, the Word of God has promises for you.

It promises that you can have confidence in being the Son or Daughter of God with all the blessings that come with that. We all know how the devil tears that one up. You see, when you have a confidence in what spiritual blessings and promises are yours, the devil himself can't talk you out of it. When you get hold of that Promised Land and you know that it is yours, the devil can't turn you around. You can know that you know that you know that you know that you have been saved, and the devil can't turn you away from that Promised Land. You can know that you know that you know that God's Word promises you healing. When that sickness comes, then no devil can talk you out that health that is promised to you. When you know what blessings God promises to His children in His Word, then you can claim those promises, those Promised Lands. You can walk in that land filled with milk and honey because God said you could. You just have to get out of the desert, and the desert mentality enough to cross Jordan and go on in. That is what this book is all about. We will read what your Promised Lands are. We will talk about how these lands are your right as promised to you.

We'll read how to cross those Jordans, whatever they may be. Those things that rise up to separate you from the promises of God. Those things that hinder you from walking in your promises. You are no less a child of God than the children of Israel whose feet rested in Canaan after the struggle of a lifetime of desert walking. You too can go and possess your land.

Now the Bible doesn't come out and say that the devil was there that day when the second generation was ready to claim their Promised Land. I'm sure though that he was. I know that flesh was. Flesh is as bad as the devil. It is always filled with thoughts of why it won't work, and why we can't do it. What if the Israelites would have listened to the devil or to doubt, or fear, and all the "can't do its" of the flesh. Well, for one thing, we wouldn't talk about the nation of Israel today. This time though, the second time around, they were ready. We'll be reading about what was different the second time around. They went in and possessed their land. No enemies stopped them. No flesh or doubt stopped them. The Promised Land was theirs.

Like we said earlier, the children of Israel knew that they were home. They knew that this was the land that God had promised to them. How did they know this? If this generation had been there on the first time around, then they were too young to even remember anything about it. That is unless some of them were navigating geniuses. Yes, there was a river, but how many rivers had they crossed in their forty years of wanderings. How did they know they were there? We read how in Joshua 1:1-4. “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. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.” Read the whole first chapter for an added blessing. They knew that they were there because God Himself told them that they were there. He not only told them that they were home. He told them the exact boundaries of where their Promised Land laid. How do we know where our Promised Lands are? How do we know just how big it is? How do we know that it is ours given by the hand of God and no enemy is big enough to stop us? How do we know that the weakness of our flesh can’t hinder us? (I’m not talking here about sin that we are caught in. Sin that we are continuing in and not repenting of will hinder us from being able to possess our land.) How do we know that the end to that battle that is spiritually killing us is just around the corner if we’ll just keep holding on? How do we know that an end to that battle in our mind where the devil is constantly condemning us is just in sight? How do we know that the Promised Land of health is ours in spite of that illness that daily robs our strength? How do we know that an end to this financial struggle that threatens to bankrupt us is just around the corner? How do we know that it is ours given by the hand of God? How do we know that the devil can’t separate us from God’s promises? How do we know that health, prosperity, peace of mind, joy, salvation for our lost family ones if or us.

That we are promised deliverance, grace to overcome, and more than we can list-these all are our Promised Lands. How do we know? Because God tells us so. He tells us in His Word. His Word, The Bible, is our map to our Promised Lands. Now you know why I fuss all the time about your needing to get it out and read it (☺). You will not know what you can claim for yourself and those you love if you don't study God's Word. To study it you have to study it in a personal way. You have God's Word filled with promises for you. Yes, they work for everyone, but does that make it less personal for you? If you read a sign post that says the name of a certain town, then you know that you are in that town.

When you read a sign pointing to financial blessings, then you know that you are at that Promised Land. When you read a sign saying "Health Here", you know that you are there. The same goes for all of God's promises. If you read them, they are for you. You are there. You can see the sign. You can get out of your vehicle and walk in that territory. If you don't acknowledge the sign, and keep on going by that town, then you won't even know that you have been there. You won't be able to claim that territory as your own.

What is another way that we can know what our Promised Lands are? In Joshua 1 we read that God told Joshua and Joshua told the people. We can know about our Promised Lands by anointed words from anointed ministers of God. Ministers who speak what God has laid on their hearts to speak. God uses all kinds of people to speak His Word. I've even had Him to use children more than once to speak to me. They would open up their mouth and out would come exactly what God was trying to tell me. I knew that it had to be from Him because there was no way that this child could have known what to say. When this happens, you'll stand up and take notice. God uses anointed people. He uses people to speak for Him that are committed to Him. They have their priorities in line. Their flesh is in subjection seven days a week so that, for the minute that God needs to use them, they are standing there ready. They are walking in the Spirit, tuned in to His voice. They are walking in the Spirit, moving in His direction, flowing where He wants to go.

Their mouth isn't so full of other stuff that they can't open it up for Him. God uses ordinary people. Not supernatural people. There are no supernatural people. We are flesh. He uses people who are willing to recognize this. They are willing to recognize their weaknesses and move out of these into God's strength. He uses people who will lay down their flesh and walk in the Spirit so that they can get the job done, because they recognize that there is no way that they can do it on their own. I think that is why God can use children so. They just listen to Him when He speaks and they do it. He says do it, so they know that they can. He says do it and they do. They don't analyze all their capabilities and come up with "I can't". They don't analyze the situation and mix it with self-doubt and condemnation. They don't think whether or not it is practical for them to do this. They may, like Jeremiah, take a moment to say, "Hey, I'm too little." Then they are OK, and it's a green light for God. We think too much.

God uses people to get His message to us. God reveals His Word to us through anointed people. But it is very important that we not rely totally on others. Hear me out here. God reveals His Word first into our own hearts and minds through His Spirit. Then He uses others to confirm what He has spoken personally to us. There is a balance. We can't just depend on others for our spiritual diet. If we do, they might just be feeding us junk food, and we won't even know it. We won't know it until the enemy comes and sweeps us away because we don't have the strength to stand against him. That sweet manna that comes right from God's throne personally to us sugared with the Holy Ghost will strengthen our soul and change our lives like no other.

On the other hand, I have known people who took an attitude like this. They'd say, "God didn't speak that directly to me. So that can't be right at all." They would strain out all the good nutrients from what others spoke and throw them away. They would take an attitude like this. "If God has any truth to tell, then He will personally reveal everything to me, and I can't trust what anyone else has to say. No one else has the full truth like I do." When we take this attitude, then we are in danger of being deceived. When we think that we have a revelation of the truth that no one else can have, then we are in a great danger.

When we think that we are more special than millions of God's children that in itself is contrary to God's Word.

Yes, there is a famine in the land of God's Word. That is scriptural as to what will happen in the last days. The full counsel of the truth of God's Word is hard to find. However, the Holy Ghost reveals His truth to the hungry. Never think that you are better than anyone who is hungry. If you do, God will turn around and teach you a lesson by revealing something to them that you have sought to understand for years. God will feed the hungry with His anointed Word. If you think that you have all the truth that there is, and you are no longer hungry for more, then He won't give you more. You'll be stuck starving right on the edge of a banquet table that the hungry will feast at.

God's Word tells us what our Promised Lands are, how to get there, and how to claim them for our own. God's Word is filled with His promises for us. Here are only a few. I have just put here the reference, and I have not written the verses. Please get out your Bible.

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|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Wisdom | James 1:5 |
| 2. Joy | John 15:11 |
| 3. God's Provision | Matthew 6:25-34 |
| 4. Prosperity | Luke 6:38 |
| 5. Safety | Isaiah 43:2 |
| 6. Rest | Matthew 11:28-30 |
| 7. Comfort | Matthew 5:4 |
| 8. Healing | Proverbs 4:22 |
| 9. Long Life | Psalms 91:16 |
| 10. Spiritual Gifts | Ephesians 4:11 |
| 11. A New Heart | Ezekiel 11:19 |
| 12. A Sound Mind | II Timothy 1:7 |
| 13. Strength | Isaiah 40:29-31 |

We could go on and on from here. Face it. Whatever you need, you have God's promise that it will be fulfilled. We just have to dig into God's Word and find it.

Another thing that causes us to be able to identify our Promised Lands is this. We have to decide where we are going.

Sometimes we have to have ingrained down deep in our spirit the notion that there are certain places where we just aren't going. That there are certain things that we just aren't going to settle for. That there are certain things that we, as children of God, refuse. These children of God, the second time around, were tired of the desert. A whole generation had passed since that first time around. This crowd was not going to turn around. There was no mention of that at all. Remember all the complaining that we read about the first time around. Just hearing about the giants in the land was enough to turn them around. I'm sure that this new generation had heard all about those same giants. I'm almost just as sure, knowing human nature, that those giants had grown over the years of telling the story. When you read the account in Joshua of the second time around, there was no mention of giants at all. Just mention of God's directions on how to overcome them. This generation refused to let giants turn them around. They simply refused to consider that they would have any more of that desert. They weren't going there any more. To get to your Promised Lands, you have to come to the place where you say, "Enough is enough." Where you say, "I am not going back into that desert. I am not going in that direction any more with my life." You have to get your head up, grit your teeth, set your back bone like a crow bar, and your forehead like a flint rock, and say, "NO MORE". Why do some people stay sick and never see God's healing even though they believe in it?

Because they accept sickness as a way of life. Why do some people stay financially broke? Because they accept financial poverty as a way of life. Why do some people have constant strife and turmoil in their lives? Because they accept it as a way of life. Come to that place where you recognize God's Promised Lands as promised to you in His Word. Then come to the place where you refuse to accept anything less than what He has promised you.

So what do we do now after having read this chapter? How do you keep from becoming like the person the Bible talks about who is just a hearer and not a doer? A good place to start to put this to use in your life would be to get out your Bible again. Do a search of God's promises. A good concordance helps.

If you don't have a Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, I recommend one. It has every word in the Bible and gives the references where each can be found. There are also good little books that you can find that are called *Promise Books*. These have a list of verses that can be found for several promises. There are several of these out. Write down the promises that the Lord speaks to your heart as the answer to some of the problems that you are having. Then make a list of the things that you refuse to accept because they aren't in your list of promises. Make a list of the directions that you are not going to go in. Then don't go there. Go to your knees instead. Pray and seek the Lord. Ask Him to give you the strength to walk in your Promised Land.

You have Promised Lands that you have not even begun to understand. We serve a mighty, mighty, mighty big God. His Word is full of promises for His children. We are precious to Him. Often we don't even realize the depth of that love that He has for us. When we do, it makes His promises all the more real. It also makes it easier to claim them for our own. In the next chapter we'll talk about that wonderful love and where we fit into it.

Chapter 3. God's Love

God's children in the desert had to be totally dependant on God. They had no idea, for one thing, where they were even going. They had to depend on God to guide them. Exodus 13:21-22 tells us, "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." That cloud that guided them in the day also shielded them from the fierce desert heat. That pillar of fire that led them by night also gave them heat to be able to withstand the desert nights. Manna from heaven fed them and their water at times came from a rock. Their clothing and shoes didn't wear out. Nehemiah 9:19-21 tells us, "Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go. Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing: their clothes waxes not old, and their feet swelled not." They had to depend on God for even the very basic things that they needed for their everyday lives. When they faced major obstacles like rivers and seas that were in their way, they didn't have to go around, they just walked on dry land. They were guaranteed success as long as they did what they should do, walked where they were supposed to walk, and kept God's Word. When the enemy out numbered them, no problem. When the enemy came against them, they didn't even have to call out all the troops. Most of the time they didn't even bother to send out their army in full. They had to trust God. Moses couldn't meet all their needs. After Moses died and Joshua became their leader, Joshua couldn't meet all their needs. They couldn't run to their pastors, leaders, and prophets for their physical or spiritual needs. They couldn't rely on one another.

That couldn't get them there, because no one knew where they were to go. They couldn't rely on their family members. They couldn't rely on the doctors and their pills. They couldn't rely on the psychiatrists, or counselors, or worldly counsel and advice. They couldn't rely on their education. They couldn't rely on their bank account. They couldn't rely on their own strength or wisdom. That wouldn't get them there. They couldn't rely on their talents, gifts, or brains. Or the welfare or Social Security system. If they wanted to make it through the desert, they had to depend on God. That is no less true today. The people who have learned to trust Him in the desert will walk in peace and victory even today. The ones who haven't will be the ones who murmur. This is no less true today than it is then. We read how they murmured in the desert. I got out a concordance and cross-referenced the word "murmur". There were 27 references to tell about the murmurings of the children of Israel in the desert. They were so bad with their constant murmurings that Moses stayed provoked with them. In Numbers 20:10-12 Moses reacted to this vexing of his spirit. "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels: must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." In doing this, Moses disobeyed God Who had given him strict orders to strike the rock only once. Why? This represented the rock, Jesus Christ, Who would be slain only once for our sins. This rock represented "The Rock" that would be slain out of which would flow that precious Holy Spirit.

Out of which would flow water for our thirsty souls. What was the result of Moses disobeying God? Read on in verse 12. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." Because of his disobedience, neither Moses nor Aaron ever got to set foot in the Promised Land.

Why do you think that these people murmured and complained so? When I see people murmuring, I know a couple of things about them. Number one, they don't know God.

They don't know Him in a personal way. They are not walking with their hand in His. They don't personally know that great love that He has for them. When you know God's love, you can trust Him enough to submit yourself to Him. His way is OK then no matter what His way is. Also, I know that they are walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit. I might add here not only are they walking in the flesh, but they are also walking in their spoiled flesh. Flesh wants its own way. It wants its own thing when it wants it. Flesh fails to look at the blessings and only sees the things that it wants. After nearly every miracle recorded in the desert, it was recorded that the people murmured. God gave them manna, a perfect food from heaven. They grumbled because they lacked meat. On and on they complained. How could they have done that if they had loved God and truly trusted Him in His love to provide the best for them? How could they have done that if they had submitted their will to God's will and wanted His way above their own ways.

Yes, we'll go through trials. Yes, we'll face our desert days. Yes, we'll go through those times when the rain falls. Matthew 5:45 tells us, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Yes, we'll face battles when it seems like the devil is tearing us into. Yes, we'll face those battles that we bring on ourselves because of our flesh that is born to be trouble. Thru it all though we can trust in God. God is love. I John 4:7-10 tells us, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." What a love God has for us. These are not just pretty words about God's love. They are telling us something for real. God loves you. God loves you. God loves you. He sent His Son for you. For **you**. Sometimes we forget how personal this all is. Get to know that love that He has for you. Wrap yourself up in it. Hide in His love so deep nothing can separate.

We know that nothing can separate us from God's love. How do we know? God's Word promises it. Romans 8:37-39 is a good place to read about God's love. Please read it. When we begin to focus on God's love and less on ourselves and on our flesh, then it will change us. God's love will change us. How many of you can say amen to that? When we start walking in that love and we start walking in the Spirit then we begin to want to please Him. That love has power to turn our lives around when we see it, feel it, walk in it, rise up and then go to sleep in it, give up and give into it. Our murmurings will then turn to praise.

Here are some scriptures about the love of God. Please get out your Bible. Read the passages around them as well as the verses themselves. We'll start out with John 17:21-24. Jesus is speaking to His Father here. This is His last recorded prayer before the cross. This is from His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. John recorded this. John recorded some of my favorite passages about the love of God. I believe that this is because John in his time with Jesus caught an upfront and personal glimpse of God's love and the love of Jesus. We know that there is no respecter of persons with God's love. However, when we love God with all of our heart and we open ourselves up to receive God's love, we'll receive more of it than others who shut themselves up. If we are like a sponge, soaking up the things of God and God's love, then we will receive more than someone who is soaking it up like a brick. Think of those times when you have tried to love someone, but they just wouldn't receive that love from you. If you had loved them with a sacrificial love, it would not have mattered because they failed to open up and receive it. God's love is the same. That is the same with anything in God including His gifts, talents, His Word, His promises, His Spirit, and anything that He has for us. We have to be hungry to receive it or to be able to get anything from Him. When we do hunger after Him, then His Word promises that we will receive. Matthew 5:6 tells us, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." John hungered after the love of Jesus, and He had an understanding of that love that was special. The love of God and the love of Jesus were important to Him. He had an insight into God's love.

He even described himself as the disciple that Jesus loved. It wasn't that Jesus loved John more. It was that John loved Jesus and accepted His love and hungered after that love. Let's read some more things that John had to say about God's love. We'll start with the first scripture about God's love that many of us learned as kids. That verse is John 3:16. Here are some more verses written by John about God's love. Please get out your Bible and read these (I have not quoted them here): John 15:9 and 13, I John 3:1-2, I John 4:7-10, 16, 18, and 19. Most of I John is about God's love and the love that we should have one toward another when we know God's love. Here are some more scriptures to read: Jeremiah 31:3, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:4 and Ephesians 5:2, I Peter 1:8, and Romans 5:8. Please read these and let God's Word minister to you.

In this flesh, we may never fully understand the depths of this love that God has for us. Paul was another one that knew God's love. God's love brought him from being a Christian killer to a saint. One of my favorite scriptures is found in his prayer for the church at Ephesus. It is a prayer that we all need to pray for ourselves. Ephesians 3:16-21 tells us, "That He (God) would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." You too can find that same assurance. We can read scriptures all day about God's love. But for them to change our lives, we have to take them personally. We have to be able to say that we know this love. We have to know that it is just as real for us as it was for Paul and John. It has to be personal.

I was first saved as a child. When I hit my late teens and my college years, the world's temptations were too much for me. I hit the world and all its temptations full blast.

I was into drugs, alcohol, you name it. When I was younger, I had followed God at a distance. I was a Christian because in my household it was the thing to be. I was taught to be one, so I was one. But I lacked a relationship with Jesus that was grounded in His love. When the world beckoned, its hold was greater than the hold that I had on Jesus' hand. Sin took its toll on my life. When I came back to God several years later, I brought with me all the baggage that I had collected while out having a "good time" as the world puts it. I had loaded up scars from my sin. I was packing around a huge amount of condemnation. Scars in my mind hindered sound thinking. I was scared to trust anyone, let alone to trust God. Living in sin in the world will do that to you. When I tried to find God's love, all that baggage separated me from His love. I was bound from being able to receive it. God could deliver me, but I couldn't get close enough to Him to let Him because of all that junk between us. I knew He loved me, but I was separated from Him. It was just like when you were a kid and you did something terrible. Remember that time between doing it and waiting for your parents to find out, punishing you, and things getting back to normal. You know, that miserable in-between time. I was in that in-between time with God. God's love hadn't gone anywhere. I had. During my journey away from God, I had suffered a lot of scars from my sin. Those scars separated me from His love. God used a picture in my mind to help me through this "valley of scars". God often talks to me in pictures. A picture is worth a thousand words. With me He keeps it simple. He knows He needs to. I'm pretty simple. Jesus showed me His hands with the nail prints in them reaching out to me. He was reaching out His hands to grab me and give me a hug full of love. I was shrinking back from them, not trusting them. He showed me those prints in His hands. He said, "These were for you." I knew that He died on that cross for the world. Somehow though I hadn't taken it as personally as it really was. He let me know that the sacrifice that He made there was just as personal as if He had died just for me. He told me that if I had been the only one, He would have suffered there just for me. I later wrote a song titled

He Would Have Died If I Had Been the Only One.

I've put the words here:

He Would Have Died If I Had Been the Only One

Chorus

He would have died if I had been the only one.

The blood He shed would have fell, if I had stood there all alone.

But His great love was so much more that He died for the whole world.

Yet, He loves me like I was the only one.

Verse 1

Many times I used to think that God barely knew me.

Heaven was so far away the world so wide how could He even see me.

With all my problems, all my worries, my temptations and my fears.

I could not understand He loved me like I was the only one.

Verse 2

Don't you know how precious you are, just how much He loves you.

Those bloodstains on His head and feet and side, they were all for you.

Those stripes for healing that He suffered.

That crown of thorns on His head too.

He would have hung there on that cross if it had been only you.

Chorus

He would have died if you had been the only one.

The blood He shed would have fell, if you had stood there all alone.

But His great love was so much more that He died for the whole world.

Yes He loves you like you are the only one.

Someone told me the other day after they had read one of my books that I was very special to God and I was close to Him. I could hear in her voice as she said this that she was considering me to be a great and wonderful person because I was special to God. I also detected a hint that she felt like she could never feel that way about herself. Now, this lady had two options after reading my book and feeling this way. I guess really she had three. We'll talk about the third one in a minute. She could have let those feelings of inferiority, condemnation, defeat, and whatever else beat her so that she shrank back from God's love. Or she could realize that the reason why I am special to God is because of His love and what I have done with it. She could realize that she could feel the same way about herself. The only difference between us was that instead of shrinking back from God's love, I run to it. Instead of allowing the devil to condemn me, when he's around, I run to God before the devil even has a chance to start. It isn't that I am special to God in a way that she can't be, it is that I have realized my place in Him.. She needs to realize God's love is wonderful, as wonderful for her as for me.

That is the focus there. The focus is not us, what we do, and who we are. The focus is God's love. If she doesn't run to it, and if she shrinks back because she feels like she doesn't deserve it, then she will eventually get mad and jealous of me, or someone else like me. On the other hand, she could read about God's love and run to His arms. He would love away those feelings of inferiority and condemnation. His Word, and His Holy Ghost would have wrapped themselves around her. She would become like Paul in Ephesians 3:17-19 that we read about earlier. She would become rooted and grounded in love.

Now let's discuss the third option. Maybe there were things that had separated her from God's love. Maybe she had let sin creep in. When we are sinning and we aren't repenting and confessing and putting things under the blood, then we have a problem. Sin puts up a barrier between God's love and us. Guilt covers up love, especially when the devil drops in a load of condemnation like a bomb. What do we have to do to avoid that deadly trap? We have to run to God and not away from Him. We have to allow His Holy Ghost to convict us. We have to let it break us and bring us to repentance-that kind of repentance that drives us to our knees. That kind of repentance that causes us to weep because we have let God down and we have gotten separated from Him. That kind that causes us to stand up with a forehead like a flint rock to say, we will never do that again. That kind that brings us to realize that with God's Holy Ghost and His Word and His power, we know that we can go on and overcome that place where we sinned. That kind of repentance that draws us back to God with a greater love than we had before because we know His grace and mercy and love in a way that is even more precious.

What are some other things that separate us from God's love? One thing is a poor self-image. If we think that we are just the bottom level, and we are totally unlovable, then we'll cut ourselves off from God's love. We'll even shun the love of others around us. We'll get a chip on our shoulder the size of Manhattan. We'll get a defensive attitude that causes us to tackle those on the offense who dare to reach out to us. We'll separate ourselves. It is easy to go from there to the place where we shut ourselves

away from God's love as well. God can heal our hearts. When we allow our hearts to get hard, God can make a new heart from a broken, stony heart.

Another thing that causes us to be bound from God's love is the devil's condemnation. Condemnation binds us from being able to see God's love for us. He will make you feel so low that God can't reach you. Take his lies to the Word of God. Take his lies to Calvary. You will find there that these lies just fade away.

I have written a book, *You Are Beloved and Longed For*. It is a book about God's love. I have put here a section from that book called *The Circle*.

I used to wonder a lot why, if God is no respecter of persons, some people seemed to have more of His blessings, anointing, gifts and talents, and more of His favor than others do. I asked God why? He showed me that His love is the same for us all, but some have found more of it. I asked Him how. He showed me this simple little scene that illustrated so much. I saw a circle of children. Jesus was in the center of the circle. Some were gathered right around Him, as close as they could be. Around that circle was another ring of children, then another, so forth and so on. I thought to myself why did He gather that one circle closer to Himself and not the others? Why was He partial to them? Then God showed me the attitudes and faces of the children. He showed me last the ring of children that were closest to Him. He showed me first the ring of children who were second from Him. The first ring of children looked on Him and the ring of children that were closest to Him with longing. You could feel their desire to run to Him, but they were afraid to. They were afraid He might reject them, because others had rejected them. They were afraid He wouldn't love them as much as He loved the ones closest to Him. Some were condemned from past sins. Others were beaten down by satan. Jesus would glance longingly at them, but you see, God loves us and draws us to Himself, but we are the ones that have to come forward. He cannot go against our free will. His love was as great and true for them all. He would in a minute have wrapped them all in His arms, but they wouldn't come closer. They wouldn't receive.

The next row of children further away looked at Jesus. They looked at Him with longing, but more than they looked at Him, they looked at the other children. They wanted to be a part of the children more than a part of Jesus' love. They couldn't press on past those others to run to Him. They did this or that to get the other children to notice them, not to get Jesus to see them. They soon became jealous and full of envy because they weren't accepted by Jesus like the others. That wasn't being fair to them, they would say. They wanted the gifts and attention, but they wouldn't do what they needed to do to get it. Some of them had in their hands weights that weighed them down so that they could hardly mover closer. These weights were the world, sin, fear and doubt, because they were not close enough to see Jesus' love. If they would only have set the weights down, they could have moved closer. God can't take these things away from us. We have to lay them down and give them to Him. Many would eventually give up trying to move up and move back instead of forward.

The next ring of children further back was looking at what was all around them, instead of looking at Jesus. They glanced at Him, but were infatuated with everything else and distracted from Him. They looked at the world and were eventually drawn by it away from even glancing at Jesus. They looked at their circumstances and eventually, because they weren't wrapped in His love, fear and doubt caused them to drift away. Some in this group wanted some of the time to be a part of Jesus love, but they didn't want to do what the others there were doing. They wanted to do their own thing their own way, so they did just that. This got them further away. Disobedience and self-will can cost us God's love.

Then God showed me the circle of children closest to Jesus. They sat with their hearts and minds riveted to every Word He said. They wanted to please Him in every detail; they loved Him so much. He was the center of their lives, He was their focus. There was a glow coming out from Jesus. His love was so bright it glowed. Those children closest to Him were wrapped in this glow. Jesus was passing gifts to those around Him. Gifts like talents, spiritual and physical blessings.

The children were joyously receiving them. The last and most precious gift He gave them was eternal life with Him; the One they loved and desired to follow with all their heart.

God showed me that sometimes some of the children in the outside circles would break away and move up a ring. Sometimes they would get all the way to the circle closest to Jesus. Many never made it. The One Who honored their struggle made those that were able to, when they struggled and broke through to Him, very welcome. Jesus' love was the same for them all, but only those that pressed closest to Him received it in the fullest measure. Only those closest in the circle around Him received His gifts, because they were the ones who reached for them, trusting Him to give them to them. Only the ones who loved Him with all their heart received the love that He had for them.

What is our part? Press on closer. Don't put your eyes on the others around you or on the world or it's circumstances. Don't look away from Jesus to things that can destroy you. Don't get caught up in anything or anyone that will hold you back from drawing nearer to Him. Give up your way and your will so that you can do what He wants you to do. His way is so much better than yours is. Ours can only eventually destroy us. Let Him make you accepted in the Beloved. Let Him draw you to Himself.

Why did God hear the cries of His children in Egypt? Why did He raise Moses up to go lead them home? Why did He put up with all the murmurings? We read why in Deuteronomy 7:7-9, "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations." God's love is awesome. God's love for you is just as awesome and just as real as it was for the children of Israel.

When we talk about God's love, we have to cover all of it. We have to discuss all the aspects of it. We know that His love for His chosen people must have been huge to do all the miracles that He did in the desert. Still we read in Numbers 21:6 where He sent serpents and they killed hundreds of His people because of their disobedience. Read this section of scripture. The world makes movies of this kind of thing. In their movies they portray God as being a warped being that delights in destroying people. In these movies He is someone who is almost schizophrenic in his nature. Well, we all know that Hollywood misses it as far as God is concerned. Why? Because they don't know Him. They don't know what His nature is like. Because of the Word of God, we do. How does this picture of the serpents fit into God's love, His grace and mercy? I want to tell a story here that will help us to see this better. I taught kindergarten for several years. One of my kindergarten classes had a rebellious streak as a whole. They couldn't understand why we had to have rules. I taught them a lesson in this that they remembered until they were grown with families, or even kindergarten classes of their own. I told them that for 1/2 of an hour they would be allowed to do anything that they wanted. I would make no rules. I wouldn't even be there to enforce the rules that we had. Now I admit this was brave, but I knew a place where I could go and I could hear them and they wouldn't know that I was there. At first they had a really great time. You could hear them all over the school. Then it started to get a little old. I could see little heads begin to pop up over the glass in the door looking to see when I was coming back. Before long they had had enough of the free for all. A little delegation came out in the hall to look for me to tell me they wanted me to come back in. They were more than willing to hear me out the next time that we talked about rules and why we have them.

God is a righteous God. He isn't a God that allows a free for all. We can rest in that. He won't allow just anything to go. Justice and righteousness is as much a part of His nature as His mercy and love. Matter of fact, real true love cannot exist apart from justice and righteousness. We hear a lot today about "tough love" being a major part of raising children. I work with teens. I see parents everyday that are losing their kids to drugs.

And to all kinds of stuff. Mostly it is because they are too free in their love. There is no justice or righteousness involved. Just a free for all. They set no guidelines. They are pushovers and their kids know just how to push all their buttons to get their own way. Are we really any different than teens in that way? What if God didn't have a righteous nature that was determined and ingrained to stand against sin and things that are wrong? What if God allowed anything to go and did nothing to stop us from compromising, because He Himself compromised? What if He didn't stand by His Word? What if He changed to meet our needs? Would we even know what sin was? How could He convict us of our sin? Would you really respect Him, or eventually wouldn't you have the same respect for Him that a rebellious teen has for a lenient parent? Would you want to call Him Lord? Could you even trust Him to be your Lord? God is perfect, upright and righteous in His love. His grace is awesome, but just as awesome is His punishment or those that rebel against His Word. Just as awesome is His righteous, just, and Holy nature. Here are some scriptures that talk about God's righteousness. Read these please: Deuteronomy 32:4, Isaiah 45:21, Revelations 15:3 are just a few.

So what do we do now that we have read this chapter? We need to go back to the Bible and read about God's love for us. Read it and put your name personally in each scripture. Begin to praise God for that great love. Let Him surround you with His Holy Ghost. If there are things that you need to let Him convict you of, submit to His Spirit. Let Him bring you back to His love. If the devil has chains around you that separate you from God's love, let the Holy Ghost deliver you. Run to God, not away from Him. He'll run to you. Jeremiah 31:3, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." I John 4:19, "We love Him, because He first loved us."

What does God's love have to do with being able to go in and possess our Promised Lands? If we don't have personal knowledge of God's love for us, then we can't understand that we deserve the promises that God has for us. We can't even see the Promised Lands that are there for us according to God's Word and according to what God has promised us in our hearts.

Chapter 4.

You Can Possess Your Land

Now let's take all that we have read and make it personal. You know that God is love. You know that He is able to help you to be able to possess your land. You know that you have a Promised Land. Here are some Promised Lands that you might be claiming for you own. Victory for the battle. Healing for that sickness. Victory for a loved one. A closer walk with God. More obedience in your life. Priorities in line. Overcoming habits. Deliverance over bondages of the past. You know that you have a Promised Land. Now we move on to where the rubber meets the road as the old saying goes. We are getting now to the nitty gritty. To where it becomes actual fuel for your journey. For you to possess your Promised Land, you have to know that you can. It is awfully hard to start a journey when you are mostly convinced that you will never reach your destination. I teach kids. They are great teachers. So many times I find a student that is terribly afraid of failure. They are convinced in their mind that they can't learn this particular thing-like Algebra for example, or Geometry. I have known some that were so afraid of Math that at the mention of its name they actually froze mentally. Never mind that they were exceptionally smart with a lot of aptitude. They barely tried and then would run in frustration because they were so afraid that they couldn't do it. Let's take this out of the schoolroom. The fear of failure hinders so many people from taking their Promised Lands. When we are so afraid that we can't or that it won't work out right for us, then all that the devil has to do is start a battle, and we back up. When we are afraid that we can't, we may never even step out of our comfort zone enough to do what God is telling us to do so that we can start on our journey. Look at the children of Israel the first time around. They were convinced in their mind that it wouldn't work, so they didn't even try. They didn't even have one battle there at the edge of their Promised Land. They turned around and ran before they had even lost. They were wandering 40 more years in the desert. What about you? Are you ready for forty more years in the desert? Most of us don't have 40 years left.

One thing that helps us to be convinced that we can possess our land is this. We have to base our taking our land on God. We have to base it on God's Word. Not on our flesh. When God promises us certain things in His Word, those things are ours because He said so. WE don't have to be perfect in our own eyes to earn these things. GOD is the one that has to be perfect so that we can possess these things. These are promises that HE has made us. Yes, there are promises that are conditional to our obedience. There are many of these. For example, one of these conditional promises is this. If you honor your mother and father, then you will have a long life. But we make a lot of these so much harder. We say, well I can't do that, so we don't even try, and that promise is never ours. We can receive His promises because He said we could. If there is something that we are required to do, then He will help us to be able to do that thing He asks. We can inhabit our Promised Lands because He says that we can. Caleb had the right idea in Numbers 13:30. "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." He made this statement while standing with the people at the edge of the Promised Land the first time that they were there. He was convinced in his heart that because God said they could inhabit the land, then they could. He had seen the giants. But he had looked past them into God's promises and He knew they were greater than the giants. In Numbers 14:7 and 8 we see the same faith at work. "And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying. The land that we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us. A land which floweth with milk and honey." Joshua and Caleb weren't looking to their own weakness or to the giants of the land. They looked to God and His promises. They were ready to possess their land. It didn't matter that they had no formal military training. It didn't matter that they didn't have a lot of weapons. What mattered was that God said it and they knew that they could.

Are you like the math students that I mentioned earlier? Are you so afraid that you can't, that you only halfway try? Are you like the children of Israel around Joshua and Caleb?

Are you busy looking at the reasons why you think you'll surely fail? Are you counting your "cannots" instead of looking at the reasons why you can? Are your feet wandering everywhere else instead of toward your Promised Land because you are too afraid to go in? When the devil gets in your face and says that you can't are you running in fear? If so, you must get your eyes focused on reality. Reality is God's Word. Reality is God's promise to you personally. Reality is the Holy Ghost inside of your heart that bears witness with God's Word and His promises for you. Reality is not what we see with our natural eye. That is what walking in the Spirit is all about. Not walking in the natural but walking in what the Word of God says, and what God is saying to your heart. You can possess your land. Whether you think you can, whether or not you feel like you can. You can. Why? Because God says so. Square back your shoulders. Get that Holy Ghost glint in your eye. Refuse to look at anything to the contrary of God's Word and His promises. Go and possess your land.

Why can you go? You can go because God is God, and God's Word is God's Word. You can go because you are who you are **in Christ**. That last thing is where a lot of us miss. We see our flesh. We fail to look at ourselves in the Spirit according to God's Word. We fail to see ourselves as we are In Christ. Who am I? Now I could look in the mirror, but that would be a mistake. That part of me is flesh, and flesh is certainly disappointing. Especially at my age. Who am I? I am a child of God. God's Word says a lot about the things that are promised to the sons of God. Here are a few. You have to read them for them to do you any good, so get out that Bible again. John 1:12, Galatians 4:7, Philippians 2:15.

That is a powerful message. You are a child of God. Not only are we a child of God, we are the bride of Christ. We are beloved. Here is a section of scriptures that changes how we see ourselves. Ephesians 1:17-23, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in

the saints.” For more, read the rest of this passage. This section in Ephesians 2:4-10 is also powerful. I’ll sum it up by putting here verse 10. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” When we look at ourselves in the flesh, or through our past failures, we are putting down God’s workmanship. We are saying that God doesn’t know what He is doing.

Remember that little song that we used to sing as kids. *He’s Still Working On Me*. You are the workmanship of Christ. From the time that you accepted salvation and became His child, He has been doing a work in you. He is the vine and we are the branches. John 15:1-5 tells us, “ I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.” We are His workmanship. He is constantly working on us bringing us to His perfection. Constantly He is pruning the branches, cleaning out the things that don’t belong in our hearts, minds, and spirits. I don’t know about you, but with me it sometimes seems like a very slow process. I’m a slow learner. Never mind. He is still at work. His Holy Ghost is in our hearts to perfect us. His Word is working a work in us that won’t fail. Isaiah 55:11 tells us, “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” His love, goodness, and grace are writing volumes in our hearts and minds every day. He is even using the hard times, the battles, to perfect us. He’ll even use the devil to work a work in us, trying our faith, growing us through it all. He is that New Man inside of us. Colossians 3:10 tell us, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.” God is working in you.

Yield and make His job a lot easier. The thing that hinders Him most is when we get so full of ourselves. We get in the way. When we try so hard to prove that we can, then we get in His way and hinder Him. When we try to prove that we are just as good or as important as everyone else, we get in the way. When we try to do it on our own because that is how we think that we have to do, we get in the way. Get in neutral. Let God be God. He'll do a work in you that you'll never be able to do.

Doesn't all of this put your weaknesses and failures in a whole new light? Can you possess your land? Those things God has told you to do, can you do them? Are you worthy to go and possess your land? Are you able to go? Let the Words of Caleb ring in your heart. "Let us go up at once and possess it for we are well able to overcome it." We are well able to overcome it. Not on our own, but through the power of God, through His Word, through His Holy Ghost who is inside of us. We are able. There is no doubt. There is no room for flesh. There is no room for anything but God. He is able. Through Him, so are you. Lift up your head. Lift up your heart. Lift up your hands. Praise Him. Praise Him. You are ready to possess your land. I Kings 8:56, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto His people Israel, according to all that He promised: there hath not failed one Word of all His good promise, which He promised by the hand of Moses His servant." Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Go and possess your land.

Chapter 5.

The First Time Around

(The Failure)

This is a good title for this chapter. We want to discuss here how the children of Israel failed at Canaan that first time around. Through this we can get a glimpse into why we sometimes fail when we try to possess our Promised Lands. Through it, too, we'll talk about how failure isn't final. After all, the nation of Israel today stands as tribute to their eventual success one day at Jordan. We'll also talk about what to do when we fail. We'll talk about how we can rise above our failure and conquer that land.

In Numbers 13 and 14, we find the story of the first time around. Please get out your Bible and read this section of scripture. Please get out your Bible and read this section of scripture. Hey, I'm saying this twice so that it registers and you pause and get out your Bible. (☺) The children of Israel had arrived at their Promised Land. Can you imagine how they felt after all that time wandering in the desert? They were there. Remember the last time that you went on a long trip the excitement you felt at arriving at your destination. Multiply that by over 100 times and you'll get an idea of how they must have felt that day. The Lord told Moses to choose a man from every tribe to go on what today we might call a "recon mission". They were to scout out two things. They were to tell about the land that was theirs. They were also to tell about the people that were there. For 40 days the children of Israel waited for the verdict. I have always wondered what went on in the home camp while the spies were spying out the land. How positive was their talk? How positive were their attitudes? The Bible doesn't say. The focus here in this section of scriptures is on the spies. However, if you remember their general attitude up to that point in their journey, it had been filled with what we at the ministry call "stinking thinking". You know what I mean by that. That kind of thinking that leads to murmuring and complaining. That negative attitude filled with doubt. I really believe that if the home camp had stayed positive, full of faith, walking in the Spirit and not in the

flesh, the outcome that day would have been very different. Instead, this is what happened. They were sorely defeated. Isn't this often true in a church or in a ministry. Your leader will have a vision from the Lord. Something that God tells him to do. There will be a few positive, full of faith, Spirit-walking, praising-God people in the congregation. They will pray through and God will give them the same vision. God will confirm His Word. When I say a vision here, I mean something that God puts in your heart to do. It is so burned in your spirit that you know that you know that it is God's direction for you. When God speaks and you listen, He anoints His Word. He writes it in your heart and mind. That has a divine touch that will put the fire in your spirit to get the job done. God's Word is anointed whether it is His Word that you read in the Bible, or it is His Word that He speaks in your heart. In our ministry we have lived and survived day to day on the Word that God spoke to us about the vision that He has for us to do. The anointing on the Word that He gave us has carried us through the hard times. It has carried us through the times when satan threw up everything he could to stop us. It has held us through times when everyone but a handful gave up and walked away. That Word gave us the strength to go on. If we continue to obey God's voice and walk in His anointing, it will carry us through to the time when we hear Him say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant. Welcome in to your reward." Hold on to that vision that God has given you.

I want to add here that if your church or ministry does not have a vision from God, then something is wrong. By a vision I mean that purpose that God directly has given you as a church. That reason for your existence. Without it you won't be able to stand through the battles and trials. We need that anointed God-given, grafted, heart's purpose. We need that reason for our existence. This means personally one on one with God as well as a church body. We need this reason for why we do what we do. We can't endure without it. Many churches though have moved away from their mission, the reason why they were established. They settle into an easy-chair state. They settle into a form and a fashion, or a ritual. They don't want to rock the boat between the flesh-walking and the spirit-walking church, so they go half way.

They compromise to keep peace between the two. They do their own thing, and God's thing goes out the door. Obeying God is no longer the reason that they do what they do. Before long the Spirit of God moves away and all they have left is a social club. They have lost their vision. We need a vision from the Lord personally and we need one in the church, the body of Christ. We need to see our Promised Land. It needs to be so real to us that no matter what the negative flesh walkers say we aren't stopping until we possess our land. That land that God said was ours to claim.

You might as well know though that most churches, like the camp at Israel, will have two congregations inside of each church. They will have a Spirit walking church, and a flesh church. Just like what happened that day at Canaan, there will be a fight between the two churches. You may as well not expect the flesh church to see the direction that God wants the church as a body of Christ to go in. The flesh church will not see the Spirit given vision for the church. It won't happen. They don't have spiritual eyes, and can't discern things in the Spirit. They will attack the things of God because they are walking in the flesh. They are naturally at enmity with God. They won't recognize what they are doing. The flesh church will strive against the Spirit walking church and not even realize why. Just like the God-led Abel, and the flesh-led Cain, they will be filled with jealousy, striving against one another. It is a leader's challenge to bring the two together. Just be careful that the flesh church doesn't rule. If it does, like Israel in the desert, you might face another 40 years of wandering around while you get absolutely nothing done for God.

The 12 spies returned to give their report. In Numbers 13 in verse 27, they talk about the land and its wonderful fruit. Verse 23 tells us that they even brought back one grape cluster that took two men to carry. Can you imagine what the melons were like? What a land. In verse 28-33 the 10 spies gave a negative report. Matter of fact verse 32 called it an evil report. We can read that report in Numbers 13:27-28, "And they told him, and said We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey and this is the fruit of it.

Nevertheless the people are strong that dwell in the land and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.” The devil certainly was there that day and so was a lot of flesh. Flesh will always give a negative report. It will be the one to say, “Now let’s stop and think about this. Let’s reason this out. Look at the negative things here.” Flesh will always come up with a list of why we can’t do something instead of why we can. That is why most churches' and ministries' projects are stopped before the idea even leaves the board meeting. Even when the project originated as a vision or direction from God. It is almost guaranteed that every time someone has a direction from God, the devil will send along someone who will yield to their flesh and let the devil use them. Here in this project the flesh talkers outnumbered the Holy Ghost walking spies. Joshua and Caleb were positive Spirit, led by God. Caleb said in Numbers 13:30, “And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” The negative reporters immediately shot him down. Verse 31 tells us, “But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.”

Well, things went from bad to worse. Here they go again in Numbers 14:2, murmuring against Moses, Aaron, and finally against God. “And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God we had died in this wilderness!” (This is an interesting thought. They got their desire. This was the generation that died in the desert. Sometimes when we are determined to be disobedient God will allow us to be destroyed by giving us the desires of our own hearts.) Joshua and Caleb still tried in verses

6-9 to still the crowd and change the direction that they were going in. “And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us: a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not.” These two were speaking wisdom from the Lord. They were speaking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. They weren’t speaking from what they saw in the natural. They weren’t speaking from what they thought or felt in the flesh. They were reminding everyone what God had spoken. They were reminding them of His Word to them. What He had promised them. How did the flesh crowd react to this? Read verse 10. “But all the congregation bade stone them with stones....” Things were getting bad. But God came on the scene to speak in their behalf. When you stand in the Holy Ghost in obedience to God’s Word, things may get ugly with the flesh crowd. The devil may have his say, and he may roar really loud. Just remember. You aren’t standing alone. Just hold on and stand there. God will come on the scene. Ephesians 6:13 tells us, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” When you have done all to stand, then just keep standing. God will come and stand with you. He certainly did that day.

Even after having missed out on being able to set foot in the Promised Land because he had been so provoked with these rebellious people to the point that he disobeyed God, Moses still took up for these people. Read Numbers 14:11-25. In summary we’ll put here these verses 11-12 and 18-19. “And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? And how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.” This conversation goes on from there.

Here is part of Moses reply in verse 19, "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." God's reply to Moses' plea for pardon is found in verses 20-25. To sum this up, the Lord consented and pardoned them and did not disinherit them. We know that because Israel is there today. There was a punishment though, and that punishment was dear. Flesh carries with it a punishment. When we walk in the flesh we are enemies with God and we are against His Word. Whether we mean to do so or not. Romans 8:7-8 tells us, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." What was their punishment? We read in Numbers 14:23-24 and 29-33. "Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereunto he went; and his seed shall possess it. Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness." What then happened to the ten spies that gave the evil report? Numbers 14:37 tells us, "Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord." What about Joshua and Caleb who stood for the Lord and walked in the Spirit? Verse 38 tells us, "But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still." They were the only two from this generation that were able to go in and possess their land.

What does this have to do with us? How can this help us.

How can knowing this make a difference when we stand at the border of our own Promised Lands? There will always be someone with an evil report. Seems like one evil report that almost always comes up when we are sick is the doctor's report. It will always be overly negative. It may not always be trustworthy either. You cannot trust the doctor and depend on his words regarding your health and decisions concerning your health. You need first go to God and get His diagnosis. After all, He lives inside of you and definitely knows your body even better than you do. He formed it. He certainly knows it better than any doctor. He will give you the positive report. Even if things do not look good, He will give you a faith filled report. Most doctors practice giving a negative report so that their patients do not gain any false hope. Well, I'm here to tell you that any hope that the doctors give is only false hope. The only real hope is in Christ Jesus and His power to heal. I am not saying that we shouldn't go to the doctor. I am, however, saying that it is foolish to put your trust in what the doctor says. You'll have to agree that most doctors are definitely not walking in the Spirit in the full knowledge of the truth. If they aren't, then who are they walking in? Put your trust in the Lord, and obey Him regarding your health. Let Him use the doctors, yes. But at the same time be sure that the devil doesn't use them against you.

Run from negative, flesh filled reports. Don't let your own flesh rule. You have to learn to concentrate on God's voice in your spirit and heart. You have to learn to concentrate on His Word and the promises there. Fill your day with Gospel music that declares the promises of God. Allow the Holy Ghost to move on you and strengthen your spirit. Pray in tongues in the Holy Ghost and strengthen that inner man. Avoid negative talkers. Call time out to your flesh. Refuse to accept anything but victory. When God says it is time to walk in and possess your land, don't hesitate. Make sure it is God. Then go on in.

Also, remember, if you are a Joshua or a Caleb, and the rest of the people around you are listening to the flesh and the devil, stand true to what you are hearing from God. God will come in on your side. Just make sure you are in the Spirit. Make sure you hear the Lord. Then stand there.

Remember when people refuse to walk in the Holy Ghost they can't see things the way you do. When you do, you will more often than not be in the minority. The majority prefers an easy way out. The compromise of the flesh is where most people will be standing. Just hang in there. The truth will be revealed and God will bless you for your stand. Just like He did Joshua and Caleb. Don't compromise. Don't be pushed into becoming double minded. Stand and stand firm. God will help you. Your reward will be great.

You can see from this story the importance of walking in the Spirit. If the Israelites that day had been listening to God's voice instead of the flesh, they would have avoided 40 more years of wandering in the desert. If they had listened to the positive report of those concerned with obeying God, they would have finished that day in victory instead of defeat. If they had just taken God at His Word, they would have possessed their land. All these are part of walking in the Spirit. We'll talk in the next chapter about the importance of walking in the Spirit and what that means.

Now, it is time to ask an important question. What do I do with what I have learned from this chapter? As you have begun to identify the Promised Lands that you are claiming, it is important to avoid the trap that the children of God fell into that day. Are you positive or negative in your overall attitude? The devil's main job is to stifle you in an attitude of defeat before you even get started. Are you walking in the Spirit or in the flesh? Are you taking God at His Word? Are you listening to the negative advice of flesh filled people around you? Are you standing up for what God wants regardless of what the majority is saying? If you have answered any of these questions in the negative, then how can you change those answers? Seek God's face. Let him show you the areas in your life that need to be changed. He will help you to become a Joshua and Caleb all rolled in to one. You can go in and possess your land.

I want to put a little footnote in to this chapter. I have done a lot of talking about being positive. But here I am in this chapter and talking about the negative side. I started with the time that they lost, instead of the time when they won.

Here I am in one of the first chapters discussing their defeat and 40 more years of wandering. Why have I started here with the bad news instead of with the good? One reason is that often is where our story starts, with defeat. Another reason is that maybe that is where your story has started. There is a message here in this defeat at Canaan. Let us fast forward to the second time around. Let's read this account of the victory trip in Joshua 1. There is no negative talk here. There are no flesh talkers. There is no talk of giants. There is no talk of defeat. They had already once faced the pain of defeat. They weren't turning back around this time. Victory was the only option they considered. Your defeat can create 1 of 2 attitudes. It can cause you to look at the Promised Land and say, "Hey, I've already been here once. I messed up. I suffered a great loss. I am not trying that any more." If we do this, it will lead us to a second defeat. This one may even be more costly than the first. Or it may cause you to be like the children of Israel the second time around. The time when they conquered their Promised Land. The choice is yours.

Chapter 6.

The Importance of Walking in the Spirit

When we get ready to possess any Promised Land it, is very important that we walk in the Spirit. We will probably not even see our Promised Lands if we don't. The things that are discerned or seen in the flesh are usually not the promises of God. Let's go back to Joshua and Caleb and other 10 spies at the edge of Canaan. What made them different? Caleb and Joshua were walking in the Spirit. They were tuned into a different channel. They were walking to the beat of a different drummer. They were looking at the things that God's Word had promised them that they could look at. In Numbers 13:30 we read what Caleb had to say about the situation. "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." Also, we read this in verse 14:6-9. I have put here verse 8. "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey." God had said that the land was theirs and so they were ready to take Him at His Word. Instead of looking at the giants of the land, which is how flesh sees things, they looked at the situation through the Word of God. Flesh will only see the natural things. When God's Word says in Isaiah 53:5 that we can be healed, the flesh will only feel the fever or the pain. When God's Word promises in Psalm 122:6 that those who love God will prosper, flesh will only see the bills piling up on the counter. When God's Word says in Isaiah 41:10 that we don't have to fear, flesh will look at the circumstances, and knees will knock, throats will tighten, and hearts will pound. All these will even be happening when the mind and spirit is praising God for His peace. When we read in Isaiah 43:10 that even the waters and the flames can't stop us, because God is with us, our flesh will feel the flames and the waves. Our flesh will run away from where God told us to stand even when it thinks it is getting a little hot. When God's Word says we can claim the promises of Joshua in Joshua 24:15. We only see the sin that our loved ones are engulfed in. God says that we can do all things-

Philippians 4:14. Our flesh looks at all our weaknesses and gives up before we start. When God says to do something and according to His Word we will have the power to go and obey, flesh looks at what we lack. We say that we can't because we don't have what it takes, when all the time everything that we needed to get the job done has been given to us, if we will only step out in faith and obey. We have a number one enemy and that enemy is our flesh and ourselves. If we fail to recognize this, we will never get to our Promised Land.

Let's take all of this from the shores of Jordan down to where we live today. We have an added bonus that the children of Israel could never have in those days. If you notice in this story God only spoke intimately with just a few. He chose to speak one on one with Moses. When it was necessary to speak to the whole congregation, He did, but that was seldom. His Spirit rested on Moses. Moses was the one that most of the time was the mediator between God and the people. God told Moses, and Moses gave the message to the people. Most of the time they were dependent on Moses to hear God's Word. Why? At that time, the Holy Spirit had not been sent to dwell in the hearts of men. It only rested on a few that God chose. When we say walking in the Spirit as describing what the people did then, it meant a different thing from what it means today. Today the Holy Ghost will dwell in the hearts of those who believe and obey. When God commands us to do something, we can hear His voice in our own spirit. He is inside of us. His Holy Ghost gives us the strength from inside our hearts to be able to obey.. We can overcome our flesh because we can submit it to the Spirit of God in us. We can allow that New Man, Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost, to rise up inside of us. Even Joshua and Caleb didn't have that.

What does it mean today when we say walking in the Spirit? Here is just a very small example. I was praising the Lord the other day on my way to work. I was caught up in His Holy Spirit. I was thanking Him for taking care of some bad situations that were coming against me. What was the different thing about that? The situations hadn't changed. They were still there. Matter of fact they were actually getting worse.

In my heart, I knew that God was working on the situation and that it was just as good as done. I refused to go by what I saw in the natural, but I pressed on to find what was going on in God's realm. I felt a feeling of victory come over me that had nothing to do with the situation as it was in the natural. It had a lot to do with my praying through to the victory. It didn't matter in my flesh what I saw in the natural. God's praises poured from my heart. It was a beautiful morning filled with His praise. Then I stopped praising God for a moment and looked at the sky in the natural. It was definitely not a beautiful morning. The sky was so black it was almost night. The wind had gotten up and the rain was pouring down sideways. I was already at work before I noticed the storm that I was driving through. I had been so caught up in praising the Lord that all I had seen was His glory. When we are in the Spirit, the dark skies that we pass through won't hinder us.

That morning had actually started with me being very aggravated at something someone had done yesterday. I made a choice not to stay aggravated at that person. Instead I gave it to God. I yielded my bad attitude to Him. I started praising God instead. Almost in spite of myself, I felt a wave of victory. I felt a love flowing through me for that person. If I had not chosen to get out of my grumbling and murmuring state I would never have had that beautiful glorious morning in spite of the storm. I was also worried at that time about a financial thing that was happening. You know how those things crop up to worry the fire out of you. This was really a big problem. I chose not to dwell on that situation, but before I left the house that morning, I prayed through and placed it all at the altar and left it there. I also had some physical problems that crop up now and again to ruin my day. I gave them to the Lord. When I left that morning, I was praising the Lord for what He was doing, for how he had taken care of all those situations, even though I didn't see anything different at that moment. It was a beautiful day in spite of the storm. I had been praying for direction on some things that I needed to do that day that I had put off for some time because I wasn't sure which way to go with them. I knew different people's opinions on what I needed to do. But I hadn't heard from God.

I didn't have peace about which way He wanted me to go. Listening to all those opinions had gotten me into a confused state as to which way I needed to go. As I praised the Lord that morning, it came to me clear as a bell what I needed to do. Along with it came the strength that I needed to get the job done. If you are like me, anytime you go through a battle, the number one place the devil will jump on to pester you will be your own self confidence. I don't mean by saying this that I looked in the mirror while getting ready that morning and I was totally disgusted with what I saw there in the flesh. I mean that I know my weaknesses. When you've been hanging around with yourself as long as I have, you will know your weaknesses. Or you should. Because then, you know the areas that you need to watch and be sure to commit them to God when they crop up. There were a billion things that I wanted to get done for the Lord that day. The devil was driving in my face all the reasons why spiritually, mentally, and physically I was not up to getting it done. He was well on his way to discouraging me from even starting. Hey, what can I say? It was a really long morning. I finally just got tired of his mental harassing and put my foot down. I told him that according to God's Word I was able to do all things. I told Him that I was able to possess my land because it was mine. God had said that I could walk there. I reminded him that according to God's Word, the devil's place was under my feet. I was definitely smarter than he was because I had the sense to know that. I told him that by the Word of God, the blood of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Ghost within me he was to shut up and leave me alone. I refused to hear him any longer. I stood up and resisted him. It took a while, but he did what the Bible said he had to do in James 4:7. Flee. He shut up and left me alone. When we walk in the Spirit we can identify the devil when he starts his stuff, and we can rise up above him with the victory that God's Word promises us. That was when I got in my car and got caught up in praising the Lord. The devil couldn't get a word in edge wise. My mind was off of his junk and on Jesus. Canaan was where my heart was. Not in the chains of Egypt.

What happened to the rest of my day? The person that I

had been aggravated at came to me and made peace. In my financial problem, God gave me a direction to go in and in just a couple of weeks that situation turned around completely. The direction with the project that I had been working on was completed and the project is underway with victory. It is wonderful. By the way, believe it or not when I went back outside later on in the day and we had summer skies and sixty-degree weather in January. What about the devil that had pestered me so? Don't know. Didn't look for him the rest of the day.

So what am I saying here? Am I saying that every morning that I have starts out this glorious. Hey, I am just flesh like everybody else, just like you. I am not writing the books that I write because in my godliness I am willing to share a tiny spark of my greatness with all those poor people beneath me. I am writing because we all struggle. We all fight the same flesh. We all fight the same devil. If you go back and reread this part of this chapter you'll know for sure that every morning hadn't been this way. I had been going through a time where it seemed I was being hit on all sides. The battle with the hard to get along person and my hard to get along self had been going on for a long time. The devil getting in my face about my finances had been an old battle. My not knowing what direction to head in because the devil had confused the direction that I needed to go in had been going on for a while. Do you get my point? What made this day so different? It was God's time for me to stand at my Promised Land and go in. I woke up determined in my heart to hear God's Word and go on in. I chose not to hear the devil. I chose not to give in to flesh. Like Joshua and Caleb, I chose not to hear my flesh or the flesh of anyone else. I chose to walk in the Spirit. I got determined that this was my Promised Land, and nobody and nothing was going to stand in my way. Instead of continuing on seeing things in the flesh, I put my eyes on God's Word, and His promises. I started praising Him for what He had done by faith. I knew in my heart that it was done. All those situations fell to the side like the river of Jordan and I just walked in and possessed my land. You can do the same. There is one thing that is important to consider. If I had not been walking in

the Spirit on a regular day-to-day basis in my life, would I have been tuned in to God's Spirit this day? Would I have been ready for this day of victory? What if I had not been praying daily? I would have gone on defeated.

What does the Bible have to say about walking in the Spirit? The book that gives the most details about walking in the Spirit is the book written to the worst flesh walking people in the Bible-the church in Rome. We all know how the society in Rome had become before its fall. Paul started this book with Romans chapter 1. Read it please. This was his introduction. Wow. It is pretty strong. You can tell from what he wrote that these people he was writing to knew about walking in the flesh to the highest degree. Doesn't this sound a lot like a letter that could have been written to the United States? In Romans 8 there is a whole chapter about walking in the Spirit. Please read it. It starts with an all time favorite, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." We all know that part. How many of us though dwell on the second half of that verse. "Who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." Believe you me, if we don't walk in the Spirit, we'll have to suffer the condemnation that the flesh brings. Let's instant replay my morning back to the time when the devil was beating me up with all my weaknesses. He did this to discourage me from making my stand in God. If I would have swallowed his lies that morning, and I would have allowed them to make me feel defeated, how different would my day have been? When we walk in the Spirit, we can discern the devil's lies. When we walk in the Spirit we know what to do with those lies. We don't allow them to become a part of us. We don't accept them. If we do, God shows us what is going on and He'll deliver us from the damage done. If we tune in to His voice. Tuning in to His voice comes when we walk in the Spirit. Tuning in to the devil's voice comes when we walk in the flesh. We have to fill our mind up with the things of the Spirit. That means God's Word, His praise, His music, His thoughts. If we have our mind constantly on other things, then no wonder the devil can slip in. When we are so caught up with this world, this life, what we see and hear in the natural, what things seem or appear to be on face value, how we feel in our mind or body,

what everyone else is saying, what the devil is slipping into our minds, how can we win?

Romans 8:5-6 tells us, “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” How can we walk in victory when we are in the flesh constantly? How can we possess our Promised Land that way? The children of Israel were in the flesh. The voice of flesh ruled that day at Canaan. Did they possess their land? Go back and reread that story. Move it into your life like the illustration that I just gave you about my life. Think of a battle or situation that you are going through. Are you in the flesh or Spirit regarding this situation? How can you change it? Are you reacting to this situation in your flesh or in the Spirit? What does God say about the situation? What does God’s Word say? Pray. Seek His face. Ask Him to show you. Ask Him what you need to do. Start praising Him for the victory He has already done even though you don’t yet see it. All of this is part of walking in the Spirit. Now if you read all this and just go on your way to the next paragraph it won’t do you any good. You’ll wake up tomorrow in the same old battle. It may even seem worse tomorrow. Take this to heart. Take it in to your spirit. Act on what you read. Let it change your life.

In Romans 8:7-8 God gets down to what I call the nitty gritty of things. He gets down to business. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” If you fail to walk in the Spirit, or if you continually on a day-to-day basis are stuck in the flesh, you will be an enemy to God. You may not want to be. You may not intend to be. But you will be. Also, God will not be pleased with you. There have been times in my life that the devil has used even my best intentions to hinder. In weak moments in my flesh I would say just exactly the wrong thing. Or I would do just the thing that the devil was waiting for to turn and use against someone. Hey, before you get disgusted at me, what about you? Have you ever been there? One of the worst examples of this was something that happened to someone that I know.

He had been traveling and stopped at a gas station. There was another man at the pumps. God told him to witness to that man. It was cold. The man was a total stranger. It was late and he was in a hurry. Flesh ruled and he didn't obey God. He left the station. He hadn't traveled too very far down the road after leaving the station when a fire truck, police, and ambulance came toward him on the highway heading toward the station. In his heart he knew that he needed to turn around and follow them. Not far from the station he saw the car that had been at the pumps at the station. It was over the bank and in flames. What about the fellow he was to have witnessed to? He had died instantly. When we walk in the flesh and not in the Spirit, we will not obey God. Our flesh is spoiled. It will shrink back when we are called to brave the cold and the unfamiliar people. When our schedule is changed, flesh can't handle it. We need to get out of the flesh and obey God. That is what walking in the Spirit means.

This is confession time here. I have surely had my moments of disobedience. One came not long ago when a student came into my office at school. I had gone through a bad day. Very hectic. Everything happening at once and things flying loose at all ends. I was totally aggravated. I was feeling pushed and in a hurry. That is just what the devil does when he wants to cause you to miss something that God is trying to do. Well, I was in line for that sort of thing to happen on that particular day. This young man came in who had really been going through a battle. The devil had been condemning him making him feel worthless. The Lord told me to speak to him. In my aggravated state, I halfway talked with him the things that the Lord had led me to discuss with him. I threw it at him like a bomb. I didn't finish what the Lord had led me to talk with him about because the phone started ringing and other people came in. Before I left that day, God showed me that I needed to call him. I was late for an appointment and thought that I would do it later. One thing led to another and it was late by the time I got home. When I walked in the door, the phone was ringing. It was this young man's mother. She said to me, "What did you talk about today. My son had been going through a battle. Whatever you said made him feel like there is no hope left for him."

He had taken what I had said out of context because of the tone of voice I had used, and because I had been in such a hurry that I hadn't finished what I had started. Usually I make sure that who I am talking with has a clear understanding. God knew what had happened. I had ignored Him when He tried to tell me that I needed to call and fix it. Because of my flesh and my hurry, that young man had left that day in a helpless and hopeless state because I took away the last thread of hope that he had been holding onto. I had done it all with the best of intentions.

We can't serve God in the flesh. We can't reach out to one another in the flesh. We can't even know or love God in the flesh because He is a Spirit. We certainly can't have a relationship with Him in the flesh. Many people struggle in their relationship with God and in their work for Him because they fail to walk in the Spirit. Many people fail to be able to serve God even though they have the very best of intentions, because they won't walk in the Spirit. All this leads to a defeated life. Many people allow the devil to destroy them because they don't walk in the Spirit. They can't discern what he is stealing from them. They can't fight against him. They can't fight what they can't see. Ephesians 6:11-12 tells us, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, and against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." How can we see the unseen in the flesh? How can we put on spiritual armor in the flesh? We can go to a museum and put on a metal suit of armor. How can that protect us in the spirit? To live a victorious walk in God we have to walk in the Spirit? To overcome satan we have to walk in the Spirit. To obey God, we have to walk in the Spirit. To please God, guess what? We have to walk in the Spirit.

How will God present a church that is without spot or blemish as Ephesians 5:26-27 tells us. "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." He can only cleanse us when we walk in the Spirit.

That cleansing is a spiritual cleansing. It doesn't involve water and soap and an iron to get out those wrinkles. When the rapture takes place you might be in the dirt digging out a sewer system. No matter about all that physical dirt that you may have on. But if you have spiritual dirt collected from all the times that you may have refused to obey God, then that will keep you out of the skies. We have to come clean in the spirit. Confess up and repent. That is how we get that spiritual cleansing.

Let's rewind here just a bit to the young man who came into my office. God is a God of grace and another chance. Praise God. He is a God of redemption even redeeming you from your mistakes. Not long ago that young man happened to be in my office. He was there at just the right time and place for God to miraculously use him to reach out to another student. He left that day encouraged tremendously. How did it happen? The Lord showed me what He was going to do. This time I stopped being in a hurry and aggravated at all the details of that day which had been just as hectic as the other day. I put a priority on walking in the Spirit. The thing that God was doing was of the utmost importance. I tuned in. God moved and He set up the situation. I obeyed God. This young man obeyed God. God used that young man to literally loose another young person from chains that the devil was using to destroy her with. God is good. Another student came into the office at the same time that young man came in. He shared with her some things that were exactly what that she needed to hear. She grabbed onto that and went out of the office in total victory. Through doing this the young man realized how he could be set free from those things that were binding him. He also left the office that day in victory. Can I in the flesh take credit for that wonderful thing that God did that day? I had already blundered in the flesh. I know about flesh. God sent the time, the place, the coming together of who was there, and the circumstances. We obeyed. He blessed. Spirit and not flesh ruled that day. Two people were set free, not just one.

We can't leave this story of Joshua and Caleb and the other ten spies who were in Canaan without discussing this one more thing. Let's go back to Numbers 14. Remember, this was the first time they were at their Promised Land.

There was definitely a battle going on there between those that lined up with the flesh and those that lined up with the Spirit. In chapter 14 you'll see what happens when people fail to walk in the Spirit. The report of the enemy will cause you to weep. Numbers 14:1 tells us, "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night." The report of the flesh, without God, will cause mourning, murmuring, doubt and fear. Verse 2 tells us, "And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God we had died in this wilderness." Walking in the flesh will cause us to run back to bondage instead of pressing on in the Spirit to victory. Verse 3 tells us, "And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" Most of all it will cause strife. We read about this in verse 10, "But all the congregation bade stone them with stones...." It will bring God's displeasure. We read this in verse 12, "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." Walking in the flesh refusing to obey God will also ultimately end in God's judgment.

I heard once about a church that split. They had a beautiful church building. I don't know exactly what caused the split, but something caused them to break into two totally separate congregations that wouldn't even stay in the same church building. When they split into, neither side could afford to continue to make the payment on that beautiful building. Both sides had to move out to two buildings. These little churches were almost across the road from one another. Both the factions had moved into little old buildings that weren't big enough to put the whole pews in. When they split up they cut the pews in two so each could have a half of the pews. This is a true story. I can take you to see the two churches. There was definitely a lot of flesh going on in that situation. Flesh will lead to strife. Walking in the Spirit will lead to unity and love in the Holy Ghost. Pastors, how do you keep this strife out? Make sure that the Spirit of God leads you. Make sure that you welcome the Holy Ghost to move

in the midst of your congregation and allow Him to work in your midst. Church members, how do you keep strife from taking over your body, this body of Christ that the Lord has put you in? Get wrapped up, tied up, and tangled up in Jesus. Put priorities in your life where priorities need to be. Get that chip off of your shoulder. Take pride to the altar. Submit to God and to one another in the Lord. When the Lord puts a hold on your tongue to keep you from saying things you shouldn't, don't speak. When you hear about someone who has done something that is hurtful, take it to Jesus, not to the gossip crowd. Find out from Him what to do with it. If He says to take it to Him in prayer, get on your knees. Listen to the Lord. Go with what He says instead of what your neighbor says. Be led of Him. Talk to Him daily. He is the Savior that died for you. Hear His Word above the words of the flesh crowd. Bury yourself and your flesh in His Spirit and His Word. Take down that Bible and find there the answer to your problems. Allow His Word to do a work in you. All of this is part of walking in the Spirit. Why should you do this? Do you care about your church? Do you want it to stay a victorious light to the world? Do you want it stay in unity in love, as Christ has loved each and every one of you? Do you value your family and its relationship with one another? Do you want to have victory in your life? Or do you want to allow strife to creep into your midst, your families and your church? Do you want to find favor with God and walk in His peace? Then you have to walk in the Spirit. Sure it takes an effort, but not near the effort that you will spend when you fail to do so.

Another problem that comes up when one group walks in the Spirit and one in the flesh is spiritual jealousy. The group that isn't experiencing the victory that can be found when walking in the Spirit will strike out at the group that is walking there. We see this all too often in our travels as an evangelistic team. Just prior to my writing this I kept hearing pastors and preachers preach about the problems that spiritual jealousy was causing in churches. I could tell that the Lord was anointing this message to go out to His body as a whole because it was a problem that many churches were having. It is a major problem and it can split a church into. How do we deal with it? How do we fix it?

While I was writing this, the Lord reminded me of something that He showed me while on my way to work one day. There were 2 houses side by side. One houses' shingles were all to pieces. You had to know how that house looked. That roof was terrible. Right next door another man had a house that had a brand new roof. Brand spanking new. Excellent condition. It was definitely a tight roof and a good shelter. Now, I knew both of these men. I knew that the man in the house with the bad roof had plenty of money. He had access to all the materials that he needed to fix his roof. He just wouldn't. He was too caught up in the day-to-day details of life to put a priority where priority was due, and fix his roof. Would you believe it? The guy in this house with the bad roof got an attitude toward the guy with the new roof. He took attitudes like these. "Well, that Mr. New Roof Man just thinks that he is hot because he has that new roof. I am just as good as he is. My roof will do. It is fine. He needn't think that he is better than me." Then he went and sat down in his leaky house and pouted. Sound familiar? Don't we see this all the time? If you are sitting there with a leaky spiritual roof for heaven's sake get up off of your pouting stool and fix it. Then you won't have to be mad at your neighbor because his roof doesn't leak. Go to God instead of coming against your brother or sister. Together you can put on a brand new roof. You have all the materials that you need. Jesus purchased them at Calvary. They are paid for. You have access to the same Holy Ghost and the same spiritual blessings and victories that anyone else has. Claim them and walk in them. Fix your roof.

So what do we need to do with this chapter? I guess an evaluation on whether or not you are walking in the Spirit is called for. Now, I didn't say here a self-evaluation. I don't mean by this a time when we start pointing fingers of condemnation at ourselves. That is not Spirit walking. That is flesh. Matter of fact self-condemnation hinders us from being able to walk in the Spirit. Why? When we evaluate ourselves, what is doing the evaluation? Isn't it flesh? Seek the Lord. Ask Him to show you where you are walking? Go to the One Who knows. That is where walking in the Spirit starts. Your Promised Lands are just in sight. Walk in the Spirit and the Lord will direct your paths.

Chapter 7. *The Holy Ghost*

I mentioned in the last chapter that walking in the Spirit means a lot more today than it did at the time when Joshua and Caleb first walked into the Promised Land. The only way that they could walk in the Spirit was to listen to what God told them through the prophets. They couldn't even have the relationship with God that you can have today. Today, Jesus Himself, through the power of the Holy Ghost, can come in your heart to live. You see, before Calvary, the anointing of God could only rest on certain people for a time or a season. This was because of sin. Because of the Holy nature of God, the Spirit of God could not dwell in a temple filled with sin. We had to receive forgiveness and cleansing before God could dwell in our hearts. Because Jesus died on Calvary to forgive us of our sins, the Holy Ghost can come in to our hearts. Now I am a firm believer that when we are saved we receive a measure of the Holy Ghost. But there is more to receive. There is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost or the filling of the Spirit. How have I come to that conclusion? One-I have studied out the scriptures. We will go over in this chapter many of the scriptures that I studied. Secondly-God Himself revealed to me that it was real and it was for me. When I first heard about it, I went to God and trusted Him to lead me. He led me in understanding about it and led me to receive it. Thirdly-I received it for myself. No one can tell me that it isn't real. When you possess something, you know that it is real. I know what a change it made in my life. I can also say that without the Baptism of the Holy Ghost I would not be here today. It gave me the power that I needed to stand. There is no need for anyone to try to hint that it isn't real. Fourth-I know zillions of other people that possess it. So how can you argue with all of that?

Through the Holy Ghost, an incarnate, eternal, all powerful, all knowing, all encompassing, perfect God can come right into your heart to dwell. You are the temple of the Holy Ghost. You have within you through the Holy Ghost, God Himself birthed in you through His Word because of His Son.

Through the One who gave His life at Calvary. That is powerful. If we can really get hold of that knowledge, it will deliver us from a lot of bondages that the devil has around us. Think about this for a moment. You have in you God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. You have God's Word for that. Now what about those insecurities that bind you? What about that self-condemnation? What about that fear of failure that prevents you from starting a work for God? What about the fear of the devil and his destruction? What about that fear of sickness? What about those circumstances that you can't rise above? What about those people who try to control and bind you? What about that thing that God has told you to do but you don't because you say you can't? What about that scared little child in you that stays huddled up in the corner instead of jumping right in the middle of all God has for you? What about those days when you feel like a certain failure? What about those situations that you just don't have the wisdom to know how to handle? What about those weaknesses that keep pulling you back? Now before you get all bogged down headed in the wrong direction, with this thought in mind, (you have within you God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost), reconsider these questions. Go back and read those questions again. At the risk of seeming very foolish, reread those questions. Are you catching a glimpse of what I am saying? You have the Spirit of God within you. You have Jesus Christ in you through the power of the Holy Ghost and God's Word. What have you to fear? What have you to fear? What have you to fear? That is one of the things accomplished at Calvary.

I want to take a minute or two here to talk about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost again. Now hold on a minute. You may be someone who does not understand what that is all about. You may have even been taught that it isn't real. You may have even been taught that it is a doctrine to fear. It is not something to be scared of. It is just simply God. I understand where you are if these things are true for you. I did not even hear about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost until I was in my 20's. I knew a little about it, but the little I knew was dangerous. If we only know enough about something to cause us to fear it, then the little we know is dangerous. You see, I was saved when I was a young.

In my older teenage days, I rebelled against God and got tangled up in drugs and alcohol, and you name it. By the time I was in my early 20's, I had totally destroyed my life. When I rededicated my heart and life to God, He was my only hope. I needed help and fast. I needed power to withstand my past. I needed the power to stand against the enemy who was trying to destroy me. I needed all I could get. Praise God. When I heard about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost I definitely didn't run away from it. I was hungry to receive anything that I could, and I opened up my arms and ran toward it. If you haven't received the power of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, remember that it is for you. I pray that through these pages you run to it just like I did.

I have put here a chapter from my book, ***Walking in the Spirit***. It is titled "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost". It is help in learning more about walking in the Spirit. Also, I have written a book titled, *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*. All these books can be downloaded for free at www.freechristianonlinebooks.com.

Trying to walk in the Spirit without having the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is like trying to race a hot-rod sports car with a model T engine. You just won't have the power to win the race. I grew up not hearing about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I grew up in an area that had been blinded and bound to think that this gift of the Spirit was not real. I was taught that when you were saved, you got all of God's Spirit that there was. I was taught that after salvation, you had it all. I grew up not knowing a thing at all about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Through a miracle, God brought me into contact with a church that believed in the Baptism of the Spirit. After I received it for myself, no one could tell me that it wasn't real. It was the key that brought me victory over a life that had been bound by sin, drugs, and alcohol. The devil had worked overtime in much of my life to destroy me because he knew that I would one day serve God. Maybe you are going through the same thing. Maybe it seems like every time you try to get up, you get knocked back. You know in your heart that you should walk up-right before God, but every time you take one step forward it seems you get knocked three back. You may be about to give up in defeat. That the devil wants you to do.

It may be that he sees that up ahead, you will bust his little kingdom wide open in some area. You may be sitting there thinking that it is hopeless. That there is no use to keep trying. You won't make it. The devil has you where he wants you. You think it is because you are worthless. It may be because you are getting ready to rise up and be what God has chosen for you to be. It is your choice. If you give up now, you will never know. Maybe the key for you to overcome is the same as it was for me-the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. When I first learned about it, I got it. I grabbed hold and didn't let go. There was none of that intellectual twisting around that a lot of people do. I knew that this was the key for a victorious life and I turned it. Even though I had grown up hearing that it was not right, when it came time for me to accept it, I knew I needed it. That settled that. Don't read about this and talk yourself out of thinking that it is real, and that it is for you. God said it is, so let that be the end of that.

Now over 25 years later, I can say that no wonder the devil tried to keep me blinded. I have been working for God for over 25 years, and will continue to do so. Not in my own power, but in the power of God's Spirit. I had to be hungry enough to submit myself to allow God to do things His way. I had to take Him and His Word at face value. I had to receive the gift that He had for me. I have never regretted it. God will allow His Spirit to control only the things that we allow Him to control. When we say, God, I have decided to do it your way. Come and fill me up to the brim. Then we are ready for the Baptism of God's Spirit. He fills us up all the way with His Spirit. That is what the Baptism of God's Spirit is all about. Here is what God has to say about it in His Word. We first read about it in Acts Chapter 2. Here we read that the disciples were all gathered in one mind and accord. In verse 4 it tells us, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." What was the outcome of this? These few who were hiding in fear after the crucifixion, became bold enough and so full of God's Spirit that they turned the world upside down. Without the Baptism, they would not have endured to start the church, and keep the Gospel that was committed to us today. Verse 41 tells of the outcome of that day.

“Then they that gladly received His word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” This didn’t stop here. We read about this throughout Acts. In Chapter 8, verses 14-17, these men received the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In Chapter 10, verses 44-48, the Holy Ghost is again on the scene filling the Gentiles. In Acts 19: 1-6, these men also received the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they had believed. These men were already saved, but they had something in addition to salvation that they were about to receive. They answered, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” In verse 6 the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. I think of myself when I read their answer to Paul, “We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.” I hadn’t heard, but God found me anyway. How do you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost? I was blessed to find a church that believed this way. The congregation laid hands on me and prayed for me in the same way that Paul laid hands on the men in Acts 19:6. But I still didn’t receive it that night that they prayed. Several nights later, when I was by myself, the Holy Ghost fell on me and I was filled. I prayed in tongues for the first time that night. You can receive it through the prayers of others, or you can receive it through your own prayers. More often than not, though it comes through the prayers of God’s people at church.

It is a gift of God that He has given us to empower us against the battle of satan. It is a gift that gives us boldness in our witness, like it did those on that first day. It is for you. I have heard many people argue against the Baptism of the Holy Ghost being real. They argue that it is not for us today. When I hear this I know several things about those people. I know that they are ignorant of God’s Word. In Acts 2:38-39 we read, “Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” I would say that means us too. I hear people argue that the Baptism is not for us today.

When I hear this I know that these people do not know God. I know that He wants the best for His children. He wants us to overcome and be victorious. I also know that we live in the last days, which has to be one of the hardest times to live on the earth. Why would God give a gift to help the early disciples, tell us about it, and then deny us the right to have it or make it so that it is not available to us who need it the most? That is not the God I know.

I think that one of the things that hinders people in receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is that it comes along with the gift of speaking in tongues. For many, that is a stumbling block. This is because the devil wants to scare people away from our being able to pray in the Spirit, or pray in tongues. What it means when we pray in tongues is that the Spirit of God prays through us in His own language. He is praying directly through us using our vocal chords. We may not understand what He is saying, though sometimes He will allow us or others to interpret. Whether or not we understand, the devil knows when we start praying that something is being done to bind him and to loose the power of God on the scene. No wonder he works overtime to confuse people about this powerful gift. Have you ever wanted so badly to pray for someone but didn't know how to pray? All you could do was to say a general half way prayer, when you know you needed to do more. The Holy Ghost knows exactly how to pray in God's perfect will. When He prays through you that is a powerful prayer that will get the job done. Also, when we pray in the Holy Ghost it strengthens our inner man, Who is the Spirit of God in us. (Jude 20, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." When we are filled and consumed with the Spirit of God, and we allow Him to pray in us, we are submitted to His Spirit in a way that nothing else can do. We strengthen His Spirit in us. We submit our flesh and our flesh man takes second place in our life. With all that going on our flesh doesn't stand a chance. God's Spirit rises strong in us and we take on His likeness.

Now you may interrupt me here to say, what about the people who receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and wind up turning their back on God, or they sin in a big way.

What about those people who take on a life of sin instead of a life with God? Just because you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost it doesn't make you perfect. You still have your flesh man. If you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost is still not allowed to control your life, then flesh will. That is why it is important to allow the Holy Ghost to move in you. Pray in the Holy Ghost daily. Don't hinder the Spirit of God when He starts to move in or through you, whether it is in church or at home. Allow God's Spirit to control. Then He will be there when you need Him. One of the greatest stories I have ever heard about the power in the prayer of the Holy Ghost is this. The Holy Ghost moved on a man and began interceding through him. The man had no idea why, but he obeyed and yielded. God spoke to him to take note at what time this had happened. The next day he heard about a close friend who had been stabbed. That had happened at exactly the time that the man had prayed. The other man's life had been miraculously spared. Another time I heard about a man on a plane who had interceded through the Holy Ghost. After they landed, they were told of a mechanical failure that had nearly caused them to crash, but miraculously the failure had corrected itself. The man who had prayed had no idea, but God knew. Thousands of times I have heard stories about how the Holy Ghost had interceded by speaking in tongues through those who had the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The situation was corrected, the life was saved, the soul was saved, the person was delivered, or whatever need there was, it was met. There is no prayer that is more powerful than the prayer of the Holy Ghost Himself.

If you do not have the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, ask God for this. Seek it. The Bible says that when we seek God, or His gifts, we will find them. Who says so? Jesus. Luke 11:9, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Read this section of scripture through verse 13. In verse 13 we read, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

If you haven't received the Baptism, ask for it.

It is a gift, and it is for you. If you have received it, realize that just receiving the Holy Ghost doesn't mean that you have arrived. We still have to day-to-day walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. We have to let the Holy Ghost rule and reign in our life daily. We have to walk in the Spirit to find the victory that God has promised us. We have to walk in the Spirit, as we talked about in the last chapter, to be able to go in and possess our land.

Chapter 8.

Detoured

I talked with someone who was an elderly person who had a lot of health problems. Because of this she had quit going to church and hadn't been in several years. She had allowed her health problems to detour her away from God. Now, true, church isn't everything. Yes, I agree with those people who use this scripture as an excuse not to go to church. You can have a relationship with God and not go to church. But we have to go back to the scripture that tells us in Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." If it weren't important to go to church, God wouldn't have spent chapter after chapter and verse on verse establishing the church in His Word. God wouldn't call the church the body of Christ. He wouldn't have set up its structure and established it. He wouldn't have commanded us to attend in His Word. Yes, I agree that there are some churches that are hard to attend. When you leave, you wonder why you went. So many churches have forsaken God. They have drawn away from the reason that they are supposed to exist in the first place. They no longer let the Spirit of God fill their midst. They no longer preach the fullness of God's Word under the power of the anointing of God. The Spirit of God no longer convicts and delivers. It no longer heals. The people are rocked to spiritual sleep in a state of compromise, and no longer even realize what they are missing. If this is how your church is, you need to get out of it before you too fall asleep? First though, ask God to lead you to a church. Find a church where people worship in the beauty of holiness. Find a church where the Spirit of God flows. Where Jesus is lifted up and He is Lord. Where flesh doesn't rule the pulpit or the congregation. Now, this doesn't mean that you are to stop going to church all together because you can't find one that is that way. Stay where you are until God leads you where you should go. He knows just the right church for you. Walk in the Spirit.

Let's get back to the woman we were talking about.

The one at the beginning of this chapter. Because of her health problems she had gotten detoured from church. She had gotten detoured from obeying God. For several years she hadn't put God as a number one priority in her life. She could not possess her land. She was being just like the children of Israel the first time around. She was on oxygen, continually having to take it with her everywhere she went. Even then she stayed out of breath and could barely go. Her grandchildren were at our Christian School. She would bring them in, and she was barely able to have enough breath to talk. Well, one day there was a change. When she came in, I could tell just by looking at her that something had happened. Her whole color had changed. Her oxygen wasn't there. She no longer panted for breath. Her eyes had a light in them that I hadn't seen there before. What had happened? She had made up her mind that weekend that she was getting back to church. The Lord had been dealing with her heart that she needed to start back. I knew that had been a struggle for her to go back. She went on anyway. She went to a Holy Ghost filled service that let God move. The congregation and the pastor walked in the Spirit that day. She went to a church where the Saints of God believed in healing and knew how to pray through. God moved and healed her. I am writing this several months after this happened and she is still the picture of health. She stopped letting the devil detour her and she got on the road of obedience. God honored her obedience. He heard her prayer. She was in the right place at the right time with the right people. She was and is healed. She turned her detoured situation around into victory. She stopped wandering in the desert and went on home.

I have a friend that several years ago got detoured. It started when she got a job that required her to work on most Sundays. Little by little it stopped her from going to church. Then it stopped being a priority for her to go at all. She became involved in something else that took what little time that she had left. She began focusing on volunteering for the local rescue squad. That became her focus. That became the center of her life-that and her work. I would see her and ask her where she'd been. We hadn't seen her at church. She looked at me with a

funny look. A look that said, “Hey, it’s not been that long since I was there. Was it?” When she left doing it God’s way, she really didn’t know. Several years later I happened to run into her. She began telling me that she had gotten into a new crowd with the things that she had started doing. She had gotten into drugs, drinking, and partying. These were things that she had been involved with before she started going to church. Her life had gotten so out of focus that she’d gone backwards instead of forward. That is what happens. She hadn’t realized what was happening until things got really bad. Then one day, she came to herself. Reality dawned. She changed her life around and her focus. God again became a priority. Not long ago, I saw her. She had married and had a beautiful little girl. Her life had totally turned around. The devil had detoured her, but she had found her way back to her Promised Land.

I talked to a mother of a teenager who had enrolled in our Christian School. Part of our program works with at risk young people. The world today labels them as at risk. This young lady was definitely at risk. She wound up spending some time in a hospital because of cutting herself. I was counseling her and her mother one day. The Holy Ghost came on the scene. The Lord led me to tell the mother that she had been detoured. I had no way of knowing this in the natural, but the Lord began to show me this. Her mother had grown up in a Holy Ghost filled church. She had turned away from God. She was far from home, far from her Promised Land. She had been detoured for many years. That was in part what was wrong with her daughter. When I told her this, the Holy Ghost fell on her and she started weeping. God told her to come home to her Promised Land. Then she started shrugging it off. I asked her if she wanted to pray with me to rededicate her heart back to the Lord so He could redirect her life. She got in a hurry and had to go. She didn’t want to give up and let God take over. I don’t know what the thing was in her life that she wanted to hold on to. Whatever it was, I pray that it doesn’t cost her having to spend eternity in hell. Whatever it was, it surely wasn’t worth it. I pray that I don’t one day hear about a tragedy in her household. Did this change in her come all at once? Was it even an overnight change for her?

Did she jump from being an obedient child of God one day to being far from God the next day? No. These things happen day-to-day, step-by-step. We get detoured step by step. We often don't realize it until a tragedy happens that wakes us up.

I have talked to many down through the years that have been detoured by failure or the fear of failure. Some of the most gifted singers that I know won't stand on a platform and sing in front of people because they are afraid of messing up. Many speakers that have a gift to talk right to the hearts of the people will never speak because they are afraid of saying the wrong thing. Some of the best counselors that God could use will never know that joy. They are too afraid of not knowing what to say. For all of these the fear of failure has stolen from them the joy of victory. Because they are afraid they can't, they never will. Some of the saddest people that I know are pastors who have no congregation. They were afraid to step out in the ministry and obey God. If they would have, God would have enabled them to. I remember a time when God was telling me to do a particular thing. My first reaction to this was to turn around and run in fear. I told God that I couldn't do what He was telling me to do. I will never forget His answer to me. He said, "I spoke and made the heavens and the earth. When I tell you that you can, then you will be able to." There was no more room for doubt. There was no room for argument. You know what. I dared to try and God did His part. I was able to do what He told me to do. Been doing it now for over 15 years. It didn't have a lot to do with what I thought that I could do in the natural. I had to get out of the natural, out of the flesh, and into the Spirit and take God at His Word. He said I could, and I did. I had to try. I had to rebuke that fear of failure that threatened to swallow me. That was a feeling that the devil had sent to detour me. I had to get up out of my comfort zone and try.

That is another thing that stops a lot of people from possessing their Promised Land. They don't want to get uncomfortable. They don't want to get tired by putting out a little extra effort. They want a 9 to 5 existence with the rest of their time spent with their feet up. If you will get out of your comfort zone, and let God use you, it is guaranteed that He will.

If God has told you to go, then go. If God has told you to do, then do. If God has told you to speak, then speak. If God has told you to witness, then witness. If God has told you to sing, then sing. If God has told you to counsel, then counsel. Go and possess your land. Take Him by the hand. Listen to His voice, not the voices of the doubters. Sure you'll have spies around you just like Joshua and Caleb had around them. Listen to the report of the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit and forget your flesh. Go and God will go with you.

We have covered this next point already and I am sure that we will cover it a lot more. We can't do things in the flesh and make them work. Neither can we look at ourselves through the eyes of the flesh and stop trying because in the natural we don't have what it takes to get the job done. In the natural you don't have what it takes, and you will never be able to do the things that the Lord tells you to do. So just don't even bother to go there. Get your eyes off of the flesh and get them on Jesus. Get them on the Holy Ghost of God within you. If God says you can, then you can. He'll give you the gifts that you need to do it. He will make the time and place happen if you'll listen and obey Him. He will use you. What kinds of people will God use? Read here to find out who God is looking for. This is in I Corinthians 1:27-31, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." God isn't looking for perfect people to use. If He were, He would never find anybody to get the job done. He is looking for the willing. He is looking for those who will yield to His Spirit so that He can flow through them. He is looking for those that say, "Lord I can't. But I know that you can move through me. I yield to you. Use me." He is looking for those like Paul that say, I am weak. Please God come and be strong in me.

“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”, II Corinthians 12:9-10. We don’t have to have faith in ourselves to be able to obey God. We have to have faith in the One who is in us through the power of the Holy Ghost. God can use you in your weakness. Let go and let God. Go and possess your land. Don’t let your weakness or the fear of failure cause you to be detoured. You may fail. Failure can’t stop you. If you allow it to failure can be a great teacher. However, if you allow it to, failure can stop you. The devil will say that you’ve messed up. You can’t do it. Just quit. Anybody who hasn’t failed hasn’t done a whole lot. Let your failures increase your drive to do it better the next time around. Give your failures to the Lord. He will use them. He can use failure a lot more than He can use nothing. In other words, if you allow the failure to stop you because you become afraid to try again, God can’t use that at all. But if you try again even if you make a mistake, God can take that mistake and turn it into a miracle. Don’t let your failures stop you from possessing your land. The children of Israel might never have stood at Canaan’s shore if they had allowed the first time around to cause them to fear that they might fail too.

Here are a few more examples of detours. I have known so many young and old people that started dating someone who wasn’t a Christian. Their thinking in doing this was, “I can change them. Maybe God has put me in their life to make a difference to them.” That wasn’t what happened. The Bible says not to be unequally yoked. II Corinthians 6:14 tells us, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?” God is wise. When someone becomes emotionally involved with someone who is traveling in a different direction it is too easy to get detoured. If we aren’t careful we will let others around us detour us. Husbands, be very careful if you have an unsaved wife.

Wife, be careful if you have an unsaved husband. Don't let your priorities slide because of others in your household who are not traveling in your direction. Don't be detoured. Hold onto God. Walk in the Spirit. That is the hope that you have of one day being able to walk together in the Lord with your husband, or wife.

Some of the most miserable preachers that I have ever known were preachers who "drove up a stake". They went so far in their obedience and walk with God. They went so far in their ministry. Then instead of going on when the going got rough they put on the brakes. They began to settle for a comfort zone. They stopped pressing on in obedience. Their relationship with the Lord faded. The Holy Ghost stopped anointing them and working in the midst of their meetings or congregations. The devil brought in a "seem right" way to detour them. Maybe these preachers settled for a big salary and a big congregation instead of obeying God and telling the truth to the people under the power of God's anointing. Maybe they settled for not wanting to offend someone instead of allowing the Holy Ghost conviction to move in their services. For example, I knew two men who were evangelists. They married sisters. Both men at one time had powerful anointed ministries. The one man got tired of traveling and being an evangelist. It was rough out there. Money was always tight. Things were a struggle. He settled for an easier way of life. He was tired of trying to raise funds to keep going on the road. He started wanting a big salary with lots of benefits. He began to focus on other things besides the vision that God had given them. He began to be disobedient day-to-day finding an easier road. His relationship with God no longer was keen. His anointing began to fade. He was a Pentecostal, Holy Ghost filled up, anointed preacher at one time. He settled for a job as a pastor of a big church with a big salary and benefits. This church did not believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. He compromised and no longer teaches about this, or about the power of God. He no longer teaches about the gifts of the Spirit. It was not surprising that we began to hear about his health problems that have eventually left him an invalid. I wonder if he had not allowed himself to get detoured, he probably would have been healed in

those Holy Ghost filled services that he used to be a part of. One step at a time, he had become detoured.

Now remember, when I started this illustration I mentioned two preachers. What about the other preacher that I mentioned? He, too, has been through rough financial times. Most of his ministry has been fought by the devil making day-to-day tasks a struggle. He has not wavered or detoured. He has put all of his time and energy in forwarding the vision that God entrusted to him. He has preached for over 35 years and his message hasn't changed, watered down, or compromised. During that time I have watched the Lord take his ministry around the world. And they are only starting. Look at how different these brothers were. One allowed the battle of the devil, his own flesh, and the world as a whole to turn him and detour him. The other allowed the battle of the devil to fire him up, and refine him so that he stayed on track. Some of the saddest, most bitter people that I know are preachers who allowed themselves to be detoured. They no longer follow God in a close relationship. They eventually wind up being used by the devil to try to destroy other ministries. Sad to say that is what happened between these two brothers-in-law. For the last several years, the brother who lacks the victory has been coming against the ministry of the brother who has the victory. Sounds a lot like Cain and Able, doesn't it?

The children of Israel were detoured that first time around. They were detoured by their flesh. They were detoured by murmuring and complaining. They were detoured by lack of faith. They were detoured, but unlike some of the people that I have mentioned in this chapter, they never found their way to their Promised Land. They died in the desert. Every day I see people who are doing the same. Something comes in their life to detour them. It may be something that replaces God as number one. They no longer have time to obey God or spend time with Him to know which direction they should take. It may be someone who takes the place of Jesus, someone who becomes number one. It may be that they just get lazy in the flesh and quit trying. For some, the battle of the devil backs them up and causes them to compromise. Most of them have no idea that they are being detoured. If they were taking time to talk to Jesus, He would

show them. He would be able to open up their eyes to see. If they were allowing the Holy Ghost to convict them, they would know. They have gradually begun to shove away conviction as they go about steadfastly going in the opposite direction to their Promised Land. Yes, they are Christians. They are children of God. But they are far from the Promised Land. They are far away from the victory that the Lord has for them.

Another detour that the devil throws us is the world. The Bible tells us about treasures in Matthew 6:21-23, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye, if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” If we love other things more than we love God, then whether we mean to or not, those things will replace the Lord as number one in our lives. We have to keep our treasure in heaven. We have to focus on the things of God. We have to be single in eye, focusing on the things that matter. When we get tangled up in this world, then it will detour us from our Promised Land and the victory in God that we will find there.

I mentioned before about how the world can detour us so easily. What are we talking about when we say that? Galatians 6:14 tells us, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Let me explain what I mean when I say the world. Down through the years I have watched those people whose priorities were in line with God’s Word. I have watched those whose commitments were solid and sound, those whose relationship with the Lord showed by the fruits that were in their lives. I have watched those whose feet were firmly planted in the truth of God’s Word. Of all those people, there were not many, if any, who had not come out from the world and become a separated people. Now what do I mean here? The Bible has this to say about the world. Of course there is the physical world, the earth and everything in it. But when the scripture talks about the world, it often means more than just that. Here are some verses that tell about characteristics of this world.

Mark 8:35-37 tells us, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; But whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel’s the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” This bears out that we can’t keep the world and keep our soul. Mark 4:18-19 tells us, “And these are they which are sown among thorns: such as hear the Word. And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful.” This bears out that the world can choke out the Word from us. John 8:23 tells us, “And He said unto them, Ye are from beneath: I am from above, ye are of this world; I am not of this world.” This bears out that Jesus is not from this world. John 14:30 tells us, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” This bears out that the prince of this world is not Jesus. So if we become engulfed in the things of this world, then we will not have Jesus as our Lord. John 15:19 tells us, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” This tells us that if the world loves us, then we are not serving God for real. John 16:33 tells us, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulations: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” This tells us how we can overcome the world. Because Jesus has overcome the world. Here are more scriptures about the world. Romans 12:2, “And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that it may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” I Corinthians 2:6, “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought.” Galatians 1:4, “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” James 1:27, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” This last verse sums up what we’re saying. I John 2:15-17,

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

We can see through all of these scriptures that the world and God’s ways are totally separate. We can see that the world can bring destruction if we become entangled in it. We can see that satan rules this world. We can see that we are to come out of the world, be separate. We can see that it is very important to get a clear understanding of just what the Word of God means when it says, “the world”. This world can only detour us from being able to inherit our Promised Land.

Here is an illustration that will help to understand this. I praise God for Godly grandparents. They taught me what it means to come out from the world and be a separate people. They lived on a farm up in a hollow in the hills of southwest Virginia. They lived a quiet life and a very peaceful one. They weren’t caught up in the pride of life. They weren’t caught up in the ideas and thinking of everyone else. They weren’t trying to be like everyone else, or have the things that everyone else had. They weren’t trying to be popular. They were just serving the Lord with all their hearts. The things that they had were only the things that they needed. My grandfather farmed and my grandmother was right by his side. They worked hard but at the same time they had plenty of time for fun and family. Their favorite pastime and recreation was going to church. They loved to go to church. They traveled everywhere they could to be in services. One of their main activities of the day was prayer. I remember as a child that we would always without fail close our day with prayer and devotion time reading together and studying God’s Word. Now as a young person, I rolled my eyes at this but no matter. We were gathered in for devotions whether we liked it or not and we really knew better than to say a thing about it. My grandparents didn’t own a TV set. It had gone out many years earlier. My grandparents didn’t have it fixed for several years. When they did, they saw that the programs had started showing

people drinking and smoking. They didn't like to watch that. So they put the TV back up and never did get it back out. The main source of entertainment was the big piano. We'd gather around and sing for hours. There was never anything played there or sung but Gospel music. They had a radio, but it always stayed tuned to Gospel stations. For more than 50 years, the only sounds that came from that house was the sound of good Gospel music, and the sound of prayer and praise, and singing to the Lord. When I think about what it means to come out from the world and be a separate people, I catch a glimpse of my grandparents. It's a glimpse that guides me today in making the choices of my life. It is a glimpse that causes me to focus on the world to come, and not on the bondages of this present world.

As a contrast, I have watched the lives of many people today. Not only people outside the church, but also many inside the church as well. Sad to say, but even in the church you find more of the world than you find the Spirit of God. The pride of life is one of the bondages of this world. I have known people who wanted more and were never satisfied with what they had. If they thought it was stylish to own something, then they would go and buy it, no matter how deep in debt they were. If they thought that it left an impression on other people if they had or did this or that thing, then they would go after it. These people are never satisfied. Their mind is constantly in what they have or want. Their lives are focused on this world, and not on the things of God. They go where the rest of the world goes, talk like the rest of the world talks, do what they do. They talk that talk and walk that walk no matter how funky it is. They have to be fashionable and up to date in their thinking no matter how against the Word of God that thinking is. They frown on and look down on those that aren't like they are and they control the popularity of others by this. These people are usually stressed out from running here and there because they lack a genuine focus for their lives. The world is cruel. Since they aren't focused on God and the things of God, the world gobbles them up. They are usually a nervous wreck, broken hearted, insecure mess. They have no real security because without God as their number one focus, they have no security. They lack peace and contentment that only comes when

Christ is number one. Usually they are on all kinds of pills. They take medication because they are nervous, or depressed, or chemically out of balance. They have no idea that their problem is that they are out of balance themselves. Now I want to make a point here. I am not talking about sinners. Matter of fact there are many people who meet this description that sit on the pews of the church every Sunday. Maybe I have even been discussing you.

The Word of God says to come out from among them and be a separate people. God knows what He is talking about. II Corinthians 6:17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord..." God knows what He is talking about. My grandparents had truly come out from the world and become a separate people. If my grandmother would have come in all shaken up, popping pills we would have thought surely the world was coming to an end. They had a peace that was a light to me even now years after they have gone on to be with the Lord. They weren't caught up in the thinking of this world but in the ways of the Lord. They passed on those ways to us. We have passed them on to our children.

Now on the extreme end from those who are caught up in the world, there is another group of people that are holy in their own eyes. They walk in a rigid life that is made up of legal laws that they live by. These people say that it is a sin to wear pants, wear makeup, wear jewelry, cut your hair and do a whole list of things. Many of them believe it is a sin to own a TV. Many of them say that if you break these rules then you cannot go to heaven. If that is true then why did Jesus die? We could have earned eternal life by keeping these rules. My grandparents didn't live the way that they lived because they were keeping to those self righteous man made rules that others had set up for them. They chose that way of life simply because it was how they were in their hearts. They lived what they were. No rules were needed to make them be that way. Matter of fact, the church that they attended regularly didn't even have those rules. Nobody was there to tell them that if they didn't do these things they were on their way to hell. They chose to do these things and they did them out of a genuine experience with God.

When someone comes along and makes rigid rules and people keep these because they are afraid not to, then all you have is a man made mess. This kind of stuff comes because people do not have a genuine committed submitted relationship to God but they have a relationship with the people who have set up these rules and they are afraid to break them. That isn't a heart-felt commitment at all. God is not anywhere near this mess. These people often have a shallow experience with God and more of an experience with what other people think of them. This often leads to rebellion. Self is not crucified but squashed down in and bound up. When you do that one of these days it is going to spring up, and when it does it will be ugly.

Let's go from here to another extreme. The world has crept into the church in the form of many doctrines and ideas. One of those doctrines says, "We don't want to make people uncomfortable. Let's not bring up what is right and what is wrong. We want the people to know God's love, so let's not bring up any truth that is definite. Let's just stay in the gray areas, and then people will come back to church." Sound familiar? We took the altar out of many services. Sad to say when we took on this way of thinking, the Holy Ghost left our services and we didn't even realize that He was gone. Church began to be a social experience instead of a spiritual one. We stopped going by God's Word. We stopped obeying Him and letting His Holy Ghost guide us in services. Since God's Word and Holy Ghost were gone from our services, then it quickly became a thing of the past that we no longer had for our personal day-to-day lives. Then our children came along and grew up in this. Do you know that I have known many young people who honestly did not know that it was a sin to have extramarital sex? They really do not know right from wrong. Everything is gray to them. No wonder they live in such a violent world that is full of such turmoil. They have no handlebars, nothing to steady them. They lack guidance and the purpose that it gives. They don't even know that there is a way that is separate. They have certainly allowed the world to detour them.

Our town has a section of highway that is actually five roads together for a distance. If someone is traveling on route

100, it is the same as highway 52 and 58, and two other roads. There for a while everybody is going in the same direction on the same road. But if the person traveling 100 doesn't stay on 100, they won't get home. If they get off on the wrong road, and this happens a lot through that section of road, they don't reach the right destination. They may be traveling toward the coast and wind up in West Virginia. If they don't find their way back to the right road, go back to where they got detoured, then they may never make it home. If you read this chapter and it helps you to realize that you have been detoured, then it is time to find that right road. The best way to do that is to go back to the place where you got off on the wrong road. Go back to the place where you first got detoured. Then get back on that right road. God can help you to get back there. Then start again. Don't be afraid of failure so that you don't start over again. How can you even reach your Promised Land if you stop? The children of Israel, the first time around, missed their Promised Land. They kept going. Their children inherited the land because they were persistent on their journey, even after they had a detour. In your life, both you and your children can possess the Promised Land. Go and possess your land.

Chapter 9.

Prosperity Land

I wonder if there were any “prosperity land” teachers that taught the children of Israel as they crossed the desert. You know, the ones that teach that if you have a battle, then something is wrong with your Christian walk. If you don’t drive a Mercedes, then something is wrong with your faith. If the devil is fighting you, then you must be disobedient in your ministry, or you wouldn’t have that fight. If you are struggling in your spirit then you must not be walking in the Spirit. If you aren’t in the cozy la-la never land of warm and fuzzy feelings, then God isn’t real to you. You know those kinds of teachers and preachers that teach that there is a “prosperity land”, a fairy like land that is far removed from reality. Now bear with me here and hear me out. Read this whole chapter and then make up your mind what you think about what I am saying here.

I am not saying that the Bible tells us that this was going on there as Israel crossed the desert. But knowing human nature and flesh, you can well think that there was. Human nature and flesh want to hear that kind of preaching. The kind that makes things easy. The kind that takes out the commitment. When Jesus said take up your cross, I don’t think that is the kind of preaching that he had in mind. Then the children of Israel came to the reality of Canaan. It was a fair land. It was a prosperous land. Yes, the grapes clusters took two men to carry. It was promised to them. But there was a problem. There were giants. They would have to fight a battle to be able to inherit this Promised Land. Where was their faith that had been tried in the fire of battle? Where was their trust in the Lord who had seen them through the storms in the desert? Where was that forehead like flint and back bone like a crowbar that would cause them to be able to go on through whatever came against them? Where was that faith that came from standing on the rock no matter what the circumstances were that came against them? They had not allowed themselves to go through God’s furnace to be tried like gold. They were a spoiled people, people who griped and murmured. When the bread of heaven fell, they complained.

They griped that there wasn't any meat. They griped and murmured until Moses was so vexed with them that he lost his temper and lost his right to enter the Promised Land. They griped and complained until God repented that He had ever led them out of Egypt. They were spoiled. They had no backbone. They had little faith. When they saw the giants, it was time to go back to Egypt. Who wanted to stay and fight them? Only two. It wasn't worth it. They thought it was all going to be easy. This wasn't what they had bargained for or talked about while they crossed the desert. "Oh, it will be a beautiful place. There will be no battles. God has promised us this perfect land. We won't have to struggle. We won't have to face problems. God has it in the palm of His hand to give it to us, His special children. It will be perfect." Then the reality came. The giants came. The knowledge of war with the enemy came. This was too much. They wanted to run.

We have to walk in reality as children of God to be able to possess our Promised Land. We can't confuse our Promised Land with "prosperity land". Promised Lands often come because we have obeyed God and sacrificed. Promised Lands often come because we have fought the devil and everything else, and overcome. Promised Lands often come because we have stood the test and came out tried and true. They come because we have stood and not wavered, or compromised. This is not the same as the "prosperity lands" where people teach us all we have to do to get there is say that we are there. Name it and claim it. It isn't always that easy. Our Promised Land will often come with a price. Most precious things do. The more we pay for it the more worth it has to us.

I heard a "prosperity land" preacher preaching that the reason that people criticized his message was because they were jealous because they didn't have it as easy as he did. He went on to talk about his private jet and how he flew around in his ministry. He talked about how if preachers don't have a jet like his, then there is something wrong with their faith, and he berated them for this. He talked about how we could easily, without price, prosper in God. Everybody wants to hear that kind of message. He packs the house out everywhere he goes.

Sure it sounds good. But is it God's Word? Doesn't it set the children of God up to be defeated easily? Doesn't it cause us to run when we see the giants in our land, and there will be giants? We have an enemy of God who will try to stop God's work and God's children. When we are taught to think that everything is easy, then young and old Christians can fall into condemnation so easily. When the devil begins to fight, and he will, they think that there is something wrong in their experience. After all, they have been taught that Christianity means instant blessings and prosperity. The devil uses this hole in the wall that comes in their faith to move in and destroy them with condemnation. They haven't been taught how to take authority over the enemy and how to stand against him. This is because they haven't been taught that there even is an adversary. They don't have the stamina to withstand the enemy because their strength hasn't been built up by withstanding him. Their faith is weak. Often faith that hasn't been tried in the fire is weak. When we have been through the battles and struggles and God has held our hand and brought us out on top of the mountain, we know that God is God. When we know that we know that we know that we can put our trust in Him, we can overcome. We don't hesitate the next time that we have to use faith to obey Him. But when we are taught that the battle comes because there is something wrong in our experience, then the battle only brings defeat. Our hope is lost before we start. You will have battles. You will have storms. God is faithful to deliver us out of them all. He will even use the battles to work things out for your good. All things work out for the good of those who love the Lord and who are called according to His purpose. I have seen some of the worst situations, the worst battles, the worst trials turn out to work so much good in people's lives, that they actually turned around and praised God for the battle. I'm not talking about easy things here either that they went through, but things that would otherwise have brought about devastation in their lives. It is the battle that will make you strong. It is the trials that will test and try and prove your faith so that it can stand in the face of the enemy.

What if God really let us live in "prosperity land", a perfect world where we got everything we prayed for?

A perfect world where there were no trials and battles. When we could name and claim all we wanted. Where we should only expect to live richly. I want to answer that with an illustration. Many years ago (more than I care to name because I might tell my age), I taught a kindergarten class. One year I had two cousins in my class. They were the same age. Their dads were brothers. Those brothers, their dads, were very different. One was a laborer. He worked in a factory. He farmed on the side. He had a bunch of kids. I think about 5. They were always working really hard just to make ends meet. They had a lot of struggles and knew what it meant to overcome. Their little boy that I had in kindergarten was a hard worker. He was tough. He was a fighter. He tried hard and succeeded even when he was that little. His cousin that was in my class was a different story. He was so spoiled. He was one whiny child, always complaining. Always murmuring. He never tried to the fullness of his potential. If it was a little hard, he didn't even bother to put forth any effort. He expected it to be easily given to him. If it wasn't, then he would get mad and pout. What had made the difference between these two little fellows? This boy's dad had a good paying management job. He became fairly well to do. This little boy was their only son. From the time that this little boy was born, he got everything, every time that he wanted it. He never had to go through a struggle; everything was taken care of for him. He never saw his family go through anything because he was sheltered and protected. He didn't even know what it meant to overcome because he was never even allowed to have a battle. Well, I watched these two little boys grow up. I don't have to tell you which one succeeded in life. I don't have to tell you which one became an overcomer? If God never allowed us to have a battle or face a trial wouldn't we become a lot like that second little boy? Would we be able to withstand the enemy when he came against us? Would we be able to overcome the world and the mess it brings against us? Would we be able to rise up above the people around us that aren't serving God to go ahead and obey? Would we have that tried in fire like gold will to obey God? What about our love? Think of the spoiled children that you have known in your life. Children like that second boy.

How much do those children love and cherish their parents? When I go through a battle that very nearly tears my toe nails right out of their sockets, then God comes in and moves on my behalf. It is then that I love Him so much more than I did the day before. I wonder how much that second little boy really loved his parents and knew that they loved him. He expected things. He demanded things. He got things. There was no sacrifice in their love to him. Love became easy, watered down. That first little boy knew his parents loved him. When they all struggled together to make it, he knew that his parents loved him. He knew their love and loved them back. He appreciated what he got because it wasn't cheap. It came with a price. Aren't we sometimes prone to be the same way? Isn't it human nature to fall into being a spoiled person demanding things and not respecting the love in the eyes of the giver? What would we be like if we never had a battle?

I was listening to a "prosperity land" preacher. The same one that I mentioned earlier in this chapter. The one who was bragging about his jet. Everybody wants to hear that God is a God that instantly rewards us. A message that tickles our ears. We don't want to hear a message that teaches commitment. Flesh doesn't want to be told that the right road isn't always easy. We don't want to hear that flesh has to die and that the Spirit of God has to rule. Flesh doesn't want to hear that it has to obey God at a sacrifice. Flesh doesn't want to hear that there are giants out there. Flesh wants to go back to Egypt when the going gets rough. Most people are walking in the flesh. They flock to hear a flesh centered message. They come to hear these preachers by the thousands. They give thousands. The preacher buys his jets with his thousands. Then he tells them that there is something wrong with their faith if they don't have the prosperity he has. What is wrong with that picture? Did that man really have faith or did he have a gimmick that he used to raise money? Did that man have a tried and true obedient relationship with God? Was he giving the people the message that God had given him to give to His children? Was he leading them like a true shepherd?

I heard a message that told the testimonies of two people. One was a businessman. He asked God to prosper him.

God heard his prayer and richly prospered him. He had everything that he wanted. His family prospered. His wife and children were blessed. He praised God for the things that God had given him. Then I heard the testimony of a Chinese college professor who had taught during the communist reign. He had openly confessed his faith in God. He was imprisoned for five years. During that time he was beaten and his back was broken. When he got out of prison, he found that things were hard. He found that his wife and children had left him. Because he had been in prison, he couldn't find any work as a professor. He was forced to do a job that required hard labor. He lived in constant pain from the injuries he had while in prison. Through it all his faith and trust in God never wavered. He praised God for who God was. He praised God for His love and his grace toward him. He knew God. All he had was God, and he walked with Him. How did the story end? I don't know. God may have raised the professor up from his poverty and richly blessed him. But you know, Lazarus remained a beggar all of his life. Remember his story. When Lazarus was being carried up in Abraham's bosom do you think that he even felt one bit of anger at the poverty that he left behind? Which one of these men, the businessman or the professor, had the deeper walk in his relationship with the Lord? Which one do you think touched God's heart the most? Which one do you think ultimately had the greatest reward?

I am not saying here that we are to settle for poverty. I am not saying that God wants to keep us broken and beat down and broke so that we will serve Him. No. You know better than that. You can tell by going back and reviewing the whole theme behind this book that this isn't what I am saying here. I am saying that there is a line to rightly divide here. There is a balance in all things in God. There is a balance in the blessing of God. You have a right to inherit your Promised Land. God has promised many things in the Bible. Most of the best things, though, don't come with a price tag because they are beyond price. We can't put a price on peace of heart. We can't put a price on a sound mind or good health. We can't put a price on the spiritual blessings and gifts from God. We can't put a price on the blessings that an obedient life brings. We have to commit our hearts.

We have to commit one hundred percent to God and live an obedient life because we love and honor and respect Him. Not because He will give us things like spoiled children. We have to love and obey Him because we have a relationship with Him that is real. One that has been tried in the hard times. We have to love Him for who He is not for what He can give us. We have to give our lives to Him and commit our wills because He gave His life for us. We have to sell out self and be filled with Him. We have to deny flesh and walk in the Spirit. We have to come to the place where we lay aside that old spoiled nature that wants its own way and we let the Spirit of God that New Man, rise up in us. None of this can happen when we are caught in believing the things that God wants for us is to give us everything perfect. We can't have our own spoiled way and victory in Jesus. It doesn't work that way.

Why am I including this in this chapter? God really put this on my heart in a strong way to share this. Everyday or so I talk with people that are going through battles. They question why they are going through things. They are asking, "What is wrong with me. If God loved me, then I wouldn't have to face anything. There must be something so wrong with me that God doesn't love me any more." They begin to doubt their relationship with God. They wind up so deep in condemnation that the devil slowly strangles the life out of them. All because they had a battle. If you are going through this, hold your head up. You may be going through a battle because you are God's, and the devil is mad. You may be going through a battle because God is getting ready to use you in a special way and the devil wants to stop you before you can really get started. We all face a battle. We all have an enemy that means to destroy us. We all live in this world that is ruled by flesh and things that aren't God's perfect will. We all live around people that aren't doing what they should. Yes there are battles. Yes, there are giants in the land. But we still have a Promised Land. We can rise up above the battle just like the children of Israel rose up and conquered their land. So can we. Just like they overcame so can we. We are over comers in Christ. You can possess your land.

Chapter 10.

Leaving Egypt Behind

All the way through the story of the Israelites first journey to Canaan, I kept reading about their wanting to go back to Egypt. Every time that they went through a hardship, they wanted to run back to Egypt. It was mentioned constantly. It was no surprise that when they stood on the boundary of Canaan that first time around and they faced adversity, they talked about turning around. (Numbers 14:2, “And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God we had died in this wilderness!) They had never really left Egypt behind. It was always a choice in their spirit. When they got to Canaan, they never really left Egypt or the desert behind. How can we as Christians today do the same?

One of the way Christians fail to leave Egypt behind is when they fail to leave their past behind. This is especially true with young Christians. I know a lot of young people who don't make it as Christians, because they won't leave their past alone. God saves them and makes them to be new creations in Him. Then their old buddies start coming around. They start thinking that they need to hang around them to be a witness to them. They start going back to all the old places that they left behind. Before long, they are doing the old things they used to do. The Bible tells us that when we go back to the things that the Lord delivered us out of, we are like a dog going back to its vomit. Proverbs 26:11 tells us, “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.” There is the parable about the woman who swept her house clean in Luke 11:24-26, “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” We need to be warned. If we go back to the things that God delivered us out of we could be seven times worse than we were before deliverance.

We need to stay away from Egypt. We need to run away from the things that God delivers us from. This is true no matter if we have been a Christian for three or for thirty years. We need to stay away from Egypt. However, we don't need to fear it. But we need to stay away from it. If we fear anything, that fear can actually work like a conduit piping in that thing that we are afraid of. What we fear will come to pass. When God has delivered you from something in your past, you don't have to fear it. God does a good work. Just stay away from it and don't entangle yourself again.

Another way that we can fail to leave Egypt behind is when we become lazy in our spiritual attitudes. The children of Israel got out of the desert because they took the initiative and moved forward. If they had not moved forward, then they would have been stuck in the desert. We do much the same way in our walk with God. If we don't move on, we get left behind. If we don't make a priority to concentrate on our spiritual life and our relationship with God, then our flesh will take over. It will be walking us backward instead of forward, and we won't be in tune with God's Spirit enough to even know what is going on. It will walk us right back to where we started. It will walk us all the way back to Egypt if we let it.

Another way that we fail to leave Egypt behind is in the desires of our heart. So many times the desires of our heart can draw us back instead of forward. That happens when our desire and affections of our heart are set on other things besides God. If there are things in your life that you desire more than God, that you have allowed to be in priority over Him, those will be the things that will wind up leading you toward Egypt. There are certain things that we have to turn loose of. If we don't, they will destroy us. They will become like a hook in our jaw. I heard a story the other day. It was really a joke, not a true story, but there was a lot of truth in it. A preacher was in a car wreck. He was talking to the police about how terrible he felt because his brand new Mercedes was crushed. The policeman said, "Man, haven't you even realized? Your arm was torn off in the accident." The preacher yelled, "Oh, no. Where's my Rolex?" He definitely was focused on material things.

Where our mind is our heart will be. Where our heart is that will be our treasure. Those things that you think about the most, they have a priority in your life. The things that you spend the most time on, that is a priority for you. Is Jesus number one in your life? We can get our focus all off, then we can't see clearly. When this happens, we will easily be sidetracked, and we will never get out of Egypt. We have to focus on the things of God. We have to focus on the Promised Land. We have to make reaching this our number one heart's desire. We have to keep our relationship with God a close relationship. We can't do that by following Him a far off. We can't do that by never spending time with Him. By never reading His Word. By never fellowshiping with His people. We have to get real in our relationship with God.

Another thing that can cause us to hold on to Egypt is the fear of being able to possess our Promised Land. So many people stay in the desert just out of sight of Egypt because they are afraid to face the unknown. They are afraid that they will fail if they try to cross the desert. They are so afraid that they can't reach their Promised Land that they lose the desire to go there. What would have happened if the second time around the children of Israel had said this? "We can't go there. We heard that there were giants. We can't do it. Our parents said so. They failed. What makes us think that we can, when they didn't?" If they would have thought this way the second time that they were there, they would never have gone in and possessed their land. We have to dare to leave Egypt. We can't be lazy if we want to possess our land. We can't stand still because we are afraid to press on. We have to trust the Lord. We have to have faith that He will lead us. We have to trust His abilities instead of our own. We have to be willing to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. When we do that, we will overcome. How can we lose?

We can also be caught in Egypt when we are so condemned that we don't see that we would even deserve a Promised Land. The devil is a master at cheating us out of God's love and His best for us. He does this by causing us to feel like we don't deserve it. He does this by making us think that we can't do it. That is when we need to stop focusing on our flesh and ourselves.

We need to look at God and His greatness and His love for us. We need to look at the promises in His Word and claim them as our own. We need to know that we don't deserve God's best, but in His grace it is for us anyway. Then we need to go ahead and possess that land.

Another thing that can cause us to hold on to Egypt is disobedience, or a rebellious spirit. I know some people who will do the opposite of what they are told to do, and they don't even realize that they are doing it. If they know that this is the direction that they should go in, it is a given that they will turn in the opposite way. If it is suggested that they need to do a certain thing, they will do something to the contrary. They are so caught up in rebellion that they don't realize what they are doing. They walk in the flesh and not the spirit, and that makes it all worse. The only way that the children of Israel were able to leave Egypt behind was by obeying the God who led them. If we aren't obedient, we won't be able to possess our Promised Land. We can't do our own thing, and not God's thing and possess our land. A journey is a series of steps. Our walk with God is a series of steps. He doesn't just pull us up here and plop us down somewhere and that is where we are to be in life. He leads us step by step on this journey. While He leads us, He does a work in us that makes us able to take the next step. Things in God happen in His order in His time for a reason and a purpose. Each step in the journey builds on the one before it. To get from point A to point B, you have to take the necessary steps in between. The same is true when we are walking in God toward our Promised Land. For example, when I was in middle school a preacher prophesied to me that I would one day serve God full time in a ministry. When I graduated from high school, my parents took me off to college. They were led of the Lord, but didn't know it at the time. After majoring in several different things in college, I settled into education. I moved away from God, but praise God, He never moved away from me. When I came back to the Lord, I moved around some. Then I joined a ministering team full time. I was there for several years when the Lord led us to start a Christian school. Now I can see that the pieces of my life were there for a purpose. God directed my path. I didn't know why I majored in education.

God did. When I settled down where I did, I didn't know why, but God did. When I joined the ministry, I didn't know my focus would be in education, but God did. When we obey God, we may not see all the pieces at first. We do the next thing that He tells us to do and we do that until He changes our direction. Step by step we move toward our Promised Land. He makes a way for us to make the next step then He tells us to move. He will go before us making mountains low and crooked places straight. But when we fail to walk behind Him, where He leads us, then we will be over to the side, lost in the mountains and tied up in the crooked places. We have to submit our will and be willing to let God have His way. We have to walk when and where He tells us to walk. We have to stop proving things to others and ourselves. That will only get us in trouble.

We must leave Egypt behind. We can't straddle the fence and head toward the Promised Land with one foot in Egypt and one foot in the desert. We can't be double minded and get where we are going. We have to be convinced in our heart that we are worthy to inherit that land. We have to be convinced that God is able to lead us. We have to trust that He will. We have to be sold out and not allow anything to turn us around or hinder us. We have to be obedient to the Lord. Those Promised Lands that you desire to inhabit are there for you. Take God's hand. Go and possess your land.

Chapter 11.

Leaving Yesterday Behind

We have touched on this subject in previous chapters, but I believe that this topic is important enough to deserve a whole chapter by itself. Many times we fail to inherit our Promised Land because we can't leave yesterday behind. More to the point we can't leave the failures of yesterday behind. Part of the reason is because we have an enemy who delights in bringing up our past. The devil is said to be the accuser of the brethren, and he works at that day and night. The devil wants to condemn us to the point that we don't even try, because we think we can't. When we do try, we only try halfway, because we just know in our heart that it won't work.

Let's look at this section of scripture that deals with condemnation. Let's talk about this tool that the devil uses to destroy God's saints. Let's turn to Romans 7:14-25 and Romans chapter 8. Please read this section of scripture. I won't write it all out here. Paul is saying here that he is flesh. He is carnal, born in sin. He says that in the natural there is no good thing in him. What he wanted to do, he didn't do. What he knew not to do, he did. In verse 22-23, he said, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." It is very important to note here that he didn't leave things there. He didn't say, "Well, that's how it is folks. You will just have to be stuck with not being able to do any better. Settle for it. Nobody's perfect. Sin lives in you. May as well give into it. God will forgive you." He didn't write this section of scripture so that we could quote it as an excuse to be able to sin. He went on in the next chapter to answer the question that he brings up in chapter 7 verse 24, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Chapter 8 is one of the most powerful chapters that is found in the Bible. So many times though we read the part where it seems like we are excused for our failures, and we draw a line there. We don't press on to find the victory. We don't go on to the next chapter. How does chapter 8 tell us that we can overcome this?

Can we overcome this “body of death”? It starts out with Romans 8:1-2, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” We read here that there is no condemnation. Now we have to be very careful here. We can use this verse as an excuse to be able to sin and that is very wrong. We can draw a line here. We can feel God’s conviction because we are failing Him in an area in our life, or in our commitment to Him. We can dismiss it as the enemies’ condemnation and go on our way closer and closer to hell more than heaven. We can allow our priorities to shift, our devotion to slide, our eyes to get off of Jesus. God will draw us back. If we aren’t careful, we can kick against Him because we don’t think we should feel bad when we do wrong. We get conviction and condemnation confused. The devil will condemn us, but God will convict us. When we are convicted, it is important to repent. If we run from our sin, or excuse it, or hide it away under the rug, we endanger our soul. Allow God to bring you to repentance. Repent. That means to be so sorry for your sin that you won’t do that again. That you are so broken before God for what you have done that you won’t walk in that path again. You see Calvary and the price Jesus paid for you there, and it is precious to you. We can’t say I’m sorry and do it all over again. We have to be able to tell the difference between condemnation and conviction. We have to distinguish in the Spirit between the voice of God and the enemy. We have to know our Savior and walk with Him in the Spirit to be able to do this. But when we identify the voice as the voice of condemnation then we know whose that is. We know how to answer it. By using the Word God. There is therefore now no condemnation. There is therefore now no condemnation.

The key to unlocking this condemnation that comes against us is found in the second part of verse one. There is no condemnation when we walk in the Spirit. If we don’t and we walk in the flesh, then we are wide open to the devil. When we walk in the Spirit, we take our identity as a child of God. We mortify the deeds of the flesh. We walk out from the bondage.

We become led by the Spirit of God. We obey Him. The Spirit of God witnesses with our spirit. We overcome our sin by walking in the Spirit. Then there is no more condemnation. Why? Because we have won the victory over sin through Jesus Christ. The first part of verse 1 won't work without the second part. For us to escape condemnation we have to walk in the Spirit.

What does all this have to do with our chapter title? One of the tools the devil uses to stop us from going forward is to throw up detours. He will trap us in a failure off on a side road somewhere. He'll cause us to get stuck in the mud and we can't get back to the main road. Then we'll eventually dig out and get back on the main road. We'll be going along fine, and the devil will say, "You can't keep this up. Remember when you failed. It is sure to happen again. You are just a failure." If we listen to him, he'll just get us off on another side road and stuck again in the mud. We just have to keep on the main road, trucking on with all our heart. Don't allow condemnation to stop you. Be tender to God's conviction. But don't listen to condemnation. If you are tender to God's conviction, allowing Him to deal with your weaknesses then when the devil tries to condemn you over a failure or weakness, you can answer him like this. "Devil, that is under the blood in the nail scarred hands of Jesus. I am no longer condemned. I am forgiven. I am precious to the Lord. He will keep me in the hollow of His hand."

When we fail God, and we all do, we need to realize something. Our failure, in the hands of God, can turn out to be a glorious victory. I went through a time recently that it seemed like the devil tore up everything that I tried to do. I would fail at everything I tried. The harder I tried, the harder I fell. I kept on trusting God. I was literally beaten down to the place where I listened to God before I moved. I was definitely humbled. The Holy Ghost in me got a little freer in my life to have His own way. Right after that, I came to a time when I needed to do some important course changing things in my life. Things that if I had jumped out of the will of God and made the wrong choice, I would have paid dearly. But if I made the right decisions, and did the right things it was a time of great blessing. I was ready. My failure had actually gotten me ready for victory.

We need to come to the place where we aren't afraid to try, where we aren't afraid of failure. We need to come to the place where we know that we are weak and subject to failure. But through walking in the Spirit we will rise above it. In II Corinthians 12:9 we read, "And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Verse 10 concludes with, "For when I am weak, then am I strong." Paul said here that he didn't glory in being perfect. He gloried in the perfection of Christ that rested in him through the power of the Holy Ghost. Now please go back and reread chapter 8. Think about this. Where are your failures? Where are your past mistakes? Where is your sin that has been repented of and God has forgiven? Where is condemnation? Praise God. We have been delivered from weakness, and sin. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can rise up and overcome.

Our past failures can become fuel for the fire. Here is one example of how that happens. I was working on a new computer operating system. It took us months to learn it. It was a really difficult program. Computers are a major tool that we use in getting out the Gospel around the world. The devil really fought us from being able to get this worked out. It was really exhausting. We were working on it until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. The more we worked, the more we got determined to keep working. The more that the devil fought us, the more we knew that we were doing just what God wanted us to do. His battle against us just fueled our determination to get it right. The more that we failed, the more we tasted victory coming. We didn't give up because of the battle. We knew that if it was something that the devil was fighting so hard then it must be something that was important. We won in spite of the battle. Rather, you could say that we won because of our failures and because of the battle. The failure of the past can encourage you to go on and succeed.

I know two sisters. They grew up in a very unstable family. I mean that they really had it bad. One went on to overcome this and become very successful. The reason that she became so successful was because she had to try so hard.

She had to overcome her past life. The other let the failures of those around her cause her to be defeated. She allowed her past to destroy her. She couldn't get free of it enough to even have a future. Both had the very same circumstances to overcome. One succeeded and one failed. Look at those around you who have allowed their defeat to drive them on to victory. If we take that attitude of faith then how can the devil stop us?

I think of some of the preachers who failed so badly in front of the world. You know their names. They repented to God and to the people. They didn't quit or allow their sin or failure to stop them. They learned and grew and kept on going. Look at those who allowed their failure to stop them. They went backwards to their destruction. When we back up, we back up toward hell. Don't allow failure to back you up. Allow it to drive you on.

Let's go back to the Promised Land. The first time when the Israelites stood at Canaan, they failed to possess their land. The second time around, I'm sure the devil was right there. I'm sure human nature and carnal minds were there too. They both said, "Remember last time. What makes you think this time is any different. What makes you think that you won't fail this time too? What makes you think that you'll succeed?" "If those voices were there though, they weren't mentioned in the scripture. Why? Maybe because they had heard about their parent's failure. They had grown up in the desert because of it. They had their fill of failure. They had learned in the desert. They were ready now. They went on in and didn't hesitate. They obeyed and possessed their land.

So what about those failures that the devil keeps bringing up? Put them under the blood of Jesus and leave them there. What about those times when it didn't turn out right like you thought it should have? Give it to the Lord. Trust Him and move on. What about those times when everybody else copped out and left you alone, and it all fell down in pieces? Get your eyes on Jesus and keep walking on. What about those times when the devil tore you apart because you dared to step out in faith? Keep on going and let God give you what you need to tear the devil up this time around. There is your Promised Land.

You don't have to back up or detour. You don't have to stop or falter. Put your hand in God's hand and go in and possess your land.

One important thing to think about when you are overcoming sin and failures in the past is forgiveness. There is a life changing power in God's forgiveness. When the blood of Jesus covers our sin, it is no longer remembered. I John 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Ephesians 1:6-7 tells us, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." When we are forgiven, we are forgiven. When God forgives us, we need to accept His forgiveness and forgive ourselves. If we continue to beat ourselves up over every mistake and failure we will never find victory in God. If we continue to beat ourselves up for not being perfect, we won't ever find that perfection that can come when we bury ourselves in Christ. If we don't let it go, then the devil can easily move in with his condemnation. We have to let it go ourselves. Then for God's forgiveness to be complete, we have to forgive others. Matthew 6:14 tells us, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Bitterness against someone who has wronged you will only stop you from receiving forgiveness. I don't care how bad the wrong is that they did to you, you have to forgive. Bitterness doesn't hurt the person that wronged you, but it can destroy your soul. It will damage you, your relationship with God, and even your relationship with others that love you. Bitterness kills. But it seldom hurts the one that it is directed toward more than the heart that it imprisons. I can remember one time when someone did something bad to hurt me. They had a wicked spirit about them. That spirit started coming against my mind and heart. I couldn't figure out where it was coming from. It was like I had a spiritual door left open in my hedge that God had around me. God showed me that I had become bitter toward that person. That bitterness was acting like a pipe that was piping in all the bad spirit from that person to my life. The devil used this.

When I cut loose the pipe and forgave them, that door in my hedge was closed. Bitterness can act as a connection between you and someone else that you may need to cut loose. Forgiveness is the only way to do that. God can help you to forgive no matter how hard it seems. Remember that you have inside of you the One Who cried out from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

God is a God of the new. We read in II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, He is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Every day we can walk in the newness of Christ. Every day we can wake up to new promises. Every day we can see the new things that He is working in us. Every day we can watch the old pass away. If we will let it go. I talked to someone not long ago that just can't let go of their past life. They constantly dwell on what is behind them. Their thoughts are like a chain connecting them to the old. They can't quite reach to the new because they don't have strength to drag the old along with them as they go. We have to let go of what is behind us.

We have to also learn from our mistakes. For goodness sake, if you fall down don't keep going back to that same slick spot and falling all over again. Learn. Don't keep making the same mistakes over and over. Learn how to avoid the thing that is tripping you up and move on to the new that God has for you.

The children of Israel had learned from their past. They were ready to possess their land. They didn't allow their failures of the past to hinder them. They had a vision of their Promised Land. They possessed their land. Move out of the old and into the new. Go in and possess your land.

Chapter 12.

Obedience

We've touched on this topic in most of the preceding chapters. I believe though that it is important enough to deserve a full chapter. Let us suppose just for a minute that the Israelites in the desert would have been even more disobedient than they were. Let's just imagine that there had been a little group of rebels among them. Let's say that there at the Red Sea, this group would have decided that a much safer place to cross was on up the coast at a different spot than where Moses stood. Let's say that they had listened to all the talk about Moses' weakness. I'm sure that he had them, and human nature being the way human nature is, I'm sure that they talked about him. It is so easy to nit-pick our leaders. If they are anointed and they are doing their best with all their heart to obey God, then you need to look over their weaknesses and build them up in their strengths. If God has anointed them, then you had better lay off. If God has set them up as leaders over your church or ministry, then trust Him in that decision. Sure they will have weaknesses. But those weaknesses are not what God has anointed. Those weaknesses are not what God has chosen. If you think that a qualification of being a leader is being perfect, then guess again. Was Moses perfect? Hey, he didn't even get to go into the Promised Land. Wasn't he still the leader that had been chosen and hand picked by God and anointed to do the job? Wasn't he still the one that God chose to talk with? Who did God speak directly to? Who did God choose to honor in their midst? Love and respect your leaders that the Lord has put over you in spite of the weaknesses. (Something to remember here is that we need to strengthen the weak. If you strengthen the weak points that are in people whether they are leaders or not, you will have strong people. If you tear them down because of their weaknesses, you will have only weak people. Strengthen the weak points in people by prayer. By loving and understanding them. By fasting for them. By lifting them up.) Let's say that the children of Israel had decided not to follow Moses that day at the Red Sea because he wasn't perfect.

Let's say that they felt like they were smarter than he was. Let's say that they had just plain had it with all of his weaknesses and they weren't going his way any more. Where would they have been? Who was God leading, in spite of his weaknesses?

Here are some more scenarios. Let's say that they woke up that morning feeling a little lazy and they didn't feel like walking all day. They decided to sleep in and catch up later. Or let's say that they analyzed the situation and it looked bad. They decided that it was better to give up to the Egyptians rather than drown themselves in the sea. Or let's say that they didn't have exactly the same religious beliefs as Moses and they needed to separate themselves in a different group and go over on their own. Whatever God did for Moses he would surely do for them too. After all they were just as important. Or let's say that they decided that the world behind them wasn't so bad. What if they decided that they wouldn't be destroyed if they just hung back toward the army? It was a lot of effort to press on. Or let's say that they just decided not to listen to anyone that day. Or let's say that they looked at the circumstances and the sea. They just plain got scared and drew back over the ridge where they failed to see what God was doing. If you have just been reading this and not really thinking about the outcome in each situation please go back and reread it. As you do, think about the times that you have done God the same way. Maybe there are some situations where you are doing that even now. Your Promised Land is right there, but you can't reach it because of your disobedience.

Disobedience is one of the biggest reasons God's people never inherit their blessings in God. There are many promised in God's Word that are conditional to obedience.

Here are some of them:

1. Long life in I Kings 3:14
2. Success in Joshua 1:8
3. Entering heaven in Matthew 7:21
4. Being treasure by God in Exodus 19:5
5. Having things go well in Deuteronomy 5:29
6. Abiding in God's love in John 15:10
7. Making your abode with Him in John 14:23

These are some pretty serious promises and they all are conditional to obedience. We must obey God.

I want to take time to be honest here. A lot of writers of Christian books are afraid to do that. I guess that they think if they are, then people won't read their books. They think that if they let their hair down and people see their weakness, they won't respect what they say. They fail to get real with people because of this. I think though that if you are real, you can help people. People see that God can help them in their weakness if you admit your own. God has delivered me from a bad rebellious spirit. I was a rebel from the 60's, early 70's. That didn't help my already hardheaded, stubborn streak that I inherited-a streak to put your head down and plow on through like a bull no matter what any one said or did. I was really hurt a lot as a young Christian and that didn't help. I was afraid to trust anyone to have authority over me. When we can't trust enough to submit to others, then it is even harder to submit to God. I began doing my own thing with all my might in my zeal to serve God. God sent a leader that I finally respected enough to submit to. He is the director of the ministry that I have been with for over 20 years. From there, I stopped my bulling around. I began to really submit to God. Even now sometimes, the devil who knows how to push all our right buttons to get us going wrong, will still try to bring this back against me. God has delivered me from it and has kept me through the years. He has fired me in the kiln to purify that out of me. I can say that I am an authority on the subject of obedience and how rebellion will cost you. I can also testify to the power of God and the Holy Ghost as to how God can deliver you from a spirit of rebellion and keep you.

The main key that led to my deliverance came when I finally understood God's love for me. When His love became personal. I was able then to let my walls down so that He could reach through. I was able to find a real and personal relationship with Him. Nothing can break down walls like the love of God. However, the devil knows that too. He works overtime to bring hurt so that you keep those walls up. He'll send the most wonderful people to turn on you because they got out into the flesh and he grabbed that and used it. He'll do all he can to bind you.

He will keep you imprisoned behind walls of hurt. You can't submit to God or anyone else when you're there. If you read this and I am talking to your heart here, let God reach through. Trust His love. Who else has loved you enough to die for you like Jesus? His nail-scarred hand is reached out to you. He is saying, "I did this for you" His love is personal and real. If you had been the only one, He would have died just for you. Reach out. Put your hand in His hand. Let His love break down those walls. Let Him send someone you respect to be in leadership over you. Even if you are leader, you need this. Sometimes pastors and church leaders get hurt to the place where it is hard for them to submit. They then wonder why they have such a rebellious congregation. Keep a submissive heart even though you are a leader. Self-centeredness and a spoiled nature can also keep us from submitting. Sometimes we grow up getting our own way. Then we begin to expect to get things our way as adults. Getting our way becomes a way of life. But it isn't reality. Then God says, "Give it all up to Me. Submit to Me. Make your will my will." It's really hard to do that then. God has to deliver us from that spoiled nature. Parent's, whatever you do never raise a child to expect their way. Discipline them consistently. If a spoiled nature starts to develop, break that spirit. The Word of God itself says that you will mourn if you don't

Another reason my people fail to submit is that they don't want to lose control. It is hard to admit that you are flesh, that you can't do it on your own. It is hard to let go and face your weaknesses and failures. It is hard to get down on your knees before God and admit that you need Him. It is hard to admit you need help. It is hard to admit that you need God. But if you don't, it will be harder to be broken later on. One way or another we will be broken before God.

Another reason people find it hard to submit to God is because they are ignorant of what He expects. They don't know His Word. They don't take time to know God and develop their relationship with Him. They blindly blunder along making all the wrong decisions, doing all the wrong things. They think that they are doing what the Bible tells them to, but they haven't taken time to study it out with God's leading to be able to know.

What is really sad is when these people are pastors or leaders. They know what they have been taught. They know what their doctrine is. They know what other people say. But they have never gotten on their face before God and asked Him to reveal His Word and His truth to them through the power of His Holy Spirit. They haven't gotten a walking, talking relationship with God where they trust His voice to reveal His Word to them. So they are stuck with just what they hear from others or what they have read about. They are blindly leading the blind. All will fall in the ditch. We need to first get to know the author. We need to submit to the Holy Ghost. We need to seek God to reveal His Word. Then we know that we are getting the truth.

When we fail to obey, we can mess up our lives really bad in just a short while. Let's talk about some examples. We knew a girl that was a Christian girl from a Christian family. She knew about obedience. She decided to get with the wrong crowd. She climbed into a car with someone that had been drinking. It cost her life. I've known hundreds of testimonies of people who have been protected and shielded because they obeyed God, and I know hundreds of testimonies of people whose lives were cut short by rebellion and disobedience. I have had bunches of times in my life when disobedience would have cost me my life. Or someone else would have been hurt. Or I would have taken a wrong turn and I would have wound up at a dead end road in my life. Or I would have faced financial ruin if I hadn't done what God told me to do when He told me to do it. Or I would have hurt someone not meaning to. Or I would have made decisions that would have hindered me from what I was trying to do for the Lord. Over and over He has directed me. Those times when I didn't listen? I paid. God guides us because He knows what is best. He isn't bound by time. He sees today at the same time He sees tomorrow. That is how He led John to write the book of Revelations. He has wisdom to know what is best for you. His ways are beyond our own understanding. He can lead you. But you have to submit to follow. You have to obey.

You must obey His Word as well. We've established that. We have to establish here what His Word is. What is the Word of God? There are two parts of the Word of God.

They will never contradict one another because they both have the same author. One is the written word of God, the Bible. The other is the Word that God speaks to us in our heart. Both are important. In our day-to-day walk we have to know the truth of God's written Word and live by it. We have to have a listening, obedient relationship with God. He will speak to your heart. Let's go back to the Word of God, the Bible. To find the truth we have to let God reveal His Word. We can't learn that from others. But in all things in God there is a balance. We can't take the attitude either that we aren't going to listen to anyone else. The Bible tells us that there is a safety in a multitude of counselors. Lone ranger stuff doesn't fit into the scriptural understanding of things. Someone told me that they were going to a church probably not everyone would like. That was because God had revealed a little different truth to them than what most people had. I question whether that was God at all. God doesn't choose a little group of people to reveal a certain truth to. He wants us all to walk in the full counsel of His Word. He desires through His Word to bring us all into fellowship with Him and into fellowship with one another as the body of Christ. This doesn't happen in a corner. That is why denominations are so wrong. We get engulfed so in doctrinal and church teaching that we forget all about the Word of God. We need to have a stronger relationship with God than we do with the people in our church no matter how great a leader we think that they are.

We have to be able to hear the voice of God. As a young Christian this was so hard for me. We have three voices going on. One is the voice of God. One is our own thoughts. One is the devil that hops on our shoulder and whispers things in to our minds. As we grow in our relationship with God we will more readily recognize His voice. If we spend time with Him regularly, that gets easier. If our relationship with Him is just a prayer where we ask for things and we never fellowship with Him, then it is hard to recognize His voice. We can easily get led in the wrong direction by the devil or by our own flesh when we can't recognize the voice of God.

Are there situations that you face today and you need to do just the right things? Seek God and obey Him.

Are there decisions you need to make that are major choices that will affect your life? Seek God and obey. Does your ministry need to head in a new direction? Seek God and obey. Is your church needing revival but you aren't sure how to guide them in that direction? Seek God and obey. Is someone you love needing sound advice and guidance? Seek God and obey. Do you want to find more victory and a closer relationship with God? Is there a Promised Land God has shown you? Seek God and obey.

Let's go back in time just a minute to before Moses died. God spoke to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 30. Please read this chapter. It is a wonderful picture of what obedience and disobedience can bring a child of God. We don't like to see God as a God of vengeance and wrath. But He is just. He has promises for those that obey Him, and curses for those that don't. Verses 5-20 tells us, "And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all His commandments which I command thee this day. And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as He rejoiced over thy fathers: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passeth over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore chose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for He is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

In that scripture we see a picture of how God is regarding obedience. He renewed His covenant with the children of Israel. What wonderful promises are found in this scripture. You can tell God’s love for these people even in spite of their failures. There would be some requirements. That is life. That is how God operates. Keep the commandments and He will keep His promises. That is only right and just. Sometimes we act like God is a push over. We think that His mercy and grace is so great that His love will be there no matter what we do. Is that reality? Is that the kind of God that you really want to serve? One that is so wishy washy that anything goes? God is a righteous and just God. Obey His commandments and you will find that wonderful love that is so deep, there is no end to it. Continually, purposefully, disobey and you will face that wrath that is as terrible as His love is great.

In Joshua chapter 1 we read Joshua’s sermon to the children of Israel as they stand on the edge of their Promised Land. We read in verses 2-5 a reminder of the promises that God gave them. In verses 7-9 we read how they can inherit those promises. “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant

commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, and thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 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.” We read that they are to be courageous. Don’t doubt. Don’t fear. Be strengthened in heart. And then obey. Do the law that was given. Obey God’s written Word. Know God is with you. Obey His voice. Go where He leads. Go and possess your land.

Chapter 13.

The Valley of Fear

I was getting ready to write this chapter when I glanced at the headlines of Sunday's paper. It was a story about an 18 year old that suddenly dropped dead with cardiac arrest. She had no history of previous heart problems. Her parents had no clue as to what had happened. As I read that article and how her heart had literally failed her, I was reminded of Luke 21:25-28. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." As I reread that scripture another thing stands out to me. This scripture talks about the sea and the waves roaring. I'm writing this just a few months after the Tsunami of December 2004. When you read this whole chapter Luke 21, it bears out that what we are going through now is only a small touch of what the world will soon see. We think that we are going through hard things now, just wait. This is only the beginning. Everywhere you go you hear of diseases like cancer and aids. Hardly a family hasn't been affected. We've all had bouts with weird flu and viruses that are killing people. I even heard that there was a danger of small pox, something that we haven't seen since I was a kid. Everywhere you hear of record-breaking happenings in the weather. Record highs and record lows. Weird things are going on with the weather. Read the scriptures and study them about the end days. This is just the beginning of the end. I'm not sure what we'll have to face before the church is raptured. I do know one thing. It can't be long from now. It certainly can't be as far away as it was last year, or it was when you first heard it preached. The rapture is drawing closer. It is definitely time to get ready. It is definitely time when men's hearts will fail them with fear.

Another thing that makes us to realize that the time of the

Lord's return is near is the complacency of the church. And the compromise in the church. Matthew 24:36-52 talks about this. Please read this. In the days of Noah people were going about doing their own thing. They had forgotten the Word of God. They had established their own moral codes. They were so far from God that He no longer could deal with their hearts. I'm sure there were religious, church-going people in that day. I am sure too that they had set on the pews and compromised to the place that they were no longer a light to the world. Compromise brings about complacency. When we move away from God in our day-to-day relationship with Him, and we no longer hear His voice, then other things come in as number one. Our priorities get all out of focus. We no longer have time for God. The world, it's thinking and its values creep in. We get fuzzy on just what is right and what is wrong. Our morals shift as we make excuses. Our focus shifts and we are no longer looking for the return of the Lord. If it does come to mind, we think of it with fear. Or we have become so hardened to that fear that we rationalize out that everything is fine. We're ready. We say that we are OK even when down in our heart, we know that we aren't. Some people have hardened their hearts until they no longer feel God's conviction. It doesn't bother them that they aren't ready. They really don't care. Isn't this something like the days of Noah? Isn't this something like the church in Noah's day? This is surely the last days.

What does all this have to do with our chapter title? There is a lot to fear in today's world. As time goes on there will be more to fear. So how does the church, God's people, fit. How do we deal with all of this? We need to wake up and get real with God. We need to get the world out so that instead of a hazy gray look, we begin to shine like a light to this world. We need to get our focus back and our priorities in line. We need to get off the fence and back to the full counsel of the Word of God. We need to welcome the Holy Ghost back into our churches and into our lives. We need to let Him move and have His way. We need to get back to an obedient walk with God. We need to wake out of our sleep, shake ourselves and reclaim what we have let the enemy steal. We need to fill our lamps with oil and stand.

The bridegroom is coming. If we do not do these things, we will not be able to stand through these days to come. How can we stand? By faith. By trusting God. By building on the rock so that when the storms come, our house will stand strong. By being filled with God's Holy Ghost and walking in the Spirit. By walking in obedience. By having a relationship with God that will stand strong in spite of the trials. By staying in the palm of His hand. By keeping sin and compromise out of our lives so that we know where we stand with God. By staying under the blood. By staying real with God. By getting filled up, baptized with the Holy Ghost and letting the gifts of the Spirit operate. By knowing the Word of God and standing on its promises. By keeping to a heavenly vision. When we do these things, fear will have no place in our lives. No matter what the circumstances are around us, we will be secure in God's love.

The words "fear not" are mentioned 365 times in the Bible. God does not want us to live in fear. I don't care if these are the last days. I don't care if it seems like the whole world is either falling apart or growing crazy, all the "fear nots" in God's Word stand just as sure as they did thousands of years ago when they were first written. We don't have to be afraid. Why then are we? I'm not just talking about the world, but I'm talking about the church, too. We travel and hold revivals in different churches. In church after church I hear God's people talking about how they are on medication because of stress, or depression. This is because we as a people have given into worry and fear. Something is definitely wrong. Is this day and time so bad that the promises of God's Word no longer work? How can we go back to a time when we aren't bound by fear? If God's Word hasn't changed and we know God hasn't changed, then what is happened?

One of the things that cause fear is sin. Isaiah 33:14 tells us, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites..." The first step that we need to take is to repent. If when you read the first part of this chapter and God has dealt with your heart that there are some things that you need to fix in your life to be ready for His coming, then you need to fall down on your knees and repent before God. Let God deal with you.

Don't shake it off. You aren't guaranteed even tomorrow. Especially in today's wild world. That is the first place to start in shaking off fear. Draw back to God. He will draw near to you. You have His Word for that. Hebrews 10:22-23 tells us, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for He is faithful that promised.)" James 4:8 tells us, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." We have to make a choice. We have to draw nigh to God and away from the things that bind us. When we do, He will draw nigh to us. Guaranteed. Fall in love with Jesus all over again. Get to know Him. Renew your relationship with Him. He is the best friend that you could ever have. When you fall in love with Him and feel His love for you, you will know that you have nothing to fear. I John 4:18-19 tells us, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us." II Timothy 1:7 tells us, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind." Isaiah 41:10 tells us, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Luke 12:32 tells us in Jesus' own words, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." When we are safe in the arms of Jesus, what do we have to fear? Sure bad things will still happen. We have already talked about how the rain falls on the just and the unjust. This world is full of bad. Some of it is bound to fall on your head too. But we don't have to fear it. God gives us the strength not only to go through it but to also shine like a light in the middle of it. Then by the time that He is done, then the whole thing will be turned out for our good, no matter how bad it might have seemed at the time. Romans 8:28 tells us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." We certainly do not have to be afraid.

Fear is one of the number one tools that the enemy uses to stop the children of God from being able to possess their land. He uses it to keep us from being able to claim and walk in the promises given us by the Word of God. He uses it to stop us from walking in obedience, doing the things that God speaks to our hearts to do. One of the phrases that the enemy uses to put this fear in our minds is this one. "What if?" You know. It goes like this. "What if the economy doesn't get any better? What about our finances?" "What if we get cancer or some other disease? After all it runs in our family." "What if we can't do the thing that God is asking us to do? What if we fail?" "What if the world gets so bad that we can't hold on in our Christian walk?" "What if my husband or wife stops serving God?" "What if I can't be strong enough for my family?" "What if...What if...What if..." Do you have any of these "what ifs" in your life? They will eat away at you like a cancer. They will knock holes in your faith and destroy you. The things that you fear will come on you. Fear opens a door and you invite these things in. How do you keep this door closed? Realize that the devil can put thoughts in your mind. Walk in the Spirit so that you can discern his voice. Let the Holy Ghost rise up in you and rebuke these thoughts. Refuse to entertain them. Don't dwell on wrong things. Find a scripture that does away with that particular fear and helps you to overcome it. If it is a thought that your family won't be saved, find a scripture promising that they will be. If the devil is bringing a fear of financial disaster against you, remind him of Joshua 1:8 that promises prosperity. When the devil says you can't do anything for God, you'll only fail. Remind Him of the scripture that says that you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. We can go on and on. Read the Word of God. Know it in your heart so that when the voices of fear start you can come back with words of faith. You don't have to be afraid. Don't let fear stop you from possessing your land.

I want to spend time here to speak just to the women- especially women in their late 40's or 50's. We all have a body that is all too ready to betray us and give us over to the devil. Here at this age, hormones sometimes are out of whack. Worse than they were when we were teens. Remember how hard that was.

Estrogen gets crazy. All kinds of things happen. One of the things that all this can bring about is a feeling of fear. Fear and anxiety comes for no reason. A friend of mine got an unreasonable fear that her husband was going to be unfaithful to her. She was going through this season in her life. This caused her to become jealous. God delivered her from this fear and saved her marriage. We can have a fear of sickness. Or fear of financial worries. These may be based in reality but by the time our hormones get done with them, they are way out balance. How do you overcome this? First, identify it when it starts. Don't let it get past the body and into the mind and heart. Give it to God. Walk in the Spirit instead of the flesh, and then the flesh can't rule. Realize that the devil will be there too to stick his ugly head in. Rebuke him. God will help you through this battle, just like He has helped you through all the other seasons you've faced in your life.

Let's go back to the children of Israel and the first time that they stood on the edge of the Red Sea. The spies brought back word of the giants in the land. Fear came into the hearts of the people. That fear spoke louder than faith. It spoke louder than the words of Joshua and Caleb who were filled with faith. What was the result? They failed to possess the land. Those that were caught in that fear died in the desert and never did claim the promises of God. If we aren't careful, the voice of fear will speak louder than the promises of God. It will speak louder than the voice of God's Spirit and His Word. It will speak louder than sound counsel from God's people. It can cause you to turn back when you are right on the edge of your miracle. As a ministry, we have had many times when the devil would throw up a roadblock to stop us. This would always be when we were right on the edge of the next miracle that would see us through. We learned that when the devil yelled the loudest that was when we needed to keep on pressing on, because just ahead of that next mountain was our Promised Land. Don't give up. Don't give into fear. If you do, you may face a lifetime of wandering in the desert. Just ahead is your Promised Land. It is just out of reach. If you give up now, you will never see it. Keep on pressing on. Go in and possess your land.

The second time around was totally different for the children of Israel. There wasn't any talk of fear. They had made up their minds that they were going in. Just like the first time around, the spies went into the land. They not only ran into the enemy but the enemy chased them. They had to hide. They heard a report there though that encouraged their heart. Read Joshua 2:10-11. Rahab told them how the enemy felt about them. If we go on in faith, then the enemy will tremble, because we go with God. When we are determined to walk in the Word of God, the circumstances will look at us and fall. This time, the spies came back with an entirely different report than what the first spies had given. They had overcome their fear enough to hear what the enemy was saying. This was the report that they brought back to camp. Joshua 2:24, "And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us." Praise God. What had happened to the giants? Hey, they were still there and they were just as big as they had been forty years earlier. What was different? They refused to fear. They were ready to go in and possess their land.

Chapter 14.

Follow After the Holy Things

Let's go back to Joshua and read Joshua 3, please. We read in verse 3 and 4, "And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore." The ark of the covenant was to go before them. They separated themselves from it. The focus was on the ark, the thing that represented God. The things of God were consecrated and considered holy. They revered the things of God. They feared God with an awesome respect. They respected the things of God. They followed them. They weren't pushy. They didn't take the attitude, "Well, God, I think that the people need to go first." Or they didn't take the attitude, "Well, if we don't hurry up, the water that parts might fall back on us. We'd better push on past the ark. It is going entirely too slow." They didn't have a little committee meeting on the side to vote on who should have the honor of going first. They shut up and listened to what God said and they did what God led their leaders to do. They as a whole, all of the hundreds of thousands of them, submitted and were led by God. They did it God's way. What about the church world today? Are we submitted? Are we respectful of the things of God? Are we respectful of the leaders that God has placed over us? Here is a question though that ties in with that? Leaders, are you respect worthy? Are you leading your flock according to God's Word in obedience and in submission to the Holy Ghost? If we want to possess our land then these two things have to take place.

Then in verse 5 we read, "And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." What does the word sanctify mean? It is defined as being "set aside, holy, set apart for God's use". Now Joshua isn't the first book of the Bible that mentions the word "sanctify". It is mentioned 107 times in the Old Testament alone (including the

different variations of the word). A lot of times it is mentioned in connection with the priests who were to sanctify themselves to offer sacrifices. A lot of times, the word is used when God tells the people to sanctify themselves because of an upcoming event, for a battle, or to heal them of a sickness that had come, or something that had happened or was going to happen. Sometimes it was because the children of Israel had slid into rebellion and had compromised with the world around them. They would follow after the world's idols and God would speak to them to come apart and sanctify themselves back to the Lord. These words are mentioned 31 times in the New Testament. Jesus first mentions sanctify in John 10:36, "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" He is speaking of Himself and is saying that God Himself is the One Who sanctifies Him. We read in I Corinthians 1:2 that we are sanctified in Jesus. We can tell by this that this isn't the same kind of sanctification exactly that is mentioned in the Old Testament. When you study out the Old Testament sanctification you find that they did outward acts to show a change of heart. They did outward things to represent the fact that they had set themselves aside for the Lord, to show their renewed commitment to Him. Here though in I Corinthians 1:2, Jesus becomes the focus in sanctification. We begin to get a wholly different view of what sanctification means. How today do we sanctify ourselves? The key is to be in Christ Jesus.

In I Thessalonians 4:3 we read that sanctification is the will of God. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification..." So we know by this that sanctification is a requirement. In II Thessalonians 2:13 we also read that it is the Holy Spirit that sanctifies us." But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." So now we see that, unlike the Old Testament sanctification, it is not just something that we do on the outside but it is something that God works inside of us through the power of the Holy Ghost and God's Word. In Ephesians 5:26-27 we read, "that He might sanctify and

cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” In Hebrews 13:12 we read, “Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.” We see there that we are also sanctified by the blood of Jesus who shed His blood for our forgiveness, for the remission of our sins. Hebrews 10:13-14 tells us, “From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Sanctification works through the blood of Jesus, the Word of God and through the power of the Holy Ghost inside of us.

So does this mean that everybody who claims salvation is automatically sanctified? If that were true then everybody who says that they are saved would automatically be set aside holy for the Lord. We already know that isn't true. So what does all this mean? Sanctification is a gift just like salvation or the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the gifts of the Spirit. To receive a gift from the Lord, we have to first recognize that we need it. We have to recognize that we need salvation in order to reach out and receive it. We have to recognize that we need the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and reach out to receive it. We have to recognize that we need to be set aside holy for the Lord's use in order to receive sanctification. We have to turn away from sin and let God clean us up. This has to be a purposeful willful thing that we do. We have to recognize our need and reach out and receive it from God. Then we have to trust that the Lord will do this work in us. For any of this to happen we have to first say, “Lord, I turn away from my sin. I don't want it any more in my life.” We have to turn away from the old and let God clean us up. We have to come out from the world. When we act like, look like, talk like, and think like the world, then we are not set aside for the Lord's use. If what comes out of our mouth is the same junk that the world talks, are we set aside for the Lord? If our focus and priorities line up to the same things that the world is drawn to, are we set aside for the Lord? If when the world sees us, it fails to see Christ shining like a lighthouse inside of us, are we set aside for the Lord? Are we sanctified for the Master's use? We have to

separate ourselves from the world. Now this doesn't mean that we do this in an occult like way. We could make a list a mile long of rules that run all the way down the church wall, but following a list of man made rules, no matter how well intentioned they are, does not sanctify us from the inside out as God intends for us to be sanctified. Following a list of rules won't clean us up and set us aside for the Lord's use. We could memorize all of our church thesis or rules and not allow the Word of God to sanctify us. We could be so caught up in rules of the flesh that we never know the Holy Ghost or submit to His cleansing power. We can be so caught up in man's rules that we never allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sin. If we never repent, then Jesus' blood will never cover our sin. Sanctification is a spiritual cleansing, not something that we can do on our own in the flesh. That would just be an outward, not an inward cleansing. But we also have to be careful on the other hand that we don't take an attitude, "Well, bless God, He will clean me up." When we take that attitude, then we fail to do our part. It takes an on-fire heart's commitment. It takes effort on our part. It takes staying away from the bad and holding on to the good. It takes fleeing evil. It takes fighting the devil that tries to pull us back into the old nature that God has sanctified us from. There is a balance in the things in God. The same is true here. On one hand we can't sanctify ourselves totally by what we do in the flesh. On the other hand, we can't take an attitude that God will do it all.

There are some that teach that when we are saved, we are automatically sanctified. It is a one-time deal. A one shot application that lasts until eternity. If that is true then why is there so much sin sitting on the church pews. Does that mean that these people who sin never were saved? Have you ever fell away from God and failed Him? Were you saved before you fell away? Have you ever known anyone who backslid, or fell away from the things of God? Were they saved before this happened? Does everyone that fails God do this because they weren't saved? You know the answers to these questions in your heart even if you have been taught different. The answer is no. We can fail God and fall away from obedience to His Word.

We can do this even when we have been saved. So sanctification doesn't just automatically happen when we are saved. If that were true, what about Paul in Romans 7:18-25 in the section of scripture that starts with, "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Was Paul saved when he wrote that? Certainly. Was he sanctified? Certainly. He sure mentions it a lot in his previous chapters if he wasn't. But we go on from that section of scripture to read in chapter 8 how through the power of the blood of Jesus, the Word of God, and the Holy Ghost that he overcome his flesh and walked in victory. That is what sanctification is all about. We can't do it on our own in the flesh. But God will do that work in us if we desire it and seek it with all our heart, and we follow after the things of God. When we walk in the Spirit we overcome the flesh. Please go back and read the whole chapter of Romans 8. We are more than overcomers through Christ.

I am not saying here that salvation does not bring about a change. I can remember a friend's husband who was a rank sinner. I mean that all of his life he had drunk and fought and been in the worst kinds of trouble. He was a fairly young man but sin had aged him. He looked three times his age. God saved and delivered this young man. It was a while after that I went to visit my friend. I didn't even recognize her husband. Salvation had wiped the years of sin off of his face as dramatically as it had wiped the years of sin out of his heart. He was truly a new creature in Christ. Forgiveness had done its work. It was all over his countenance. Yes, the Lord cleanses us when we are saved. But what if that is the only application of this miracle that we ever received? What if that was the only time that the Holy Ghost, the Word of God, and Jesus ever worked a cleansing in our heart and renewing and setting aside in our heart. What if we never again submitted to allow God to work this work in us? What about the day-to-day battles with the devil? What about the world that continually wears away at us? What about those unsaved ones around us that wear us down? No, praise God, we can continuously be sanctified daily being made new, set aside for the Lord's use.

All this has to start with a consciously made up mind. It has to be a willful decision that we want to be cleaned up and set aside for the Master's use. We have to reach out and receive the gift for God to do His work in us. We have to submit to His work in us. If we don't, then we shut ourselves away from being able to receive this gift. That is how it works with all of the gifts of God.

Is there a Promised Land that you are waiting to possess? Set yourself aside. Prepare. Set yourself aside like the children of Israel did that day. Joshua told them in Joshua 3:5, "And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." They obeyed God and sanctified themselves. They considered and honored the holy things of God. What happened when their feet touched Jordan? The thing that separated them from being able to inhabit their Promised Land just simply rolled back. Joshua 3:15-16, "And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho." They simply walked across on dry land. Set yourself aside for the Master's use. Get out of the world. Get out of that sin. Bury yourself in God's Word. Walk in the Spirit. Let God convict you. Submit to His Spirit. Let the blood of Jesus cleanse you. Let God do His full and complete work in your life. Go in and possess your land.

Let's take a moment here to skip ahead in our story of the children of Israel. We are fast-forwarding here for a minute then we'll go back to the other side of Jordan, before the crossing. We are moving ahead a little to chapter 7. In chapter 6 Joshua and Israel had begun their take over of the Promised Land. They were victorious in every battle that they faced. The enemy feared them when they drew near because of the reputation for victory that they had. The enemy had watched the walls of Jericho fall. Israel went in and overtook everything they had.

Then they came to a city called Ai. Something happened there. Let's read in chapter 7. Please read that chapter. Here is a brief outline. Joshua 7:4-9, "So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men; for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. And Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" The spies had gone out to spy out Ai. They came back with the report that this place would be a snap to take over. After all they had just watched the walls of Jericho fall. They said, "Hey, we won't even need to take but a few thousand men. Why make everybody work today. Give them a break." They went in against Ai. Those guys came out and chased them until the sun went down. The children of Israel that had stood so boldly as they stepped over the broken down walls of Jericho now were shaking in their boots. What had happened? They had touched the accursed thing. We read in verses 10 and 12 God's reply to Joshua's prayer from verses 4-9. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. There were some things that God had told them to leave alone because they were accursed.

Some of the people disobeyed God and took them anyway. God knew. They thought that they had done this thing in secret. How many knows that we can't fool God? So what was the answer to this dilemma? How were they to fix this situation? Verse 13 tells us what God told them to do. "Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." They had to all come clean before God. They had to cleanse themselves from that accursed thing and get it out of their midst.

There have been many times in our church history through the years when we were ready as a body to possess a certain Promised Land. It might have been a vision of growth that the Lord gave us. It might have been a new building program. It might have been the addition of a program like a Christian school. For whatever reason there was something new that we were claiming. We had to first sanctify the body. Now I don't mean here the physical body, but the body of Christ. God would lead us to get ourselves straightened up. He would lead us to renew our commitments and our convictions before Him. He would lead us to get our priorities of our lives in line. Why? Any time that you are ready to advance for the cause of Christ, you will have a battle. God knows this. He would lead us to strengthen ourselves in Him so that we could overcome when the battle came. Also, there are certain conditions in the body that will unlock the working of God on your behalf. If you want God to do a miracle, then come together in unity as a body and get serious about the things of God. Let the Holy Ghost clean you up and sanctify you to the entirety. Then go in and possess your land. That is the key to unlocking the supernatural workings of God for your church. The supernatural revivals that have changed whole nations started with a group of people who sanctified themselves and set themselves aside to be used by the Lord. They came together in unity with one purpose in mind, to allow the Holy Ghost to move in their midst. And move He did.

Or there have even been times when the ministry became deadlocked in a certain area. Maybe in our finances.

Or maybe we would go through times when it seemed like the devil was winning on every hand. God would lead us to get together in unity. We would let the Holy Ghost do that work in our midst. It would turn out that there were some of us that were touching the accursed thing. They weren't living outside of church what they were living inside the church walls. They weren't walking what they were talking. They were hindering others from coming in. When people do this, they stand in the door and won't come on in all the way themselves, and they keep any new people from coming in. We've actually had people tell us, "We want to come to your church but as long as so and so goes there we won't go. We know how they live and we don't want to be a part of that." If you are having a battle in your church, then it may be that there are some that have touched the accursed things. They are messing around where they shouldn't be. How do you deal with it? Ask God to show you. Get a core of people together to pray? Seek Him. Let Him come and do His work in your midst. He can straighten it out that way, or He may have you to take action. There are times when we have to go to that person as the scripture tells us in Matthew 18:15-17. Leaders, you have a responsibility before God. When sin enters the camp it will hinder the whole camp. Don't wink at it or turn a blind eye. Get real with the issue, and get real with God. God can tell you how to deal with it. A lot of these problems can be fixed just by having an atmosphere in your church where the Spirit of God is free to move and people are taught how to submit to the Spirit and allow Him to work.

Do you wonder why there is so much strife and jealousy in the church today? Do you wonder why nobody is getting anything done for the Lord? Do you wonder why the congregation is bound with sickness and trouble? Or why there are no new converts coming in? Do you wonder why the anointing of God no longer blesses your services? Why people no longer receive healing and deliverance? Why the Spirit no longer moves in your midst? Does it seem like God no longer is blessing you spiritually or financially as a body? Why is God no longer forwarding your ministry? Maybe it is because someone in your midst has touched the accursed things.

What are we talking about when we talk here about the accursed things? I am sure that no one is keeping idols for themselves, like I believe they did at Ai. But can't we have accursed things that we get tangled up with today? The first one that stands out is sin. When a house has sin in it whether it is covered up, or not, it won't have the blessing of God. If a church no longer declares the full counsel of God's Word so that the people are convicted of their wrong, then you touch the accursed thing. If the full truth of God's Word is no longer preached from the pulpit because the pastor doesn't want to offend anyone, then you are touching the accursed thing. If the full truth of God's Word is not preached, then conviction can't come and people can't repent. If compromise is winked at and a true relationship with God is not taught, then you have touched the accursed thing. If your children can't tell right from wrong because it hasn't been taught to them, then you are touching the accursed thing. If the world inside your church walls is no different than the world outside those walls, then you have touched the accursed thing. In all of the examples, sin is being allowed to rule, not the Word of God or the Spirit of God. If you want to possess your Promised Land, then you have to win at Ai. You have to get the accursed things out of your midst. You have to go back and sanctify yourselves personally. Then you have to sanctify yourselves as a body of Christ. Then you go in and possess your land.

Now you may read this and become pricked in your heart that you personally need to turn away from some things and get more serious in your relationship with the Lord. Maybe you need to come out from the world, and get real with God. Let's say that you do this. Then you look at your church and it is filled with the things that I mentioned in this previous paragraph. Let's say that you begin to realize that your church won't sanctify itself. What do you do then? God may lead you to leave. There have been times when I have known people who turned their church upside down because they got totally turned on for God. But I have also known times when people stayed in a church because they loved the people and didn't want to let go, and they stayed because they wanted to help. They wound up losing every bit of the fire they had. They wound up compromising and being gulped up.

Let God lead you in what to do, whether to stay or go. Normally speaking, my advice would be to let God lead you to a place that is sanctified, set aside, and filled up with the power of the Holy Ghost.

To sum it up, if you want to find real complete victory in your life, then you have to leave the accursed things alone. You have to leave sin alone. You have to leave the world alone with all its thoughts, attitude, and actions. You have to leave alone everything that the Word of God tells you to leave alone. You have to leave alone everything that the Holy Ghost convicts you to leave alone. You can't stand with one foot in the Promised Land and the other in the world. It will tear you in to. You can't grab a hold of your Promised Land and pull toward it with all your might if your hands are full of the accursed things you gathered at Ai. Get rid of that junk. Get real. Give it to God. Then go on in victory and possess your land.

Chapter 15.

The Parting of Jordan

Please read Joshua 3 and 4 again, please. Can you imagine how they felt that day? This was way over a forty-year trip. We were talking one day about how kids get when they are going on a trip to the beach. You know how it goes. “Mom, are we there yet??” This is repeated 100 times in the first half hour of the journey. Then you start to smell that salt smell in the air and you know that you are getting close. Hey, now remember we live in the mountains in Virginia. That is 5-6 hours away from a beach. You can imagine how excited we get when we catch a whiff of that salt breeze. And how excited we get when we finally see the ocean. Or how about those even longer trips. Maybe for those people traveling to the coast from out Midwest. Maybe there have been times when you haven’t been able to get home to see the folks for a while. Then you get news that you are getting to go home. My, how good their faces look and those familiar sites are when you finally get home. Well, this journey was a 40 plus years long journey. For those guys, I guess you could really say that it was journey of a lifetime. All they had ever known was the road to the Promised Land. All their life from the time that they were born was spent in just traveling toward this destination. All the battles that they had fought were to get ready for the ones that they would face when they got there. Their sole purpose in life was getting there. All the steps that they’d taken were steps toward this destination. There they were on this side of Jordan.

Have you ever felt that way? It seems like in our ministry we have always been looking for that Promised Land, the coming together of the vision that the Lord has given us. I remember the first time that I heard Brother Goad, our ministry founder and director, talk about the vision God had given him for a worldwide ministry. We were just a handful of people. It was a mighty big vision for such a mighty small bunch. But through the Spirit of God, those words caught in my spirit. That became a vision for my life as well. It was strong enough to last through the years. It lasted when the devil fought to destroy it. It was strong enough

to last when I had to pass by people who let go of the vision. It was strong enough to last when we had to do without, with the promise that one day it would get better. It was strong enough to last through those 14-hour workdays, because other people had set down, and we had to carry their load plus ours. We have to allow God to write the vision in our hearts that will carry us through whatever we have to face to obey that vision. What happened with the vision that Brother Goad shared with us that day? Today in the course of a typical day's work I average talking to people from a half dozen different countries that are connected with the ministry in some way. God has kept His Word. We are only scratching the surface as to what we will do. As I am writing this we are putting together a plan to take the Gospel to the world through Internet radio. We have been doing this, but it will grow more and more in this outreach. Why are we doing all this that we are doing? Why is this so important? Matthew 24:14 tells us, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." If you want to hasten the coming of the Lord, then get busy spreading the Gospel in your corner of the world. That's how we started. Then God extended the corners of our world. That is what God told us to do. That is what God said He would do if we did what He told us to do. Now here we are putting together an international ministry that will be reached with an international Internet station. Next we are getting into TV. I say this not to brag on us, but on God. Our ministry and church association is bounding around the world. Our college is starting extension colleges in several countries to teach and train workers for the body of Christ. Am I saying all of this so that you can be impressed or intimidated by what we are doing for the Lord? No. I am telling you this to say that our journey toward the Promised Land started over 30 years ago when God gave our Director a vision. That man stayed true to his vision. When his vision caught in the hearts and minds of others, they joined him in that journey. They worked. They sought God and obeyed Him. Step by step they traveled toward the Promised Land. When the enemy came, and believe me he came with a vengeance, we stayed true. We obeyed God and stayed true to that vision.

When it all fell down around our ears, we just keep on going trusting God to put the pieces back together again. When God tried our hearts to see if we would stand true, putting us through His fire, we kept on going. When half the people decided that it wasn't worth the price and turned around and quit, we kept on going. When the world shook its head like we were crazy for wandering around in what looked like a desert to them, we kept going. Why? Because we knew that God had told us that there was a promise land. The only way we would ever reach it was to keep on going. We let God lead us, and we trusted Him to do so. We laid down every weight that could easily beset us and we kept on going. We stayed away from the accursed things. We focused and were single minded and single eyed. Our priorities were in line with God's Word. Those that let them get out of line fell by the wayside. We kept on going until that day when we stood on the banks of Jordan.

If God has given you a vision, if He has promised you something either by His Word or by His Spirit speaking to you, then you may be going through your desert hour. Don't look at the desert. Don't get too wrapped up in what is going on there. Keep the eyes of your spirit on your Promised Land. Don't listen to the negative report. Listen to the Calebs. Listen to the Joshuas. Those voices that say, "Keep on going. Canaan land is just in sight." Keep on pressing on. Keep obeying God's voice. Keep listening to His Word. Keep on walking when He says to walk. When the enemy comes, know that he can't stop you because you have a Promised Land ahead of you. Push him out of the way and just keep right on going. Jordan is just ahead.

Now I want to stop and talk about Jordan for just a minute. You have to understand something to get the full picture. From the time that I joined the ministry, when I first heard about the vision for it, until the time when I first started seeing the banks of Jordan was over 20 years. I'm not saying that during that time we didn't have a good ministry and we didn't get anything done for God during those years. Yes, we did. We had a wonderful ministry. It just wasn't totally yet what we knew one day it would be. Hundreds of people were reached. Souls were saved and people were delivered. The Holy Ghost

used us in a tremendous way. But we traveled twenty years before we came to the place that the Lord had shown us in that vision that I had heard about all those years before. It took me over 20 years of traveling to come to that place where I looked over into the edge of that place that God had promised us a world wide ministry. There were many others in the ministry that had traveled that journey for longer than that. Does that mean that those twenty years were just whittled away, wasted, because we weren't yet where we were going? NO. No journey is ever wasted. It is the process by which you get to where you are going. Every battle we fought was blessed. Every thing the devil stole from us was restored. Every tear we cried was saved and God honored it. Every time somebody we thought was a friend that turned around to become an enemy, God saw and understood the pain in our heart. There were a lot of disappointments. Often we thought that the Promised Land was right there and it turned out to be just a disappointment. When that happened God encouraged our hearts to go on. When it got to the place where we were only few in number and every one of us carried a load that was much to big for us to carry, the Lord gave us the strength to go on. He made up the slack left by those that had fell by the wayside. He strengthened our hearts and held us together in unity. He gave us joy so that we could rejoice even when the going was so rough. When our feet got weary, He rested us in His Spirit with the peace that only can come from Him. When the enemy tried to destroy us to keep us from being able to continue He would just raise up His angels and brush the enemy aside. It sure has been a rough journey. But oh how very precious each and every step of the way has been.

I know that there will be some of God's children who will read this who know exactly what I am talking about. You know because you are walking there too. Keep on walking. Keep on going through that desert. There is a Promised Land and it is yours. Jesus walks with you. You don't walk alone. The only way that you can lose is if you quit.

Then we came to Jordan. We came to a dead end road. There was no way to go on. No way to go any further. No way to turn around and go back because we had burned all the

bridges behind us. That is how you have to do when you are walking to the Promised Land. Don't leave any options of turning around. Because in God, there isn't any. There we stood. We could see the Promised Land, but our feet weren't there. There was no way to go on. That was one of the most discouraging times that I have ever been through. You could smell the breeze of the homeland but there was this huge river like thing in the way. We couldn't get around it. We were surely going to die if we didn't go on. Every time we tried to take a foot forward, we wound up getting wet and tired and totally beat down. The devil was throwing everything at us that he could to get us to turn around. Personally he attacked us on all sides. He attacked our minds, our health, our families, and our finances. As a ministry, everyone that even reached out a hand to help us was attacked. Everything that the devil could throw at us to discourage us he did while we stood there and looked at that river. He wanted us to think that there was no hope so that we would give up. The hardest thing we faced was this. God backed up and let the devil tear us up to even an ounce of our lives. We knew that God could part the water, but for a while He didn't. He just let us go through it. Sometimes God will try you while you stand at the banks of Jordan. He will try you to see how much you love him. He will try you to see if there is anything that is Lord in your life above Him. He will test your trust in Him and your faith. He'll put everything in your face that even appears to look like any battle that you have ever been through in the past to see if you'll turn around. You see. He doesn't make it easy to get into the Promised Land. That is why that first group died in the desert. I am especially right at this minute ministering to someone who is in some type of ministry. You have been through the desert. You are at the banks of your Jordan. You can glimpse Canaan. But you are going through the worst battle that you have ever been through. It seems even that God Himself is against you. No. He is for you. He is trying your heart, soul, and mind. Stand still and see His salvation. This battle won't last forever. You can inherit your Promised Land.

I want to include here a chapter from another book. The name of the book is, *The Enemies Camp*.

One of the hardest enemies' camps that we can ever go to is the one in which God has put us. You might disagree with me here. Why would God put us in an enemies' camp? Ask Job. In Job 1:6-12 we read that satan came before God's throne and God bought up the subject of Job. In verse 8 he asked satan if he had considered his servant Job. Satan answered that it was easy for Job to serve God, because of the hedge that God had around him. God gave permission for the devil to try Job. He lowered the hedge so that the devil could get in. We read, though, that God didn't give the devil free reign. He was limited in what he could do.

We read throughout the scriptures that God will try our hearts. David wrote in Psalms 26:2, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." Jeremiah 9:7 tells us, "Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them: for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?" Jeremiah 17:10 says, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." God will put us through the fire. For one reason, He will use the fire to purify us. Zechariah 13:9 says, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Malachi 3:3 tells us, "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." When we are purified and tried in the fire of the Lord, then all our impurities are burned away. Then He will bless us and use us. Then He will restore what was stolen from us while the fire was hot. He'll try us and take us to that potter's wheel told about in Jeremiah 18:2-4. "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another

vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.” God is the best potter that you will find. He will mold and remake you so that you will be a vessel that is fit to use in the house of God. Then He can anoint you. One of the things that He will use to mold us is the enemy himself. God will, like He did to Job, allow satan to buffet and fire you in his fire. Then you will come out like gold.

God can't anoint us until we have been tried. When we have been tried in His furnace, then He knows that we will hold against the battle of satan. He knows what we are made of. He won't waste an anointing on a novice that hasn't been through the fire. Only when he knows that you will stand will you be given an anointing. We live in a church world today that preaches that we shouldn't have to go through anything. The idea that God would actually allow satan to come against us is foreign. Then when the devil comes against them, they either become condemned or think that they aren't saved, or they run away and hide. We have an enemy and he will especially try to destroy those who are called for a purpose. We also have to understand that God will allow us to be tried so that He can do His perfect work in us. If you study the scriptures, before every resurrection, there was a Calvary. Before every great victory there came a time of trials when that person was made to shine like gold. Before every great victory was a time when the Lord made sure that they would stand through it all. Believe it or not, sometimes it is harder to rise up in great victory than it is to go through a trial. When God lifts you up, there will be all kinds of things that you will have in your face that if you aren't ready, they can cause you to fall away quicker than the battle can. God won't lift up novices that aren't ready. If He did, it could destroy them. Rather He works on them getting them ready for years. One example is the life of Moses. God worked in his life for more than 40 years. When God is getting ready to use you, He will fire you in His furnace so that you will stand. Praise God for His fire. Praise God when He allows you to go to the enemies' camp and there He purifies and molds you.

How do we react when we are in that place and we know that we are there because God has allowed it? It was hard for me to realize that God would do this sort of thing.

I remember the first time that it happened to me. At first I was angry with God. It felt like I had been abandoned. I was about to explode from the pressure of the battle and I knew that God could fix in all in an instance. But He wouldn't. He let me get worn all the way down before He stepped in. When He did, He gave me a song. There's A Blessing In this Trial. Here are the words of that song.

The Blessing in This Trial

Verse 1

*I went through a valley so low I could not see the mountain.
It seemed the victory was somewhere out of reach.
I asked God could you make it all better please.
He answered me with Words that brought me peace.*

Chorus

*Child there's a blessing in this trial just you wait and see.
I'll do miracles for you just wait from Me.
You may not understand how My hand is working.
If you hold on soon you'll be—reaping my blessings.*

Verse 2

*On the other side of that trial that had brought me to my knees.
I saw what wonders God had worked in me.
I new heart, a brand new strength, a greater faith and peace.
I praised God for that miracle that trial had worked in me.*

We want it all to be instant and easy. It doesn't happen that way and we get mad and quit. We need to get committed to the place that we can praise God for the trials and for the miracles that they work in us. We read in I Peter 4:12-13, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

One of the most profound scriptures that I have read concerning times when God is trying you and allowing you to go through the fire before He uses you is found in Exodus 4:24. "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him (Moses), and sought to kill him." Have you ever noticed this? Have you wondered what in the world that this scripture was

talking about? It can only mean one thing. God tried to kill Moses. Moses hadn't done anything to bring God's wrath upon himself. Matter of fact, he was stepping out in faith to do a task that he believed to be impossible. But in faith, he was obeying God. What was going on here? The scripture bears out over and over the fact that when someone is called for a supernatural task, then God will put them through the fire. We've already established that. Moses in a few short days was going to see some very scary things that God was going to use him to do. Exodus 7:1 says, "And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." God actually let Moses have some of the attributes that He had as God. Moses would take a rod and smite the river and watch the water turn to blood. He would hold out his rod and bring a plague of frogs, and then cause them to die. He would be used by God to bring many plagues, including the death of the Egyptian children. He would stretch out his rod, and the sea would part returning to its banks to destroy their enemy. God knew the tremendous power that Moses would see. God would perform mighty things through Moses' hands. If Moses wasn't ready and baked in the fire, God knew that all these things. He knew that if Moses wasn't ready, and tried in the fire, what was ahead of him could actually destroy him. God had to know that Moses was ready. God needed someone that He knew He could count on. On the edge of Egypt, He literally tried to destroy Moses. Moses stood firm. God knew that He had His man. Moses did not fail in his task.

I am not sure that Job was tried in the fire because God was getting ready to use him to do something supernatural. I think that God allowed Satan to try Job because of Job's faithfulness. On the other hand, God certainly used Job in a tremendous way. How many times has the story of Job strengthened and blessed you all these years later. Down through time it has done the same. I am sure that Job missed his original family and the things that he had before he was tried. I believe though that what God blessed Him with after the trial was so wonderful that it more than made up for what he had lost. God will never take something that He doesn't return better for.

He will even bless it to a hundredfold. When you know that your heart is upright and that you are prayed through in your relationship with God, and you have bound the devil and take authority over him, then stand ye therefore. You may be in one of God's furnaces. Stand true. You have a blessing on the way. The enemies' camp will yield up the spoils of Egypt and you will be blessed.

Let's go back to the children of Israel at the banks of Jordan. No doubt many times while they were camped there they walked down to the banks of the river. They probably walked down to the banks and prayed that God would show them how they could get across. Some probably stood in the water disgusted at what they saw there. Some may have even stomped the water in anger and disappointment. Because there was desert behind them, I doubt that any of them turned and headed in the other direction but they could have. Human nature is human nature, even at Jordan. Some may have gone down to the waters edge and wept and cried, and howled about how terrible a circumstance this was. They could have. We stand at our Jordans today and do the same. Let's read though what Joshua did. Joshua went and had a talk with the Lord. When you face your Jordan and you want to know how to get over, quit stomping your feet in impatience. Quit turning around in defeat. Quit your boo-hooing. Go and have a talk with the Lord. Hear what He told Joshua. He told him just exactly what he needed to hear. Joshua 3:7 tells us, "And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." When it was time, God spoke. Sometimes we have to wait for His voice. What do we do until then? We keep on doing the last thing that He told us to do. Then when it is time to do something else, He will let us know. Just like He did for Joshua. When it is time to go, He will give you the details on how to proceed. Not until then.

I have learned this from Brother Goad. He is a man that pays attention to details. Every day he looks after the thousands of details that our ministry involves. He has taught us that when you take care of the details, the big

things take care of themselves. He is right. He especially takes great care in following all the details that the Lord tells him to do. He has learned that when you stand at the banks of Jordan and there is no way to get around it through it or over it, then you had better keep obeying God. And you had better obey Him to the details. There were a lot of details that God gave Joshua to follow on that day as they stood in the sand on Jordan's side. To the letter, Joshua kept them. Not only did he keep them, but also as an entire body, the children of Israel followed him. Church, if you want that river to part, then your body has to get in sync with the pastor who is following the details God has given you as a body to follow. Walk in the Spirit and in unity. God will roll back that river. Joshua 3:14-17 tells us, "And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; and as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan." Can you imagine the shout of victory that rang out in that place on that day? What a victorious chapter. When you start to wonder if you'll ever see your Promised Land, get out and read Joshua chapter 3 and 4. It will bring victory into your spirit. Read on into Joshua 5:1, "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel." What happened to the enemy that had stopped them so many years before? They were afraid because of what God did for them. Read on

through Joshua 5. How could they lose? Look Who was on their side. Joshua 5:13-15 tells us, “And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay: but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot: for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.” When you have stood the test and endured the desert. When you have dared to stand at the shores of Jordan and keep on pressing on. When you stand faithful in spite of what ever the battle has been. Then know this. You will not stand alone.

Your Promised Land may seem small to you. It may not be like a ministry going worldwide. It may be salvation for your loved ones. Victory in your life over a habit or sin. It may be a promise that you have found in God’s Word that you are holding onto. It may seem small to you, but it is not small to God. Don’t let the enemy minimize any of the Promised Lands that you are claiming. If it is something that God has promised you, then it is certainly valuable. It may seem that you will never get there. Keep on pressing on. Don’t quit. Don’t turn around. If you do, you may never know that your Jordan is just around that next curve. Step in the water and prepare to cross. That brick wall that you are standing at will break apart like a paper wall when it is time to go through it. That circumstance that the devil has thrown up to stop you will fall at your feet just like the walls of Jericho when it is God’s time to go on through. Sometimes we have to wait. God’s time is a perfect time. He is busy at work behind the scenes doing things that we can’t see, taking care of getting all the details to work together. He is at work on all sides where we may only see one small part of it. Trust Him to do a complete work and to move that river when it is His time for you to cross. On that day when it was time for Israel to cross Jordan, they already had the attention of their enemies. Their enemies were aware of what they were doing, and aware of

Israel approaching their coasts. They were aware of what God had done at Jericho. If their journey had been different, and they had not had the attention of their enemies, would their crossing have had the same effect? God's timing insured their victory in years to come. Be sure that you don't try to part the waters on your own. Sometimes we can get in the flesh and do our own little thing. All we can accomplish on our own is to muddy the water so that it isn't clear when it is time to cross. Follow God. Don't get ahead of Him. Don't try to get him to bless what you are doing. He'll anoint what He is doing. Follow Him and see. Remember Joshua didn't part the water. The priests didn't part the water. They just lined up in obedience at their right place at the right time. Then God parted the water.

Let's read Joshua 4:5-7 and 24, "And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; and when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall before a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. And that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever." It is important to notice here in Joshua that the people led their children. Their children were with them. They weren't lost wandering around in the desert somewhere because their parents had lost track of where they were, or lost control of them to the place where they couldn't make them go where they were supposed to be. They were there with their parents. When their parents crossed into the Promised Land, they crossed too. Parents where are your children? I don't mean physically. Where are they spiritually? How do they stand in their relationship with God? Are you leaving a legacy behind you for your children so that they can find their way to God? Are you leaving stones as a memorial to what God has done?

Where are you in regards to your Promised Land? To the

Promised Land that God has for you. Whether you are just rounding that first hill and you still see the lights of Egypt that you've left behind. Or whether you have been on the journey long enough to have forgotten some of the things behind you and you've yet to gain a good sight of what is ahead. Or if you have just come to the edge of your Jordan and it looks hopeless and you are helpless. Or you may have just by faith taken that first step into the water obeying God. He will see you through. You serve a God who loves you too much to let you stay in the desert. Follow Him. Stay close to Him. He will see you through. Your Promised Land is just in sight. Go in and possess your land.

Chapter 16.

When We Cross That Last River The Finish Line

I was blessed to be able to stay with my aunt for a month as she was dying of lymph cancer. She was a precious saint of God or let me restate that. She is a precious saint of God. I don't know why we talk of people who are spending eternity with Jesus in the past tense? I think it is because in our fleshly minds we have death and life so messed up and backwards. I remember a time when I was praying for a young friend of mine who had been shot in an accident. The Lord told me that he would live. That very next morning I got word that he had died. I knew that I had heard the Lord. I went to Him and asked Him to be sure that I had. I'll never forget His answer. From that moment on it changed how I saw death. He told me that the boy did live. He was in eternity with Him. That is life. We have this life and death thing all backwards. We can't even on our own understand what eternity with God means. Our human flesh minds have a beginning and an end. That is the reason why we think the way we do. Unless God reveals to us what eternity means, it is just too big to hold in our minds. It literally blows our minds to think that way. Can you picture this? Never ending. Forever. Eternally. Eternity has no end. For forever, we'll be with Jesus. We'll be in the presence of God eternally. We'll be perfect. We'll be like Jesus is now. I John 3:2 tells us, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." I think that the most wonderful thing about heaven will be that there will be no more flesh. No more battles with yourself. No more weaknesses. No more hindrances separating you from being consumed totally with God's Spirit. No more fleshly barriers. Just being totally filled up with God. Praise God. It even gets better. Everybody around you will be the same way. We'll be able to love one another in perfect love, in perfect unity, in perfect fellowship. We'll never get in the flesh and hurt someone that you never meant to hurt. No one will do the same to you. We will know exactly what to

do and say and never say anything that is contrary. Perfect unity in perfect love all in the One Who loves us so much. Sometimes now when we get a glimpse of God's love it is so overwhelming that our physical bodies can't stand it. Have you ever been in a good old Holy Ghost filled meeting when the Spirit of God was falling like the rain. I've been in meetings where you'd get to shouting and praising the Lord, dancing in the Holy Ghost. Before long you couldn't stand it any more because this physical body couldn't take so much of God's love and His Spirit. I believe that is why people get slain in the Spirit. God's Spirit overwhelms you and your physical body goes into what computer people call sleep mode. It goes into neutral drive. In other words, our physical bodies can't stand but so much of God's love and his Spirit. In heaven, praise God, we won't have to worry about that. We will dwell in the middle of the Spirit of God for eternity. For forever. Now after having been caught up in thinking about what a wonderful place eternity will be and how long it will last, let's think about this for a minute. 80 years. Or 60 years. Or 70 years. What is that? That is not even a drop in the bucket. And it is a very, very big bucket. Now you know why this is true. A thousand years is but a day in the sight of God. I mean really. Think about this. A life time here on earth. It is a sneeze. It is like a blink of an eye. This is death. Eternity is life. Eternity with Jesus is life. Eternity in the perfection and blessing of God is life. We are in death now. One day whether by the grave or by the rapture we'll pass into life.

Now let's go back to my aunt. She wasn't in a lot of pain when she died. Not excruciating pain like many people are when they die with lymph cancer. But she did struggle. She fought death because there were some things that she had to get a peace about that she struggled with. There were some unanswered prayers and something that she needed to get a release with that she wanted God to do. There were also some things that she needed to fix with some other people. When God gets ready to take us, He will often give us a chance to finish unfinished business. But we don't ever need to live like we are going to get that opportunity. He might not let us. Death was not easy for her. I don't think that it ever is. There were times when she agonized

to take a breath. This went on for weeks. This flesh struggled to hold on. So I guess that you are wondering about my statement I made earlier when I started this chapter. When I said that this was a blessing to be able to stay with her when she was dying. Just stay with me and I'll explain.

She was so weak toward the end that she couldn't even suck water out of a straw. I had to give her water a few drops at a time. She was so weak that all she could move was her hand. She would raise it up and wave it and say thank you Jesus. The last words that she said were thank you Jesus. She praised God until she fell into her last sleep. There was no fear from the time that she started her journey toward death and all the way through. There was only joy. On the night that she died I was asleep. The quickening power of the Holy Ghost jumped up in my spirit and leaped me awake. The Holy Ghost literally filled the house. I knew that her wait was over. I knew that it was time for her to go home. I knew that life for her was just beginning. What do we have to fear? When we can lie in the jaws of death in the grip of cancer and praise God for His love and his goodness, what do we have to fear? When we can walk in His love through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil, what do we have to fear? My aunt had caught a glimpse of what was ahead of her. She had caught hold of her Savior's hand. The one that she had held to for most of her life here on earth. It was just another step. Another walk with Him. She praised Him through that part of her journey just like she had praised Him through the other steps that she had taken in her life. I could tell on her face day by day as she waited for her heavenly escort that she was seeing more and more of Him and less and less of this world. Not long before she died I walked into the kitchen. I reached up to turn off the light because I thought I'd forgotten to turn it off. It was already off. That light that was shining wasn't coming from any light bulb. I believe it was just a reflection of the garments of the angels who waited to escort her home. She had crossed what here looks like to be that finish line. Her race on earth had ended. Her life had just begun.

We are in a race. Paul called the prize a heavenly prize. It is an eternal prize that we are running for. Hebrews 12:1-2

tells us, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...” We have a Promised Land of Promised Lands that one day we’ll call home. When you really get a glimpse in your spirit of that Promised Land, it will change how you see this earthly life and how you see death. A lot of things that you think are so important are just shadows. We spend more of our time here on earth chasing shadows. Our priorities get all messed up. The things that this world calls important will all one day burn up. All that will matter is our walk with the Lord. All that will matter is our obedience to Him. All that will matter will be our walking, talking, and obedient, submitted relationship with Him. Is that the main priority in your life? On that day when you stand before the Lord will he know you? Or was your life, heart and mind so filled with other things that you didn’t have time to spend knowing Him?

If we don’t go by the way of the grave then we’ll rise to meet Him in the air. In Acts 1:9-11 we read, “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” When we see Him, we’ll rise to be with Him. Study out God’s Word. It is as sure that this will happen as tomorrow will happen. Some people no longer believe in the rapture. Some are preaching that it will not come. To me, that only proves it even more. We read that there will be a great falling away before the Lord’s return. That just proves that His return is even closer than we think.

Not long ago the Lord started dealing with me about some things in my life. He let me catch a little glimpse of hell. Sometimes we need this to get our priorities in line. It is one thing to get used to the idea that our unsaved loved ones are going to hell. It is another thing to see a glimpse of them sliding into the

flames. Hell is as eternal as heaven. Hell is as bad as heaven is wonderful. If your husband isn't saved and doesn't accept salvation he will go there. If your Mother or Dad has once lived for God but has turned away from Him, if they don't turn back they will go there. Your children, your neighbors, and friends who are lost will be lost forever, if they don't turn to God. We don't like to think about these things. They hurt. But that doesn't make them any less true. We are prone to push that thought back. We need to get a glimpse of hell that is so real that it renews our commitment to share the Word of God with everyone we see. We need to get that light out from under a bushel and let it shine.

Right after the Lord gave me this glimpse of hell he began to show me how near the end that we are. We don't have time to waste. His coming is just around the corner. During that same week that I mentioned in the last paragraph, I talked to several people who had the same thing happen to them. As a whole, God is dealing with the body of Christ. He is coming soon. We have labor to do. The fields are white unto harvest but the laborers are few. Luke 10:2, "Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest." The Word of God is powerful. In every way that you can you need to be putting His Word out. You have His Word in your heart and spirit. Live it.

We have a Promised Land to look forward to. It is precious. It is certainly a pearl of great price. Matthew 13, "45-46 tells us, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. We need to make the kingdom of heaven so precious that following after it is the number one priority in our lives. We need to make a priority that when we stand before the Lord that we stand in a crowd who testify that in some way you made a difference to their lives. That in some way you reached out a hand to them to help to find their own Promised Land.

Oh, what a sweet homecoming that will be. Canaan land, our Promised Land of Promised Lands, is just in sight. Keep on keeping on. Set aside any weight that might hinder you

in this race. What a celebration there will be one day when we cross that final finish line. It might take a few hundred years just to get over the newness of it all; it will be so big and so wonderful. Oh and to see Jesus. It will take an eternity just to thank Him. We certainly have something to look forward to. Praise God. Praise God. Praise God.

Closing

I pray that this book has been a blessing to you. I pray that you have a renewed vision of the Promised Lands that the Lord has for you. That you be strengthened in spirit and that you go in and possess your lands. We as children of God have many Promised Lands. They belong to us. God said it in His Word. We believe it. That settles it. We also have Promised Lands that God has promised to us personally, speaking the promise into our spirit, those Words that He has spoken to your heart. These promises are as settled as His written Word. Yes, there will be battles and circumstances to overcome. But just as the children of Israel watched the Seas part and the walls fall, so will we watch our own enemies fall. So will we watch the barriers that seem to separate us from our Promised Land rise up and part so that we can walk through. We will watch the walls that separate us from our promises fall at our feet through our obedience. God's Word is sure. So are His promises for you. Go in and possess your land.

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