

Take the Land

There is a desire that is common among all people....the desire to be successful. No one WANTS to fail in life.

So everyone desires success, but what is success? That is where we vary from one another.....Success can be getting married, having kids, going to college, graduating from college, getting a good job (a career), being promoted in that job, being wealthy, being known.....

These are the types of success by the world's standards. Unfortunately people measure their worth (and the worth of others) based on these successes. These CAN all be good things, it's not that we shouldn't pursue them or look at them as success stories.

But these things are all temporary. The happiness they provide is temporary. And these are things that ALL people pursue to a degree and view as success in life.

What about God's measurement of success?

We often talk about Christianity being a selfless religion, it's all about sacrifice, doing things for others, serving. Basically to be a Christian you have to be a giver....give your money, give your time, give your wisdom, give your talents, give, give, give.

I agree that we are to be givers. I think it should be the way we live our lives, giving of ourselves the way Jesus gave of Himself. We should love God with all our heart, we should love others and esteem them more highly than ourselves. We should live sacrificial lives for God.

We are called to be givers.....But do you know we are also called to be takers?

To be successful, you have to take
take chances (do things simply by faith),
take risks (do what doesn't make sense),
take orders (from God - obedience),

I don't think it would be an exaggeration to say that everyone wants to hear from God. Who would like for God to audibly tell you right now what you should do about a situation or what lies ahead for you?

How many of you would then say ok, I'm willing to take a chance, take a risk, and take orders?

It comes down to one thing.....TRUST. Can you say "God I trust you."? You might be in a difficult situation, even an impossible one, but nothing is impossible with God. So can you trust him today?

I want to look at a story of trust, success, and taking. Flip to Joshua chapter 1.

Joshua 1:1-5 (HCSB)

1 After the death of Moses the Lord's servant, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, who had served Moses: 2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I am giving the Israelites. 3 I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses. 4 Your territory will be from the wilderness and Lebanon to the great Euphrates River—all the land of the Hittites—and west to the Mediterranean Sea. 5 No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or forsake you.

For those who don't know the OT well. Moses was leading God's people for 40 years wandering about in the wilderness. Moses was the person God was using to lead them to the promised land. Moses had directly disobeyed God and took credit for something God had done (rock providing water). God showed Moses the promised land at the end of Deuteronomy and said I have let you see it but you will not cross into it. He died without leading the Israelites across.

This is where we pick up, Joshua had served under Moses, we are told he was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid hands on him. Joshua is God's choice to continue what Moses had started. He would be the one to lead God's people into the promised land.

WOW, talk about big shoes to fill! Moses had done and seen great and mighty things. God reassures Joshua. Tells him the plan, says "*No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or forsake you.*"

God told Joshua, YOU and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I'm giving you.....Here is what God is telling Joshua.....take the land!

Success for the Israelites was getting to that promised land. That's what their sights were set on. It was the mission and goal of the entire people group. They had been waiting for this moment.

Think about the promised land....yes this was a literal, physical place, actual land. It was a destination, it was where God's people were to dwell, inhabit.

But what does this symbolize for Christians today? The promised land is still a destination for us today, not literally, but figuratively. The mission, the goal today is for God's people to walk in, dwell in, inhabit the promises of God.

The promised land represents the promises of God. Look back at Deuteronomy 34 just before Moses dies.

Speaking of Moses, it says “And the Lord showed him all the land” - In Hebrew, to see it with your eyes was a symbol of legal acquisition of property, Moses was accepting, from God, ownership of the Promised land on behalf of Israel.

When God shows you something, it is yours! The promises He makes, He keeps. It may seem impossible, it may seem unlikely, but do you trust Him? If God shows you things, accept them, take ownership of them as though they were already done!

What has the Lord shown you? What do you need to be taking ownership of? Write it down.....

NOW.....TAKE THE LAND. Moses saw, he accepted the land for Israel. But he didn't see it through, even though it was theirs, he didn't see them possess it. Joshua is told to TAKE IT.

You can sit on the promises of God all day long, believe them, stand firm on them, but there will come a time in your life when God says “TAKE THE LAND” and you better be ready to GO!

But how, what do I do? First of all.....be ready. Be ready to cross the river. Whatever is between you and God's promise, be ready to cross over to the other side. It may be difficult, there may be a strong current, there may be debris, but be ready to wade through it. What's on the other side is worth it.....

Then here's what God told Joshua:

Joshua 1:6-9 (HCSB)

6 “Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance. 7 Above all, be strong and very courageous to carefully observe the whole instruction My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. 8 This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to recite it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. 9 Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

This is God's encouragement to take the land. Consider the promises that you may still be waiting on. While you are waiting, God is working. When He says “take the land” it's time to be strong and courageous.

You can't take the land because you are a great leader or faithful follower, but because the God you serve is able!

It's time to be a taker, it's time to be bold, determined, and to prevail. If you aren't you won't be up to the challenge! To Be strong and courageous means to become strong and courageous. Maybe you aren't now but God is saying through Him, you can become what are not right now!

No need to fear, be anxious, or feel inadequate.

2 Timothy 1:7 (HCSB)

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.

There are things that cause you to be afraid that keep you from taking the land. It's time to BE strong and courageous. The weapons of our warfare, they are mighty through our God! (Rick Pino)

You have to get over the past and to the next level....to take the land you have to move forward!

Are you willing to take risks, chances and orders? Do you trust Him?

You must carefully observe the WHOLE instruction, don't turn from it to the right or left, so that you will have success wherever you go! This is the key to having success in taking the land....following God's instruction....obedience!

Luke 11:28 (HCSB)

28 He said, "Even more, those who hear the word of God and keep it are blessed!"

Without God's leading it may be possible to take the land but it won't be possible to keep it!

The promised land was given to be Israel's forever. Yes this earth is a temporary home, but we are told in Revelation the earth will be purged with fire and we will have a new heaven, new earth, and a new Jerusalem.....the promised land. Is the promised land theirs today? Do they inhabit it and have control of it? NO

It is still supposed to be their land, God promised it to them. The land would always be theirs, but this doesn't mean they will always inhabit that land.

Joshua 1:8 (HCSB)

8 This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to recite it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.

These are the three things you have to do to prosper and succeed in keeping the land.....

1. This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth
 - a. This is the truth, God's promises, they must not be removed from your mouth, don't let that doubt, fear, lies, negativity replace them.

2. you are to recite it day and night
 - a. Speak out God's promises. Speak them out boldly, with confidence, day and night. You speak of them as though they are done, because the land is yours, you just need to go and take it.
3. observe everything written in it
 - a. This is the result of God's promises remaining on your lips and you speaking them day and night....observe everything written in it, meaning to do, accomplish, produce.....you will produce those promises in your life. Take the Land!

God's Word is important. His Word is truth. You need to know it, study it, think about it, obey it!

God has to be the priority! For the Israelites, it wasn't about Moses or Joshua, or even Abraham whom God made the original promise to. The priority was God. The promises are HIS. He is faithful, He is the one who delivers, He is the one whose leading we need. It's supernatural strength and courage by HIS Spirit that we need! It's His presence that must go with us!

Joshua 1:9 (HCSB)

9 Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

WORSHIP TEAM

Joshua was the one to lead God's people into the promised land. But He had God's presence with him.

Everything in the OT in some way points to Jesus. Joshua means God is salvation. Joshua led God's people into the promised land but it foreshadowed Jesus leading us to the promised land.

Jesus provided a way for all believers to become followers. He led us back to a relationship with the Father. He redeemed us. He restores us. It's in Him that we find rest.

Maybe you have been wandering around in the wilderness for the last 40 years or 40 hours, today, because of Jesus' finished work on the cross and resurrection, you can TAKE THE LAND!

What has the Lord shown you? What do you need to be taking ownership of today? What land do you need to take?

Romans 8:37 (NKJV)

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

It doesn't matter what you are like right now. You may be weak and afraid, but through Christ, you can become strong and courageous. Through Christ, you are a conqueror. Through Christ, you can take the land.

Romans 4:13 (HCSB)

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would inherit the world was not through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

Can you trust Jesus today? If you have land that you need to take hold of this morning, come forward and take it!

Today is the day to take the land.

- Stand on God's promise
- Accept God's challenge
- Obey God's command

Take the Land!