

A Better Land

Who believes that this is not as good as it gets?

Who believes that God has something greater for you than what you have right now?

I like free upgrades. Like when you get to a hotel and they don't have the room you reserved so they give you a better one! Or if you're doing Walmart grocery pickup and they didn't have your exact item so they gave you the next size up for no additional cost!

We like to get things that are better, especially if it's free!

As the Israelites wandered around the wilderness for 40 years, they were motivated by this promise from God for a better land. It was the Promised Land. Land that was first promised to Abraham over 500 years earlier.

Could you imagine...40 years of hanging on to a 500 year old promise while you struggle.

But see I think a lot of us in this room can relate. Because I believe this writing about a physical land represents something spiritual for us today.

You know everything in the OT in some way points to Jesus. But while these "stories" are true and really happened, they show us an image of the spiritual life we live.

This morning we're going to look at what it takes to get to and then fight for a better land.

Deuteronomy 11:8-9 (NKJV)

"Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, 9 and that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, 'a land flowing with milk and honey.'

Here's the promise...one of a better land and it starts with obedience. Keep His commandments, that you may be strong. Who wants to be strong?

You're not going to get a better land without being strong. But strength comes from obedience. And obedience is simply this - submission to authority. And when you submit to authority, you come under their protection, their covering, their provision. And you now have strength (power) that you wouldn't otherwise have!

This is what God wants for us! This gets you in position to go in and possess the land.

But not only that...it will prolong your days in the land. Strength from obedience to Christ is what will keep you advancing in the land.

And you need to know that this isn't any old land...it truly is a better land.

A land flowing with milk and honey

Flowing - abundance

Milk and honey were things you didn't have to work **hard** for if the land was fertile. Animals (goats) supplied the milk, honey was either fruit nectar (date honey) from date palms or honey produced by bees which required flowers and nectar.

God promises that the land He gives to His people will be abundantly fertile. It's a land that produces!

The Promised Land was a physical place that was promised. But it represents a spiritual place for us today. A better land.

John 10:10 (NKJV)

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

I believe this is the better land...not just that we have life in Jesus...but we can have it more abundantly. We've got to be obedient to Jesus which makes us strong, then we go in and possess the land He has given us!

Remember that. As the WH Press Secretary would say, "we're going to circle back to that" except we actually will!

Now to realize you need a better land, you've got to remember the land you came from.

Deuteronomy 11:10 (NKJV)

For the land which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot, as a vegetable garden;

Egypt was the place of bondage and hard labor. God says the land for His people is not like the world that He brought you out of...

They had to water by foot...working water wheels, carrying buckets of water...see in Egypt the rain didn't water the crop, instead they had to pump and carry water from the Nile River.

It was hard work!

Egypt represents the world. The place Jesus brought you out of. It's not where you are now if you're in Christ. But remember how hard it was? Remember how much you worked to gain so little? Remember how you were in bondage to sin, your past, your mistakes? And you carried that all by yourself...it was hard.

But that's not where you are in Christ and it's certainly not where you're going! It's a reminder!

Deuteronomy 11:11-12 (NKJV)

but the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, 12 a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.

The land which God was giving to them was not going to require watering by foot but it would be watered by rain. In other words, this land wasn't going to be sustained by labor, but by blessing.

Praise Jesus!

Now don't misunderstand the point here. Salvation is a free gift. There's nothing you can do to earn it. Only by the grace of God and through faith in Jesus. Confess with your mouth, believe in your heart that Jesus rose from the dead and you will be saved. You can't earn it. You don't work for it.

But in the land He has given you...there's work to be done just like there was work for Adam to do in the garden of Eden. A place that was perfect and when life was without sin...and he still had to work...it just wasn't hard. He didn't get a stiff back. The ground wasn't hard. Yet he still had to work it...

*****Every man deserves a tractor** - when we got the carport, I was out here on a friend's tractor moving some rock around, having a good time. (Tractors are fun) and I verbally said to Jesus, "Lord, every man deserves a tractor." I kept riding along...and the Holy Spirit responded, "No, only a man who's willing to first use a shovel." Thankfully I had just done some shovel work so I was worthy.

The point is that if you aren't willing to do the hard work, don't think you're going to get the easy work.

Church, this spiritual place that God has for us...this better land...it's a place that Jesus cares for and His eyes are always on it. The hills and valleys drink water from the rain of heaven. It's a place where He provides the rain...a better land is sustained by blessing!

Many times in the bible, God uses the rain to symbolize the Holy Spirit. Notice the rain from heaven (not the clouds).

Jesus is physically sitting on a throne in heaven right now. But His eyes are on us. He sent the Holy Spirit to sustain us. He is the blessing!

Jesus didn't just leave and say "you saw what I did, now do it" and expect us to do it in our own power. He left us with His Word, to obey...and power through His Spirit so that we can overcome and enter into a better land.

Deuteronomy 11:13-15 (NKJV)

'And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. 15 And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.'

Obey, love and serve God....THEN He will give you rain for your land in its season. We'll have this Spirit for the period of life we're in. The Holy Spirit is the Helper, the Blessing...and God speaks of the early rain and the latter rain. The indwelling and the outpouring of the Spirit.

Most Christians are wandering the desert...saved...following Jesus...but walking in circles because they lack the faith or the power to enter the better land.

God has more for you. We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit because it is the power of God upon our lives.

Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

This gives us the power to enter in instead of wandering around just holding on to a promise wondering if it will ever be fulfilled. Because when we're in that place...we aren't strong...

Deuteronomy 11:16-17 (NKJV)

Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, 17 lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.

Don't ever think you've arrived. Man if Christianity is all about getting saved and wandering through trials and pain with just a hope that SOMEDAY we will die or Jesus will come back for us but until then we have to be miserable...then that faith stinks!

You can enter into the better land TODAY!

As a child of God, you have been given dominion over this world. Jesus took back what was stolen from us when Adam sinned in the garden. Adam was told to rule and reign over everything that God had created!

And this is what it looks like to enter the better land in the power of the Spirit of God!

Joshua 1:2-3 (NKJV)

“Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.

You can have power and authority in every place the sole of your foot treads...He's given it to you! This is the abundant life...

If God has given you every place that your foot steps..you still have the responsibility to take the steps!

YOU walk in faith and TAKE what was given to you!

Psalm 119:105 (NKJV)

Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.

If His Word says it...you can have it! If you don't, you're leaving money on the table...you're not taking full advantage of the blessing of God!

Listen...there's MORE for you!

Joshua 13:1 (NKJV)

Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the Lord said to him: “You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.

There is still more to be possessed! You've got to move your feet! Claim it!

Do you know that once they entered the better land they still had to continue to battle for the land God gave them? They didn't stop fighting the enemy. What God did is assure the victory, they had to fight!

They already had the milk and honey...God said there's very much more to be possessed. The abundant life!

Are you going to be content with what you have or are you willing to claim victory in every step of your life?

Where is your foot touching? It's yours!

Enter into the better land...then keep fighting for more!