

23 Joshua 13-14 – Leaving it All on the Field



This has been a study that we'll never forget. We have found in the Book of Joshua biblical principles that we can use in how we approach the battles in our lives.

13 Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed. (Joshua 13:1, KJV).

Wow. God was telling Joshua that he was "stricken" in years. I can certainly identify with that. Often these days I feel like I too am "stricken with age." One of our ladies has been heard saying, "I don't know what happened. I was young, and then two weeks ago I woke up and I was old." It just sort of happens, and this piece of scripture reminds us that even when we

are old, God has a work for each of us. Let's go ahead and read the text beginning with chapter 13.

13 Now Joshua was old and advanced in years when the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and a very large amount of the land remains to be possessed." (Joshua 13:1, NASB).

When I sat down with folks from Union Grove back in 2016, I was about to tell them that we are "all in the sunset of our years" (we were three or four folks sitting there at a table and we were all in our 50's and 60's). I distinctly felt God was stopping what I was about to say. Then almost out of nowhere (obviously through the guidance of the Holy Spirit), instead I said, "This is the 4th quarter. Let's make it count." My words even surprised me. Coaches will often blow the football game by playing it safe in the 4th quarter. If we've lived a good life, we're tempted to coast at the end and "play it safe." That is rarely the case for what God has in store for you and me. You see, He has prepared your whole life for EXACTLY what you're in right now.

Each of us has a mission to accomplish while we're on this earth, and we're not done until we're done. We must never underestimate something as being unimportant.

Remember how unimportant so many things have seemed in the Book of Joshua. When God told the people to do something illogical, like walking around the city quietly, they just did it.

I want to remind each of you listening or reading this that is a senior that NONE of the patriarchs even reached their defining moment with God until they were probably in their 80's. I am talking about Abraham who had Isaac at 100 years old. Jacob was 65 when his firstborn Reuben was born and he was 97 when Benjamin was born.¹ This means that his encounter with the "man" (probably an angel) at Peniel was when he was in his 80's. That is when Jacob became Israel (meaning one who wrestles with God). Then let's not forget Moses who was 80 before he began his God-appointed liberation of the Jews out of Egypt. God is not through with any of us in this room, and He has "much land to be possessed in our lives."

Let's read on and see the work that God said was remaining for Joshua.

² This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and all those of the Geshurites; ³ from the Shihor which is east of Egypt, even as far as the border of Ekron to the north (it is counted as Canaanite); the five governors of the Philistines: the Gazite, the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite, the Ekronite; and the Avvite ⁴ to the south, all the land of the Canaanite, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorite; ⁵ and the land of the Gebalite, and all of Lebanon, toward the east, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. ⁶ All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon as far as Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians, I will drive out from the sons of Israel; only allot it to Israel as an inheritance as I have commanded you. ⁷ Now therefore, apportion this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh." (Joshua 13:2-7, NASB).

I know all of these are just difficult names to pronounce that don't mean a lot to us, but the point is that God was reminding Joshua that He had, in fact, already given great portions of the land that had never been taken. In a similar way, there are many promises of God that were given to us that we have never gotten around to possessing. There are works that He has prepared for you and me that we have not done yet. You might say, "Oh Pastor, I can't do anymore than I'm doing right now." I'm not asking you to do more. I may be suggesting that you do less. What I'm suggesting is that you need to be doing the things that God has for you to do.

Let's focus in now on verse six. God is saying, "I'll drive your enemies out if you'll divide up the land among the tribes." This is a big thing to understand. All throughout this

¹ <https://www.fullbibletimeline.com/jacob-and-his-twelve-sons>

study we've seen God do what Israel was not able to do in their own strength, but the people were left to do much of the work as well. I think it was my father who used to tell me, "In whatever circumstance or problem you're in, do ALL YOU CAN DO to solve the problem as though it all depended on you, BUT PRAY KNOWING THAT IT ALL DEPENDS ON GOD. Do your part and trust that He will do His part. I have seen God do this over and over and over in my lifetime.

"Canaan-Land" living is really all about laying down your agenda and getting in line with God's agenda for your life. Having everything go your way is not living in Canaan Land. Canaan Land is letting go of your own plans, your own agenda, and your own resources and letting God use them for His purposes. This is what gives you a richness in your soul that nothing can touch. Your soul can prosper and work out being Jesus' hands, feet, and heart right where He puts you. There is great joy in just doing what God wants you to do even if it seems mundane.

In verses 8-32 God tells Joshua how the land east of the Jordan is to be divided up. Interestingly, in verse 33 He reminds Joshua that no land is going to be given to the Levites. Instead, they are given their daily bread (verse 14) and they are given a relationship with the Lord Himself as an inheritance. ³³ *But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them. (Joshua 13:33, NIV).* I want to remind you that YOU and I have been given exactly what the Levites were promised. We are given our daily "manna" and we are given the Lord Himself as our inheritance. We are given the gift of the Holy Spirit that lives within us.

Moving on into chapter 14 we find the allotment of land to the west of the Jordan. Probably the most interesting thing for me in the chapter is the dialogue that continues with Caleb. Caleb is an interesting name because it either means "dog" or "one having heart."² Looking at chapter 14, I think it probably means the latter.

Chapter 14. ⁶ *Then the sons of Judah approached Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God on account of you and me in Kadesh-barnea. ⁷ I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart. ⁸ Nevertheless my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed the LORD my God fully. (Joshua 14:6-8, NASB).*

² <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Caleb.html>

Caleb reminded Joshua of what had happened when Caleb was 40 years old. He reminded Joshua that he had gone as a spy into the land, and he had brought word back to Moses as to what was in his heart. And do you remember what was in his heart? It was the opposite of what the other spies had brought back. They had brought back fear causing the heart of the people to melt, but Joshua had walked in faith and had believed that God would do what He said He would do. It was only through Joshua and Caleb's insistence that the people had ever moved on out of Kadesh-Barnea. Let's continue on in verse 9.

⁹ So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'The land on which your foot has walked shall certainly be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God fully.' (Joshua 14:9, NASB).

Moses told him at that time that because Caleb had "walked on the land" and had followed the Lord his God fully, that the land was an inheritance to Caleb and his descendants forever. Oh what a joy it would be to "follow God fully." We can do that. It is a decision to give it all over to God. It is a choice to get yourself and your desires and passions out of the way.

¹⁰ And now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. ¹¹ I am still as strong today as I was on the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in. ¹² Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out just as the LORD has spoken." (Joshua 14:10-12, NASB).

This is probably the sweetest part of all in today's lesson. Caleb was 85 years old and like Joshua, he was stricken in age. But look at this guy's incredible heart. It is like he's saying, "Joshua, I'm 85 years young, so BRING IT ON." He said that he was as strong at the time as he was back then, and what did Caleb ask for? In verse 12 he asked for the most challenging piece of land that was left "give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out just as the LORD has spoken." Caleb was addicted to seeing the mighty hand of God at work.

When you begin walking in the Spirit and relying on God daily for direction and when you start following the path that He asks you to follow, you will become addicted to feeling God's presence and you'll be satisfied with nothing less in your life than seeing the mighty hand of God at work.

This word today is for both the young and the old. It shows the young that there is great joy in knowing the Lord and following Him when you're young. It will affect your life when you are old. As you trust the promises of God's word you, will see great victories in your life. You will see Him at work. You will feel the incredible joy at being the hands and feet of Jesus in the territory that He has given you. If you serve Him when you are young, you will enjoy His inheritances for many more years to come. Your spiritual inheritance began with the Holy Spirit of God being placed in your heart to guide you, comfort you, whisper to you, and direct you. Like Caleb, you will not be left shaking in fear at the thought of going into battle against the circumstances that others might find scary. There is no joy like knowing the will of God and doing it. There is no confidence like knowing you are in the palm of His hand.

There's also a great word in here today for those who are "stricken in years". Don't rest on what you've done in the first three quarters of your life. Realize that you are stronger in the Lord now at "eighty-five" than you were in your walk with the Lord at forty. He prepared you for such a time as this. Stop playing it safe! It's time to leave it all out on the field! Are you willing to give up your safety and security to fight in the Lord's army. Are you willing to take the "hill country" and go where the "giants in the land" still might be hanging out. This is your day Joshua! This is your day Caleb! Trust God and go for it. It might look like getting on your knees and just praying for this assembly. It might look like encouraging the youth in here and getting to know them. Don't be one of the ten. Be a Joshua! Be a Caleb! You too will have a reward.

¹³ So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. ¹⁴ Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully. ¹⁵ Now the name of Hebron was previously Kiriath-arba; for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land was at rest from war. (Joshua 14:13-15, NASB).

God gave Caleb the land of the giants that was named after Arba, the greatest of the giants. I looked up the origin of the name "Arba" and you'll never guess what it comes from.³ It means the fourth, or the fourth part. Caleb went into the fourth quarter going after the biggest of the big. Now, let us go and do likewise.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by

³ <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Arba.html>

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