

Our Daily Homily - Joshua

by F.B. Meyer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of claiming our inheritance in Christ, trusting in His promises and power, and relying on faith to overcome obstacles and achieve victory.

Scripture: Joshua 1:3, Joshua 23:11, Joshua 24:19, Isaiah 43:2, John 10:10, Romans 8:32, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Ephesians 1:3, Hebrews 11:30, 2 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Faith and Obedience", "Claiming Spiritual Inheritance"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the necessity of claiming our spiritual inheritance in Christ, drawing parallels between the Israelites' conquest of Canaan and the believer's appropriation of God's promises. He illustrates that while the land was given to Israel, they had to actively claim it, just as Christians must assert their rights to spiritual blessings through faith. Meyer highlights the importance of meditating on God's Word for strength and the significance of Christ's blood as a protective covering. He encourages believers to recognize the vast spiritual territory available to them and to actively pursue it, trusting in God's provision and guidance. Ultimately, Meyer calls for a life of obedience, faith, and love as the means to fully experience the abundant life promised in Christ.

Transcript

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon - Joshua 1:3

All the land was given, but every inch of it had to be claimed. Israel had to put her foot down upon the land, whether wilderness or Lebanon, plain or hill, and say, "This is mine by the gift of God." And as the right was asserted, God made it good. The land had been covenanted to them through Abraham, but it awaited conquest and appropriation by the Israelites. No man was able to stand with them in the lot of their inheritance.

The settler who has purchased a plot of land in the Far West claims it to its furthest borders; and, if needs be, invokes the aid of the Government to make good his purchase. So with our possessions in Christ. All spiritual gifts are ours in the Risen Saviour. From the wilderness of the earth even to the river that makes glad the city of God, and unto the glassy sea on which the sun never goes down, is our border. But we must put the foot of faith down and say, "All things are ours; we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. He hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness."

Let this be the beginning of a new life for thee. Reckon that thou art on the resurrection side of death. Do not look at temptation or difficulty, but claim by steadfast faith whatever God has taught thee to feel the need of. Dost thou ask how that strong courage may be thine? The answer is at hand. Meditate on the Word of God day and night, and depart not from it to the right or left. The strength of the inner life finds nourishment in the Word of God. Only in this way can we behold the broad expanse of territory that is ours by right, and obtain strength to go up and possess it.

This line of scarlet thread - Joshua 2:8

It speaks of the precious blood of Christ. Scarlet is the color of Calvary. Twine it round the window through which thou lookest out on thy foes, and away to the river of death. Nothing can hurt the soul which has put the precious blood of Christ between it and condemnation or alarm. Let every outlook to the future be associated with a remembrance that His blood was shed for thee, and be thou thankful.

Rahab is the type of Gentile sinners who are permitted to share in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to sit with Him in the heavenlies. That scarlet thread had been the means of salvation to the spies. By it they had been let down to the ground and saved from death. It must have been strong. So the blood of Christ avails, not only for us, but for all who shelter with us in the household of faith, and for others who find it the means of life as they receive it from our hands.

Let us see to it that, like Rahab, we gather father and mother, brethren and friends, to share with us the shelter and safeguard of the precious blood.

But, after all, it was not the cord that saved - that was only the emblem and type. Behind it on the one hand was God's oath, spoken through the spies, and on the other was Rahab's faith. The true safety of that house on the wall stood in the moral attitude of one woman in it. Rahab believed God who had dried up the water of the Red Sea, and who was God in heaven above and in earth beneath. This faith raised her afterward from her life of shame to become the ancestress of Christ. Such wonders does the blood of Christ work in outcasts from the commonwealth of Israel, bringing them nigh.

When the soles of the feet of the priests, shall rest in the Jordan - Joshua 3:13

The floods of the Jordan were high: so may be the floods of trial and sorrow that sometimes overflow their banks; so the floods of conviction of sin; and so, to some at least, the waters of death. Possibly this overflowing is needed for the time of harvest; the width of golden grain in the Jordan valley was no doubt to a large extent dependent on the far-spreading of those waters. How the heart trembles, as we hear the gurgling and rushing of the floods. Hark, how they lift up their voice!

But when the priest's foot touches them, they shrink away. Jesus has stepped down into these floods as our High Priest. In Gethsemane their overflowing tide washed around Him. At Calvary the water-spouts went over His head. In the grave He seemed momentarily to have succumbed. But since then they have been cut off. Through the ages He has stood, bearing the ark of propitiation, and arresting the tumultuous floods. "Thus far, and no further."

Sinful soul, deeply convicted, "Look for the Priest," on whose person the storm broke, and by whom it has been checked and stayed! Tried believer, be sure that the water-floods cannot pass Jesus, to reach or drown thee! His promise to thee is: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be

burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa 42:2). And when death approaches thee, O fearful and trembling one, thou wilt find Jesus standing between thee and its might, making a path by which thou shalt pass over dry-shod.

Those twelve stones did Joshua set up in Gilgal - Joshua 4:20

Not content with pitching a cairn of stones on the river's bank, Joshua, at God's command, set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant stood. And often, as he came back to Gilgal, he must have gone out by himself to walk and muse beside the river, turning the outward and the inner gaze to the spot where beneath the flow of the current those stones lay hidden. They were a perpetual memorial of where the people had been, of the grace which had brought them forth, and of the position to which God had conducted them. Children in after days would gather round those mighty boulders and be instructed, and it is a great matter that the deliverances of God should be graven as with a pen of iron on the soft and yielding surface of the child's heart; thus the coming generation shall revere and love the name of Jehovah.

The story of these stones is told again by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2. We were dead in trespasses and sins, and lay hopelessly in the grave, like stones in the heart of the river of death. But we were brought forth by God's mighty hand and outstretched arm. We were raised up together with Christ. The resurrection of Jesus is the memorial stone of our position in the sight of God; from this we should never recede. How those old stones would have cried out, if Israel had gone back over the Jordan! And does not Christ's empty grave protest against our living amid the pleasures and cares of the world from which He has gone, and going, has taken us also? This is not our rest; let us make good our standing in the risen Christ.

Behold, there stood a Man - Joshua 5:13

When Jericho, its fortifications looming dark through the night, must be assailed, then the Divine Man may be looked for. Only let circumcision do its keen work of separation, so that there be nothing of the flesh with its energy and pride to vaunt itself before God; then, as we stand face to face with some imminent peril, God will be revealed as our very present help. Not weeks before our need, not before the Jordan has been crossed in faith, not before circumcision has been performed; but when all God's demands have been met, and to-morrow calls for action, then behold there will stand the Man Christ Jesus, not by Himself, but as Captain of the Lord's host, awaiting with mighty legions on the wing for His least word.

It is sometimes thought that the Divine Warrior had come to supersede Joshua; this is not so. He was Prince of another host than Israel. His host was the celestial armies, which were going forth to war against Canaan. As long as Israel was true to God, these were its allies. Look up, Christian soul! Thou thinkest thyself alone; or countest sorrowfully thy poor array; but in very deed the Man of Calvary and of the throne is beside thee. All heaven owns His authority, and will supplement thine efforts. Be reverent, obedient, full of faith and prayer. Keep step with the goings forth of God. Thou shalt have light work to do. Before the impact of His might, thy Jericho shall fall. The battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift; but each to those who are living lives separate from the world, and dedicated to God. The vessels which are meet for the Master's use are pure ones. Cleanness, rather than cleverness, is the prime condition of successful service.

Every man straight before him - Joshua 6:20

God required of the Israelites only to wait, obey, and trust, whilst the Divine Captain led His celestial hosts to the assault, and achieved the victory. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days." We must be sure that our way lies through and beyond Jericho, and that God has called us to take it. When that is ascertained, we may be perfectly certain that the frowning walls of difficulty, which rise between us and the further land of promise, will fall down flat.

There must be times of Waiting. Israel waited a whole week. We may have to wait still longer. Let patience have her perfect work. There is no such teacher as she is; her pupils become perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

There must be times of Obedience. The people could not understand the meaning of these repeated marchings around the walls. They were not, however, asked to understand, but simply to obey. First the priests and ark, then the warriors. We must subordinate our armed activities to the slow and reverent pace of faith, hope, and love.

There must be times of exultant Faith. There was no quaver or hesitation in that cry. The Word of God, as communicated by Joshua, hushed every doubt and misgiving. In confident assurance the people shouted, and according to their faith, so it was to them. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." There are no walls of superstition and sin strong enough to resist Faith's shout, when God says that her shouting time is come.

The Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up - Joshua 7:10

There was something very beautiful and impressive in that prostrate form. And as the awed people gathered around in silence to contemplate their leader thus prone upon his face, it must have greatly touched them.

There was cause for soul-anguish. Joshua had counted on unbroken victory through the might of his covenant-keeping God; but here it appeared, either that God had deserted His people, or that He could not cope with the gods on which the Canaanites depended. In either case, Israel was in awful peril; obviously she had not strength sufficient to cope with the seven nations of Canaan. If left to herself, she must inevitably be cut off. But even this prospect alarmed Joshua less than the discredit that would attach to the name of Jehovah.

There are hours in our life when we are called from the exercises of devotion, good and God-honoring though they may be, to deal with the sin of our people, or to cut out some source of failure and defeat. Our place then is no longer before the ark; but arraigning the people by their tribes, casting lots for the offender, or consigning the accursed thing to fire. Child of God, do not be content with weeping and praying before God; diligently ascertain and put away the accursed thing which has hidden His face from you. When defeat befalls you at the hands of Satan, you may always be sure that there is some flaw in your consecration. You have taken some of the devoted thing back from God. The course of the Christian warrior should be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength, and in regular gradients drives his chariot from the eastern wane up the steep of heaven.

He wrote a copy of the law of Moses - Joshua 8:32

If we view this act typically, it is very significant. These things happened to Israel as a type and foreshadowing of great spiritual realities. Canaan is an emblem of the heavenlies, that blessed condition of joy and peace and spiritual power which is ours in Jesus, and becomes ours to enjoy, when we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. It might have been supposed that in the land of promise there would have been no need for the holy law of God, as given at Sinai, and repeated in Deuteronomy. But it was not so. So, even in the heavenlies, the law must be written again.

Jesus said, I came not to destroy, but to fulfill (Mat 5:17). - Not to abrogate, or set aside, or supersede the holy law, but to reenact it after a more spiritual sort, and to secure, not an outward, but an inward compliance with its precepts. Our Lord complied, not only with the moral, but with the ceremonial law; and His great aim and purpose was to honor and magnify it in the hearts of His people.

The Apostle Paul says that the ordinance of the law will be fulfilled by those who walk after the Spirit (Rom 8:4). - It is holy, just, and good; and they who are carnal and sold under sin cannot by their own resolutions and efforts comply with its demands; but when the soul is yielded to the Holy Spirit, He works in us the will and the power.

The Epistle to the Hebrews says that it will be written on our hearts (Heb 8:10). - This is the provision of the new covenant; God's law written, not on stone, whence it might be obliterated; not on metal, whence it might be melted; not on the memory, whence it might fade: but on the tablets of the heart, where we shall love it.

They asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord - Joshua 9:14

What an ominous sound there is in those words! They portend disaster - and it befell. Up to this moment the initiative had always been taken by the Lord. Now for the first time it is taken by Joshua and the people. It was a bad business! Certainly the Gibeonites did their work with guile, and were more than a match for the chosen race. Probably they would not have dared to attempt such a piece of imposition on men of their own sort; but the Israelites seemed a likely prey. They had so recently come into the land, that they might be supposed to be unfamiliar with the guile of Canaan. Yet how astute they fancied themselves!

So the children of God are imposed upon still! Women get married to unconverted husbands, supposing all the while that they are converted. Ministers of churches admit ravening wolves into their midst, deceived by the device of the sheepskin. Young converts get seduced from the simplicity and purity of the faith by lying spirits, that seem as lovely as God's angels. This is due to their relying on their own judgment, and not asking counsel of God. We must try the spirits, whether they be of God, for many false spirits are gone out into the world.

Yet God held Israel to the covenant that their leaders had struck, and in after years their breach of this promise was awfully avenged (2Sa 21:1-2). When we have taken a false step we may be forgiven, but we shall be held to its results. O souls, be sure to call in the Priest, with the Urim and Thummim, that He may give you counsel. Seek the purged eye and the pure heart, to be able to see people and things as they really are.

There was no day like that after it - Joshua 10:14

The sun seemed to stay its course in mid-heaven, and hasted not to go down; but there has been no day like that, and there will be none. You may bid the westering sun of another's life stay its downward track toward the western sea, but in vain. It may be some revered minister, some sainted parent, some life dearer to you than your own; but it obeys not your bidding. Surely and inevitably the little daughter of Jairus fades like a flower plucked from its stalk; and Lazarus sinks into his death-sleep, despite the eager message of the sisters to the Life-giver.

So with the sun of your own life. Slowly and steadily it descends. Work while it is called today; for the night cometh, in which no man can work. Finish the work that your Father has given you to do; there is only just time enough for it to be done within the span of your days. Our one anxiety should be that nothing divert us from His path, or intercept the communication of His grace.

But there is one Sun that goes not down. "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw herself; for the Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." Ah, precious Sun of Righteousness, when once Thou hast risen upon the soul, Thou shalt know no setting, ever higher and higher shalt Thou rise until the perfect day; no twilight or night can come where Thou art; no darkness draw its veil across the sky! Neither life nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which has broken upon our hearts, through the wall of cloud.

So Joshua took the whole land, and Joshua gave it - Joshua 11:23

This is almost an exact parallel of the words addressed by Peter to the crowds on the day of Pentecost: "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this." In His representative capacity, as the Head of His Church, and the Forerunner of the great host of the redeemed, it was necessary that Jesus should first receive from God the Father all that spiritual inheritance which He was to communicate to those who should afterward believe in His name: and having received, He is prepared to give. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

The whole land of spiritual blessing is now in the hand of Jesus. The prince of this world is cast out. The power of the Anakim is broken. The seven nations of Canaan and all the power of the enemy is under His feet. His are the rivers of the fullness of the Holy Ghost, and His the mountains of fellowship; His the slopes where the vines of Eshcol ripen and the corn of Canaan goldens; His the green pastures and the still waters of communion, as well as the rocky defile of death. Whatever, then, you desire, you must seek at His hand, in whom it is vested for thee, and me, and every believer: and He will give it.

The land had rest from war. Cease, then, from strife. You will not win by sore wrestling. The lame take the prey. Learn to take; let Him cause you to inherit; let Him give according to the division allotted you in the providence and determination of God. "It shall be given to those for whom it is prepared." "They that receive the abundance of grace shall reign."

Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave it - Joshua 12:6

We must not press a type, or analogy, unduly, though we may employ it to illustrate a doctrine well established from other parts of Scripture. Such an illustration is here. It is remarkable that the two tribes and a half which Moses settled beyond the Jordan took little part in the national life, and were soon wiped out of their inheritance. They were apparently absorbed by the nations whom they were supposed to have superseded.

This was partly due to the devotion of the people to their material prosperity. In the words of Deborah, Reuben preferred to sit among the sheepfolds, to hear the piping of the flocks, rather than to take part in the emancipation of Canaan from Midian. But, looked at typically, may we not say that whatever Moses gives will ultimately evade our grasp and slip from our possession? Like the tables of stone, it will fall from our hand and be broken in pieces. All that you try to be or do in the power of your own resolution and energy will inevitably fail and deceive you. The land looks fair and the tenure seems good, but you will not be able to retain it.

The deepest blessings of the spiritual life cannot be won or held in the strength of our own purpose, even though it be a holy and earnest one. These things can be ours only in so far as we abide in Christ, in whom our inheritance is vested, and from whom we receive it as we need, by faith. We can hold nothing apart from abiding fellowship with Jesus. And this is our privilege. Let us lift our hearts to the blessed Spirit, asking that He would reveal to us that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, but which God hath prepared for those that love Him.

There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed - Joshua 13:1

This is true in many directions:- Of the Bible. - How many pages of our Bibles are unpossessed! We have not underlined any verses in them, or put any marks in the margin to indicate that God has spoken through them to our souls. They are as clean as when they came from the printers. It is well sometimes to consider this, and to resolve to master some unfamiliar portions of God's Word, believing that no word of God is devoid of power. To many believers the Bible, which God intended for their possession, is yet an unexplored continent.

Of Doctrinal Truth. - Doctrine groups texts, and compares them. Doctrine is to isolated texts what natural laws are to particular facts. We should know the doctrines of the Bible. We should understand what is meant by Predestination; the unction of the Holy Ghost; and the Second Advent. How much unoccupied land there is here, which, if brought under cultivation, would yield grapes, and corn, and other produce for the refreshment and strength of the soul!

Of Spiritual Experience. - Talk with some deeply-taught saint, and you will see how little you have traversed of the good land beyond the Jordan, or know of its blessed extent. To know the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ seems given to but few; but it need not be. There is no favoritism in the Kingdom which excludes some poor souls from the richer portions, and shuts them up to barrenness and a northern aspect. Rise, go through the land in the length and breadth of it; it is all yours; the gift of God in Jesus Christ; claim and possess it.

As my strength was then, even so is my strength now - Joshua 14:11

Men sometimes lose heart as they grow old. They say: My intellect will become impaired, my physical strength will abate, my power for service will wane. Yes: but if the outward man decays, the inward man shall be renewed day by day.

Those that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength: whether to war, to go out for service, or to come in for fellowship and rest. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart. He shall satisfy thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's. God's angels are always young. The drain of the years is amply met by the inflow of His all-sufficient grace. There is no reason why we should decline in usefulness and fruit-bearing with the increase of years; but the reverse. The last sheaves that

fall beneath thy sickle shall be the heaviest; and the width of thy swathe shall be greatest as the angel of death touches thee and bids thee home. The secret lies in wholly following the Lord.

But Caleb did not rely on his strength to win Hebron. Very modestly and humbly he said, "It may be that the Lord will be with me." Not that he for a moment doubted it. Could it be for one moment supposed that the God whom he had wholly followed for eighty years would desert him in the supreme crisis of his life? But he put it thus in the sweet lowliness of his soul, because he counted not himself worthy. The strongest men are they who count that they are helpless as worms; and who put their weakness at the disposal of God's might. To each of us comes the promise of God: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

He gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs - Joshua 15:19

Caleb had conquered his giants, and so he was able to give his daughter an inheritance of land and springs of water. It was when Jesus had overcome the sharpness of death that He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers; it was as He trampled under His victorious feet the principalities and powers of darkness that He gave to His Church the upper and the nether springs.

There are two departments in our life, which are closely related and yet one. We occupy the one in our contact with men and our work in the world; the other, in our holy moments of meditation and prayer. Christ's sheep go out to their manifold activities, and come in to feed on the green pastures beside waters of rest. In each of these we stand in daily need of the springs that are fed from the River which proceeds from the Throne of God, and which is an emblem of the Holy Ghost.

On the Lord's Day, in the House of God, or in private prayer, we climb the hills and stand on the margin of the upper springs that rise there; in the solemn hush we hear the murmur of their waters. On Monday we descend into the valley amid the clang of the battle and the cries of human need; but, thank God! plentiful springs are there also. Upper springs from the Mount of Transfiguration; nether springs for the Valley of Humiliation. Upper springs for the days of health and abounding activity; nether springs for days of depression, and pain, and death. Upper springs in praise, adoration, and rapture; nether springs for taking the yoke, bearing the burden, and drinking of His cup. Let us partake freely of the refreshing water which flows from the River of God.

And the children of Joseph took their inheritance - Joshua 16:4

What a wonderful wealth of blessing these children of Joseph came into! There were the precious things of heaven, the dew, and the deep that couched beneath; the precious fruits of the sun and of the growth of the moons; the metals of the ancient mountains and the everlasting hills; the precious things of the earth, and the fullness thereof; and, above all, the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush (Deu 33:13-16). Surely they were blessed with all manner of bless-ings - more than they had asked or thought! The rich gifts of God's grace! An inheritance which could not have been won by their prowess or arms, but was the free gift of God's love - to be taken and enjoyed!

These things happened to them as types; the spiritual counterparts of all are ours in Christ. He is precious - nay, priceless: His promises are exceeding great and precious. The blood by which we were redeemed is precious, has meanings not yet explored; the very trial of our faith is precious as the gold taken from the everlasting hills. How much preciousness there is for us who believe! (1Pe 2:7, R. V.). But we are poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, because we have not taken our inheritance.

We need to do more than ask for it. He that asketh should not rest satisfied till he receiveth. We must take by a faith which claims, appropriates, employs. Open your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, that He may cause you to receive and enjoy all His precious gifts. In Christ all things are yours: go in and possess; take your inheritance; believe that you do receive; thank Him, and go on your way rejoicing.

The hill country shall be thine - Joshua 17:18

The hills were steep, irregular, covered with forest. "These shall be yours," said Joshua to the children of Joseph; "you are a great people, and have great power; cut down the forest, terrace the slopes, turn their bare declivities into cornfields and vineyards; fill these vast untenanted spaces with life and song."

There is always room higher up. - When the valleys are full of Canaanites, whose iron chariots withstand your progress, get up into the hills, occupy the upper spaces. If you can no longer work for God, pray for those who can. If you cannot move earth by your speech, you may move Heaven. If the development of life on the lower slopes is impossible, through limitations of service, the necessity of maintaining others, and such-like restrictions, let it break out toward the unseen, the eternal, the divine.

Faith can fell forests. - Even if the tribes had realized what treasures lay above them, they would hardly have dared to suppose it possible to, rid the hills of their dense forest-growth. But as God indicated their task, He reminded them that they had power enough. The visions of things that seem impossible are presented to us, like these forest-covered steepes; not to mock us, but to incite us to spiritual exploits which would be impossible unless God had stored within us the great strength of His own indwelling. Difficulty is sent to reveal to us what God can do in answer to the faith that prays and works. Are you straitened in the valleys? Get away to the hills, live there; get honey out of the rock, and wealth out of the terraced slopes now hidden by forest.

Joshua charged them that went to describe the land - Joshua 18:8

In every age of the Church's story, God has sent forth men to walk through and describe the land of our spiritual inheritance. They have become dissatisfied with the low attainments of their brethren, and with great desire have followed the Divine suggestions which pointed to a wider knowledge and enjoyment of the possibilities of Christian living. In the first ages, this was the work of men like Chrysostom and Augustine; the later ones, of the Reformers; in later ones still, of men whose names are still fresh in the memory of the Church.

But there is a sense in which all the experiences of life, all our walkings through the land of promise, all our discoveries of springs and valleys and far-stretching campaigns of territory, are not intended for ourselves alone, but for others. We are led by a certain path, that we may know how to direct a poor wanderer on his way. We are comforted, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble. Our Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ, that we may communicate those blessings to our fellows. We are shown the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, that we may be able to unfold their joy and helpfulness to others. We are saved that we may become workers together with God.

The books which come to us from holy men who have traversed the land are of priceless value, like this Domesday book which Joshua prepared. But we who cannot write books should yet describe the land. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God; and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." There is a Divine warrant for experience meetings of the right sort, where the form is subordinate to the fresh and living Spirit.

In the midst of them - Joshua 19:49

Since Joshua prefigures the Lord Jesus, we are led to think of his inheritance in the midst of his brethren.

In the midst on the Cross. - "They crucified Him, and with Him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." Forasmuch as we partook of flesh and blood, He shared the same; and since we were under the curse of a broken law, He also bowed beneath its weight, and was made a curse for us. He took the mid-current of pain; where the pressure was heaviest, there the Lamb of God bore the sin of the world. On Him God made to meet the iniquities of us all; alike of those who refuse, as did the one thief, and of those who accept, as did the other.

In the midst, in the gatherings of His People. - "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them". He is the centre of unity. We come from different quarters with our peculiar prepossessions and preconceptions, with no special affinity to each other; but touching Him, we become one with all who touch Him also. See that, not the sermon, nor the supper, nor the form of worship, is the centre of fellowship; but Christ always and in all. Then let Him be the centre of thy home life and thy business life under all circumstances.

In the midst in Heaven. - "In the midst of the throne, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing." All the circles of the re-deemed, of angels, and of all other beings, revolve around Jesus, as their common centre. They thus become concentric. Jesus is the Heart of Heaven; the Sun of Paradise; the Essence of its bliss; the Centre of its love; the innermost Soul of its life.

And for the stranger that sojourneth among them - Joshua 20:9

It is interesting to note this provision, made in the Land of Promise, for the passing over of sins which were not sins of presumption. In this verse there is that great word "Whosoever." These cities of refuge were not for Hebrews only, but for whosoever had killed any person, without malice or forethought, but quite unintentionally, and had fled thither. Some poor Gentile might be sojourning among the chosen people, and suddenly find himself liable to the pursuit of the avenger of blood; but the gates of the refuge city were open to him, and the elders of the city were bound to give him a place that he might dwell among them (Jos 20:4), not only safely, but in rest and peace.

Herein there was a foreshadowing of the days when God should open the door of faith unto the Gentiles. "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, since the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all them that call upon Him."

There were two mysteries made known to the Apostle Paul: one he unfolds in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the other in the Epistle to the Colossians. First, he teaches us that the Gentiles may be fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise of Christ through the Gospel. Next, he expatiates on the riches of the glory of this mystery, among the Gentiles, that the living Saviour is prepared to dwell in their hearts also, as the Hope of Glory. It is a serious question, how far we are participating in our inheritance. The gates of the promises made to Abraham and his seed are open for us to enter in and dwell there; but there is too much backwardness and hesitancy in us all. "Whosoever will, let him take."

There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken - Joshua 21:45

Such will be the summary of our lives, as we review them from the land of the sunset. We shall see plenty of our own failures, shortcomings, and sins, and sadly acknowledge them. We shall see that our unbelief and disobedience have deprived us of the enjoyment of much that God intended for us. We shall see that whatever was lacking was in no wise due to Him, but to ourselves. The land of our inheritance had been all given us in Jesus; but we suffered the lack of much, because of our failure to enter in.

There may be long delays in the fulfillment of promise. - But delays are not denials; and it is better to let the fruit ripen before you pluck it. Wait till God drops it into your hand; it will be ever so much sweeter.

There may be enemies and obstacles. - But they will give back, before the will of God, as the gates of night roll back before the touch of the dawn. Do not scheme, or fret, or be impatient; God is doing all to make thy life full of favor and blessing. Wait on Him, and keep His way; He will exalt thee to inherit the earth. Thou art as safe as if the gate of pearl were behind thee; thy joy cannot rust or be stolen; every wind is a south wind; every shore thy native land; every circumstance a rough packing-case containing the gifts of thy Father's love.

There may be ignorance and weakness. - But God can deal with this also. Take to Him thine imperfect apprehension, thy faltering faith, He can make right what is wrong, and adjust thee to receive all He waits to give. Heaven will be full of wonder at the way in which God has kept His word, and done all that He had promised, and more.

A witness between us and you - Joshua 22:27

The two tribes and a half made the mistake which all Christendom has made since. They endeavored to erect an outward symbol of unity in this altar. They hoped that it would secure them from excision from the rest of Israel. They sought to make a unity, instead of accepting this as a fact, and endeavoring to manifest it by three pilgrimages a year to God's altar at Shiloh.

Similarly, some Christians set up a church, a system, a creed, and mode of worship, and maintain that the Divine unity can only be realized in connection with one or other of these. You must be a votary at their altar of Ed, or you run the risk of their accusing you of the sin of schism. They substitute an outward for an inward unity, and a mechanical for a vital spiritual fellowship.

If we belong to Christ, we belong to one another. The Church, with all its members, is one vine, one body, one family; and therefore we have to manifest, rather than to make the unity, concerning which our Lord thought so much in His intercessory prayer. "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be One in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

We are one in the thought of the Father, one in the redemption of the Son, one in the possession of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Let us be one in our relation to others, pitying, loving, aiding each other, forgiving and restoring, avoiding unkind comparisons and criticisms, remembering that the failure or success of one is that of all, and endeavoring to hasten the hour when the manifested oneness of the Church shall compel the world to believe that the Father sent the Son.

Take good heed unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God - Joshua 23:11

Love is the crown of human nature; its regal chaplet of flowers; the bond by which the sentient universe is made one; the trait in which we most nearly resemble God - for God is love. We may love God from four parts of our nature (Luk 10:27). From the heart, the seat of the emotions; from the soul, the seat of

individuality or will; in the strength of our activities; and in the mind, the organ of thought and intelligence. Some natures are more prone to one, and others to another. Each is a gate into the metropolis of Love, or by which the love of God may enter us. And it is of small consequence which gate you use, so long as you use one, and in this way enter the city.

Many people are accustomed to impute love to the heart only, instead of associating it also with other departments of the inner life. Because you have no emotion of love, you therefore conclude that you do not love. But there may be the love of soul, wherein the will crowns Christ as King; or the love of the strength, wherein all the energy of life revolves around Jesus; or the love of the mind, in which all thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Choose which you will.

But we must take heed to ourselves. The love of God will come naturally and easily in us as the fruit of the Spirit, unless we do anything to mar or hinder it. Love begets love; think then how much He loved you, when He gave Himself for you. Take heed to your speech, acts, intentions, volitions, affections; watch as well as pray; keep yourselves in the love of God; love one another and so abide in His love; and in you also the love of God will be perfected.

Ye cannot serve the Lord - Joshua 24:19

It seemed as though Joshua sought to damp down the enthusiasm of the people. They were all on fire to serve, but he repressed their ardor, crying, "Back, back! This is no place for you." We are reminded of a precise analogy in the Gospels, where our Saviour said to Peter and the rest, "Ye cannot follow Me now" (Joh 13:31-38). Why this Divine reluctance?

The answer is clear, when we consider the sequel in each case. In the one, we have only to turn a page in our Bibles, to come on all the disobedience, anarchy, and backsliding of the Book of Judges; in the other we see that Peter denied and the rest forsook Him. How obviously it was shown that there was a moral incompatibility between their self-confident assertions and the service of the Holy God. But this incompatibility was present to the Spirit's discernment when these strong asseverations were made, first by the Israelites, and secondly by the Apostles.

So it becomes us to speak very reverently and leniently of our ability to obey. We are probably overestimating our powers. Created might wanes and fails beneath the searching demands of the Holy One. Perpetual failure has weakened us; for when once a door has been broken through a wall, that spot is always weaker. A fallen ancestry has predisposed us to fail. To will is present with us, but how to perform that which is good we find not. No one can look thoughtfully into the workings of his own nature without realizing the terrible paralysis which has befallen it. We need then that God should counteract our fickleness by upholding us with His steadfast, or constant, Spirit (Psa 51:10).

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