

Laying Hold of Our Promised Land

by Jason Neil

The sermon emphasizes the importance of actively claiming God's promises through faith and community support while warning against unbelief and disobedience.

Duration: 58:52

Scripture: Joshua 15:1, Judges 1:21, Hebrews 3:18, Hebrews 4:1

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Claiming Promises"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of gathering together as God's people, as Jesus promises to be present when they meet. The speaker encourages the audience to hold onto God's promises, such as walking with Him in truth and victory in their families, raising righteous children, and reaching people for Him. The speaker also highlights the example of Caleb, who wholeheartedly followed God and believed in His promises for 45 years. The sermon concludes with a call to action, urging the audience to stop waiting and start taking possession of the promises God has given them.

Transcript

Well, praise the Lord. We can pray here. Father, we just want to thank You for Your great faithfulness to us.

Lord, Your faithfulness toward all people, Lord. You are always true to Your Word. You're true to Yourself.

You're true to Your character. Absolutely holy and righteous and loving in all You do. And so we lift You up this morning and just declare that aloud that we love You.

And we just pray that You would draw us near to Yourself. I ask, Father, that You'd give us willing hearts, open ears, open eyes, Father, that we can lay hold of all that You have for us in Christ Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Well, praise the Lord. Wow. I tell you, God's faithfulness is never ending.

It never ends, ever. You know, I was thinking this morning, I was in prayer and asking God what I should speak about this morning. You know, the Lord just laid on my heart.

You know, it would be real nice to have a testimony before preaching. And I thought, yeah, maybe I'll ask Joe if he'll share. I didn't even need to ask him.

The Lord just had him share. That's just one little thing. The Lord's done some things.

You know, in the men's prayer meetings, we've been meeting as men every morning at 6 a.m. I think every morning and praying. And God has been blessing that richly. You know, and He's been blessing us with some spiritual warfare even.

In my home, we've seen some things that we've never seen before in some of the children. And so I put in bolds. I think Joe bolded it for me.

Pray for the Neal family every day. Seriously. The devil's trying to take us out and try to take everybody else out I'm sure too.

But if you would pray for us, that would be great. I was just praying for my family, for one of my children in particular that seems to be hard hit. Just praying.

I said, Lord... The Lord just showed me that a greater revelation of His love for her was needed. And so I just prayed, Lord, put this song on her heart. She needs a song in her heart.

Put it in there. We had our family Bible time and anybody got a song? And she raised her hand. It was that song, you know.

I said, Esther, do you know how that song got in your heart? Well, I just thought about it. I said, no, I put that song in your heart by my prayer. That was a children's lesson for the day as far as explaining how that happens.

But God answers prayer. And even as we pray that the Lord would make us a light for His glory. I've been sharing that with you that I've been praying that for some time.

My family and the fellowship that we would be a light. You know, when I was just thinking about that, I was like, wow, you know, I've shared Christ more clearly and openly with more students this year than ever. And we've had this opportunity here and other opportunities there.

We've prayed for opportunities to serve. And in comes the Rambeys. In comes Cedric.

And in comes Clint. And in comes John. And in comes everybody else.

We've just had opportunities to serve. Let's not forget that we just prayed these things. And God answered.

So the Bible says that God is able to do more than all we think or imagine according to His power at work for those who believe. I mixed Ephesians 3 and 1 together there. Because believing is important.

Believing is important. So God continues to answer prayers. And I feel like I've been reading in Joshua.

I read the book of Joshua this week. Joshua says he rose up early in the morning to muster the troops. And I just want to muster the prayer troops and just tell you to keep praying and come to the men's prayer meeting at 6 a.m. if at all possible.

I believe that God is... This tape we have, this children's tape, I think Ryan's got the same CD. The Bible verses, the music, and a little narration at the very beginning. The verse that they're singing is when two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst.

And the narrator just says this. I don't know if he says boys and girls or not, but it's talking to children. When God's people meet together, Jesus comes to be with them.

Wow! That is truth. When God's people meet together, Jesus comes to be with them. And that's true.

That's true. I'll testify that I believe that. And I know it's true.

Well, we've been praying for Tom Carlyle. I'll keep praying for him. He's been so busy wanting to glorify the Lord's name, he hasn't had time to finish his letter he's working on, which I figure that's the Lord.

Just keep praying for him and we'll talk more about things there later. I'd like to speak this morning about laying hold of God's promises. Laying hold of God's promises.

And if we could start out in 1 Timothy 6. You know, all of God's promises are free of charge. They're free. He offers them to us.

And there's nothing we can do to earn them. There's nothing we can do to bribe God to offer the promises to us. But He gives them to us free of charge.

And He holds them out to us free of charge. And yet, there's so many times God just extends His goodness to people and people just resist it. They refuse to take it.

I've seen it so often. We've all seen it so often that God just, here, I offer you Jesus. We read about His great faithfulness.

All blessings are mine and ten thousands beside. Or something like that. That's true.

And how few people truly take advantage of all the blessings that God has for them. Yes, there's the people that just reject Christ altogether. And then there's some people that kind of play around with Jesus.

Yeah, I think I believe. Or maybe I believe. Or some people say, I do believe.

And yet still, they don't have the reality of that other song we sang which is based on Philippians 3. They consider all things rubbish compared to Christ. Knowing Christ is what's excellent and everything else is nothing. And so they fail to take hold, to truly take hold of the promises by faith.

And we see Paul's exhortation here. The Apostle Paul's writing to Timothy. And he says in 1 Timothy 6, verse 11, But you, man of God, flee from all these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

There were things that Timothy had to flee from. Not just kind of, well, okay, I'll tiptoe away. I believe the Apostle Paul's saying, look, Timothy, there's some stuff here you better flee.

Run in the other direction from. Then verse 12, and of course, obviously, there's things you need to pursue here, Timothy. Pursue things.

Yeah, that looks pretty good. I think I'll go in that direction. Not just tiptoe towards the good things, but pursue them.

Pursue them. But verse 12 is the verse that's really stuck out to me today. And it says this, Fight the good fight of faith and take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.

And you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. Here is God, who has called Timothy to eternal life. And Paul says to lay hold of it.

To take hold of it. And of course, preceding that is fight the good fight of faith. And take hold of what God has called you to.

So I think we as Christians are called to some things. We're called to... I preached last week about being a more than conqueror. About being an overcomer.

We're called to have victory over the devil, victory over the world. We're called to this. And it's by faith.

It's a fight. If we're going to take hold of that calling, if we're going to take hold of all the promises of God, it's going to be a real fight of faith. All kinds of things are going to come against our faith.

Our truly just believing in God. I mean, if the devil can get us there, he's got us everywhere. But brethren, sisters, if we can fight the good fight of faith, and take hold of the eternal life, I think that's significant.

Listen, God has called Timothy to eternal life. I mean, can you believe that? He's called to eternal life. And yet, Paul still wrote to him, Hey, Timothy, take it.

Take hold of it. Timothy, there's things you've got to be conscious and active and zealous about doing. So I have on my heart today, not only laying hold of eternal life, but laying hold of all these great promises we have in God's Word.

Just laying hold of it. As I was meditating on this and pondering this in my mind, Hebrews 3-4 came into mind about the Israelites coming into the rest. The rest of God.

Maybe we should turn there just real briefly. This is still the introduction. Hebrews 3-4 There's just portions of Scripture there.

I'd encourage you to read the whole book of Hebrews when you have some time just to get the context here. We're talking about entering the rest here. And specifically about the Israelites taking possession of the land of Israel.

Wow! You know, here's God saying, Hey, Israel, here you go. I've got this land for you. The promised land, in fact.

This is this covenanted land I've been promising you guys for generations. Here, I've got it for you. And then they had to take hold of the land.

They had to take hold of it. In Hebrews 3-4, the analogy is here's this rest. This wonderful rest of God.

This life in Christ. I don't know. People apply the rest to all different kinds of things.

Some people say, Oh, the rest is heaven. So, heaven is remaining for God's people. No, the rest is just, I think, it just represents all the promises of God.

If you want to call it heaven, then sure. It's the eternal life. If you want to call it, name the promise.

If you want to enter into God's restful walk, walking with God at His rest, then here's some things for you in Hebrews 3-4. Verse 12 says this. Chapter 3 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of

unbelief in departing from the living God.

But exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. You know, beware, brethren, lest in any of you there's an evil heart of unbelief. Just one of you.

Any of you. Verse 18 of this same chapter says, And to whom did God swear they wouldn't enter His rest? But to those who didn't obey. So we see they couldn't enter because of unbelief.

Disobeying and unbelief. Very similar in the Greek and the English. The meanings are the same.

Refusing to obey God is really just refusing to believe in Him. Chapter 4. I really like that. Going into chapter 4, verse 1, it says this, Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear, lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

For indeed, the Gospel is preached to us as well as to them, these Israelites, as well as to the Israelites. What they heard, though, didn't profit them, because it wasn't mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed, who have faith, enter the rest.

And it goes on. You know, there's a promise of entering His rest. And it still stands.

We are promised. We have promises of God. It says here we need to fear.

Let us fear, lest any one of you may seem to fall short of it. Let us be careful. Let us fear.

Let us be very, very aware so that none of you, none! That's what we're after. Not a single person in God's church lacking faith, coming short of any promise of God. So, we've got promises of God, and we need to lay hold of the promises.

We've got a rest of God here, and we need to lay hold of the rest. Not come short of it. So as I considered these things and pondered these things, I was thinking about those Israelites and the Israelites having this promised land.

And you know as well as I do that that is a type and a shadow for us. All the things that are written about them were written for our learning, the Bible says. And so, these Israelites here have this promised land.

God says, here you go. So I guess I'd like to look at how the Israelites laid hold of the promise of God. How the Israelites laid hold of the promise of God and maybe we can learn some lessons there to spur us on and to help us to lay hold of God's promises in a real way.

Way back in Genesis, God planned the destruction of the land of Canaan. God planned that the Israelites were going to occupy the land. In Genesis, there's so many parallels here.

You know what? You know when God planned for us to serve Him? Yeah, a little bit before creation. I don't know how that was before time was invented, but He planned us a long time ago to be laying hold of some promises, to be living by faith, to be preaching His Word, to be experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in reality, in our daily life, to be mighty in prayer, to be bold men and women of faith, to raise up godly children that love the Lord and serve Him. He prepared this for us a long time ago.

Well, He also prepared for the Israelites a place, a land for them. And it says in Genesis 15, God is talking to Abraham and He says, they're going to go down to Egypt and stuff and be oppressed. And then in verse

16, it says, then in the fourth generation, they'll return here for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.

Or that the sin of the people, the Amorites, the sin of the land, isn't growing. It's not great enough yet. They're not complete in their wickedness yet.

Another translation reads that the sins of the Amorites hasn't reached its full measure yet. So, God got it all planned and it's completely just. God didn't just randomly flip a coin and say, well, hey Israel, you can go settle in this land.

No, these Amorites were wicked people. And they were ungodly, idol worshippers. They did all kinds of detestable things and God planned it out.

Well, by this time, the fourth generation, by this time, the sin of the Amorites will be complete. It will be finished. And you guys can go in and I'm going to give you their land because they're so wicked.

So God planned the destruction of Canaan for a long time. Here they are, the Israelites. At first, they didn't believe God.

They wouldn't go into the land. I mean, after Egypt and after all God did for them in the wilderness, here they are at the border of Canaan. They spy it out and they say, no, too hard.

Can't lay hold of the promise. Can't lay hold of the promised land, Moses. The people are big.

They're strong. We can't do it. So God said, fine.

You can wander in the desert for 40 years and we'll see how your children do. Well, here they are. After 40 years of wandering, they finally get to the edge of the land of Canaan and they're ready to take possession of the land.

And here we are. We've got all kinds of promises. We're living our life here.

And we've got all kinds of things that God wants us to do. We read it last week in Hebrews 11. All these people through faith, they uprooted whole kingdoms.

Through faith, they were cut in half and killed and all these things. And their testimony spread throughout the whole world. God hasn't changed.

God still does desire. Jesus told us that His people won't be done even going through Jerusalem when He gets back. His people are going to be preaching.

Sharing the Gospel. We've got all kinds of promises for our families. All kinds of promises for... wow, too many to name right now.

And here we are on the brink of entering His promises. Yeah, sure, maybe we'll take one promise, take another promise, but are we going to lay hold of all the promises? All these promises of entering into God's rest. Of fully walking in His promises.

Are we going to do that? Are we going to fight that good fight of faith and lay hold of it? Amen. I was hoping somebody was going to say yes. Hallelujah.

You know, it's important that not just Scott's heart is saying yes, but that everybody's heart is saying yes. We were warned there in Hebrews that we need to take heart, lest in any of you there's a heart of unbelief. I find that significant.

Hebrews 4-1 told us, let us fear, lest any of you seem to fall short of the promise. Let's be careful so that none of you come behind. You know, so I think of the Israelites coming into the land and they're going to Joshua and Joshua's leading them and they're going to Jericho and they defeat the city of Jericho in victory.

They have victory. They lay hold of that part of the promised land. And then, one person had some sin in their life.

His name was Achan. Joshua 6, verse 27 says this, So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land. Well, everything's going great for the Israelites.

I mean, the whole land is quaking with fear because of them. And then in Joshua 7, here comes Achan along and he takes something he wasn't supposed to take. He coveted some of their gold and some things.

Wow. In chapter 7, verse 12, God said this, I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things that are under the curse that are in your midst. Wow.

Achan's sin caused 30 or 40 people to die. His sin caused him to die. And of course, he was stoned for his sin.

The Israelites couldn't stand up to their enemies. The promised land. Here is a land that was promised, and they couldn't do it.

They couldn't do it because of one man's sin. That hits me real hard. Here's a promised land.

Here you go. And the whole army goes out and they get defeated. Actually, it was probably only 3,000 men I think because the city that whooped them was a weak city.

It was nothing. One man's sin. One area of any of our lives we're not willing to give over to the Lord.

We're not going to lay hold of His promises. We're going to get beat down by the enemy. Any area at all that we can't just put on the altar.

Any area that we're unwilling to fight the good fight of faith. Anything we're unwilling to flee from. Any good thing we're unwilling to pursue.

That's it. We've gone as far as we can go. Jericho is the last city you'll conquer.

It doesn't matter if you've got it all on the altar today and you defeat Jericho. It says, let us fear. Let us fear.

Present tense. Let us continue to fear. Let us continue to be aware.

Let us continue to take heed. Let us continue to flee. Let us continue to pursue righteousness.

Let us continue, because we have become partakers in Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Hebrews chapter 3, verse something. We are partakers of Christ if we continue like

that till the end.

And it's all by faith. You know if Achan believed God, he never would have taken anything. If Achan really believed that God was a God of justice and that God was going to give them the land, no, he wanted immediate gratification.

I want this gold now. I'm taking it now. He didn't believe there was anything for him later.

These soldiers were rewarded handsomely. All kinds of plunder. The very next city, God said, take what you want.

But Achan really didn't believe that. He wanted it here and now. And he didn't believe God's promises.

And so he took it for now. So beware lest any of you are unbelieving. How did these Israelites, these Israelites, after Achan was out of the way, oh, Joshua was leading them, trying to spur them on, like I mentioned to you earlier.

I forget the exact reference, but Joshua gets up early to muster the troops and get them going. I like that verse. I read over in Joshua 12.

Look at what they did. In chapter 10, the sun stands still. Can you believe it? They're fighting their enemies and the sun's maybe starting to go down and Joshua just lifts up his hands and says, Lord, make the sun stand still so we can obey You.

So we can wipe them out as You've commanded us. Let the sun stand up so we can obey You. And it says God listened to them.

God listened to a man. Well, that's the kind of stuff that God's doing for the Israelites. And then chapter 12 is like the resume, the list of kings they destroyed.

The king of Jericho, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Jarmath, Eglon. 31 kings in all I think. Yeah, 31 kings in all.

Wow, everything seems to be going great. These Israelites are laying hold of 31 kingdoms. That's great.

So they were laying hold of the promises. This is so parallel to what we need to do with the Lord. Lay hold of this kingdom.

Lay hold of this kingdom of the devil. Lay hold of this stronghold. Beat down this stronghold.

Beat down this stronghold. Turn over to Joshua 15. I guess this whole thing here, this whole chapter is just about the allotment for Judah.

You know, the boundaries. Here's where it is. Wow, just the description of this wonderful parcel of land.

The whole thing. It's great. Here's where it goes.

Six cities with their villages. You get these cities and their villages. You can have this city and this village all the way here and there.

Wow, it's great. Very last verse. The very last verse of the chapter is where you start to get, hmm, uh-oh.

But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah could not drive out. So the Jebusites dwell with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day. God told them to drive them out.

Don't leave anything that breathes. The sons of Judah, it says, could not do it. Could not do it.

Couldn't do it? God told them to, and they couldn't do it. What's going on? The word they heard was not profiting them. It wasn't combined with faith in the hearers.

It wasn't combined with faith. I'll prove that to you in just a second. But let's turn over to Judges 1. You get more of a hint of it in Judges.

And some of what we're going to read in Judges is after Joshua's already dead, but plenty of it is still while he's alive as well. But Judges 1, verse 19 says this, So the Lord was with Judah, and they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron. The Lord's with us, huh? How far are we willing to go with the Lord? How far are we willing to go with the Lord? The Lord is with Judah, and they drove out the mountaineers, but they couldn't drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron.

How about verse 27 of the same chapter, But Manasseh didn't drive out the people of Beth-shan, or Tanach, or Dor, or Iblum, or Megiddo, and their surrounding settlements, for the Canaanites were determined to live in the land. Listen, we're going to come up against people that are determined. We're going to come up against spirits that are determined to serve the devil.

We're going to come against things. The devil is pretty determined that we don't lay hold of the promises of God, including eternal life, by the way. Well, here they are.

The Canaanites were determined to live in the land. Verse 28, When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor, but never drove them out completely. And it goes on.

Ephraim didn't drive out the Canaanites living here. The Canaanites continued living among them. Neither did Zebulun drive them out, nor did Asher.

It goes on and on and on and on and on until we get to verse 35. The Amorites were determined also. They were determined to hold on to Mount Haraz, Eishlon, Shalbim.

But when the power of the house of Joseph, when these Israelites increased, these other people were forced into labor. I posed the question to somebody this week, or maybe some of the brothers at the morning prayer meetings. I just asked this, what are you willing to settle for in your Christian life? God's promised you the land.

Do you think it's pretty good to have some forced labor? What are we willing to settle for? These Israelites, when Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor, but never drove them out completely. Never had complete freedom. Never had the complete hold of this promised land.

They always had other pagans trying to take them away from the Lord. And quite successfully, they did take them away from the Lord all throughout the history. You can't help but think of the kings and all the idol-worshipping kings they had and all the Philistines.

You know, those Philistines were never supposed to even be there. They were supposed to be gone. All the problems throughout all the Bible.

So much of it can be traced back to this stuff right here. What are we willing to settle for? Well, I've laid hold of this promise and this promise and this promise. I don't really have a good grasp on this, this, and this, but I've got enough of the promises.

I've conquered enough cities where I'm not desperate. These iron chariots, oh, they're pretty strong. Eh, we've got plenty of room.

We've got plenty of land over here uncontested. Why bother with those guys with the chariots? So I've laid hold of this promise and this promise and God's doing this in my life. Wow, I'm so thankful with what He's doing.

But, wow, yeah, this other area's pretty tough. This is a harder area. I'm not really willing for that.

After all, look at us. We crossed over the Jordan miraculously. Here we are.

We've defeated this king, this king, this king, this king. We're doing pretty good. And sure, God is with us.

We're driving out inhabitants. God is with us. He's doing stuff.

Oh, we're doing... Still didn't lay hold of it all. Didn't lay hold of it all by faith. If we turn over to Joshua 17, we get some inside glimpses.

These are just sketches, but what were the daily conversations like between Joshua and some of these Israelites? What were some of the daily things that went on? I can just picture Joshua. What are you guys doing? Hey, they've got chariots over there. Who cares? Go get them.

You can just picture it going on, can't you? The Bible records a few of those types of statements, by the way. Well, first let's look at Joshua 17. Verse 12.

Joshua 17, verse 12 says this, But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities, because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land. Listen, I'm not trying to say it's going to be easy to lay hold of all the promises of God. Paul wasn't either.

Paul said it's a fight of faith. War of the good warfare, Timothy. That's what Paul said.

Here, the Canaanites were persistent. They persisted in the land. And it came about when the sons of Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

Then the sons of Joseph, these same people, see Manasseh was of the tribe of Joseph. Then the sons of Joseph came to Joshua. Listen to what they said in verse 14.

Why have you given me only one lot and one portion for an inheritance, since I am of numerous people whom the Lord has thus far blessed? Do you get what they're saying to Joshua? Hey Joshua, we don't have enough place to live and it's all your fault. You didn't give us a big enough piece of land, Joshua. I mean, we just got done reading that the Canaanites were still living in the cities, and here they boldly come to Joshua.

Joshua, what are you doing? They're blaming Joshua. Listen to what Joshua says. Joshua said to them, if you are a numerous people, go up to the forest and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Raphael, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you.

Raphaelites, by the way, I think those are giants. Joshua spoke to the... Oh no, verse 16. Here's their reply.

The sons of Joseph said, the hill country is not enough for us. And all the Canaanites who live in the valley there in the valley land have chariots of iron. But those who are in Beth-she-an and its towns and both those who are in Beth-she-an and its towns and those who are in the valley of Jezreel.

Did you hear that? Joshua said, hey, go get them. Clear the land. You've got plenty.

Oh, but Joshua, you don't understand. They've got chariots and this stuff. And they still are blaming Joshua instead of blaming themselves and their own lack of faith.

So, Joshua said again. He didn't change. Oh gee, I guess you're right.

They do look pretty tough over there. No, that's not what he did. Joshua said this.

You are a numerous people and have great power. You shall not have one lot only, but the hill country shall be yours. For though it is a forest, you shall clear it, and to its farthest borders it shall be yours.

For you shall drive out the Canaanites even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong. Period. Oh, they went away.

So, we get a glimpse there of the people's lack of faith. People's lack of faith. Continuing on in the next chapter of Joshua 18.

Maybe we can start in verse 2. There remained among the sons of Israel seven tribes who had not divided their inheritance. So Joshua said to the sons of Israel, How long will you put off entering to take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you? How long are you going to wait? How much longer are you just going to sit there? When are you going to take possession? When are you going to lay hold of these promises of God? What are you sitting around for everybody? Let's go! I like Joshua. I mean, he sounds pretty encouraging to me.

Doesn't he? I mean, hey, go! But it's too strong. Go! They have iron chariots. You're stronger.

Go! Wow, isn't that great? I love that. And then finally, what are you waiting for? This is what Joshua did. He mustered the troops.

Let's go, guys. Let's go. You know, we get this picture of success.

Oh, God is blessing them. They're conquering kingdoms and all these things. They're right in the pages of the Bible.

God's working, you know? And then these failures. Oh, but they forced labor. They get the cancellation prizes.

Thanks for trying, but play again next time. You know, they didn't get the full promise. They didn't get to lay hold of it.

But in the midst of there, there's a man of a different spirit who followed God wholeheartedly. Wholeheartedly. Wow.

His name, of course, is Caleb. From day one, he has believed God. Forty-five years ago, when they first went to spy out the lands, and ten of the twelve spies come back, these guys are tough.

Iron chariots. Sound familiar? I mean, they're still saying it forty-five years later. They decide to lay hold of some cities.

But still, they don't have this full-hearted faith to take hold of the whole thing. Well, anyway, Caleb and Joshua, forty-five years ago, said, yeah, they look tough, but guess what? We got the Lord. We already conquered the mightiest kingdom of the world, Egypt.

Let's go get these guys. I mean, they were ready to go. So Caleb here, he's in Joshua too.

We didn't forget about him. Wow. God told him way back in Numbers, because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I'll bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.

That's a promise, by the way, but Caleb, guess what? He still had to lay hold of it too. He had to lay hold of it too. Here's how he did it.

Joshua chapter fourteen. What a blessing to consider Caleb this morning. Joshua chapter fourteen, verse seven.

Caleb speaking. He says this, I was forty years old when Moses, a 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.

He had a testimony in his heart. Nevertheless, my brethren who went out with me made the heart of the people melt with fear, but I followed the Lord my God fully. Can you imagine that? Him and Joshua were the only old men in the nation.

So Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land on which your foot is trodden will be an inheritance to you and your children forever, because you followed the Lord my God fully. Now behold, the Lord has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years. He's eighty-five years old.

Think John Riley. From the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness, and now behold, I'm eighty-five years old today. I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me.

He's either speaking in faith or reality. I don't know. As my strength was then, so my strength is now for war and for going out and coming in.

Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day. For you heard on that day that the Anakim were there with great fortified cities. Perhaps the Lord will be with me and I will drive them out as the Lord has spoken.

This is the hill that was trembling, those ten spies, forty-five years ago. This is the hill Caleb wanted forty-five years ago. And he's been itching for forty-five years to lay hold of that hill.

Can you picture it? Can you see this? Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day. For you heard on that day that the Anakim were there. This is the argument they heard forty-five years ago.

Give it to me, this eighty-five year old man. I'm going to get him. All these youthful warriors.

He's the only one. Him and Caleb are the oldest people in the country. And these young men are saying, well, the chariots.

The hill country is too hard for us. And here's Caleb, eighty-five. I'll go get him.

Wow! There's a different spirit altogether in that guy. I mean, it's unreal. Unreal.

I'll drive them out as the Lord has spoken. Whew! Caleb. Can you picture now the heart of Joshua? Oh, Joshua's heart just had to be... And it says in the next verse, So Joshua blessed him.

God bless you, Caleb. I love you, Caleb. Go do it.

Man, I can just picture that. Therefore, Hebron... Next verse. Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb.

The son of Jephthah. Until this day, because he followed the Lord of God of Israel fully. Now, the name of Hebron, by the way, this is Hebron.

It just adds a little exclamation point. By the way, the name of Hebron used to be Kiriath Arba, for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest.

I mean, Caleb didn't pick the weakest place. Can you picture it? That heart that Caleb had to lay hold of the promise of God. What promises of God are there in our lives? Do we ever whip out the old iron chariot excuse? It's all about faith.

It's not about surmassing a large army first. I mean, Caleb was walking in literal faith. Complete faith.

Eighty-five years old. I mean, whole tribes wouldn't go touch the land where he would go. And him and probably his clan.

I don't know if he did it all by himself. He probably had his son. They went out there and they cleared the land.

Took care of it. Wow, Caleb's faith. What a blessing.

That's what it says in Numbers 13. Caleb silenced all these grumbling spies and said we should go up and take possession of the land for we can certainly do it. But the other spies wouldn't.

We saw the Nephilim there. The descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim. We seem like grasshoppers in our own eyes.

And we look the same to them. I don't think they interviewed him. How do they know? God? Yeah, I mean, they probably didn't even speak the same language.

We looked like grasshoppers to them. Well, grasshoppers have flattened many a land. Grasshoppers have ruined lots of crops and lands, haven't they? Well, that's Caleb for you.

That's Caleb. And so we get glimpses of him. If we could turn over to Judges 1. A couple more Scriptures and then we'll be close here.

Judges 1. Here's that same one. I think we looked at this earlier, but it deserves to read the context here. Verse 19.

Judges 1.19 The Lord was with the men of Judah. They took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains because they had iron chariots. As Moses had promised, Hebron was given to Caleb who drove from it the three sons of Anak.

The Benjamites, however, failed to dislodge the Jebusites who were living in Jerusalem to this day. The Jebusites lived there with the Benjamites. You know, nestled in there between two verses that describe failures.

You've got a little Caleb shining in there. It doesn't matter what they're doing. They're failing, they're failing, they're failing.

God's promise still stands. There still stands a promise of entering the rest of God, of laying hold of the promises of God. It's still there for all who will take it.

Look at the consequences if we don't. What are the consequences if we don't take hold of all of the promises? All of them. All the promises.

Every one that God wants us to walk in and live in. What are the consequences? Amen. Forever.

They were plagued by these idol-worshipping neighbors. Forever. Just like God said, by the way, there'd be a thorn in your side.

You know? So the Lord was with the Israelites. That's what it says. They're with them.

They just didn't do the whole job. And God's with us. God's with, and then they just stopped.

So I want to know, what about us? It's easier to think about, oh yeah, a little church down the road. Where are we? Are we really going to lay hold of God's promises? You know, they did. Judges 2. This is amazing.

It says here in verse 7, The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel. The Lord worked. The Lord prospered them.

And the people in general served the Lord. Joshua didn't have people set up idols. You know, like some of these kings did.

They basically didn't worship idols. And they basically sacrificed and did whatever. They basically served the Lord.

But what was this? The service of the Lord that they had. How was it? I mean, we read it. We've skimmed through some of the things.

It was not as grand and as great as God had wanted it to be. I mean, it was not these people just rising victorious over all the circumstances like we read in Hebrews 11. It wasn't that.

It was just the Lord was with them, but they didn't drive off the chariots. For the most part. You know, it wasn't a lasting faith.

It wasn't a lasting faith. They served the Lord it says. I don't want that kind of serving the Lord.

I don't want it to be said, yeah, they served the Lord. No. They served the Lord and they got 10,000s besides.

All the blessings and 10,000s besides. These people were Caleb's. You know, when it says that Caleb served the Lord, and the people served the Lord, different.

Different. The descriptions of Caleb and the descriptions of Israel in general, different descriptions. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua.

But Caleb followed Me wholeheartedly, fully. Words like that. Fully.

Wholeheartedly. These big adjectives. Different heart, different spirit.

All these things. That's what we want. Because look at what happened after these people that served the Lord.

You know, not very zealous. They won the battles they could. You know, the battles they didn't need a lot of faith for.

They took those. Look what happened to their children. Verse 10.

All that generation also were gathered to their fathers, and there arose another generation after them that did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel. The Lord wasn't the sender. I mean, He was not the wholehearted peace.

You bet the children had heard of the battles. I mean, we're in Israel. We're in Canaan now.

We used to not be in Canaan. Wow, we're here. But they didn't know the Lord.

They hadn't heard what the Lord did. Except for Caleb's family. You know where the first judge of Israel came from? Caleb's family.

Caleb's family. It says in Judges 3. Verse 9. Osniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, saved them. Saved the whole nation.

Caleb. It's no surprise that Israel's first judge was from Caleb's family. It doesn't surprise me.

It says in Judges 3. The land had peace for 40 years until Osniel died. And then of course, Caleb's seed didn't die out. I don't know.

I guess this didn't make it to the godly home sermon. Brother Denny, I don't think. You know when I found this in 1 Chronicles 27.15, David listing off 12 heads of the families for the head over the army.

12 different divisions. And for the 12th month, his name was Heldai the Nataphathite from the family of Osniel. There are 24,000 men in his division.

All the way down to King David, I guess there's this mighty man. Maybe there's a gap in there somewhere. But way down there, it talks about Osniel again.

You know, the son of Caleb. Keeps on going. So Caleb had a faith that didn't die out in one generation.

He followed God wholeheartedly. And man, his kids growing up in that house was a blessed time. It was a blessed time.

So I want to encourage you, spur you on this morning to lay hold of God's promises. The things that God has said, He will do it. And if you won't take hold of the promises, then God will have a Caleb that will.

Ah, what promises? What promises are there? How about walking with God in truth, in victory, in your family every day? Raising up children that are going to be righteous. Heads and shoulders above us. How about reaching people for Him? Reaching people.

Being a light. I've been praying that God would make our fellowship a lampstand. It's going to have to be God because we're down here in a basement.

We don't have a sign in the yard and things like that. Well, it's a for sale sign, but that doesn't count. But I mean, I'm serious.

Promises. God wants us to testify and not love our lives unto death. To have a word of our testimony that would overcome the devil.

I think sometimes we don't think of ourselves as great Calebs. I don't want to be one of the Israelites watching Caleb, look at that 85-year-old guy go. Wonder how he does it.

Wow, that's amazing. I don't want to be like that. I want to be a Caleb.

I want to be full of faith. Be doing everything God wants us to do. Not weak.

Weak people of God. Be strong and mighty in the land for His kingdom, you know? Imitate those that through faith and patience inherit the promises. How about a radical prayer life? You want a radical prayer life? I mean, the real kind.

A George Mueller prayer life. Or do you want to just read about George Mueller? Oh, that kind of prayer life. I mean, I'm convinced.

I've listed off ten things, at least five or ten things, that we just prayed about and God did. Even this morning, we're holding a prayer sheet. I'm just praying in my heart, Lord, bless James and Heidi.

Bring them back sometime so we can bless them. I look up. Oh, they're here! Wow, they came through the door right when I finished praying for you, you know? I'm convinced that God's ready if we would just simply ask.

So how about a fiery, fervent prayer life? You want that? How about you want quiet times that make you weep? You know, I don't know. I've wavered a little. I'm not for emotional Christianity alone.

But I'm one of the unemotional guys you'd ever meet. I never get upset. I don't cry.

Except when I pray or read the Word. It's a weird thing that the Lord's doing. Or preach.

But other than that, I don't get upset. Sad. Nothing really.

And I don't want to talk too much about emotions and things like that. What I'm saying is, what do you want? What do you want to walk with? I mean, gifts. God's promised gifts to His body.

So we can say, well, we've got this going, we've got this going, we've got morning prayer meeting now, we've got preaching, we've got some testimonies going, we've got the children's lessons. I consider these as cities that have been conquered. Yeah, what else is there? Let's have some prophecies.

Let's have some healings. Let's have some... whatever you can ask or imagine. God will do more.

I'm trying to imagine some things. So yeah, that's where it hits home for us. We can say, yeah, we've conquered this, this, this.

Hey, look where we are. We're walking in the promised land. Yeah, and you could be right there.

You could be right there in that verse there too. Judges 2.10 Serve the Lord all throughout your life. Isn't that nice? Yeah, I mean, how about laying hold of everything, you know? And truly, those things I'm listing off, I need help in my faith on some of those things.

I'll be very honest. Lord, start with me. I need help.

Fan the flames. Yeah, I'm convinced. So, praise the Lord.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7605.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jason-neil/laying-hold-of-our-promised-land/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net