

Let's turn in our Bibles tonight to Joshua 13 as we continue our study through this sixth book of the Bible, the first one named after a guy, the first one not written by Moses.

The book of Joshua can be divided easily into three parts. I think we've told you that a couple of different times. The first five chapters are all about entering the land - how the LORD brought this nation across the Jordan into the Land of Promise. Beginning in chapter 6 and going through chapter 12 is the report of the conquering of the land. It takes place over a seven-and-a-half-year period. It is covered by, really, two major campaigns as the LORD brings the kings of the south and the kings of the north to the middle of the country where Joshua and the armies were there. And then beginning tonight and continuing through the rest of the book, there are some awfully good lessons. In fact, I think I'm about five weeks ahead of you in Joshua, and I think we spent four weeks in chapter 21, 22 and 23. There're some great lessons in there. I'm really looking forward to going over them with you. But, needless to say, beginning in chapter 13 through the end of the book is the distribution of the land to the various tribes, and then God gives to each of the tribes a personal responsibility to rid the area that God gives them of the wicked inhabitants that God had intended to bring judgment upon through the hands of His people. So, chapters 6 through 12 take place over a seven-and-a-half-year period. The next ten chapters are really something that happens in just a matter of weeks. Then we get to the end of the book - chapters 23 and 24 - where Joshua gives his final sermon, if you will, and that jumps about seventeen and a half years ahead in time.

So we come tonight to the end of Joshua's ministry, if you will. Though he will live seventeen more years (he'll die at the age of 110), he is currently 93 years old. As we read in verse 1, he is old and advanced in years. But the LORD will set him aside in terms of collectively leading the nation where, for the last seven and a half years, they've been leading and being led against these major powers in the land that God had given to the people. It's an interesting balance, isn't it? God gave it to them, but they had to go get it. God provided it for them, promised it to them, but they had to go fight for it and follow His direction. Kind of like you and me - we get saved, and God's got eternal promises in mind for us, but you get to Peter,

and he says (2 Peter 1:3), "God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness," but now, "Add to your to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge." And so there's a lot to be done by you if you're going to take the land, if there's going to be peace and victory over the enemy and over the world that we live in. But Joshua will, like I said, live another seventeen years from this chapter, but the organized military campaign over which he led them was done. In fact, they won't have another leader, really. They had Moses, they had Joshua. But now the responsibility for finishing the work, ridding the land of the occupants, falls upon individuals, if you will. So God will assign the responsibility to the individual tribes.

Chapter 12, if you were with us last week, recounts (and we didn't read it because of all the names) the defeat of thirty-one different kings and their city states, if you will, that both Moses and Joshua had overcome. And now it was given to the tribes to mop up the area. Growth takes time. The LORD said to them back early on (Deuteronomy 7), "I'm not going to give you the land all at once because then you'll be overwhelmed by the land and by the animals. I'll give it to you a little at a time." And that's kind of the way you grow, right? You grow a day at a time. It's hard to measure sometimes. I don't know if your parents drew on a door frame when you were growing up, but I remember as a kid - maybe I was 7 or 8 - my parents started marking it, and I stood there every day. "Any better?" Nothin'. Because you can't tell in a day, but you can tell in a year, and you can tell in even six months sometimes. So it's kind of the same with these folks. Now, if you've read your Bible carefully, you might think that thirty-one kings in a land that's literally 150 miles long and 50 miles wide at its widest would be a lot of kings; and you'd be right. But really these kings and kingdoms amounted to one city with a wall around them, with their own set of rules, their own armies and all. And so those are the thirty-one most powerful cities in the land (at the time) that God used Joshua and the army to destroy over those seven and a half years, to weaken if you will. Sadly - and certainly the story that follows Joshua in the book of Judges is that - though they had great victories going forward, they stopped; which is such a sad deal. The enemy was allowed to stick around in some of these areas. He got a foothold, a base of operations. He worked to effectively oppose the work of God in the lives of His people. He was there to hinder their walks. And, in many chapters - the chapters that begin speaking of their responsibility to take the land - end up by them allowing the land to be overrun by the enemy that they were supposed to be defeating. And so you'll see the enemy planting himself nearby. We will be given a report of the division of the land. It is important that you know it only because you're going to read the whole Bible, and you should know where everybody is. And

if you have a map like this - it's a pretty good map as far as major cities; I think it'll help you most of the time. But it required every portion of each tribe to be faithful, and when there was lack of obedience, there were consequences - first to the tribe, eventually to the nation.

I don't think it's a coincidence that in the midst of these reports of the dividing of the land there are really only two major figures that stick out in them. And that's Joshua and that's Caleb. Because if there were any two people from that whole time that we've been studying that were faithful, it was these two guys. They were - all of their lives - faithful. The Bible is filled with people and reports of their lives, and I think that we learn lessons far better when we see them embodied in someone's life rather than just reading about them or being told that that's something that should happen. I get the feeling that we don't have too many heroes in our culture today. Right? Someone that others could emulate and want to be like. I'm pretty sure being a Power Ranger is not the goal in my life. But Joshua and Caleb were two heroes of the old school, if you will, the old generation. They're the only ones that survived it in the wilderness. By the time we get to this chapter, Caleb is 85 years old. His buddy Joshua is 93. Both men had refused to be the old-way-of-life guys who would always be reaching back to, "Oh, do you remember back in the day?" Most of their lives were lived in the moment, serving the LORD. But we find them both together in the midst of this dividing of the land. They're the two that stand out prominently as examples to the whole nation of what God would have wanted to do with them. So, finish possessing your possessions. God didn't expect them to do it in a day or a week or a month or, for that matter, in a year. It'll be seventeen and a half years down the road that the LORD will say through Joshua to the people, "I'm going to be with you. You're going to still be able to do this thing. Just do it." But they didn't, and they wouldn't.

So tonight we're going to just look at some of the division of the land and some of the lessons in it, and then we will proceed as the LORD gives us time each week through to the end. Verse 1 says, "Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: 'You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.'" If you look at chapter 23 of Joshua, verse 1 says this, "Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age." And in verse 2 Joshua will say to the people, " 'I am old, advanced in age.' " So, like I said, he's old here in chapter 13. He's even older in chapter 23. He'll be seventeen years older; he'll be right near 110 years old. And apparently the years of wandering and of

service had pretty much taken a toll on him. He shows the beating of life that he took. He wasn't the spry and capable and strong guy that he had once been. His physical health seemed to wane, and with it his leadership skills obviously suffered as well. And so it was the LORD's decision to tell Joshua he was finished with that part of his life and that the LORD was going to now hand the remaining battles to individuals. And so notice the LORD says directly to him, "You're an old guy." He was showing signs of wear. He'd had a tough life. I mean, read Joshua's life. And he had had lots of responsibility. He had served Moses faithfully for forty years. He had led the nation for the last decade in nothing but war and campaigns. And maybe it's only the LORD that can get away with looking at His servants, saying, "Hey, you're old now." Most people are frightened by getting older, and I get the feeling listening to people that are older - when they really feel like they're older, that they feel one of two things. They feel being useless - they're afraid of that, and they oftentimes regret about how they lived. There're weird stages in life. When you're young, you've got a vision and you've got a plan, and it's marriage and kids and a house and career. And then, somewhere in the middle, there are people that stop and go, "Maybe I should change careers. I'm not really happy with this one." And then it's too late, and then you're going, "Well, I should have done that. If I'd only done that." There're a lot of those regrets. I read a really interesting article the other day by a woman who was 105 years old. And she wrote in the article that, if it was possible for her to go back and live her life again, she said this, "I would dare to make more mistakes, I would be sillier more often, I would definitely eat more ice cream and less beans, I'd have more actual troubles and fewer imagined ones, and I'd like to travel a whole lot lighter. I will never take a raincoat or a parachute with me." I thought that was pretty interesting.

Well, here's Joshua, and Joshua, in a ministry sense, is pretty much at the end of his rope. Like I said, he'll be around. I suspect he'll have influence. But he kind of drops off the pages in that regard. It isn't something that, until the end, he gets to enjoy some of the peace that had escaped him all of his life, and he gets to the end of his life, and we get a two-chapter sermon both to the leadership (in chapter 23), to the nation (in chapter 24). If you want to think about Joshua in terms of how did he do, I don't think he had any regrets. If you can get to the end of your life serving the Lord being able to say what Joshua writes in these last two chapters, you'll be just fine. So he did well, but he's pretty well worn out.

And so there was, notice in verse 1, still a lot of the land to be developed and to be taken over, to be ruled by God's people. There was a lot left to do, but there were

a lot of people - 2½ million folks - and twelve tribes to really go out and to serve the LORD in His strength. And so Joshua took up where Moses left off. Now the people are being called upon by the LORD to take up where Joshua left off. You know, it's always the case; one stops, the next begins. Stephen gets killed, and Saul steps up. Wycliffe gets killed, Martin Luther gets raised up. I mean, there's always someone waiting in the wings to continue the work. The tragedy of this occupation was that God had given them and promised them so much, and somehow, after this seven-year period and for the next two decades, the people, rather than pursuing with great excitement what God had promised them, pretty much just quit. They pretty much kind of put their lives on hold. They never possessed the land that God wanted for them. What they left around them became their downfall. You can write over the children of Israel at this time - low expectation, dwindling ambition, not the hunger that you see in Joshua's life, who hung around Moses and wouldn't leave the place of worship, no drive. God had wanted to bring judgment upon the heathen through this people that He had chosen. A lot of that stuff was left undone, and because it was left undone, and it was left in their lives, (God had wanted to protect His people by wiping out the bad influence around them), they let it stay there, and the influence took quite a toll on the people as a whole. You can read the first six verses of chapter 7 of Deuteronomy where the LORD tells them, "Don't make any covenants, don't intermarry, don't have fellowship, don't bow at the altar of their gods because they're going to be your stumbling block. They're going to take you out and take you down." And, unfortunately, the evil influences that they allowed around them were their downfall. And when you read, you want to say to yourself - why didn't they just take the land? They had a history now, even their present history - the last seven and a half years, plus the year on the other side of the Jordan - they had almost a decade of victory. A couple of losses, but other than that, that was it. And the two losses were their problem. Other than that, they had won literally every battle. Wouldn't you say that, gosh, everybody would be motivated to continue to press ahead? But they weren't.

And I guess we could ask ourselves the same question - why don't we fully possess the life in the Spirit that God has for us, that these conquests represent? I mean, if you go back and read this, at least this generation when they first went into the land had some great spiritual zeal, and they had a real conviction in their heart; and yet somehow, within ten years, they were pulling their hand away from the plow. And I think there's probably nothing worse than watching Christians who begin to do well run out of gas. And, unfortunately, having traveled enough in the world

over the years, it is more likely a problem for Western Christians than anywhere else. We have it so easy. You can complain about life here, but you go anywhere else, you'll be back in a moment. Things don't get much easier than living in the West. But you find a weakness amongst the saints in the West that you really don't find in the East or that you don't find in the Far East or that you find in Africa. You find people that have nothing, and yet their hearts tuned into the Lord are so great that there's really nothing else that they want, and they don't have a lot of distractions. But I always equate it to new believers. We started our new believer classes yesterday, and I love new believer classes. In fact, Pastor Lyle has taught them here for twenty-five years, and I don't think he'd give it up if you tried to drag it out of his hand. There's nothing better than teaching new believers because they're like vacuum cleaners. Everything you say, they take in, and they write. "Slow down." They want to write down. There's nothing that's boring. There's nothing that's over the top. They want to know everything, they want you to teach them anything. You can't keep a new believer out of church. Now you can keep a ten-year-old believer out of church just by a threat of rain. "Well, it may rain. I think I have to stay home. I believe I have the sniffles." And what happened to that zeal? What happened to that hunger? Maybe we have too much access to the things of God. Maybe we're blessed so much. I don't know what it is, but there is this lacking and this losing of vision. New believers pray constantly, they read chapters of the Bible, they believe everything that they read, they study with a tremendous interest. And then, somewhere along the line, they hit these spiritual plateaus. And maybe it's when the feelings go away, where they, "Oh, I used to feel" It's kind of like the Lord said, "I'll carry the lambs in My arms," and then He puts you down and says, "The sheep will follow Me," and you go, "I like to be carried." Maybe you have a kid that's about that age, and they're always like this (Pastor Jack lifts his arms as if he wants to be picked up), and you, "No, you walk." "Aaaah. I don't want to walk." I think that's what it is with the Christians. The minute you've got to walk by faith rather than just being carried, all of a sudden, we hit that plateau. And so you'll see a lot of folks that do good for a while, but when the walk of faith begins, and the feelings are not what they once were, and the newness has worn off, then the settling in begins, and you see no progress in their lives for the next twenty years. Oh, they're around, but they haven't moved five minutes in that direction. They just are kind of stuck. And you can watch Israel - though they've had, really, nothing but success, they settle in. They had made huge strides towards spiritual maturity, if you will, in terms of taking the land. But they lost the desire for more ground. It's like, "Well, we've got enough. They live over there, we live over here. We've got the train tracks to

separate us." They don't really have much of a drive for victory. They love the settling in on past accomplishments, and they never get to see, they never get to experience what God really wanted to do in their lives. And we can do the same thing. You could have been here for twenty years. You can settle in, though, in five minutes. It has to be that drive to go forward. Christians that always talk about the past are scary to me. "What's the Lord doin'?" "Oh, back in '68, those were the years." "Yeah, those were fifty years ago is what they were!" "Oh, back in the day....." Well, back in the day is not today. That's out of date, isn't it? "Remember when," that doesn't work. But spiritually we become complacent and stagnate, and the length that these new believers traveled in the first year - they never seem to duplicate. Whatever ground they make up in the first year, they can never reproduce that in the second or the fifth or the eighth or the tenth year. And the fact that God was saying to them, and would say to them to the end of this book, "I'm going to go with you, just don't forget what I've told you, I've got so much more for you," He's more than willing, He's more than able. But time becomes a deterrent to diligence. It's time that steals from you commitment, and it shouldn't. We should be more at it. The warning from this book and the one that follows it is that we should be careful of spiritual complacency. Because the places where you, in your flesh, leave strongholds for the enemy - even though most of your life is in the Lord's hands, and everyone would consider you a man or a woman of God, and you're known for that - there are those areas in your life that can be the very areas that take you down. And the enemy doesn't rest. He's not giving up. Satan, he's still motivated to destroy you and to take you out, and he'll work with what you provide. But if you leave, in your Christian life, things that the enemy can grab on to - whether it's your anger or your pride or alcohol or pornography or covetousness, pick one - if it's an easily-besetting sin, it can take care of you. And the children of Israel, they'd come so far, and you go, "Yes!" And then they stop, and they don't go forward. God promises victory to the spiritually diligent. And, instead, Israel settled in, and it became their ruin, and the enemy took what could be taken. He worked them over. And that can happen to you, and it can happen to me if we lose our sense of drive.

Well, verse 2 tells us that the LORD said to Joshua (besides that he was old, and there was still a lot of land to take), "This is the land that yet remains." And down through verse 7 is the land that remains, and I would refer you to a good Bible map. It won't be the one that I gave you because the one that I gave you has to do with the assignment of the tribes. But needless to say, you can certainly find these areas on your map. And what you get the feeling about, when you read down

through verse 7, is there was a lot of stuff left for them to deal with, a lot of stuff. Verse 6 says, " 'All the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth, and all the Sidonians - them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.' " So, God takes this place of division to say, "There's lots of resistance," and these pockets are in the north, the south, the coastlands, over towards the Jordan River. But Joshua wasn't going to have a success. The tribes were going to deal with it themselves.

Well, starting in verse 8 the LORD then gives to us - through the end of this chapter - the division of the land first to those who were going to stay on the other side of the Jordan, where the children of Israel have come from, if you will, the eastern side. And you remember those two and a half tribes. In fact, you can see them on your map. You can see how much land Manasseh actually got if you look on both sides of the Jordan River, which is kind of in the middle; that Gad is there and Reuben is there as well. But he starts by speaking to us about those two and a half tribes on the eastern side (or to the right side of your map, if you will) of the Jordan River. And in verses 9 through verse 33, again, I'm going to save you the trouble of reading them tonight because there're a lot of cities - some of them are no longer with us, but they explain the borders of the land. Verse 15, "And Moses had given to the tribe of the children of Reuben." In verse 24, "Moses also had given an inheritance to the tribe of Gad, according to their families." And in verse 29, "Moses also had given an inheritance to half the tribe of Manasseh." So those are the three. And, like I said, a good ancient map in your Bible you can get a good feel for these folks.

The bigger lesson is the one you don't want to lose, and that is - though God gave them this land, they left enough enemies in it to be defeated by them eventually, and they lost all that God has given them. You know, the Lord might give you peace and joy and hope, but you get away from the Lord, you're going to lose your peace, you're going to lose your joy, you're going to lose your hope because you're going to have your eyes off of Him and back on the things around you. So, they never pressed in. Even though God had His best in mind, it would require diligence on their behalf.

Now we are going to deal with it in another couple of weeks in more detail, but I wanted to address this issue of these folks who took this land on the eastern side

of the Jordan. Because the question always comes up, and you can put the map up (on the screen) if you guys want to. I don't know if it'll help or not. You've got one in your hands, so I'm sure we'll be fine with that. I wanted to talk to you for a minute about these two and a half tribes because if you remember, if you were back with us, that eight and a half years earlier, these representatives of some of these tribes (and, by the way, these tribes were basically cattle-raising tribes), when they came to this part of the country, before they'd ever gone into the Land of Promise, they said to Moses (Numbers 32), "We'd like this land. We've got a lot of cattle. There couldn't be a better land. I'm sure that the land the LORD has promised us is good, but it can't be any better than this." And they literally asked for this land on the outside of the Land of Promise. And Moses went to the LORD, and the LORD said, "Give it to them. If that's what they want, let them have it." And Moses came back, and he said, "Well the LORD said you can have it if you want it. But before you can have it - you can leave your kids here and your cattle here and your wives here - you, as an army, are going to go fight with us until all of the other tribes get their land." And so 40,000 troops (as we will read in the weeks to come) joined the rest of the nation to inhabit and to fight those seven and a half years of battles. That's now over with. That's where we're at in chapter 13. So they are now being released, and will be here in a little bit, to go back to their lands and to occupy and to be reunited to their wives and to their children. I mean, it had been a long absence for this land that they wanted. And when they are released (here in a couple of weeks), when Joshua speaks to them after the division of all of the land, he will tell them how faithfully they had served, that they hadn't disobeyed, that they'd been exemplary, that he prayed God's blessing upon them for their faithful service. So all of that sounds pretty good.

The problem is - was that a good request, or was that a good choice? And it is my personal persuasion that they'd made the wrong choice. And there are a lot of reasons, I think, to set that before you. When we get out to chapter 22 or so, when the children of Israel finally send these guys home, there are some real problems that arise even as the result of them being separated from their brethren. But here're the things that I think you can put on the list. Number one - it's outside the land that God had promised them. Now, had they taken all of the land that God promised, it would have been inside the land. Eventually that would have spread in that direction. But for now, they were told it was on that side of the River, not on this side. And so they were willing to settle for less than God had promised them. Here's the one-in-the-hand, two-in-the-bush, that kind of deal, you know? They only saw the grazing land and went, "That's what we want." They

weren't willing to listen to what God had to say and say, "I'm going to hold out for the best." Because as far as they were concerned, the best, they already had it. "So we would just want this," and they worked for years to get it. I mean, they put in their time, but their decision was based solely upon what they had seen. And it kind of reminds me of Lot looking out with Abraham and saying (Genesis 13), "I'll take the well-watered valley, and you can take the desert." And Abraham saw by faith, and he said, "LORD, I'll just take whatever they don't want," and the LORD said to him, after Lot left, "Look around. Everything's going to belong to you. It's all going to be yours." But Lot could only be moved by what he saw. That's what these guys did. We will find, as we go on in the years that come, that not only were they settling for something that was on the wrong side of the Jordan, they found themselves without any natural boundaries to protect themselves. If you've been to Israel, the Jordan River runs through a long Rift Valley that goes all the way down to Egypt, and there are cliffs that are natural - 2000' high. Israel has a border, by the way, even along the cliffs. But there're places you don't need it. No one will ever climb those things. But they have them. It's like a natural defense. If you were in the land of Israel, you had the Golan on one side, you had the desert on the other, you've got this great river valley with the Jordan, and then you've got the Mediterranean. You're pretty well protected in the land, so to speak. These guys on the other side of the Jordan were not protected at all. In fact over the years, when Israel would get into fights (and there were a lot of people who wanted to take Israel out), the first people that would get beat up were those guys. They'd have to go through them to get to Israel. They almost always came from Syria and up from the northern areas, and these guys were just getting clobbered constantly. But they weren't in the land. And chapter 22 will tell you (if you want to go ahead and read ahead) that there was tremendous amounts of distrust between "them" over there and "us" over here, where God's name was in Shiloh and then in Jerusalem, where the place of worship was (and you were only allowed to worship there, you couldn't build altars wherever you wanted). So these guys are alienated, and they're isolated, and they're in the wrong place, and they're vulnerable to attack, and they're far removed from the presence of God, and they're pretty much isolated from the body of believers, if you will, that God had chosen. So I think if you'll watch for that as you go through - and especially keep in your mind Reuben and Gad and that half-tribe of Manasseh in the north, who are really choosing and settling for less, "We can do that. God, we're in church, we love the LORD, we're reading our Bibles." But God has so much more available if you'll just take the few extra steps to go, "I don't want to go by what I see, I want to go

by what You say," and that you are willing to stand and wait for God's best, by faith.

Well the chapter ends with verse 33 where it says, "But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them." So if you just read that and kind of stop, you might say, "Gosh, that's not fair. The Levites get nothing." Well, it's not really true because the LORD was their inheritance. That's kind of the best inheritance you can hope for. You will find that these Levites were isolated from their own land through the sin of Levi (the founder, if you will) years earlier, and we'll cover that when we get to it. But they were placed in cities around the land. They were there to provide spiritual direction for the tribes. They were given common places to raise their animals. They were fed and provided for by the tribes that they served. And they were allowed to work day in and day out in the eternal things of God. I think for me, one of the greatest blessings for my life has been, in pastoring, that you get to do eternal things. I had a pretty good job and made really good money early on. But my thought going home every night was anybody can do this job or someone else will do it better. It's just money. Money talks. And if you're not any good anymore, you get old, you get tired, they'll get somebody else. It's driven by income. And church work is driven by the Spirit. So you don't get the rewards here. You'll never get rich being a pastor unless you're a crook. Then you can get rich. You can get your own TV show and make stuff up or move to Texas or wherever it is. (Laughing) But there is great benefit to doing eternal things, and what drives you is - even with the frustrations of ministry - it's eternal. It's going to last. It's going to make it through the recession, it's going to make it through the good times and the bad, whether the democracy succeeds or not, whether we have a world war, it's going to make it through. It's not dependent upon anything but God's Spirit. And so, to me, the Levites got the best job of all. They find themselves all over the place. They get forty-eight cities, and six of them are refuge cities (and we'll cover that all as we go). But they had a pretty cool job, though they didn't get land, didn't have that possession as everyone else.

Well, in chapter 14 the land on the west side of the Jordan is now divided amongst those nine and a half tribes. Verse 1, "These are the areas which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them. Their inheritance was by lot, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. For

Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. For the children of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for their livestock and their property. As the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land." So the land was divided by lot, the Old Testament method of determining the will of God. It stops in the New Testament because the Lord gives His Spirit to you to lead you and guide you. And you might remember that the last use of the lot is found early on in the church as the disciples get together and cast lots to try to pick a replacement for Judas (Acts 1); and they gave God two options, and really He'd chosen neither of them - He'd chosen Paul to be the twelfth apostle. But they were just - this is the Old Testament. And the Lord didn't honor that anymore because now His Spirit came to live within you. But the Old Testament - that lot meant if the high priest cast the lots, the LORD would dispose thereof, and it was indeed the way that you would find the will of God. In fact, one of the sins of Saul was that he very rarely went to the LORD to ask, although that was clearly available to him if he wanted. So God divided the land. And I have to think - and maybe just put yourself in this place - that this had to be an exciting time for everybody. This was payoff day. Right? In reality, they had spent nearly forty years wandering in the wilderness. They'd spent seven and a half years fighting to get their place and to get in there. And now, it was payoff day. "All right. Let's see what the LORD's going to give us after all that sweat and toil and wandering and all." And this was the day you got to get your portion and go home. And now you were home. You got to settle in, and it would be "goosebump time," I think. This is yours now. This is what God has appointed for you to have.

And so God's first division of the land is going to go to the children of Judah. However, before they get to Judah, Caleb, the other guy, pops in here in verse 6, and he kind of interrupts the whole flow. In fact, we read in verse 6, "Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: 'You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. 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 back word to him as it was in my heart. Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God. So Moses swore on that day, saying, "Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you

have wholly followed the LORD my God." And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said.' And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war." So before the first lot is cast, here comes Caleb. And Caleb has a promise from God that's been hiding in his heart for decades. In fact, forty seven and a half years earlier, when he had been sent into the land at almost forty years old (actually he was thirty-eight when he left Egypt and forty when he got to the land), all he saw were giants. That's where he went; that's where the LORD had sent him. And he had come back that day with an understanding that God could handle this, and whatever it looked like outside that the LORD would deal with it. And so Joshua meets Caleb, who has come to lay claim to something that God has promised him for generations, if you will. And he'd not only hung onto it with his heart but with his hands. "I have this day a promise from the LORD." All of those years. In fact notice in verse 7, he said, "I brought back word to him as it was in my heart." When Caleb saw the giants, all he could think about was the LORD's promise, and his heart had always kind of stayed there in the same place. Maybe that is what can keep us from fully inhabiting the land that God promises us. Maybe we have a divided heart.

Here's a guy who lived his whole life with only one thing in mind - he had held on to God's promises during the thirty-eight years of wandering. It took him a year and a half to get into the borders of the land, seven and a half more years of corporate conquest, and now here's an eighty-five-year-old guy, and he wants to collect. "Hey, before you cast any lots, give me what God had promised me. I want to cash in. Here's the chip that God gave me." Notice in verse 8 that years earlier Caleb, who was just a young man, had not allowed the lack of faith of others to influence his heart. He was sure of God then. Imagine if you were Caleb, and you spent forty years in the wilderness knowing that it was the people around you that

had kept you from God's best; because he hadn't done anything wrong - he believed that God could certainly have delivered had the people just went ahead. You will read this phrase three different times in this short chapter, "I wholly followed the LORD." Right? The key to all that you see in this older man's life now is that he had given the LORD his all, and he was willing to wait upon God's promises. Can you write that on your life? "I have wholly followed the Lord." Caleb - the name means impetuous or bold. And he certainly was that; he was a bold guy. And he wasn't ashamed to really be that fellow that would serve the LORD. "I followed the LORD with all that I had, and God gave me a promise."

Now I don't know about you, but I can almost see (and maybe I'm way off base) the young guys - they're a whole lot younger than Caleb - rolling their eyes as this old guy starts to tell the history. "Oh, yeah, it was back in '02," and everybody's going, "Oh, here he goes. He's always got a story." Well he did. But this was the most important thing to his life. "This is a promise that God had given to me." He had memorized the promise. He told you the day. It was the word of God to his heart, and it drove him for decades to go forward. And it was the precious word of God. I'm sure it was his favorite verse at the time.

Notice he said, in verse 10, " 'And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses." God said this. Caleb didn't view his longevity as some good fortune or luck. He said, "God kept me alive because He made me a promise. Unless you think I'm too old," notice in verse 11, he argues it away. "I'm not too old. Let me just give you my latest health report. I'm as strong as I ever was." That's quite different than old Joshua, who was advanced in years and falling over. And they're only eight years apart. But, needless to say, old Caleb was quite a guy, wasn't he? And he's kind of a walking infomercial for faith. "I just wholly followed the LORD, and God made me a promise. I want the land, man, the one I saw, the one that the LORD promised to me."

I read somewhere once that you're only as old as you've outlived your enthusiasm. In other words, if you've lost your zeal, you're an old person; it doesn't matter how old you are. But this guy's not burned out, you know? He's got great excitement. And the way I read it, as he begins to speak there at the end of verse 10, I love the fact that old people want to tell you publicly how old they are. Now you know how this works, right? When you have kids, or when the kids are little, first of all, we talk in terms of months. "How old's the baby?" "Oh, he's 11½ months old." "All

right, he's not even a year." "Yeah, he's 11½ months." We like to talk in months. When kids get a little older, they use half-years. Half-years matter. "How old are you?" "I'm 6½. I'm almost 7." They want to tell you how old they are to the half. Later on, we don't like to talk much about age at all, so we're thirty-something. (Laughing) "How old are you?" "Well, I'm thirty-something." Or, "I'm forty-something." And then there're a few years in there where you just don't dare ask, and nobody wants to tell you. But the minute you get old, they'll tell. My wife and I were riding the motorcycle Monday up in Rancho Mirage, and we went to a Starbucks, and there was an old timer guy. He was old, and he saw me drive up on the Harley, and he goes, "I had me one of them." I said, "Is that right?" He said, "It wasn't this shiny, but it was one of them." I said, "Well, that's great." He goes, "You know how old I am?" I said, "No." He said, "I'm 92." (Laughing) Fit right in to my Bible teaching. He was so proud. "I'm 92." "Good for you." "Don't I look better than 92?" "Oh, yeah. You look 91." I don't know. (Laughing) Hilarious.

And I think about Caleb that way. "Give me the land. I'm 85." Yeah. Good for you. Half-years matter, months matter, and then pretty soon nothing matters. But here comes Caleb. And the past was cool, but he is moved by the promises of God in the present tense. In other words, he takes what he's learned of God, and he applies it in the moment. There's no sense just looking back. People want to talk about in "those days," and they were cool times, but I think the coolest time is coming. Don't you? And He gives him Hebron, and the word "Hebron" means fellowship. So the spunky guy, the old guy, is given, because of his fellowship with God by faith, the city of fellowship. And he aged better than Joshua. He had less pressure, I think. Joshua always had those leadership pressures. I think Caleb just had a good time following along. But I'll tell you what, Caleb's last years were the most productive ones of his life - more than any other time - and we'll read about it. In fact, in chapter 15 there're five or six or eight verses of report of how he does in the next couple of years to come. And he's stuck right in the middle of Judah because, if you look at your map and you find Ein Gedi there on the Dead Sea in that dark red at the bottom, to the left of it, a little up, you'll see the word "Hebron." That's the place and the mountain that he was given. So, he's quite a guy.

Now, we are told in verse 15 that before Hebron, this place was called Kirjath Arba, which is where the giants lived - the Anakim. Nothing to do with Star Wars. Had to do with the giants that were left in the land that you can read about way back in Genesis 6. One of the concluding verses in chapter 14, at the end, was that

"the land had rest from war." That isn't to say that there were no more wars. There was lots to be done. But the national campaign under Joshua had ended. The regional battles were still going to start.

Well, before we summarize chapter 15 for you, I would challenge you to think about Caleb, or go and read his life story in the Bible. It isn't very long. But I think you'll walk away with at least three or four distinctives of what it means to wholly follow the LORD. And one of the things I looked at was he wasn't a half-hearted guy. He wasn't haphazard in his devotion. The word "wholly" means with everything. Right? "I've given it all I've got." And one of the things that you discover with people that are really committed to the Lord is that they have a moral and kind of a spiritual bravery about them. Go back to when the spies went into the land; 2½ million people were led astray by ten cowards. They were ten cowards. They were guys out of touch with God. The two guys that were "wholly following the LORD" were about killed by the fear in the hearts of the people who believed the cowards. But both Joshua and Caleb showed a wonderful moral bravery, if you will, in light of the dissenting voices of the majority. Secondly, when they get to speak to the people (for a moment), they spoke the truth without having any regard to pleasing men at all. They weren't interested in making people happy. They were interested in telling the truth. It reminds me of what Paul said in Galatians 1:10 where he says, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ." In other words, I can only please someone; not everyone. And men and women who wholly follow the Lord are not interested in being men-pleasers but God-pleasers. Not only moral bravery, not only interested in pleasing God, but it seems to me that both Joshua and Caleb lived lives that were recklessly abandoning themselves to the will of God. It was pretty dangerous territory in which they walked. Like I said, early on when they spoke against the majority, they about got killed. You and I, as Christians, live in a pretty changing world, and it has changed radically in the last decade or two. Nobody likes Christians now. "You fundamentalists, you proliferers, you Bible thumpers." It can lead to intimidation, it can result in isolation. God's plan for you would be infiltration. Get out there as the light and as the salt, and live it out, man. Don't let people intimidate you. What do you care what they think?! You've just got to be concerned with what God thinks, and His power is still with you. We shouldn't be shrinking away because someone doesn't like it. Tough! I've had people go, "Hey, you shouldn't say that, the Bible's on tape. Someone's going to sue you." "Well, go right ahead. It's still in the Bible. You can't really compromise on that. Sorry you're upset, but here it is. Not that I'm lookin' for

trouble, but if it comes." So, get in there, and mix it up. Get out there, and speak up for Jesus. He's worth serving, isn't He? But you see that in Joshua's life, and you certainly see that in Caleb's life. "Hey, before you hand out the land, here's what I want," and he gets it.

Well chapter 15 is then, finally, the distribution to the first tribe that's on this side of the Jordan, the tribe of Judah. Verse 1 says, "So this was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families," and then the borders are given, and, again, I would point you to your map. Those are the borders that are marked for you on that map, down towards the bottom. Judah, where Jerusalem is and Benjamin - those two little tightened places. Verse 12 of this chapter says, "The west border was the coastline of the *Great Sea*" (the Mediterranean). "This is the boundary of the children of Judah all around according to their families," and indeed those were the borders. And if you jump ahead to verse 20, "This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families," and you literally have forty-plus verses of cities. Some of them are on your map (the larger ones are). Let's just skip all of those, and go to verse 63, and we read, "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day." Now in between, just from verse 13 to verse 19, you can go back, and you can read that Caleb not only is given the land but he goes and takes that land from these remaining giants and distributes the lands to his daughters and his sons; and you can read about it there and how he provides for his family before he passes off the scene - because he had a promise from God.

We can end in verse 63 before (next week) picking up the pace. And, like I said, I'm staying on time. I've got two minutes - I'm gonna do this in two minutes. The question would be - why didn't the children of Judah take Jerusalem at this time? And the only answer I can give you is they didn't want it in the way that the LORD wanted them to have it. Because they were given all of the land, we can only presume that the capture of the land would have been as easy as Jericho or maybe as bad as Ai. The problem was what we will find with all of the tribes and that is leaving part of the things God has promised them into the hand of the enemy, and that problem went from small to huge. I'll tell you when the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem were defeated - it was when David finally came and took the city, and God moved His place of worship from Shiloh (where the tabernacle had stood; in fact, it stood longer in Shiloh than it does in Jerusalem) to the place of worship.

There was one central place of worship. You couldn't just build wherever you wanted. You were all called to one place as a body. So, even the first mention of the first tribe was, "Well, there were at least some cities that they just couldn't deal with." But they should have, and there's no place in the Bible that says they shouldn't have or God didn't have that for them. No. "The land is yours. Go take it."

And I would say that to you tonight. If you're fightin' with stuff, God has you in mind in terms of victory. He wants you to be overcomers not overcome. Right? And you need to have that assurance that the Lord can do that in your life. But it comes when you don't get tired of well doing. It comes when you stick to the grind and get your Bible out and get on your knees and believe what God has said. It's not easy to walk with God, but it's a whole lot harder to not walk with Him. And the children of Israel certainly would learn that in time.

So next week, if you just read ahead you can skip over names. That should get you to the next couple of chapters, and we'll look forward to learning some new things with you next Wednesday night.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
May 8, 2017

