

Romans 6:15-23: Slavery as a Metaphor for Gospel Grace

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[0 : 00] Joshua chapter 21 verse 43 through 45. This can be found on page 185. Once again our scripture reading will be taken from the book of Joshua chapter 21 verse 43 through 45. This can be found on the Pew Bible on page 185. Please stand.

Amen. Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers and they took possession of it and they settled there.

And the Lord gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them. For the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands.

Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed. All came to pass. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you.

Be seated now. Good afternoon. And thank you Ben and company for that sneak preview of Friday night.

[1 : 28] Should be a good evening. These are interesting days in our city, in our church, in our lives.

God is good. Do thank you for Devin for praying for the lively family in the midst of their loss. And we want to continue to support them as what's prayed tomorrow evening is the funeral.

Keep the family in prayer. Many of you remember Janice who taught the Gem of the Ocean class. And her husband oftentimes was sitting with her. And again, let's remember them in prayer.

Chicago. What a great city. Sometimes known as the city that works. Either because of its hardworking people that inhabit the city.

Or because it's a city that gets things done. You know, it works. Also known as the city in a garden. As a matter of fact, that's the motto, the Latin of it, which I will not attempt to do all this afternoon.

[2 : 37] But another distinctive that Chicago has is that it is a city of neighborhoods. A city of neighborhoods. It was in the late 1920s that the Social Science Research Committee at U of C defined 75 community areas corresponding roughly to the neighborhoods within the city.

It was in the late 1950s that the O'Hare community became the 76th neighborhood when some of the neighborhoods around O'Hare were annexed into the city.

And then, in 1980, Edgewater was separated from Uptown and it became the 77th Chicago neighborhood.

Maps of Chicago often depict the various boundaries that are there. I know on our west side office we have a blown up model that looked something like this.

But alphabetically, it goes all the way from Albany Park to the, it's not Woodlawn. Yes, it is Woodlawn. The last in the alphabet.

[4 : 06] Numerically, from 1 to 77. From Rogers Park to Edgewater. Well, it was not a map of Chicago that you should have received when you came into the sanctuary on this afternoon.

It was a map of Canaan. And we want you to hold on to that because we want to look at some of the places that are on the map. And if you didn't get one when you came in, you might find one in the back of your Bible.

The land of the twelve tribes of Israel or the allotment of the land. Something that designates the property or the real estate, as it were, that was given to the children of Israel as a gift from God.

The book of Joshua is about God's people possessing the land that God had promised to them.

Promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And the book of Joshua is about their possessing the land. And the community group study for this week is going to cover chapters 15 through 21.

[5 : 24] Stefan was a little shaking in his boots because he thought he was going to have to read all seven of those chapters this afternoon. And now the hub of our exposition is going to be the verses that he read.

Although we will make some references to the chapters that go from chapter 15 through 21. In those chapters, we see the nine and a half tribes minus the two and a half that received their inheritance to the east of Jordan.

We see them in these chapters receiving their allotted portion of Canaan. Again, the two and a half tribes had received their inheritance east of the Jordan.

But because they were one with the remaining tribes, they did not actually enter into their rest until the entire nation entered into rest and into their particular allotments.

But notice the summary of the conquest that we see in the verses that were read. That's our preaching text. The division of the land was along tribal lines.

[6 : 39] And it concludes in Joshua chapter 19. And notice verse 51 with me. Joshua chapter 19 verse 51. As a matter of fact, I want to go a little higher.

I want to look at verse 49 because I want you to see something here. This is at the end. When they had finished distributing the several territories of the land as inheritances, the people of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua, the son of Nun.

By command of the Lord, they gave him the city that he asked, Timnath, Syrah, in the hill country of Ephraim. And he rebuilt the city and settled in it. These, verse 51, are their inheritance that Eliezer, the priest, and Joshua, the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel, distributed it by lot at Shiloh before the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

So they finished dividing the land. Joshua, you recall on last week, Caleb was at the head of the line getting his inheritance. We see here at the end of the line, Joshua receiving his inheritance.

You recall that these were those who were faithful and obedient to God. And it sort of brackets the particular passage that shows the allotment of the land.

[8 : 02] Who is it that actually gets the land or gets the inheritance? Again, you've got these model individuals, Joshua and Caleb, who model faith and obedience that is really good and essential for those who are inheriting the land.

But we see here special allotments in these chapters 15 through 21 are given to those for cities of refuge, as well as special allotments for the children of Levi.

That is 48 cities, 48 Levitical cities, along with their pasture lands, were distributed to the sons of Levi. Their pasture lands before Moses' death, the Lord had spoken about both of these special allotments for a city of refuge, as well as for the Levites there, the Levites who had provided special services in the nation.

So while the allotment of the land actually covers all of these chapters, look at chapter 21, verses 43 through 45. The main thing that comes into focus in these verses is the Lord's activity on behalf of his people.

And let me read it again in your hearing. Follow with me. Thus the Lord gave to Israel, notice, all the land that he swore to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it, and they settled there.

[9 : 33] And the Lord gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands.

Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed. All came to pass.

Here's a brief summary of what you have there as far as in checklist fashion. The Lord gave all the land. The Lord gave rest to Israel on every side.

The Lord made good on all of his promises. Therefore, in verse 43, what we see is they had possession of all the land because the Lord himself, he had been faithful.

We have sung about that, haven't we? And we must be careful to note that they possessed the land because the Lord gave it to them. It wasn't because of their goodness.

[10 : 43] It wasn't because they were a great multitude. The Lord's activity on behalf of his people had resulted in their possessing of the land.

We're reminded of that in Joshua 1 and 2. Listen, my servant Moses is dead. Now therefore, rise, go over this yard, and you and all this people, and to the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.

The land, like salvation, yours and mine, was a gift from God. It wasn't based on their goodness or their strength or their numbers.

The Lord had set his love upon them. He had sovereignly chosen them to be recipients of his favor. By God's power, the strength of the Canaanites had been broken, and then their land had been divided amongst the children of Israel.

And notice that the Lord gave the land to Israel. It was all of them. Each tribe had received their allotment. It was the full number of the people of Israel.

[11:53] They took possession, and they settled there. This is interesting, what we see here. As a matter of fact, I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 49. It's a great chapter to read in conjunction with the chapters that are before us because it is there that Jacob blesses his 12 sons.

And we see that those who emerge or rise as prominent in prophecy are the ones who arose as being prominent in their possession.

Particularly, we have Judah and the sons of Joseph. We see that they were prominent in Jacob's prophetic utterance, but we also see that they were prominent in the land that they received.

Let me show you that, Genesis chapter 49. Look at verse 9.

Verses 9 through 11 give Jacob's blessing, a prophetic blessing on Judah.

[13:08] And then we see Jacob's prophetic blessing for Joseph going from verses 22 through 26. And just let me read a portion of them, and then we'll refer to their particular land allotments.

The scepter shall not depart from Judah. Now, Judah, verse 9, is a lion's cub from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as a lioness who dares rouse him. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until the tribute comes to him to whom it shall be the obedience of the peoples, binding his foal to the vine, and his donkey's coat to the choice vine.

He washed his garments in wine, and his vesture in the blood of grapes. Look at the blessing on Joseph in verse 22. Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring.

His branches run over the wall. The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him, and harassed him severely. Yet his bow remained unmoved. His arms were made agile by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob.

[14:22] From there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel, by the God of your father, who will help you, by Almighty who will bless you with blessings from heaven above. Note something else here while we're in the chapter.

Look at the word of Jacob, the prophetic blessing, or words for Simeon and Levi. In verse 5, Simeon and Levi are brothers. Weapons of violence are their swords.

Let my soul come not into their counsel. O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed me, and in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen.

Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel. And notice this particularly. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.

Prophetic utterances that show the prominence in prophecy, but we also see the prominence in possession.

[15:20] As a matter of fact, take your map out, if you will, and look at the land allotments for Judah and the land allotments for Joseph, which you will not see the name Joseph because Joseph got two portions.

one for Manasseh, who was his firstborn, but Ephraim was his secondborn, but Ephraim was the more prominent one. Look there. You see all of the land that is there for Judah down in the southern portion there.

And notice right in the middle of Judah's property, who do you have? Simeon. You remember the prophecy? It's going to be divided. And also, the 48 cities that were spread out throughout the land, the Levitical cities, again, Jacob's prophecy coming to pass.

Notice, you see right in the center, Ephraim, but notice to the north of him is West Manasseh, as well as East Manasseh, where the, which was the inheritance of one of the tribes that was East of Jordan.

These two tribes emerging. And then, notice in Joshua chapter 15, you see the allotment for Judah. And you might want to put 15 on your map there for Judah, chapter 15.

[16:49] And then, you go on down and see the allotment in chapter 16 for Ephraim and for Manasseh. The Levites, again, had no specific territory, but they were scattered throughout.

The Lord was their inheritance. They did not have land, per se, or at least as the other tribes did, but they had cities amongst the tribes. Several observations are in order as we consider this possession because of God's faithfulness.

And these things have a parallel, I believe, in the Christian life as we are walking through this earth and walking through this land. But as far as the possessions and our inheritance in the Christian life as believers in Christ, possession of what was promised was not without combat.

We see that in these particular chapters. Particularly in Joshua chapter 15, verses 13 through 15, Caleb fought with giants in order to gain his possession.

The inhabitants didn't roll over and play dead. They put up a fight, but some of them still were not fully exterminated. Possession of what was promised was not without combat, even in the land that had been given unto them.

[18:13] One of the ways, I don't know if you've ever had any extermination done in your home or your place of business. And the exterminator comes in and he, you know, sort of knocks out whatever the insects that are there, whether they're roaches or water bugs or fleas or whatever.

But every now and then, you have some of those boogers, they're still around. That's when you get the raid can, the personal raid can, and you knock them out there.

And that's sort of like what it was in the land. That not all of them, though the big conquest had happened, still, they needed to get the raid can out every now and then and get the inhabitants that were in the land.

They didn't roll over and play dead. The big battles were won, but the guerrilla warfare in the land remained in the land of Canaan.

chapter 15, verse 63. But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah, could not drive out so that the Jebusites dwelled with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

[19:25] Chapter 16, verse 10. However, they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer. So the Canaanites lived in the midst of Ephraim to this day, but had been made to do forced labor.

Possession was not without combat. If you thought or think that gaining ground in the Christian life will be without combat and warfare, you and I are mistaken.

That is not the case. If you're resolved to honor Christ with your life, expect to engage in a measure of combat even as one who has received the inheritance of God through Christ, i.e. eternal life.

As a Christian, don't expect the enemy to roll over and play dead in your life and life. Christian life is not without combat.

Possession of what the Lord had promised was not also without complications. We see that in chapter 17 where we encounter challenges and complications as it concerned the allotment of the sons of Joseph, both Manasseh and Ephraim, the daughters of Zilophahad, one of what was rightfully theirs in verses 3 through 6, chapter 17, that came to Joshua based on what had been determined beforehand by Moses.

[20:56] The people of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, chapter 17, came to Joshua with a complaint based on their numbers that they wanted more land but they were unwilling to do the work of clearing the land.

It was not without combat. It was not without complications. It was not without complacency. We see that in chapter 18 and verse 1. Look at that with me if you would, please. The whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them. There remained among the people of Israel seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been apportioned.

So Joshua said to the people of Israel, how long will you put off going in to take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you? Huh? Whether it was they had gotten complacent, grown accustomed to staying with the larger group, they were reluctant to enter into their possession.

After the land had been subdued, there seemingly was a reluctance on the part of the seven remaining tribes to fully receive what the Lord had promised. They were like people on the edge of the water rather hesitant to get in and to go after their inheritance.

[22:19] Had they been content to dwell with the whole community and didn't want the responsibility or the challenge? Were the people here playing it safe, taking comfort in the strength of their numbers with all of the group?

Whatever reason, they were not moving forward. Their heritage awaited them, but they needed to enter into their heritage, their inheritance by faith.

God's people needed to be challenged to possess what had been promised to enter in to their God-given heritage. But in spite of the challenges and the combat and the conflict, all of the tribes took possession of the land.

Again, back to chapter 21 and settled in the land that God had promised to give Abraham and to his descendants through Isaac and Jacob.

Because the Lord was faithful, they had possession of the land, according to verse 43 of Joshua chapter 21.

[23 : 24] But also, because the Lord was faithful, verse 44, they had rest on every side and victory over all of their enemies. What we see here in chapter 21, verse 44, actually repeats what we've seen already in chapter 11, verse 23, and chapter 14, verse 15.

These verses, this verse particularly fulfills what the Lord had spoken in Joshua chapter 1, verses 5 and 6. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life.

Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you, for you shall cause his people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

That's what we see in verse 44. The Lord gave them rest on every side. Gave them because he had gotten victory over all of their enemies.

Major warfare had ceased. The land had been conquered and the people of God were at rest. Rest from the major conflicts of war. The power of the enemy had been broken.

[24 : 34] They were no longer a major threat. Power of the Canaanites broken. The enemy posed no major threat. God's people were at rest.

Because the Lord was faithful, they had possession of the land, had victory over their enemies, and rest from war. But also, verse 45, they experienced the fulfillment of all the promises because God was faithful.

It comes into view again in verse 45. Not a word of all good's promise. God's promise had fallen to the ground. Everything needed for fulfillment of his word is wrapped up in his nature and his being. No props. No backup system. God is God. All by himself and he fulfills his promise. He's true to what has been promised. All came to pass.

I don't know if you noticed the word all in the text. It's a very prominent word. Four times here in our English text. Six times actually in the Hebrew text.

[25 : 44] And notice also that the Lord's promises are described as good promises. They're good because of their source. They come from a good God.

They're good in their essence because they are true. They are good in their effect. They're good for us and they are good to us.

And all of God's promises to his people came past. So the question as we look at this particular very three verse kind of paragraph the question comes to us what how do we as Christians view what we see in these verses.

Certainly we see that God is faithful but how do we view them? Well here's a couple of ways to look at this. Number one we see that they provide a sneak preview of what is ultimately fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have first of all a sneak preview of our inheritance. In the text it's land it's an earthly inheritance but it is through Jesus Christ that we obtain our inheritance both while we're here but also in glory in future that we've sung about here on this afternoon.

[27 : 15] It's not as it concerns us it doesn't concern earthly real estate or property. Ours is a spiritual inheritance that is indeed secured by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ and it awaits us it awaits you and me in eternity.

As a matter of fact Dave read this particular passage right at the beginning of our service blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to his great mercy. He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Here it is to an inheritance that is imperishable it is undefiled it is unfading it is kept in heaven for you God God's people all of God's people who are kept or being kept by God's power guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

It's a sneak preview of what you and I have in Christ of our inheritance that is through the person and the work of Jesus Christ. This particular small paragraph three verses gives us a sneak preview

of inheritance and not an earthly one but one that is reserved in glory for you prepared in and through Christ.

What things do we possess even as believers here? So yes there is a future dimension of it through Christ but brothers and sisters there are things even now that are ours in Christ by reason of our position in him.

[28 : 58] You and I as believers have the heritage of communion with God in prayer. We have the heritage of help in the time of trouble.

have the heritage of family fellowship and communion with the people of God. You and I have the heritage through Christ who led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.

We have the heritage of giftedness and usefulness in the family of God. Gifts of grace to encourage faith even among us. These things are yours and mine in Christ.

Our inheritance includes peace with God and the very peace of God. The heritage of victory in the midst of our battles. Are you realizing some of your inheritance even here even here by reason of your being in Christ your spiritual location not in Canaan but you are in Christ if you are a believer. These are the things that are yours and mine even in this life and then we look forward to the great inheritance that is ours.

[30 : 13] It's for all the people of God the full number of God's people just as we see the allotments for the children of Israel all of them had a portion even so you sir you ma'am and sometimes we may not we may not feel that we are spiritually wealthy in Christ but it's not according to feeling is it it's according to faith in a faithful God Jesus death is the gateway to our present and future inheritance!

So sneak preview of our future inheritance particularly but also it speaks of what we have in Christ now but also it previews the rest verse 44 that we have in Christ as a matter of fact you need to turn to Hebrews chapter 4 and just read one passage as it relates to the rest that is ours Hebrews chapter 4 verses 8 and 9!

if Joshua speaking about Joshua and giving and his ministry as we've been looking at it over these weeks had given them rest God would not have spoken of another day later on there remains a rest!

a Sabbath rest for the people of God for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his own works as God did his again it's a sneak preview of the rest as ours in Christ I believe there's a present aspect of that dimension of that but it's also a future dimension of that when you and I look at this paragraph in Joshua chapter 21 it's a sneak preview of your inheritance not of the land but the good things of God that will have in eternity but also there's residual there's overflow from the cross that accrues to you and me here in this life and then it sneaks previews the rest that we will have an eternal rest but even also things that are ours as it relates to our rest our ceasing from our own words our full faith our trust fully relying on

Christ the death of Jesus is the gateway to our present and future inheritance and even the death of Christ as pictured in the elements that are behind me for communion Jesus response of obedience and faith it it it it model for your obedience and mine to our faithful God how should you and I respond to the God who is faithful to fulfill all that he has promised how should you and I as believers in this life believers living within the 77 neighborhoods of Chicago how should we respond to this faithful God who is faithful to fulfill all that he's promised we should respond yes like Caleb as a person who was fully obedient to God we should respond like Joshua but ultimately our obedience must be like the obedience of Christ who was obedient even unto death yes death on a cross that's the nature character of our obedience and may

[34 : 03] God find us obeying him in that way and may we be people who increasingly understand the implications of our inheritance in Christ both the earthly dimensions of that as well as the eternal dimensions of that for God's glory and for our good let me invite you to bow your heads now we are going to receive communion a time where we can do several things several things come together at this particular moment amongst the people of God certainly it's a time to look back and see Christ's work for us but it's also a time to be nourished and strengthened because of that work these elements that depict his broken body and his blood may they on this afternoon be a visual aid as it were to your faith may you be strengthened may you be strengthened in the knowledge of

God's faithfulness to fulfill all of his promises in and through Christ listen to the words from 1st Corinthians chapter 11 where Paul accounts his receiving from the Lord what he had delivered to the people of God in Corinth it says for I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the

Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and said this is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me in the same way he took the cup and after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me let's pray

Lord we give thanks that you are the God who fulfills all of your promises not one word falls to the ground and Lord you have fulfilled your word in sending your son our savior to this world he is our king Lord when we serve him he is our servant king and we want to serve him fully in obedience Lord praise you for your faithfulness to your covenant faithfulness to your word pray that the people of God on this afternoon would be nourished Lord as we commune together around these crucial aspects essential aspects of the Christian faith commend ourselves to you Lord if there are those who need specifically Lord to do special kind of business with you

I pray Lord that in their hearts preparation for receiving Lord your supper! would continue even as we proceed the blessing out of your name amen Dave is coming to assist we invite you as you