

Claiming the Promises

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 February 2021

Preacher: Rev. Iain Thomson

- [0 : 0 0] Let's join together in prayer. Let's pray together. Our Father in heaven, we're encouraged with the words that we've just sung that assures us that you will keep our souls, that you will preserve us from all ill, and our going out and in, that you will keep.
- So that when we come before you, O Lord, in this act of worship, and as we so often come before you, not knowing how to address you, not knowing what we're going to say to you, we still seek to come because we have the desire to come.
- And it's not so much what we can say to you that's important. It's what you're going to say to us because we're not going to say anything that you're not already aware of.
- We cannot bring any of our circumstances before you that you haven't already seen. Yet, O Lord, as we come before you, we're not aware of our own situations like we would like to be.
- We're not aware of the glory and the honor that you have clothed yourself in like we would like to know it.
- [1 : 2 6] So as we come before you, we throw ourselves at the mercy of your Holy Spirit to teach us how to pray. Teach us, O Lord, to come with words that will express something of the glory of the majesty that belongs to you so that we might begin to understand what a glorious God you are.
- And it's only as we're enlightened in our minds and as your Spirit furnishes us with words that we will have that understanding. And even as we enter into the depth of our own souls, you are not ignorant of us.
- You know the groanings that we cannot express. You know the deep down longings and the hidden recesses of our hearts. You're well aware of what's behind these groans that give us to come to you.
- Because we know that even or though we have to acknowledge that we are so ignorant to a large extent of our own situation that it is to you that we want to come.
- As Peter of old once said, to whom else can we go? You have the words of eternal life. So we come before you, O Lord, because we believe that.
- [2 : 5 4] We believe that you're the God who can enlighten our minds. That you're the God who can reveal yourself to us in such a way that life will flow into our souls.
- As Jesus himself said, that this is life eternal to know you, the living and the true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent forth. Outside of that communion with yourself, O Lord, there is no life.
- So let us never be satisfied with the husks of religion. Let us never be satisfied with the performance of our religious act.
- Let us never be satisfied, O Lord, that we have come aside from the things of this world to perform our religious worship.
- without that end bringing us, without that means bringing us to the end of entering into your presence.

[3 : 59] Because that's the only thing that's going to satisfy the soul that you've brought to life. To have communion with yourself. So we're asking, O Lord, as we come before you this morning, that you would help us to meet with you.

Wherever we are geographically, whether we're sitting in our own sitting rooms, or wherever we may have tuned in, it's not where we are geographically that's important.

It's where we are spiritually. And although we might be hearing the Word of God, and although we might be seeking to pray to the living God, and although we might think that these things bring us near to you, our hearts might be at a great distance from you.

And you encourage us to lift up our hearts to you. Because it's what proceeds from our hearts that you see. And it's what proceeds from our hearts that you want to hear.

And we're asking, O Lord, that you would help us to lift up our souls. That you would help us, O Lord, to recognize that unless we're able to come to you in spirit and in truth, then we will have failed in our endeavor to worship you.

[5 : 23] And we will have failed in our endeavor to seek your blessing. We need your blessing. And it's only in the act of worship that we will receive your blessing.

So make our worship effectual. Give us a right attitude so that we might worship you in a way that would be appropriate.

That we might give you the reverence that is due unto your name. That we would pay attention even as we sit in the luxury of our own homes.

That we might be aware that we're coming into the presence of the living God. And if we were aware of somebody important coming into our homes, we would make an effort to seek to address that person appropriately.

And as you come into our homes through this live link, we ask, O Lord, that you would give us an appropriate attitude to give you the reverence that is due unto your name.

[6 : 31] And help us, O Lord, that we would address you in a reverential way and that we would seek to glorify your name. And as we seek to listen to what the Lord God has to say to us, we pray that you would prepare our hearts.

That you would open our hearts for yourself, O Lord. That you would help us to hear you. that we might hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

And that we would seek to address whatever it is that you are going to speak to us by giving you an act of adoration and worship.

Because your sheep will hear your voice. And the effect that that will have on your sheep is that they will follow you. So we're asking you, O Lord, that we would follow you if we're hearing your voice.

That we would follow you into the paths of righteousness. Not just in our acts of worship, but as we seek to live our lives before you. That you would give us, O Lord, the grace to be able to appropriate what would be comely comely and what would be appropriate for those who profess your name in the way that we live our lives.

[8 : 00] We ask, Lord, that we would seek to live them to your glory. That we would indeed walk in the paths of righteousness, giving obedience to your revealed will.

Because your Spirit will lead us into the truth and he will never have us to walk contrary to your truth. So we pray that your truth would be impressed upon our hearts.

That it would permeate all the faculties of our souls. so that our lives would be transformed and that we would be seen as those that have been with Jesus.

That it would be evident that we would become living witnesses, that we would become living epistles to be seen and read by the world that we live in.

That we are the children of God. We're asking you, O Lord, that you would bless your church wherever they find themselves today.

[9 : 05] We're asking you, O Lord, that you would remember them in their own individual situations because we know that it's our individual experiences that will be profitable to the corporate worship of the church.

So we're asking, Lord, that you would meet with us all at the point of our needs because our needs are varied, but we're thankful that whatever our needs are, they are not outwith the bounds of possibility for you to reach us.

You're able to meet with us there and you're able to give us grace to help us where our needs are. so we pray, Lord, for your church, whatever their situation, whether things appear to be going well for them and your face seems to be smiling upon them, or whether they're experiencing adverse circumstances and being persecuted as a result of professing their faith in you, many of them in danger of their lives, many being martyred still throughout the world, although that doesn't make the headlines, Christians that are put to death because of their faith, we're asking, O Lord, that you would continue to strengthen your people, that you would continue to enable all of your people to gather at the throne of grace, particularly on this day which is your day, the day that you've appointed for your people to come together to worship you.

we're asking that we would indeed meet with all of your people round the throne and round the throne where the spirits of just men made perfect and the angels in heaven gather round.

We're asking that we would be part of that body that shows forth your glory, that seeks to worship you. We're praying, O Lord, that you would meet with people in this world that are experiencing hardship, or at least as a result of the pandemic that you've afflicted this world with.

[11 : 29] We're praying, O Lord, that that would have the effect upon those that are astray from you in bringing them close to yourself and helping them to realize the uncertainty of our circumstances in this world, that there is nothing in this world that we can rely on because everything in this world can be shaken.

It can be removed out of place. But when these things are shaken and when these things threaten our health, when these things threaten our livelihoods, we know that we can come to you who is the refuge and the strength of your people, who can never be moved, who is the same today as you were yesterday and as you will continue to be forever, you are the rock, you are the foundation on which your people can build for eternity.

And we're asking, O Lord, that we can come to you. We're asking that you would help those throughout the world to have that desire to come to you.

and we're praying that more would be brought into your kingdom because we know that you can use the providence that we're experiencing at this time to these ends, like you can use everything in our experience.

And we're praying that it would lead sinners to yourself and that we would be brought back as a nation to yourself, that you would remember our leaders and the leaders of all the nations of the world, because your vision for the church is to encompass all the nations.

[13 : 16] So we're praying for the leaders throughout all the nations that you would help them to realize that there are things out with their control and that they have to look to you for wisdom, for guidance, so that they might find deliverance and that they might lead the people in a way that would give them everlasting blessings, because we know that even good governments are seeking the good and welfare of their people, but it's only as we are led to you that we can have everlasting goodness.

So we pray for our governments, that you would give them guidance, that you would give them the wisdom that comes from above. We pray, O Lord, for those that are laboring to help others, our health workers, but not just our health workers.

Almost everybody in this world are engaged in doing work that's going to be useful for others. So we're praying, O Lord, that you would help us to understand and to realize that, that we would look out for one another, that we would pray for one another, that we would seek to share each other's burdens, and that we would seek to bring all of our burdens to you as the God who can give us rest.

And we're praying, Lord, for that rest. We're praying for your peace to visit this world, that you would benedict us with your peace, that you would pour down your blessings upon us, and that you would continue to lead us and to guide us as your worshiping people to seek these blessings for this world, so that we might be prepared for the world that is yet to come.

Lord, lead us and go before us this morning, and have mercy upon us for our sins and shortcomings, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[15 : 24] Well, we're going to read in God's Word in the book of Joshua. Joshua chapter 14.

We're going to read the whole of the chapter. These are the inheritances that the people of Israel received in the land of Canaan, which Eliezer the priest and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel gave them to inherit.

Their inheritance was by lot, just as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses for nine and a half tribes. For Moses had given an inheritance to the two and a half tribes beyond the Jordan, but to the Levites he gave no inheritance among them.

For the people of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, and no portion was given to the Levites in the land, but only cities to dwell in, with their pasture land for their livestock and their substance.

The people of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses, they allotted the land. Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenesite, said to him, You know that the Lord said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh Barnea concerning you and me.

[16 : 56] 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 him word again as it was in my heart.

But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, yet I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.

And now behold, the Lord has kept me alive just as he said these forty-five years, since the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness.

And now behold, I am this day eighty-five years old. I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me. My strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming.

So now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that day. For you heard on that day how the Anakim were there with great fortified cities. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out, just as the Lord said.

[18 : 16] Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave him Hebron, and he gave Hebron to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, for an inheritance. Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenesite, to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord, the God of Israel.

Now the name of Hebron formally was Kiriath Arabah. Arabah was the greatest man among Anakim, and the land had rest from war.

Amen, and may God bless to us that we deem from His own holy word. I just want to speak to the children, first of all, before we look at this passage.

It's hard to believe that it's the third week in February. It doesn't seem that long ago since New Year.

New Year. And I was wondering about some of the New Year resolutions that maybe some of you may have made. You all know what a resolution is.

[19 : 29] It's a promise that you want to keep. And very often people make these promises, these resolutions at New Year.

when they're starting a new year, they promise themselves that it's not going to be like the last year. They promise that they're going to do better. Maybe you've promised to yourself that you're going to be more obedient to your parents.

Maybe you've promised to keep your rooms tidier. Maybe you've promised yourself that you're going to work harder at your school work. Well, I want to ask you, how are you getting on with your promises?

Have you been able to keep all the promises that you made to yourself and maybe to others? Now, maybe you don't really think it's important that you keep your promises.

But I think it's important that we keep our promises. And the reason I think it's important is because I believe that God thinks it's important that we keep our promises.

[20 : 43] God always keeps His promises. And we can depend upon His promises. We can't always depend upon the promises that we make ourselves because sometimes we end up breaking them.

Sometimes we can't depend on promises that other people have given to us because they sometimes end up breaking them. But God never breaks His promises because God cannot lie.

God must continue to remain faithful to Himself. Now, in today's lesson that I'm going to do shortly, it's about Caleb.

Caleb was one of the twelve spies that Moses sent out into the land of Canaan. Remember when God took His people out of Egypt?

I'm sure most of you will be familiar with the story of the plagues that came upon the Egyptians because they were refusing to let God's people go.

[21 : 54] And then eventually they let them go and they then chased after them and they seemed to have cornered them. That there was no way out and God suddenly opened up the Red Sea for them to pass through.

And how He delivered them. And how the Egyptians were drowned. Now, He had promised to bring them to the land of Canaan.

He had promised to give them Canaan. And before they entered into Canaan, Moses sent out twelve spies to see what was happening there.

To find out who was living there. To find out if they were able to defend themselves, where their weaknesses were, where their strong points were.

They wanted to find out all of these things. So He sent out twelve spies. spies. And when the twelve spies came back, ten of them sought to discourage the people.

[23 : 02] They said, yes, the land's exactly as God said it would be, but there are giants there. They're living in fortified cities. They've got great armies.

They are strong, these people. We cannot go in to possess this land. Let's just give up on it. And Caleb and Joshua were faithful.

And they didn't look at how strong the people were. They looked to God's promises. And they sought to encourage the people and said, look, God has promised to give us this land.

Let's go in and possess it. But they didn't go in and possess it. because the voice of the ten spies that had sought to discourage the people prevailed.

And God was displeased with them. So they ended up in the wilderness for the next 40 years. But he had given Caleb a promise because of his faithfulness.

[24 : 11] He had promised Caleb to give him the land that he had spied out. And after the children of Israel have gone through the wilderness for 40 years, they have now entered into the promised land.

And Caleb has remembered his promise. The promise that God had given to give him that particular portion of land. Not only was it important that Caleb remembered that promise, but more importantly, God remembered.

And although it was 45 years, God kept his promise. Now, sometimes we get impatient.

to pray to God and we ask for things that we know that he's promised to give us, but they don't seem to be coming.

And we give up. We get discouraged. But we should encourage ourselves by reminding ourselves, if God has promised it, God must keep that promise, because God cannot lie.

[25 : 33] He must remain faithful. He is faithful to himself, and he is faithful to the people that he's given these promises to.

So let us never be discouraged when we're praying about something. Let us continue to pray, because God will fulfill that promise for us.

May God grant that he would bless to us these thoughts. Let's just bow our heads in prayer. Our Father in heaven, we give you thanks that you're the God who is not only willing to give us your blessing, but you are able to give us your blessing.

you never promise us something that is out with your ability to deliver on. And we're asking, oh Lord, that you would encourage us in our faith to lay hold of the promises that you give us.

Help us to come, even with the simplest of desires that we learn from your word, and help us to start praying them, praying that you would bless us, and that you would help us to come to know you as the all powerful God who can give us everything that you've promised your people.

[27 : 10] Lord, make us your people and help us to look to you, for we're asking it with the forgiveness of our sins. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We want to come back to the passage that we read together in Joshua chapter 14. The children of Israel had been in the land for five years, and they had started to distribute the land to see what inheritance each tribe would receive, and this was to be done by Lot.

But before they started casting the lots, Caleb came forward, and he requests that the hill country be given to him.

In verse 12 of chapter 14, we read, So now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that day. For you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities.

It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the Lord said. This piece of land was still in the hands of the enemies.

[28 : 41] place. But Caleb wants to lay claim to this piece of land. It wasn't for his own personal use.

He was claiming this piece of land for his tribe, the tribe of Judah. And there were representatives from the tribe of Judah with him when he makes his request.

And he reminds Joshua of the promise that God had given. As a result of his faithfulness to God, and in seeking to remain faithful to God, God, through Moses, had given him this promise, that he would receive the land that he had spied out.

After they had come back from spying the land, Caleb and Joshua had remained faithful. They had stood up to the rest, and they wanted to encourage the children of Israel to go in and possess the land.

But, as I mentioned earlier, the voice of the ten spies that were not willing to go in prevailed, and the children of Israel were ready to stone Caleb and Joshua for wanting to go in to possess the land.

[30 : 20] And the first thing I want to consider is how the promise of God rejoices the heart.

how it must have rejoiced the heart of Joshua to see his old friend Caleb coming forward and laying claim to this piece of land.

We read there in verse 6 that as soon as they had decided to start casting lots to see who was going to inherit what, that the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenesite said to him, you know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh Bernea concerning you and me.

He's reminding Joshua of the promise that God had given concerning the two of them. 45 years previous to this.

He had received the promise 45 years ago but Caleb had never forgotten that promise. He had probably thought about the promise all of these 45 years as they journeyed through the wilderness wondering how is the Lord going to fulfill this promise?

[31 : 52] When is the Lord going to fulfill this promise? The thought of the hill country that he had spied out had become part of his life.

This is what he had been dreaming of. This is what he was assured of God was going to give him.

Because he couldn't forget the word of the Lord. The wilderness and the adverse circumstances that they had experienced couldn't dissuade him from continuing to believe in that promise.

Most of the people in fact all of the companions that he left Egypt with that were over 20 years of age had now died.

Because that was part of the chastisement for their disobedience, none of them would go in to possess the promised land apart from Joshua and Caleb.

[33 : 02] They have all died, those that were over 20 years of age. It was their children that went in to possess the promised land.

Many of them died, died. But the promise never died. The promise remained as fresh in Caleb's mind as the day that it was given.

Now, some people might think that it's wrong for us to dwell on the promises that God has given, that we shouldn't dwell on the rewards that He has promised to give.

Now, this may not be the highest motive for service, but that doesn't mean to say that it's wrong for us to view the prize, to view the rewards that are yet awaiting the people of God.

Even Jesus Himself encouraged His people to be faithful unto death and that He would give them the crown of life. He's wanting them to look beyond their present trials to the crown of life that He would give them.

[34 : 19] They're looking to the promise. They're looking to the reward. Now, some might think that we should be willing to serve the Lord out of our love for Him.

Because Paul says that it's the love of God that constrains Him. And that's true. We should be willing to serve God for who He is.

But that doesn't negate the fact that we should also be looking to the prize that He set before us. Jesus Himself was looking to the joy that was set before Him.

And the same Paul that said that it was the love of Christ that constrained also said run so that you may obtain. He set in the prize before them.

So Caleb wasn't wrong in thinking about the prize that was set before him. The land that God had promised to give to him and to the tribe of Judah.

[35 : 31] for a person who is as faithful as Caleb was, commands and duties are just as precious to him as the promises are.

He is just as willing to do what God commands him to do as he is willing to do it because of the prize that is set before him. The person who is really pious, the command is as sacred as a promise.

In fact, the Lord's command is just as precious as the promise. It's a great blessing when God condescends to give us to do something for himself.

He doesn't need any of us. And anything that we do for him isn't going to contribute to anything that he already possesses.

But he condescends to come down to our level and to make us feel useful. And he gives us something to do. And when he commissions us to do something, it's as a result of us having our sins blotted out.

[37 : 08] He has forgiven us our sins. And the fact that he commissions us to do something is the proof that he has forgiven us our sins.

Jonah, when he rebelled against God, was encouraged that God commissioned him the second time, assuring him that his sins had been forgiven.

Had his sins not been forgiven, he wouldn't have been commissioned the second time. But God did not hold his sins against him. Peter also sensed the pardon when he was recommissioned.

When Jesus met with him at the sea of Tiberias. When he had so famously denied his Lord three times. You can understand how down cast Peter must have felt.

And how he must have been worrying whether his sins would be forgiven him. And would the Lord ever use him again? And you can understand how relieved he was when the Lord recommissioned him and returned him to service.

[38 : 26] Well, he's commissioned all of us. He's commissioned us to go forth into this world. He's commissioned us to win this world for himself.

He's commissioned us to go forth with the gospel of Jesus Christ. And he's done that because he has forgiven us our sins. And he wants us to feel useful in this world, to feel useful in his service.

Now, Caleb walked before God with a deep concern to know God better and a deep concern to know how he might serve God more obediently.

When he came back from spying out the land, he tried to reason with the people. He tried to quieten their rebellion. He tried to encourage them to go in to possess the land.

and when he was unable to, he and Joshua tore their clothes. They were sorry that the people had reacted in the way that they did.

[39 : 53] He and Joshua had remained faithful. And not only were they faithful at that time, they had remained faithful right down through their sojourn in the wilderness.

And they're to be admired for that, that they didn't just walk out on the children of Israel and say to themselves, why are we going to suffer along with these disobedient people?

They're now going to suffer for 40 years as a result of their disobedience. We don't need to suffer with them. We can leave them. they didn't have to stay with the children of Israel, but they did.

And they're to be admired for that. And anybody that stays in a church where the Lord's chastening is on that church is to be admired for that.

For their steadfastness, for their faithfulness, not just for their faithfulness to God, but for their faithfulness to the people, and how they might serve them, and hopefully bring them back to the Lord.

[41 : 10] And now although they had suffered, they're now receiving their reward. Joshua has become the head of the people.

Caleb is now claiming the land that the Lord had promised him. because he rejoiced in that promise.

And he saw the preciousness of that promise. And we ought to rejoice and see the preciousness of God's promises to us.

The second thing I want to consider is that we're not to imagine for one moment that to be obedient to God is going to be easy.

Many Christians become like the children of Israel. They become disobedient. and they allow the world back into their hearts.

[42 : 27] The children of Israel, when they denied the Lord and were disobedient to him, hankered back for the things of Egypt. They couldn't go back, but their hearts were filled with the things that they had enjoyed in Egypt.

And the same is true of many who profess faith in Christ when they decide that they're not going to be obedient to Christ.

They can't really go back into the world, but the world comes back into their hearts. And they give their hearts back over to the things of this world as the Egyptians stood for the things of Egypt.

Or the children of Israel rather did for the things of Egypt. And as a result, they're never able to do anything for the Lord.

What did the children of Israel do? As a result of their disobedience, they ended up going round and round in circles for the next 40 years.

[43 : 39] They weren't able to achieve anything for the Lord. it's a person who seeks to walk in obedience to God, that God reveals the secret of his covenant to, and that the Lord fulfills the promises of that covenant to.

Because the obedient person walks by faith. faith. And by walking by faith, he is able to claim the promises.

And he's able to receive God's blessings. We read that the promise that God had given concerning the land has now turned into a commandment in chapter 15 at verse 13.

We read, according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua, he gave to Caleb, the son of Jehunitha, a portion among the people of Judah.

The promise has become a command. And when we seek to be obedient to God and seek to lay hold of the promises that he has given to us, he will command that we will be given the fulfillment of that promise.

[45 : 16] God's promises are not given to us so that we will become lazy and wait for God to act. God's promises are to encourage us to action.

They aren't to replace effort, they are to encourage effort. They are to stir us up into action. God's way of enabling us to seek the fulfillment of the promises is not to take the difficulties out of the way and make things easy for us.

God's way of enabling us to receive the fulfillment of the promises is to strengthen us, to strengthen our faith so that we can lay hold of these promises.

Very often our prayers to God are that God might make the path easy for us. But that's not how he answers these prayers.

He doesn't make the path easy for us. He doesn't diminish the problems. What he does is he increases our faith and by increasing our faith he increases our strength so that we may lay hold of the promise.

[46 : 51] He says, as your day is, so shall be your strength. It's not as your strength is, so shall be your day.

It's a natural desire to want things to be easy. We all want an easy path. The apostle Paul prayed three times for the thorn to be taken away from him.

But what was God's reply to his desire? He didn't take it away. But he told him, my grace is sufficient for you.

My strength is made perfect in your weakness. And when we endeavor to give obedience to God's command, we experience the difficulty.

And when we pray about it and ask that he takes away the difficulty, very often he won't take away the difficulty. What he will give us is more grace. And by giving us more grace, he gives us to understand that we must live in reliance upon himself.

[48 : 12] and what we can't do, he can do for us. By our weakness, his strength is made perfect.

Now Caleb came forward in the strength of the Lord. He was 85 years old and he said to Joshua, give me this land.

and if the Lord wills, I will go in and possess it. He doesn't imagine that it's going to be easy. He acknowledges that unless the Lord helps him, he will not conquer the enemies that are still in possession of it.

And they were giants. The people that possessed that particular area of land were over seven feet tall, most of them.

they were strong people. But Caleb didn't look to the people that he was going to confront.

[49 : 21] He looked to the God that was going to help him confront them. And that's what we must do. We must endeavor to give obedience to God.

we must endeavor to give ourselves wholly unto God. Several times it's mentioned in the chapter that Caleb wholly followed the Lord his God.

And when we're willing to give ourselves wholly unto the Lord, even against all the difficulties that confront us, we will go forward not in our strength, but acknowledging our own weakness, but laying hold of the promise that God will give us the grace to help us in our time of need.

And when we go forward in his strength, we will receive the promise. That's what Caleb did. And the final thing I want to bring before us is this, to ask the question, what vision have we got?

What part of God's kingdom are we going to conquer? God has promised to give us the kingdom. He promised to give the children of Israel the land of Canaan, God's God's God's kingdom.

[50 : 58] But they had to go in and possess it. They had to go in and overthrow the enemies before they would possess it. What vision have we got?

What Hebron, what whole country have we set before ourselves that we're going to conquer for the Lord? God, how many families in our communities are we praying for?

How many people do we know that are still possessed by great giants under the influences of the world, the flesh and the devil, still in enemy territory?

How many people are we praying to be delivered and brought into the kingdom of God? Yes, the enemy is strong.

And yes, we're living in a day where atheism and secularism seems to be rolling on the high ground. They seem to be in possession of the whole country.

[52 : 13] They seem to be in possession of Mount Hebron. what are we going to do about it? Are we going to go in and possess this land for God?

Are we making it a point at the throne of grace that we pray for the people that are the enemies of God? that they might be translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light?

We need to take this warfare into the heavenly realm kingdom. Because as Paul reminds us, we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

We're not wrestling against the atheists and the secularists. We're wrestling against the spiritual forces that are using them as instruments.

Where do we take this warfare to them? No, we take it into the heavenly realm. We take it into the heavenly sphere. Because we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against rulers of darkness, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places.

[53 : 47] Which means that our warfare is not to be engaged in as the world as the world engages in war. We're not to attack the people that oppose us.

We're to take them to the Lord in prayer. We're to wrestle for them at the throne of grace. And we're to ask them to break the powers of darkness that are rolling them.

the spiritual wickedness that are occupying the high ground, the whole country, Mount Hebron. And you might think, well, I haven't got that faith.

Or my faith isn't strong enough to continue wrestling for souls at the throne of grace. grace. I can't do anything.

Well, how are you going to find out unless you try? You'll never find out if you've got faith unless you put your faith to the test. And to put your faith to the test, throw near to God because your faith will always bring you to God.

[55 : 09] Your faith is focused on God. And your faith is in reliance upon God, not upon you and how strong you are, but how strong He is.

Faith looks to Him, not to you. And if you've got faith in Him, and if you put your faith to the test, you might find out that God is willing to hear your prayer that He will give you these souls that you're wrestling for at the throne of grace, and that we will see the promises being fulfilled, that He will strengthen us, and that He will give us grace to help us in our time of need.

Very often in the history of the church, when the church was persecuted, it wasn't the people that made a loud noise about the faith that they had that stood.

Very often they were the first to fall, and the people who actually stood were the people who very rarely claimed to have any faith at all, but when they were put to the test, they stood, because their faith was in God.

Let each of us make it a target to think of one or two people, or maybe more if we think that we're going to be able to continue, and to make a point of praying for these particular people that we've chosen daily.

[57 : 12] Let's make this commitment to God, and let's ask God to help us to keep that commitment. Let's make it our target to win some of the territory that's still an enemy occupation, to win it for Christ.

Let's claim souls for Him. And let's not be content to spend the rest of our lives going round and round in circles, as the children of Israel did, with no purpose in life.

Let's endeavor to have a purpose, and let's make it our business to win souls for Christ by praying for them diligently and daily at the throne of grace.

Because God's business is a family business, and He wants every member of that family to be employed in this business, and His business is to go forth into this world and to claim it for Himself, all the nations of the world.

That's our vision. That's the goal that He set before us. And that's the business that we ought to be engaged in. Let us stop going round and round in circles and make it our business because it's His business, and it's the family business, to establish His kingdom in this world, and to pray that His kingdom would come, and that Satan's kingdom would be destroyed.

[59 : 12] May God grant that He would lead us to these ends. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Our Father in Heaven, we come before You this day acknowledging our shortcomings, acknowledging that we are so often more like the children of Israel than we are to Caleb and Joshua.

Help us, O Lord, that we would not waste our lives as they did going round and round in circles, not endeavouring to do anything for the Lord, not seeking to go in to possess the land that You've promised us.

Help us, O Lord, to go forth seeking to win souls for Yourself. And help us to do so, not because we feel we're strong enough to do so, but help us to do so looking unto You, the author and the finisher of our faith.

Lord, be pleased to bless us by impressing upon us the promises that You have given to Your people. and help us to claim the grace that You've promised to give us to help us to overcome our greatest trials and our greatest needs.

And if You are pleased to bless us with these blessings, then it won't be us that will receive the glory. It will be You, because the glory belongs to You.

[60 : 46] And we pray, O Lord, that You would help us to give You what belongs to You and not take it to ourselves, that we would be left in no doubt as to where the victory will lie if we're to receive it.

Lead us to these ends. Have mercy upon us for our sins and shortcomings. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.