

Boundaries

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Preacher: Glenn Haugh

[0 : 00] I know you, and I said, we were in vacation Bible school in your class. So anyway, we just need to be there and do that.

Thank you, Matt. I guess I need to turn my cell phone too. There we go. Well, I just want to let you know that we're going to be in Joshua 16 and 17.

I know it sounds like we've been going back and forth a little bit, but we're going Joshua 16 and 17. And my friend said he was going to read the scripture for me this morning, and he was going to do the King James Version.

I said, well, if you read it, you use any version you want. So you'll be able to follow along and hear this too. 16.

And a lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho under the water of Jericho on the east to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout Mount Bethel. And goeth out from Bethel to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archai to Adiloth.

[1 : 04] And goeth down westward to the coast of Jaflatai, under the coast of Beth-horam the nether, and to Gezer, and the goings out thereover at the sea. So the children of Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim took their inheritance.

And the border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was thus. Even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Adiroth-Adir, unto Beth-horam the upper. And the border went out toward the sea to Micmethah on the north side, and the border went about eastward unto Teanath-Shiloh, and passed by on the east to Genoa.

And it went down from Genoa to Adiroth, and to Neiroth, and came to Jericho, and went out to Jordan. And the border went out from Tabior westward unto the river Cana, and the goings out thereover at the sea.

This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families. And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh. All the cities were their villages.

And they drave not out the Canaanites that hurried to Gezer. But the Canaanites took only Ephraimites and blessed them to this day and serve unto tribute. And then I asked them to read chapter 17 for me too.

[2 : 23] I thought it would just pop right up, but I guess not. Chapter 17 There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph, to it, from, to it, from Mekir, the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war.

Therefore he had Gilead and Basham. There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families. For the children of Ahazer, and for the children of Hebech, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hefer, and for the children of Shemida, these were the male children of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, by their families.

But as the wolf had the son of Hefer, the son of Gilead, the son of Mekir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters. And these are the names of his daughters, Mala, and Noah, Hagla, Muka, and Tirzah.

And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore, according to the commandment of the Lord, he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side of Jordan, because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons, and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

[3 : 56] And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Mekmatha, that lieth before Shechem. And the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of Intapua. And now Manasseh had the land of Tapua, but Tapua on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim.

And the coast descended under the river Cana, southward of the river. These cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh. The coast of Manasseh also was on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea.

Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea is his border. And they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east. And Manasseh had in Issachar, and in Asher, Bethshean, and her towns, and Iblium, and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor, and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor, and her towns, and the inhabitants of Tannac, and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo, and her towns, even three countries.

Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, but did not utterly drive them out.

And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, for as much as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto? And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

[5 : 25] And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.

And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power. Thou shalt not have one lot only, but the mountain shall be thine.

For it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down, and the outgoings of it shall be thine. For thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.

Well, there we go. I thought that was going to be a lot easier.

Let me make sure I shut it. Just this off. Than me trying to read that, too. You know, when I started reading this, I found out, you know, a good time ahead of time that this was what I was going to be speaking on today.

[6 : 29] I got thinking about it, and, you know, I'd get... I talk to the Lord a lot when I go walking. A lot of times I walk in the mornings. I walk a couple miles in the mornings, and I talk to the Lord about this, and I'm asking about this.

And I got thinking a little bit, too, about my... My grandma had eight children, and then they had grandchildren. And when we would go to my grandmother's house, which was just a little wooden old structure, they'd all get in there, you'd have people...

Everybody talking at one time. So you would probably have about 30 people stuck in a little room just talking. But if you listen carefully, you could get some really good stories. That's where the first time I heard about my Uncle Ralph going coon hunting with the rest of my other family.

He was from up north, and they took him coon hunting. And the coon was up in the tree, and so they wanted to knock it out and get it alive. And so my cousin put on his tree climbers and was going to go up there, and he said, Ralph, now when I knock him out, you grab him.

You know, you get the coon when he comes out. And the dogs are all about barking around there. So my cousin Ray climbs up, and he's poking at it, and he finally knocks it off that limb.

[7 : 38] That coon comes down. Well, he didn't explain to Ralph how to catch the coon. So when he came down, Ralph just took his coat and grabbed the coon with his coat. Well, the next thing, the coon didn't like that.

And the next thing he knows, all the dogs are on top of him trying to get the coon. So my uncles are all laughing. They're saying, there's Ralph rolling around the ground. There's a coon in there, and there's like five or six dogs trying to get the coon.

He says, after a while, the coon goes running out, and there's nothing but Ralph and the dogs wrestling and fighting over his coat. But it was a good story because I listened to what was going on, but there was five or six other stories going on at the same time.

They were loud when they got together. Renee can probably testify to that. And they protocol and being courteous and waiting for one person to finish was not a common thing.

They just, everybody talked at one time. So as we go through this scripture, we look at this, there's four things I want us to be able to share a little bit about I want to share with you. And so I'm just going to kind of kind of go over that and be telling you, I may not be specifically saying what the scripture goes along with it, but I think you'll get the idea as we talk about it.

[8 : 47] Because when we look at this, the Israelites have come into the promised land and now they're getting their allotment of the land that God has promised. Now let me ask you this.

Who among you have had dreams of possibilities, of things that might happen? Maybe to receive something new and unknown, yet a promise of wonder and excitement. And I imagine this was what was going on.

Well, the Israelites have been brought into the promised land and now they're receiving the promised inheritance. Now how long they've been looking forward to this for fulfillment and inheritance has been a good while.

Because let's see, Abraham, who was later called Abraham, received the promise from God. In his old age, Abraham passed that promise to his son Isaac.

Then Isaac passed it to his son Jacob who would deceive and was deceived himself. And later, his name was changed to Israel. And Israel passed that promise to 12 sons that he had who through jealousy turned on one of their own brothers, Joseph.

[9 : 54] And Joseph, through God's promise, continued promise, would save his family of Jacob from extinction. Jacob's 12 sons would carry that hope and that promise through 400 years of slavery in Egypt.

Then God fans the spark of his promise through Moses, freeing the descendants of Jacob, permitting them to finally receive the promise of the land that God had said and the relationship.

Yet after the miracle upon miracle and at the pinnacle of finally being able to receive the long-anticipated promise, they faltered. So for another 40 years, they waited as the generation of doubters died.

Then after their leader, Moses, and that generation were denied interest into the promised land, the sons of Jacob, called Israel, entered the promised land under new leadership and that's Joshua.

Now the promise made to Abraham passed to Isaac, received by Jacob and given to the 12 sons, is being fulfilled and the inheritance is being the allotment to the tribes and the clans of Israel right now and are being in our story.

[11 : 11] And today we examine the allotment of Joseph. If you listen to that or if you've actually read this, the chapters, when you read in there, the second youngest of Jacob's sons that were first were born to Rachel was Joseph.

And Joseph's inheritance is received through his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. And we're going to see that in Joshua 16 and 17.

The thing is, in the beginning of 16, he refers to them as Joseph's clan. Then he starts to talk about what's going to go to Ephraim and then what's going to go to Manasseh.

And then at the very end, he talks to them as one group again, as Joseph. So Abraham's descendants are finally going to receive the promised inheritance. But the inheritance is more than just a promise of land.

What it is, what is in it and what is on it. The promise and the inheritance is really about a relationship. A relationship with God. See, God told Abraham in Genesis chapter 12, He said, Go forth from your country, from your relatives, from your father's house, to the land which I will show you.

[12 : 24] And I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. So you shall be blessed. Be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you.

And the one who curses you, I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth will be blessed. And then a little bit later, he says, In your seed, all the nations of the earth will be blessed because you have obeyed my voice.

But wait. You know, when you think about this, we think about the promise that God has brought all through Genesis all the way up to this point. But you know, but that's not the only promise of inheritance.

We have an inheritance promise too. A relationship with God through Jesus Christ that leads to heaven and eventually the new earth. We have that promise. We see the promise being spoken of even back in Jeremiah chapter 31.

It says, Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the days I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

[13 : 36] My covenant which they broke although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord, but this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord.

I will put my law within them and on their heart and I will write it and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

They will not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother saying, Know the Lord for they will all know me from the least of them to the grace of them, declares the Lord.

For I will forgive their iniquity and their sin and I will remember them no more. And then later Jesus himself told us for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

See, we the church, that's us, the bride of Christ have a promise. Kind of like what we see here in these chapters. Given by God himself there's a relational promise that we have.

[14 : 42] We give ourselves to Jesus Christ and he becomes the Lord of our life. We receive his relational promise of forgiveness, love, hope, and joy. And, through this relational promise we receive the inheritance of heavenly citizenship and the future life on the new earth.

Something to look forward to. So we, like the Hebrews, the Israelites, whichever one you want to call them, when they are going to the promise, they have something to look forward to. Well, we do too.

We have that promise that God has given. We see in the past, in the Old Testament, God fulfills his promise. He is always true. He is always going to keep his promise.

We may falter, but he doesn't. So, we see that there's a promise that God had here and there's a promise that he gives us. So I kind of got that out of that when I was reading.

But then also, I got something about boundaries. You know, all through the chapter before and the chapter after, there's talk about, you know, where their established areas are at. And in 16, 1 through 4, he talks about the boundaries of Joseph.

[15 : 48] Then in verses 5 through 10, he talks about the boundaries of Ephraim. And then from 1 through 13, it's the boundaries of Manasseh. And then again, he goes back to Joseph again in verses 14 to 18.

So according to the division of the land of Canaan under Joshua, there was kind of three stages. The first was the settlement of the tribe of Judah. And it's the stronghold of the south into Palestine.

Secondly, the establishment of Joseph, which is Ephraim and Manasseh, is the center of the country and is some of the strongest positions for the northern part of the country.

And then thirdly, you'll hear about the tribes coming in, not in what we're reading, but the coming in, the remaining tribes kind of fill in all the gaps that are there in the territory. And the boundaries of the territory are given.

But there's no really catalog of cities as it was done in Judah. So you'll see this. So when we start looking at these boundaries, which I'm not going to run down through all this because I'm going to give you a reason.

[16 : 48] As you begin to read through the chapter 16, you see portions of the promised land given to Joseph's descendants as a whole in the heart of land. You'll notice that the boundaries are not really clear.

And the land was very fast. Matter of fact, if we took the scripture, we took our compass, we took some maps, and we dropped all those right in the middle of there right now, we would really have a difficult time figuring this out.

And you might say, why? Well, I tell you what, a lot of those places no longer exist that are mentioned. They're buried under ancient soil. And some of the rivers and places, the wadis and such that they talk about, those things are dried up.

So, we take a look, if you take a look in your Bibles, a lot of times your Bibles will show maps like that or if you go online. And they're not the same. Every one that I looked at, they show a little bit of difference.

They're in the general area, but they're not the same. In the beginning, we look at the allotment of the whole being given to Joseph. And when he's talking about that, he's talking about his sons.

[17 : 53] After we see the overall boundaries of Joseph, then we see them start splitting it up between Ephraim and Manasseh. The two sons are Ephraim, which means passing of Joseph's hardships and Manasseh, Joseph's fruitfulness in Egypt.

And the land is allotted to them. Now, you'll note too that this, what we're talking about here is the western part of Manasseh. The eastern part has already been settled on the other side of the river. So, it's not spoken about in here.

Actually, it's spoken about Numbers 32, verse 33. It says, So Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad, to the sons of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Joseph's sons Manasseh, the kingdom of Sion, king of the Amorites, and king of Og, and the king of Bashan, the land and its cities that were their territories and the cities of the surrounding land.

And that's in the eastern part of the river. FYI, Joseph brought his two sons to his father. As we've seen it happen so many times, that they have his father bless them.

And when he brought them in, he expected Manasseh to get the blessing. But Jacob blessed them in reverse.

[19 : 08] So, what happens is Manasseh ends up seeing them get the bigger part of the property. But he says, Ephraim will be the greater of the nations. And these two tribes will be the largest and the greatest influence in the northern half of Israel.

In verse 10, the allotment of Ephraim, we are told that the people failed to drive out the Canaanites, which we've seen many times already. They didn't completely drive them out.

The Canaanites are made to be forced laborers. And Gezer will remain under the Canaanites under control until the time of Solomon. Matter of fact, it was in the time of Solomon that I thought this was unusual.

the Pharaoh of Egypt came and took Gezer and then gave it to Solomon as a wedding gift when he married his daughter. So, that's how long that did not remain before it was part, before it was under their control.

But they did, they were under, let's see, under forced laborers. Then in verse 12 and 13 in the allotment of Manasseh, we are told that people failed to drive out the Canaanites who lived in the cities.

[20 : 14] And later, when Manasseh became stronger, the Canaanites were made to be forced laborers. See, the Canaanites were under God's ban and they were supposed to be destroyed. So, we see two different places that the Canaanites were not driven out.

And it continues to be a problem. This was a problem because God has specifically told the Israelites in Deuteronomy chapter 20, He said, only in the cities of these people that the Lord your God has given you as an inheritance you shall not leave alive anything that breathes, but you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite as the Lord your God has commanded you so that they may not teach to you to do according to their detestable things which they have done for their gods so that you would sin against the Lord your God.

So God said they were supposed to completely destroy them but it didn't happen. They allowed them, you know, for whatever reason I think I've heard John and others say that, you know, they would run them out of the city but they'd come right back and they never destroyed all of them and this will be a cause of future problems with them and will be evident in the book of Judges.

I want you to notice that in these two chapters too there's no clear definite boundaries or the borders. Matter of fact, when they're talking about them they're giving kind of a general idea of where the borders go and some of the cities aren't even in their territory.

Ephraim has cities that are in Manasseh and the cities that they have are in different parts so they're not necessarily in their territory. You even see other people outside the Israelites are included in their areas as the Akarites and the Jezorites are not destroyed.

[22 : 10] This is evidence that we can see that God, that those who were judged had placed themselves completely outside of God's purpose would be destroyed. But, see, God's purpose is to bring people in and if they conform their lives to God's purpose then they were permitted to stay.

We've seen that with Ruth. We've seen that with Rahab. Thank you, John. I appreciate that. And so we see that even cities of one allotment clan were also in another.

Now you think, you know, you think about this. Why would God do this? Well, God wanted them to remain as a group but not necessarily as becoming individual nations.

He wanted to bring them together and they received their inheritance but God is still their king, their leader and so they wouldn't split up. Now I want you to think about the church, the bride of Christ.

What about our boundaries? Follow along with me if you will on this a little bit. We are a mom-care church. We are part of a community but our reach and responsibility is not just a little square mile around this church.

[23 : 21] You think about how in the description how the cities and the areas are kind of given in general. Well, think about it for us. None of our clans, some of our clans are in other areas.

Think of our church. Think of who we are. We've got this area but our clans also reach out in Bear Creek, Broadway, Carthage, Corinth, Lower Moncure Road, New Hill, Pittsburgh, Sanford, Tramway.

We even have reach out into Florida, Bolivia, and Columbia. As a matter of fact, I was thinking young Mark, what is your area considered?

I didn't think about it. Southbury. Where? Southbury. Southbury. Okay. Okay, so Cameron. So I should have put that in there too. So there's a reach out to all these places and everything.

See, God's purpose is to bring all of us in and for us to conform our lives to God's purpose. We were, we, wherever we are, are God's church, the bride of Christ.

[24 : 36] And we're told in Galatians chapter 3, for all of you who were baptized in Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek.

There is neither slave nor freeman. There is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to the promise.

Remember, as a church, our resources, our work, our mission field is to be applied locally, but ultimately, the church is universal. And it reaches out over this entire world of ours.

Also, we have to remember that, remember who we belong to and whose promise we stand on. Not compromising God's purpose or like allowing the Canaanites to come in and to, we are to remain, you know, faithful to God and not allow them to commit the world to compromise us with difficulties as what we've seen happens to these tribes that allow the Canaanites to stay.

So, as we look at this, we see that God has shown us that we have boundaries. That our boundaries are just, we shouldn't say, oh, well, you know, this is just our area.

[25 : 56] This is the only place we're going to take care of. Our reach is to be everywhere that the Lord has us, wants us to go to. Then, if you notice in here, there's something else that happens that came to me also.

We got that promise. We got that, the boundaries of how we go out. And then I notice these daughters that come up. And here, we see that there's a gentleman, his name was Zellafiah, and he had these daughters, Mahal, Noah, Hogliah, Milak, and Tireslah.

And these daughters come before Eleazar, the priest, and Joseph to claim their inheritance. And similar to the way, you know, when Caleb came up, he said, give me the hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day.

But in the scripture here in Numbers, in Numbers chapter 27, one through seven, we kind of see an idea of what happened. This is why they came up. Then the daughters of Zellafiah, the son of Haphir, the son of Gilead, the son of Malachi, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, came near.

These are the names of the daughters, Malah, Noah, Mahogah, and Melchah, and Tezar. And they stood before Moses, before Eleazar, the priest, and before the leaders and all the congregation, all at the doorway of the tent of the meeting, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, yet he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah.

[27 : 33] But he died in his own sin, and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be withdrawn from among the family because he had no sons?

Give us a possession among the father's brothers. So Moses brought the case before the Lord. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, The daughters of Zealopiah are right in their statement.

You shall surely give them a hereditary possession among their father's brothers, and you shall transfer the inheritance of their father to them.

So we see here that these daughters are named three times in the Old Testament. And it's because they noticed that they wanted to receive their inheritance.

Notice the zeal that the daughters hold in Israel concerning God's word. They came near before Eleazar and the priest. This is in verse 4 in chapter 17 what we're doing today.

[28 : 33] They came near before Eleazar the priest and behold Joshua the son of Nun and before the leaders saying, The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers.

So according to the command of the Lord he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers. Here we see justice is in place of tradition.

We see that the idea of things that have never been done this way before is now being carefully looked at and at the purpose of the law and the merit of each one before their decision.

Also we see that it was later amended some that to keep the property into the land that they received in their tribe that they had to marry somebody within their tribe.

And so we see that happen now. But how about the church? See one of the things I want you to think of when you think of these daughters they had a zeal they had a desire to have to be a part of this.

[29 : 35] They went to before the Lord before Moses and Eleazar and they went before them asking for the inheritance. And so but how about the church? Do we have a zeal to have a to the accountability of God's word and his promise?

Do we have the zeal to go for that? A desire to live in the light of those promises to bring those promises before God? You know sometimes we have this tendency or do we think that God's promises are only for those who live exemplary lives who for just for a special few.

Should we have zeal to know God's promise and that be willing to ask them in the name of Jesus Christ in whom they are fulfilled? See we should have that desire to ask for these promises to go before the Lord and seek them and not just sit back and think well that's for somebody else.

We are children of God and we should be able to do that. And in 2 Corinthians 1.20 it says for as many as are the promises of God in Him there are yes therefore also through Him and our amen to the glory of God through.

So we see that we are to seek those promises and everything. I'm not saying name it, claim it but I'm saying we have promises that God has given us all through His word and stuff and we should read and study and claim those words.

[30 : 55] So we've seen this idea of promises that God has. We've seen that there is boundaries that we should think of as a church. We have seen that we should have a zeal to seek those promises and go before the Lord and ask Him for those things.

And so the last part of the scripture he goes back to talking about Joseph again. Joshua is having to take care of a complaint.

See in Joshua 17, 14, 15 notice the contrast in the way Joshua is having to deal with these groups.

Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua saying why have you given me only one lot one portion for an inheritance since I am a numerous people among whom the Lord has thus far blessed.

Joshua said to them if you are a numerous people go up into the forest clear the place for yourself there in the land of the parasites and of the raphim since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you.

[32 : 05] Now see now they're complaining about what has been given to them but look at the difference when Jacob I mean Caleb was given he said now then give me the hill country above which the Lord spoke of that day for you heard of that day when Anakin were there that the great fortified seeds perhaps the Lord will be with me and I will drive them out as the Lord has spoken and that's where Caleb he's showing that he's really ready and anxious to do what the Lord wants him to do but we're seeing that Joseph is a little bit they're reluctant for it yet here again as in the beginning of chapter 16 Ephraim and Manasseh are thought of as one tribe and now complaining because their portion is small compared to their size still they're fearful even though they are large they're probably thinking that they'll get some special attention and favoritism from Joshua because you know what Joshua happens to be part of that tribe and but they and they felt that he would side with them and help them but Joshua said if you don't like what you have go up possess the mountains but remember there are giants and you will have to work for it you will have to fight and it will cost something see as God's church it's time for us to sometimes stop complaining we are to possess what God has given no matter what the giants or the iron chariots that are spoken about remember

God's word says when you go out to battle and that's often what we're doing when you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you do not be afraid of them for the Lord your God who brought you up from the land of Egypt is with you when you are approaching the battle the priest shall come near and speak to the people he shall say to them hear oh Israel you are approaching the battle against your enemies today do not be fainthearted do not be afraid or panic or tremble before them for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies and to save you so we see here that he's telling us not to be afraid and often that's what's happened with the tribe of Joseph they have been afraid and it comes back and it haunts them all through judges they have difficulties because they're not able to they didn't conquer the

Canaanites as they were told matter of fact in Judges chapter 1 verse 27 through 29 it said Manassas Manassas did not take possession of Belshia and Tanakh and its villages or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages and the inhabitants of Evian and its villages or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages so the Canaanites persisted in living in the land and it came about when the Israelites became strong that they put the Canaanites to force slavery but they did not drive them out completely Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gazar so the Canaanites lived in Gazar among them so they had to deal with this continually when you think of this we run into problems too and we can allow things to happen so my brothers and sisters know this that we are numerous we are the church and when I say numerous I'm going to talk about what we have here the church is numerous there are many in the church

God we have brothers and sisters all over this world remember that we are the church it isn't just this one little building and us together but the church is in hold we have great power and that is the Holy Spirit that indwells in each and every one of us we have we have been given a lot our church family think of what this church family we heard testimony from our sister Miss Janet this morning think of what we do for each other how we build each other up how we encourage each other we have hill country in our community that we have to conquer we have our community forest around us that we need to probably cut down and work at we face giants and iron chariots but we'll prevail because we have God who goes before us so let us remember great plans and best intentions can be put in practice but who's willing to work and we need to make sure those great plans and things that we want to practice are those of

God and we can sit around and say well you know what I think church needs to do this or the church needs to do that pastor John pastor Matt y'all need to get to work when we when the Lord starts putting something on our heart it might be he's putting on our heart because he wants us to step up and to be a part of it and if God gives us a vision of something we need to share that and we need to be a part of that the issue of every Christian is you think about the whole idea is we want to spread God's word and a lot of times we often well when do I share my faith we often find that there's reasons to share and then there's reasons you know to we want to make sure we share right we don't want to think well we don't want to turn someone off Jesus by being inappropriate and everything so what should we do well we need to be intentional we need to plant the seed intentionally plant the seed we need to be intentional for look for moments of meaningful opportunities that we can share with people we need to be on guard against rationalizing these opportunities and rationalizing of not doing something to you know not sharing God with someone we need to know that there is a time of boldness in sharing the gospel we need to intentionally remember it does not come from you but the

[38 : 07] Holy Spirit that dwells in you when you are sure and we need to depend on that too and we need to intentionally reveal Christ to others in our words and as well as in our deeds you know in Matthew chapter 13 31 32 it says he presented another parable to them this is Jesus speaking the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in the field this is smaller than all the other seeds but when it's full growth it's larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and nest in the branches we must go out into the world and veil what has been veiled in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verses 3 through 6 it says even if our gospel is veiled it is veiled to those who are perishing in whose case the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they may not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God for we do not preach ourselves but Christ

Jesus as Lord ourselves as our bondservants for Jesus sake for God who said light shall shine out in the darkness is the one who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ so my brothers and sisters if we kind of close this up remember the promise of God the relation and the future inheritance that we have remember the boundaries are endless and we are intertwined with other churches we're seeing a little bit of that intertwining with some of our churches with our men's breakfast and everything coming together remember to have a zeal to claim and know the promises of God and remember that they're true and then remember to know by our strength not by our strength but by the power of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit we have strength let us bow for prayer heavenly father we've come for you this morning just looking at your word

Lord and I just pray and ask that we would see harvest harvest is great and there's much we need to do Lord that we don't allow the confines of the organization of the church to keep us from doing things for you to be a part of your plan let us always see where you're at work and let us always be a part of that Lord help us to remember the promises of your word let us study them and go through your scriptures to know those promises Lord let us not be hindered by the idea of boundaries Lord let us be able to know that we are to go out and we are to go everywhere and spread out and to be interactive and be your word and to be your witness to wherever we go and Lord let us have a zeal in claiming your word Lord to search it and seek it and then Lord let us remember that our strength comes from you and we just put it all in your hands so

Father this morning it seems like we're all church family but Lord if there is a decision that needs to be made or there needs to be a time of clarity with you Lord let it be made this morning Lord let us remember that we are always to be a witness for you throughout our community throughout our neighborhoods that we live in in the name of Jesus Amen