

Still A Lot To Do

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[0 : 00] And the Lord said to him, you are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess. One of the things we all know, we can't stop the clock.

The minutes tick away relentlessly, the hours, the days, the months, the years, and on and on it goes. And if we are spared into old age, what will be said of us will be said the very same as was said of Joshua.

Joshua was old and advanced in years. Now, we know that Joshua had been an incredibly faithful and loyal servant of the Lord from the very time that they had left the land of Egypt to make their way to the land of promise.

Remember that Joshua was Moses' servant, and he had served Moses faithfully all these years in the wilderness. And now after Moses had died, he had taken over, or God had set him to take over the mantle.

Caleb, the other spy, along with Joshua, who had brought back a good report. Caleb, we read, was about 85 at this time. And he was still in full vigor, full of strength.

[1 : 17] Joshua was older. He was somewhat between 90 and 100, and in all probability at this particular point, was nearer 100, or may well have been 100, because he died at the age of 110.

So it's a ripe old age in many ways. And the story of Joshua and Israel's conquest of Canaan is one that the Christian so often goes back to, because it's full of encouragement.

And we find that all the way through, Joshua was instilling, just as God was instilling into Joshua and Joshua into Israel, the only way of success, the only way that we can truly conquer the land, is by being obedient to God.

We'll do what God asks, and let God do his bit. And of course, the great example was at Jericho. Remember how they marched around the city.

And they just went round it, thramped round it each day. And then eventually, they went round it seven times and gave out the shout, and the walls fell. What they did was by faith. They followed exactly what God asked them to do.

[2 : 34] And when they did that, then God worked. And you know, it's still the very same for ourselves. Because we are in a battle. It's a battle. The moment you become a Christian, you're in a battle.

It's an ongoing battle. It never, ever stops. And sometimes we can feel overwhelmed. There's times we feel it's too much for us. Times we feel like giving up.

But the only way to prosper, the only way that we can advance, is by following exactly what the Lord says. That's what the Lord commanded.

Give me obedience. Do what I say. And the rest will fall into place. And we see that when Israel didn't do what the Lord asked us happened in Jericho, when Achan stole what didn't belong to him, and God's judgment came down upon Israel, and they weren't successful initially at Ananii, Israel learned that failure to obey God will bring calamity.

It won't, it just won't work. So it's actually a really, really stirring story. And God's way is the only way. God's way is the way of eternal life.

[3 : 49] There is no other way. And irrespective of how successful people may get on in life. How successful they may be. At the end of the day, when we come to the very end of the day, unless we have the Lord, then our life is not really a success at one level.

Now don't get me wrong. There are many people whose lives are very successful and have done wonderful things for many people. And I'm not taking away or, I don't want you to misunderstand what I'm saying.

But at a personal level, unless our life is in Christ, unless our life is actually built on the rock that is Christ, unless we have Jesus Christ as our Savior, everything that we have had in life will ultimately crumble.

And we're left with nothing. But in Jesus Christ, this is the one thing that cannot crumble. Our faith will never crumble. Our love will never crumble.

Our love for the Lord cannot crumble because our love for the Lord is initially His love for us. We love Him because He loves us. And He has a hold of us.

[5 : 01] That love can never be broken. That cord can never be severed. That can never be undone. And so that's why it's so important that we root ourselves in Christ.

That we accept Him by faith. And just say, Lord, come into my life. And help me to follow you. And it's, in many ways, it's a very simple thing that we ask.

However, becoming a Christian, we come into conflict. A lot of people think it's just a very simple thing. You become a Christian, then that's it. And that way you go. But know the moment you, in fact, Jesus said the kingdom of God suffereth violence.

And the moment that you become a Christian, a conflict starts that will never stop. Because there is a battle between who we are in and of ourselves and what the Lord is making us.

Because God's great purpose for you and for me is to turn us, to shape us, to mold us, to resemble Jesus more and more. And that's hard work.

[6 : 10] It's not easy. And God has to work away in us. And that's what goes on all the time. Because we're resisting that. We want to be like ourselves.

And God wants us to be like Jesus. And so that's where the battle is. Because I say to myself, well, this is what I want to do. And God's word says, no, that's not what I want you to do.

It's this. And so there's this. This is the conflict that goes on. And it goes on for as long as we live. So here's Joshua. And he's 100 years old.

And I'm quite sure that about, or he's round about 100. Joshua would be saying to himself, oh, well, it's time to put the feet up. But I've done my bit. I have fought. I've served the Lord all through my life.

I was 40 years in the wilderness. And I led out. Moses sent me out to lead a lot of campaigns there. I was one of the spies that went out. And since we've crossed the Jordan, I have fought.

[7 : 08] And I have fought. And I have fought. And I have led. And you could well imagine Joshua saying, I'm done. The Lord says to him, Joshua, you're old. You're advanced in years.

But there's still work to do. And so we find that Joshua's great work now, although he is, we're told this, that there's still land to be conquered.

The main work for Joshua now is that he is to divide out the inheritance. Only allot the land. Verse 6. We find it saying there that only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance as I have commanded. Now, therefore, verse 7, divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh. And you'll find this word inheritance around about 50 times in these chapters of Joshua. Because the land of Canaan was Israel's inheritance. It was God's land. And in fact, all land is God's land. But God was going to give it to them.

[8 : 17] They didn't get this land. Yes, they fought for it. But it was God who helped them. It was God who had given it to them. And they were, in fact, tenants of that land.

And the only rent that God was requiring of them was obedience. You follow me. You do what I say. You worship me. Put me first.

And I'll bless you. This land will become a land of prosperity and a land of peace. I will be with you. And God gives so many promises to his people in that land.

If they will put him first and they will follow him and do as he says. And you know, in a sense, God has not changed. Because God cannot change. And he says the same to every nation.

Of course, Israel were his own particular people. But he says this still nationally. But he also says it individually to ourselves as well. And so it is important that we, for back in Leviticus, we read there that the land, this is what the Lord says, the land shall not be sold.

[9 : 24] The land will not be sold. For this land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me. So the promised land was a gift from God.

And it's the same with regard to salvation. It is a gift from God. If you're following the Lord Jesus Christ today, it wasn't by your own initiative.

It wasn't by your own power. It wasn't by your own intellect or gifts or strength. It is a gift. And you know, it's one of the hardest things for us to understand that salvation is a gift. Because always we think, in order to be a Christian, I've got to do something. I've got to start becoming incredibly good. I've got to change my life and become better than I've ever been before. I've got to go from this level to this level. And if I do that, then maybe God will accept me and I'll become a Christian. That's not how it works.

[10 : 26] Because we don't have sufficient, even suppose, that's what Paul said. Supposing I gave my body to be burned. He went to the most extreme thing that you could do.

And he says, right. What's the most extreme thing I could do to show God how good I am? I'll give my body to be burned. Paul said, even that doesn't work.

Unless I have love. In other words, unless God's love in Jesus Christ comes into my life, I have nothing. And that's why we have to go to the Lord and say, Lord, you saved me.

Because I can't save myself. Come into my life. Give me the gift of salvation. Ask him for that. And even if you're saying to yourself, you know this, I don't really understand what you're saying. Say to the Lord, Lord, even, and be honest with the Lord. And just tell him, Lord, you know, there's a lot of stuff I just don't get. And I don't even understand exactly what it means by the gift of salvation.

[11 : 33] But I'm going to ask for it. And I'm going to ask today, Lord, give me the gift of salvation. Give me the gift of Jesus Christ. May Jesus come into my heart and life.

I'm asking you, will you do that today? Maybe some of you are saying, oh, no, I'm scared to do that. I'm afraid what will happen. I'm not ready for that. But, you see, and this is a problem.

Because we still want to be in control. It's my life and I still want to be in control. And the Lord says, no, I want to be in control of your life. I want you to follow me.

And so, just as the Lord said to Joshua, there is still a lot of land. There's still, that's what he says, you are old and advanced in years.

And there remains yet very much land to possess. And in a sense, that's what the Lord is saying, the very same thing to you and to me. Because, if we're Christians, there is still within our own lives so much that there is yet to do.

[12 : 40] And let me say, if you're not a believer, if you're not somebody who has closed in with Christ today, I urge you to do that right now. Because, you know, a lot of people think that the idea of becoming a Christian is just, it's like an insurance policy.

And they say, you know, I'm going to become a Christian so it will be okay when I die. And they kind of think, that's it, you become a Christian and then that's everything sorted. But it's not, it's a different way of life, it's a new life.

It's still you, still engaging, still involved in everything in life. But you have a new incentive. You have a new purpose.

You have new aims. You have new goals. God is at the heart of what you are and who you are. And you're serving him in what you do. And you're saying, Lord, help me to be more like you in my place of work.

Lord, help me to watch my tongue so that I am careful what I say to people. Help me, Lord, with my attitude. Help me, Lord, to reflect you in all that I do.

[13 : 48] Because, you see, you can't have two, there can't be two you's. There can't be one that is for Sunday. And another that's for work.

And another that's for leisure. And another, it's just you and the Lord so that this should govern and cover every area. Now, of course, we so often fail in all the areas of life.

But that's where we've got to come back to the Lord and say, Lord, forgive me. I don't want to be a failure. I don't want to be failing. I want to be like you. Please, please help me.

And so, it's important that we sign up with the Lord. Sign up with him and follow him. So there is still for all of us so much yet.

For instance, there is so much for us still to know. Because when you think about it, we have so much in God's word. Here are the riches of God's word. It's full of history and law and prophecy and poetry and gospel and letters, practical letters, teaching us a way to go.

[14 : 56] And so, we do not, it doesn't matter how much we've studied, there is still so much for us to know. Because even what we're familiar with, it's always different.

You know, if you're going somewhere, if supposing you said to yourself, well, I'm going to drive down to back or to point or over to Calanash or Harris or Lochs or whatever. Supposing you did that, supposing you had to work, you were going to work there or you lived there.

Every day, you're traveling back and forth. You and I know that the journeys are often different. You travel the same road. But sometimes it's wet.

Sometimes it's dry. Sometimes the road is busy. Sometimes it's morning. Sometimes it's night. But even on good days, supposing you have a beautiful week and the weather, the sun is shining every day.

Every day is different. Different colors. Different hues. You see things differently. The light shines on things differently. Sometimes you see the hills in the distance and the visibility is so clear.

[16:03] You can almost see every rock. Other days it's not so clear. And that's how life is. And that's how God's word is. Because it doesn't matter how often you come to it.

You'll find something new in it. Because this is who God is. And he makes old things. He tells us that in the Bible. Old things made new.

So that you come to even the same thing. And you say to yourself, when you come and read it and you say, Lord, open my eyes that I might see wonderful things out of your law.

And God says, yes, I'll do that. And so as you come to read, your eyes are open to see. And you say, you know, I never saw that before. Even though I've read this chapter, I've read these verses over and over, I've never seen it like that before.

And so there is so, so much for us still to understand and to learn about the Lord. And there is still so much character, Christian character to be possessed.

[17:09] Because, you see, we're developing as we go along. We haven't come to full maturity yet. None of us here can say, you know, I'm there.

I don't think I can get any better as a Christian. I think I'm 100%. Nobody would ever say that. Even the great apostle Paul, who was, there were few Christians ever like him.

He says, not that I have already attained or possessed. He says, I'm not yet perfect. He says, in fact, I am, all the time, I am striving, I'm straining, I'm searching, I'm looking for, I'm wanting to develop Christian character.

And he says, I'm forgetting the things that are behind. And I'm pressing forward to the things that are before. You know, that's one of the great differences between a Christian and a non-Christian. Particularly elderly. Now, I've often been with old people who aren't Christians.

[18:20] And they talk about life. But they haven't really anything much that they're looking forward to when they get really old. Now, obviously, I've spoken to Christians and they're reflecting back on life as well.

And everybody, all older people have rich experiences of life. But the Christian's looking forward. The Christian's always looking forward. And he says, you know, I don't know what all's ahead. But one thing I know, that what's ahead is even better than the best I've ever had here. The Bible tells us that. The Bible shows us that.

And so there's an anticipation in the heart of the Christian that the best is yet to come. And so that's one of the wonderful things that we have.

But we're always seeking that our character and so on will be developed. Paul, who was saying, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

[19:20] But he also says, it is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. And so all the time, as we said earlier, God is at work to make you more and more like Jesus Christ.

That's what's happening every day. And when you come to church, come with a prayer in your heart and saying, Lord, see when I come in today in the singing, in the reading and in the preaching.

Help me just to get a little more that will shape me to become even more like Jesus Christ. See, when we come to church, it has to be interaction.

We don't just sort of walk in and walk out. And we don't engage in any shape or form. Before we come to church, we need to be asking the Lord, Lord, make it an experience where I learn and where I'm blessed.

May I come out a better person than when I go in. May the influence of your word affect me and challenge me and change me and show me what to do and how to go.

[20 : 22] Because that's what God's word does in our lives. And as we were saying before how God's word is always changing, as our experiences are always changing, then God's word is always fitting our experience.

You see, the experiences that you have now are different to what you had 20 years ago. God's word was suitable to your experiences 20 years ago, but it's equally suitable to your experiences now.

Because God, although his word doesn't change, God doesn't change, but he fits the word always to your changing experiences.

And that's why we should always, always be in the word. And there is still so much work for us to do. As we said, there's so much for us still to know about God.

There is still so much character, Christian character for us to develop. But there's also still so much work for us to do. Now you'll notice that although the Lord said you are old and advanced in years and there remains very much land to possess.

[21 : 36] Joshua's work was moving more from the military into sort of what you would almost say government and administrative.

And the Lord won't require of you in old age to be doing what you were doing in the very prime of life. And that's what happened.

Joshua's years of battle were coming to an end. He would be coming physically, he wouldn't be able to do what he used to do. But there was still a lot that he could do.

And that's what God was saying to him. This is what you're to do. There's still a lot of land to conquer. But you now, your job, your work, you are going to have to administer and divide up the land into the different allotments.

So the different tribes will receive their portion and such like. The important thing for you and for me is always to be available for the Lord.

[22 : 39] And we don't reach a point where we say, well I've done my bit, that's it, my feet are up. I'm not going to engage in anything. I'm not interested. I'm tired. And the Lord says, no, no, there's always something for you to do.

Always something. And even if it is, there are very simple things that we can do. You have access to people that maybe nobody else has.

We can always visit people. We can pray for people. As Christians, there are so many people that need to know about the Lord Jesus Christ.

And maybe you are the only person who has access to them. Maybe you have their trust. Maybe you have an opportunity to share with them.

And every time an opportunity comes, take it. Use it. And you know, when you look back over your Christian life, and think back before you became a Christian.

[23 : 42] Remember one of the things that had a part to play in where you are today was the influence of other people. Other people had an influence on your life for good.

It might not even be about what they said, although that might have had a huge part to play. But it might have been just something about them.

There was something about their life, about their character, about who they were that had an influence. And it stayed with you. It challenged you.

And I can think back, and I'm sure you can think back, on people whose lives influenced you.

Maybe you begin to think. Because the Bible tells us, as Christians, we are living epistles, read. Living letters, read by all people. People are reading our lives. And our lives are either being constructive for the good of others, or destructive. And I pray that it's constructive.

[24 : 44] And that we will be helping to build people up. And so, the Lord is saying, there is still much work to do. Well, as we move forward today, may we seek, first and foremost, that we are on the right side with the Lord.

That we are following Him. And if we are following Him, may we always be willing to serve. And wherever He will have us do. Like the prophet said, here am I, Lord.

Send me. May we be willing to do that. To be used by the Lord. Because life is short. Our day is soon going to be over.

And one day we won't have the opportunity ever again to do anything. Surely, what you want to hear when you close your eyes in death. And open them in eternity.

Is to hear the voice of the Lord saying, well done, good and faithful servant. That's what you want to hear. Well, in order for that to be said, you need to be doing that here.

[25 : 55] Let us pray. O Lord, we pray that we may indeed be still and know that you are God. We pray that we may stop and hear what you are saying to us.

And in this busy world, that we may be always ready to do whatever you would ask us to do. We pray to bless every home and every family.

And again, we pray for those who mourn. We pray to take us home safely and bless us with every spiritual blessing. We pray to bless a cup of tea, coffee in the hall afterwards and fellowship.

And be with the youth fellowship tonight, we pray. And we give thanks, Lord, for doing and arranging this. And we pray to help him. And we pray that it will all go well.

And there won't be any difficulty with the communication. That everything will work well. We pray then that you will take away our every sin.

[26 : 56] In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen. We conclude singing from Psalm 37, verses 3 to 7. Psalm 37, 3 to 7.

And this is from the Scottish Psalter. That's on page 252. Verses 3 to 7, Psalm 37.

The tuner's Grafenberg said, Thou thy trust upon the Lord, and be thou doing good. And so thou in the land shalt dwell, and verily have food. Delight thyself in God.

He'll give thine heart's desire to thee. Thy way to God. Commit him trust. It bring to pass, shall he.

And so on to verse 7, verses 3 to 7.

The tuner's Grafenberg said, Thou thy trust upon the Lord. Set thou thy trust upon the Lord, and be thou doing good.

[28 : 06] And so thou in the land shalt dwell, and verily have food.

Delight thyself in God. He'll give thine heart's desire to thee.

Thy way to God. Commit him trust. It bring to pass, shall he.

And like unto the light he shall thy righteousness display.

And he thy judgment shall bring forth like noontide of the day.

[29 : 13] Rest in the Lord, and patiently wait for him.

Do not fret. For him who prospering in his way, success in sin doth get.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.