

Jos220 – Apathetic About The Promised Life? – Joshua 18:1-10
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Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “Apathetic About The Promised Life?” We’re going to Joshua Chapter 18 and looking at the first ten verses.

Apathetic About The Promised Life? What does *that* mean? The definition of being “*apathetic*” is: ***Showing or feeling no interest, enthusiasm, or concern.***

Is it possible to be apathetic toward taking possession of the Promised Life? Is it possible for a Christian to *show or feel no interest, enthusiasm, or concern* for growing in our Promised Life in Christ? Is it possible we could receive the initial victory of salvation – like the Israelites crossing over the Jordan – maybe get “in” to the Promised Land (in general) but then maybe bring out the recliner a little too early? Is it possible to maybe go into spiritual retirement before taking possession of *any part* of the Promised Life – not turning away from the Lord, but not taking possession of the life he has for you either?

Maybe we are in danger of becoming apathetic about the Promised Life.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, strike fear into our hearts. Don’t allow us to be subtly deceived by our own flesh and the temptation of the world and the schemes of the devil, to get to a place where we become apathetic about the Promised Life that we have in you. About what you desire to do in us, Lord. About us taking possession of more and more of what you have for us. God instead, give us a driving passion. Give us an enthusiasm. Give us a deep concern to possess ALL you have, to walk in ALL you have for us, Lord. And teach us what it looks like and what it feels like if we ever begin to slip into apathy about your Promised Life. Lord show it to us, bring it out to us in the Book of Joshua today, please, by your Spirit and in your name, Jesus, amen.*

For seven long years the Tribes of Israel have been fighting to gain control of the Promised Land, after growing up in the wilderness waiting for the previous generation to die due to their lack of faith. This generation was inspired by Joshua to be “strong and courageous” in Chapter 1.

In **Chapter 3** they closely followed the ark across the Jordan River – leaving the wilderness behind and entering the promised land

In **Chapter 4** they built memorials to God who had miraculously bringing them into the promised land

In **Chapter 5** – they KNEW the enemies in the land were trembling at their presence

In **Chapter 6** - they marched in faith around Jericho watching as its walls miraculously FELL

After a stumble at AI in **Chapter 7** – and a renewed commitment in **Chapter 8**
In **CHAPTER 10** - they fought and won *SEVEN successive battles* to take control of the Southern HALF of the land
and in **CHAPTER 11** – they *successfully take control* of the entire Northern half of the land.

What an incredible run! What an incredible string of victories! Israel saw God continually going before them in victory until all the Promised Land was conquered.

So, with the victories in place, the Promised Land could begin to be divided among the Tribes.

First - in **Chapter 13** – is the record of the two and a half tribes who *ASKED* for their Inheritance to be on the *EAST side* of the Jordan

Then - In **Chapter 14** – *CALEB* came to Joshua *ASKING* for a land allotment for his Tribe of *Judah* and for *himself*

In Chapter 16 – land is allotted to the “*favorite child*” tribes of *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*

But in Chapter 17 – they couldn’t stop *WHINING* that God hadn’t given them *enough land* and God hadn’t made it *easy enough* for them.

And we learned a God lesson from them, didn’t we? A lesson about “Growing Where You’re Planted.” Those two tribes were discontent. They were *discontent*. They were a prime example of how *not to act*. But, at least they were taking some action. At least they were *doing something* (even if it was wrong).

Today, we’re going to look at the remaining seven tribes
who were *not whining*,
who were *not complaining*
but who were also not really doing... anything.

After all that God had done, after all the miracles and all the victories seven of the twelve tribes (over half of the tribes) had so quickly become apathetic about the Promised Life. *They showed no real interest, no enthusiasm and no concern for actually taking possession of what God had given them.* It’s not they were doing anything wrong, it’s just that they were not doing anything right, either. In regard to actively taking possession of what God had given them, they just weren’t doing... *anything*.

We see it today as we begin in Joshua 18:1.

Joshua 18:1 (NLT)

I Now that the land was under Israelite control, the entire community of Israel gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tabernacle.

Seemingly on the heels of the complaining fit that we saw from the last two tribes last week, Joshua uproots his headquarters at Gilgal and moves it to Shiloh. Shiloh was in the center of the Land of Canaan making it easier for the people to get to and Shiloh was in the allotment to Joshua's own tribe (Ephraim) making it personally important to Joshua. And Shiloh does mean rest – and there was rest from the initial battles of gaining victory in the land.

But... I wonder if Joshua sensed something else. I wonder if he sensed the need (already) for a revival, for a renewed commitment from each of the tribes to actively “push ahead” into the Promised Life.

We're actually not told why Joshua moved to Shiloh. But when he got there he immediately set up the Tabernacle – the dwelling place of God and the meeting place of God and man. Joshua immediately gathered all of Israel together around the Presence of God at the Tabernacle.

It seems to me to be a refocusing, a not so subtle reminder to the tribes that God was *in their midst*
That God was *in charge*
and that God *had a plan* for each of them.

And maybe we see a glimpse of why they may have needed a refocusing in Joshua 18:2.

Joshua 18:2 (NLT)

2 But there remained seven tribes who had not yet been allotted their grants of land.

The NET Bible puts a Footnote of the literal Hebrew here “*there were left among the sons of Israel who had not divided up their inheritance seven tribes.*”

We've seen five tribes ask for and be given their allotment in the Promised Land.

First – two and a half tribes on the EAST Side of the Jordan

Then JUDAH – Led by Caleb

Then Joseph's kids (Ephraim and half Manasseh) who came WHINING - *but at least they came*

And then the Promised Land allotment stops with seven tribes who had not yet divided up their inheritance. They had NOT asked for it. They had NOT sought after it. It seems like they had just *become okay* to be in the general area of the Promised Land. They didn't feel the need to “take any initiative” or to press in, to put in the effort in order to possess *or even find out where* their Promised Land allotment *was*. They were just kind of THERE, hanging around. *No . . . We're good . . . We're just kinda . . . HERE.*

It seems that Joshua knew he had to get these tribes into the heart of the Promised Land and he had to get them refocused on the presence of God and on the plan of God.

And so in verse 3 Joshua gently tries to wake up these seven sleeping tribes from their slumber.

Joshua 18:3 (NLT)

3 Then Joshua asked them, “How long are you going to wait before taking possession of the remaining land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given to you?”

Seriously, how long are you going to sit around, Church (which is what the Tabernacle was.) ***How long are you gonna sit around NOT taking possession of the life God has given you?***

Guys, we *must* continue to *press on* – to push ahead; to take hold of what God has already given us; to take full possession of the Promised life which is what these seven tribes are *not* doing. Our race is a life-long marathon. We’ve got to always be *pressing on* toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul says in Philippians 3:12,

Philippians 3:12 (NLT)

12 I don’t mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.

We must proactively press on - to *POSSESS that for which Christ Jesus first POSSESSED US!*

And the only way we can take possession of the Promised Life is to continue to have that commitment.

We CANNOT get apathetic about the Promised Life.

Many of us know a Christian or two who started out great. Moved by an event or a message they committed their life to Jesus. They left the wilderness for new life in Christ and they won a few key battles – *at first*.

But then the days passed and the years passed. They just kind of stopped trying as hard. They didn’t turn their back on Christ; they just stopped moving forward in their life with Christ. After awhile the natural drift of their life was back toward the wilderness.

The only way to stop that is to not get apathetic about possessing more and more of the Promised life Jesus Christ has for you. We must be *continually committed* to being *continually transformed* more and more into the image of Jesus, thereby possessing more and more of the Promised Life.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)

18 So all of us who have [put our faith in Christ] (had the veil removed) can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord -who is the Spirit - makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

NKJV = ***We are being transformed, into HIS image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.***

We must always be *pressing on* and *pressing in* to possess more and more of the promised life, and if we are not – then by our old nature we will naturally drift back toward the wilderness. If we are not moving forward with Jesus – then by default we will be moving backwards.

It's like driving a heavy load uphill. You put the truck in low gear and you just keep moving forward – you don't have to be fast but you do have to keep moving forward – because if you decide to put the clutch in and take it out of gear for one second, you had better look out because you're going backwards fast!

So what do we do? *What do we do* if the Holy Spirit convicts us that we may be in this place – today?

There's one verse that describes what Joshua is going to do with these apathetic tribes.

Psalm 34:8 (NLT)

8 Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

Taste and see – experience a taste of how good it is to take possession of the Promised Life. The Hebrew word for “take refuge” also means *to put your trust in* – or *have confident hope in*. That is what Joshua is going to inspire these apathetic tribes to do.

So back in Joshua 18 as we read through these final verses would you ask yourself *WHAT would this LOOK LIKE if I APPLIED this – to MY own life?*

Joshua 18:4 (NLT)

4 Select three men from each tribe, and I will send them out to explore the land and map it out. They will then return to me with a written report of their proposed divisions of their new homeland.

Notice, not *one* man from each tribe, but *three* so they can strengthen and support one another. And Joshua sends them out on a detailed exploration and mapping mission of the Promised Land. In other words, go and see all that God has for you (taste and see that what God has for you is good) and map it out. Write a detailed report of your thoughts (which means you're really going to have to study it).

Then, Joshua 18:6.

Joshua 18:6 (NLT)

6 And when you record the seven divisions of the land and bring them to me, I will cast sacred lots in the presence of the Lord our God to assign land to each tribe.

You go look at it – big picture style – taste and see how good the Promised Life is. Then God will place you exactly where he wants you in this great life. *Do you see it?*

Then Joshua repeats the plan in verse 8 because he is talking to men (they might not have been listening the first time).

Joshua 18:8 (NLT)

8 As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua commanded them, “Go and explore the land and write a description of it. Then return to me, and I will assign the land to the tribes by casting sacred lots here in the presence of the Lord at Shiloh.”

Joshua repeats the plan to make sure we get it right. Go and take in the Promised Life – study it. Write a detailed description of it. Be immersed in all that God has for you.

Reminds me of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:18-19.

Ephesians 3:18–19 (NLT)

18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. (go and map it out)

19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Paul is describing in Ephesians what Joshua is trying to get these tribes to experience.

Taste and see that the Lord is good. You can put your TRUST and your HOPE – fully in his love, and in his plan.

And so Joshua 18:9 says,

Joshua 18:9 (NLT)

9 The men did as they were told and mapped the entire territory into seven sections, listing the towns in each section. They made a written record and then returned to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh.

We've tasted and seen. Indeed the Promised Life is good. God has provided all we need – in every area. We trust him and we know that whatever portion he gives us, it will be good.

And so we read in Joshua 18:10,

Joshua 18:10 (NLT)

10 And there at Shiloh, Joshua cast sacred lots in the presence of the Lord to determine which tribe should have each section.

God (through Joshua) has done everything necessary for these seven tribes to inspire them out of their apathy and inspire them into the Promised Life. To inspire them to take full possession of the Promised Life he already has reserved for them – and God wants to do the exact same thing with us.

After ALL that God has DONE in OUR lives

After ALL that God has so freely given US

After ALL the Promises God has promised US

will we be apathetic about taking possession of the Promised Life? Will we allow ourselves to fall into this tragic place where we ***show (or feel) no real interest, no enthusiasm, and no concern . . .*** for pressing on and pressing in; for continuing to take possession of more and more and more of the Promised Life?

We must never become apathetic about taking possession of the Promised Life.

May we always say – With the Apostle Paul

I press on to possess that for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.

Let's pray. *Lord, Jesus, save us. Save us from ourselves, from our own flesh, from our own tendencies to get apathetic. From our own tendencies to rest on our history, save us God.*

If you haven't made a decision for Christ yet, you just heard step two. Step one is this prayer... *Lord, save me. I'm a sinner and I'm sinking into sin, save me. Save me from the consequences of my sin. Come into my life and be my Lord. Fill me with your Spirit.*

And then, for those of us who did that some time ago, can we just spend a silent moment with the Lord and answer these questions – “Am I in danger of becoming apathetic about the Promised Life? Am I in danger of not pressing in or pressing on? Am I in danger of not fighting to possess all that Christ Jesus has possessed me for?” If so, would you just respond to the Lord, right now, right where you are? Don’t move until you do this.

Say this, *Lord*, (and then the rest is up to you.) You say, “Lord” and then you talk to him about it.

“Lord, help me. Fill me with your power. Give me the faith and the obedience, Lord. I choose to obey. Give me the power to obey. Draw me to that place where I press in, more and more and more to possess all you have for me. Lord, I’m not satisfied where I’m at. I’m not satisfied with just having said “the prayer” or gone to church. I want to know you. I want to know you better. I want to see you move in my life. I want to press in hard after you. Do that in me, Lord. Make me who you desire me to be. Transform me from glory to glory into your image, Jesus. I pray for your kingdom’s sake, and in your name, amen.”