

## OPENING SCRIPTURE & PRAYER:

Paul prays for believers in Ephesians 1... that we would know...

1:19 what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

And again, in Ephesians 3...

3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; ...

19b ...that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER that we would live according to the power that raised Jesus from the grave & by which He ascended into heaven!

Intro: Few Christians seem to be actually living according to the power available to us. It is kind of like the craze among celebrities to own a super expensive, extreme sports car—but not to take it out racing on a track or on the German Autobahn, but instead, to show it off like a fashion statement!

ILLUSTRATION: The Bugatti Veyron:

- 16 cylinders / 8 liters / all-wheel drive
- 4 turbochargers
- Over 1000 horsepower
- Top speed = 267 mph
- Had the record for the quickest accelerating production car in history
- 0-60 in 2.5 seconds | 124 mph in 7.3 sec
- Empties its 100-liter tank in 12 minutes at top speed
- Feels like you are in a jumbo jet taking off – creates more acceleration G's than an F16 taking off
- In a race across Europe against a Cessna 182, the Veyron won!
- Over \$1.5 million

Famous owners...

Tom Cruise – The famous actor arrived at the Mission Impossible III premiere in a Bugatti Veyron (He had an extremely hard time opening the passenger door)

Ralph Lauren – the fashion designer, (bought one in black / it is a nice prop for his models to pose with)

Celebrities – Simon Cowell, Jay Leno (on his museum floor)

Chris Brown, and other rappers... Jay Z, Flo Rida (wrapped in gold), Drake, Lil' Wayne, T-Pain

Nigo - Famous Japanese fashion designer and owner of "A Bathing Ape" (He owns a pink Veyron)

The thing is—it is mostly bought as a status symbol or a fashion item

It is designed to be driven on roads like the German Autobahn, yet most are probably stuck in traffic in downtown LA. And you'll never get it much above 100 mph in the US without a hefty speeding ticket.

Think of what that car was designed for—yet how it is never used to its full potential!

My friends, according SCRIPTURE – Christians have incredible power “under the hood” and we are meant to be living boldly, and victoriously in Christ Jesus!

Unfortunately, for many, Christianity is not much more than a fashion statement, and when it becomes unfashionable, or uncomfortable, or too challenging, they park it and walk away.

But trust me—if we were to step out in faith and experience the kind of power God designed us to live by, we would never stop doubting, stop making excuses, and stop living complacently.

This is our theme this morning. We are going to see two different attitudes in the book of Joshua toward conquering the Promised Land—one an example of how we often act like VICTIMS and make EXCUSES of why we can't LIVE BOLDLY – the other a power example of how we can live as VICTORS – accepting the CHALLENGE to live BIG and BOLD for Jesus!

OUR KEY PASSAGE IS JOSHUA 17

17:12 *But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities, because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land.*

13 *It came about when the sons of Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.*

Let me explain where we are in the big story of Joshua...

Joshua 11:18 • *Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings.*

Joshua 11:23 • *So Joshua took the whole land, ... & gave it for an inheritance to Israel ... Thus the land had rest from war.*

Joshua 13:1 • *Now Joshua was old and advanced in years when the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and very much of the land remains to be possessed."*

The WAR was won / Joshua WON and there was peace in the land

But—even though God gave Joshua VICTORY, he didn't stop waging war against the Canaanites!

This is a common theme from this point to the end of Joshua. There was incomplete victory. There were enemy tribes not fully driven out.

3 REASONS WHY – there were still Canaanites living in the land /

All of these are a picture of WHY SIN PERSISTS in the Christian's life...

This is why we can easily understand the Promised Land as a TYPE of the Christian life...

- Some Canaanites remained who deceived Joshua (the Gibeonites).

Satan will deceive us—*"Oh, that's not sin. It won't really hurt you. God doesn't really care about that little thing. You are hurting anyone, so don't bother with it."*

- There were territories left unclaimed

Canaanites were still hiding out in territory Israel hadn't yet stepped foot in by faith. The tribes were supposed to investigate their whole territory and report back to the priests to have it sectioned off to the clans and families. We read about this on Wednesday—some tribes delayed doing this.

*For some sins or areas of doubt and fear, we simply have no idea that this area of exists in our life. We need to keep investigating. What about this attitude? What about this habit? What about this area of distraction? What about this weakness? What about this choice or that choice? What about this thing that bothers me, but I've never done anything about?*

- But in most cases, the Canaanites persist in the land because the Israelites flat out disobeyed God and stopped fighting (as we read in 17:13)

They allowed these tribes to remain in their midst, even as "forced laborers"—instead of driving them out, as God instructed. This will cause huge problem in Judges, when they intermarry them and begin to worship their idols!

*These are the areas of our life we know good and well are not pleasing to God, but we make excuses anyway. These are things we know God has called us to do, but we procrastinate. These are areas we have capitulated in and are content to live complacently in!*

James 1:21 • Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

Listen – the battle was already won – the Canaanite armies had been defeated, but we are not in heaven yet—so, until we are perfected and set free from the presence of sin, we must continue in the SANCTIFICATION process We need to TAKE the whole territory of the SPIRIT FILLED Christian life / TAKE ALL OF WHAT JESUS HAS PURCHASED FOR YOU.

What does Paul say in Philippians 3? Let my paraphrase:

*Hey, I'm not perfect yet, but this is why Jesus has taken hold of my life—to make me more like Him. And one day, when I see Him in heaven, I'll be perfect, so until then, I'm going to PRESS ON to become like Him. I'm going to forget the past and press on to what lies ahead!*

We can never rest on our past victories. We must also press forward. We must never think we are done yet. We must never think we have reached a place of perfection.

We need to walk in JESUS' POWER & VICTORY in areas of fear / doubt / where God said “Go” but you said “No” / unforgiveness / bitterness / SIN – both known and unknown / laziness / selfishness / anger

14 Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, “Why have you given me only one lot and one portion for an inheritance, since I am a numerous people whom the LORD has thus far blessed?”

The sons of Joseph = Ephraim & Manasseh / they already had TWO PORTIONS of land in the Promised Land

AND – Manasseh was the largest territory / even on both sides of the Jordan river!

And – Ephraim was the most SIGNIFICANT northern tribe – the lead tribe / Israel as a whole is often called “Ephraim”!

So – they recognize they have been blessed – and they admit they are a NUMEROUS PEOPLE – but they are unable or unwilling to completely drive out the Canaanites from their territory...

They had settled in the narrow foothills between the valleys and the mountains – and had LITTLE PRACTICAL TERRITORY as a result

They ADMIT they are not enjoying the fullness of their land!

Like so many Christians! We know the POTENTIAL of what we should be experiencing as Christians, but we ADMIT we are coming up short.

We are aware of our SPIRITUAL DROUGHT – so we CRAVE MORE life – we think we are missing something!

15 Joshua said to them, “If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you.”

So – Joshua REPEATS what they have heard a hundred times before: “Clear out land in the territory of the Canaanites. It is your land. Take it.”

Joshua even suggests WORKING TOGETHER to clear forest land!

But the fact that these forests are in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaim means they will have to FIGHT some battles as well!

They will have to knock down TREES as well as GIANTS. But to Joshua, they are all the same.

16 The sons of Joseph said, “The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the valley land have chariots of iron, both those who are in Beth-shean and its towns and those who are in the valley of Jezreel.”

So now, the KEY ISSUE: Ephraim & Manasseh MAKE EXCUSES for their COMPLACENCY = *"We can't take the land you've given us. So—give us some different land."*

They felt ripped off and cheated—they were obviously a huge tribe and they deserved more—but they were being short changed the land they needed.

Christians are CONSTANTLY making excuses for living complacently / not stepping fully into the SPIRIT FILLED LIVE Jesus promised!

We just MAKE EXCUSES of why it won't ever be a reality in our life...

- Why we won't ever conquer this or that sin
- Or why we won't ever be able to forgive so and so
- Or why we don't have the resources, money, skills, relationships, etc. to step out in faith and do what God is calling us to do
- Or why we can't share our faith—that our fears are just too great to evangelize

Especially in our culture – we have LEARNED TO BE VICTIMS and blame others. We use this as an excuse for mediocrity. We don't take responsibility.

My friends, when you believe that you are a victim, you define yourself as

- one who is broken and unable to succeed,
- or lacking something that puts you at a disadvantage

"I'm a victim" is another way of saying, I'm not going to be a winner in this game, because my competition cheated and treated me unfairly.

My friends, we started with scripture that proclaimed the POWER that is available to EVERY Christian to live by. Remember...

*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*

That passage in Ephesians was written to Gentile believers who thought they were second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God, because they had been the VICTIMS of racial and religious discrimination by the Jews for centuries! Paul was telling them they had EQUAL access to the POWER OF GOD in Christ Jesus!

You see, no matter who you are, and no matter what is your background, or your sin, in the Gospel of Jesus, we have been RESCUED & REDEEMED from our sin / and then we have been RESTORED & made RIGHTEOUS before God. We are MADE COMPLETE in Jesus. We are lacking nothing. Our identity is no longer a VICTIM – but instead, we are VICTORS!

*17 Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, "You are a numerous people and have great power; you shall not have one lot only.*

WAIT – did Joshua acquiesce to their demands? Did he give them what they were asking for in their COMPLACENCY?

Did he just ENABLE their immaturity? What is this?

*18 but the hill country shall be yours. For though it is a forest, you shall clear it, and to its farthest borders it shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong."*

No, he didn't! Joshua's words are a stunning rebuke and reveal a reality of our own walk...

Joshua simply said, *"I'm simply giving you what you are refusing to take. Now go take it!"*

*"Take the mountains. Take the valleys. They are yours. No more excuses.*

*"If you will simply walk in faith and obedience and DO what you know you should be doing, you'll have more territory than you could possibly need."*

My friends, you might think you are lacking something in life, but if you were to ask Joshua, he'd simply say: *Okay—I'll give you what you ask. It turns out though, that you already received this in Jesus! You just didn't take hold of it yet!*

What Joshua is telling them is not unreasonable: A few chapters earlier, Caleb took on the same mission—WILLINGLY! Excitedly!...

In 14:10–15 • Caleb, the old man, asks for his territory to be a great mountainous stronghold of giants!

...now behold, I am eighty-five years old today.

11 "I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in.

12 "Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities;

Deuteronomy 1:34–36 | God promised Caleb the area he spied out faithfully

It is the highest altitude community in Israel at 3000 feet

Unlike Manasseh, Caleb was BEGGING to be allowed to fight the giants in the hills

And this is when he was 85 years old, and on the verge of retirement!

This was his retirement plan—fight giants until the day he died!

perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken."

Caleb's attitude is stunning! He isn't certain of victory—he says, "perhaps the Lord will be with me" = meaning, "Maybe God will give me victory, maybe He won't. Either way, it's going to be a good fight, and I wouldn't miss it for anything!"

13 So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance.

14 Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully.

Because he followed God fully, Caleb was given one of the most important regions—Hebron!

Why did Caleb want Hebron?

It was the burial place of Abraham's family

It was called "Friend" (Hebron) because Abe was the "friend of God"

He waited over 40 years for this land

Caleb was righteously bold to claim God's promise

15 Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba; for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war.

In fact, it was named after the greatest giant = "Arba"

Caleb though, was going to make sure it was renamed! Not after the Giant Arba, but simply for His FRIEND, GOD!

What is *your* Hebron? Do you have your eyes set on a prize? Do you have a big vision and mission in your life? What is your goal?

Is there something that you could say, "I don't know if I'll be victorious in this, but it is well worth the fight! I'm going for it. No more excuses. My God is bigger. This thing has a name that has caused me fear in the past. I'm going to redefine according to my King Jesus!"

YOU CAN BE LIKE EITHER CALEB OR MANASSEH IN YOUR CHRISTIANITY! WHICH IS IT GOING TO BE?

PRAYER

give us vision / calling / a Hebron  
reveal sin to be repented of  
fear to be faced / adventures to undertake  
how we need to step out in faith  
we want to LIVE BIG by the power of your Spirit  
to live out the ABUNDANT LIFE Jesus promises

You have given us INCREDIBLE POWER by the Holy Spirit / let us live according to that power

No more excuses / no more complaining / it is time for us to rise up and be YOUR CHURCH

That the gates of hell cannot prevail against!