

VII. The Year of Jubilee in Biblical Perspective
“For Coming Generations”

Joshua 1

By: Dr. Harry Reeder and Rev. Frank Barker
September 26, 2010 – Morning Sermon

(Harry Reeder speaking) Let me invite you back tonight for a special conclusion to our celebration weekend. Fifty years ago Briarwood Presbyterian Church became a particular church on this Sunday and we have been celebrating all year in our Year of Jubilee for its 50 years. We have celebrated Briarwood as a great commandment church, a great commission church and this last part moving into next church Briarwood as a great commitment church. I'll be preaching some messages beginning in January 2011 on Briarwood as a great commitment church for a couple of month and I'm looking forward to that. There are a lot of things that didn't make the celebration video that will make the video tonight. We will have an open mike tonight on what you might briefly share about God's thanksgiving tonight. A couple of very special testimonies will be shared with us also and we look forward to that. What a great way to end this weekend and even as we look at the next 50 years. Eleven years and two weeks ago I came to Briarwood and this was the chapter that was on my heart as I came and it gave me great comfort and challenge. This chapter has been with me for 11 years. So if you don't mind I want to share with you today from this chapter, Joshua 1, as we celebrate 50 years and anticipate the future. Let's look at Joshua 1. This is the Word of God. It's the truth.

Joshua 1:1-18 says *1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." 10 And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, 11 "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, 'Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess.'" 12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, 13 "Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, 'The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.' 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the*

land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, 15 until the Lord gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.” 16 And they answered Joshua, “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you, as he was with Moses! 18 Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”

The grass withers and the flower fades. God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may this His Word be preached for you.

This is a very interesting text and very powerful text. I want to very briefly walk through it with you. God made a promise to Abraham and gave him a covenant people. He put them into slavery in Egypt for about 400 years and then He sent Moses as His instrument to bring His people out and now they have had an entire generation in the wilderness. That generation has now passed away except for a few such as Joshua, Caleb and Moses also is dead. Now they are about to enter the promise of God. The mission has been given to them where the Lord has said to, “Go and take possession of the land that I have given you and this is the land for you to inherit from Me. I’m giving it to you, now go and take possession of it.”

Notice the things that he values. One is unity. Here are a couple of tribes that already have their piece of the land beyond the Jordan but the Lord said, “Listen you’re one with the other people. So I want you and you can leave your wives and your children, you men of war you get up and go with the other tribes to take possession of the land. I’ve dealt with you in diversity but I want you to live for Me and accomplish the mission in unity.” Notice how the elders are shepherding when it says “Pass among the people.” The elders of the tribe are to go among the people and shepherd them, provide for them and guide them. This is what we might call discipleship and how they are to be equipped for the mission. Take your provisions and grab your armaments. So they are being equipped and disciplined. Notice the presence of God and they have the Word of God. They are not to depart from the mission but they are to do it to the utmost until they possess the land and all of the enemies are driven out.

In the midst of all of this how do we land from there to over here in the New Testament? The key to this is to first understand who Moses is and who is Joshua? Don’t miss this. First of all this lands in our life and we take this chapter and apply it and I have good news. Moses isn’t dead. He is sitting right over here (it’s Frank Barker). Praise the Lord, it’s the pastor emeritus. There is some application that obviously we could see from the work of Moses and the work of Frank’s ministry here and Joshua who is one less able and one still called to the same thing. Moses gets to go through the Red Sea and Joshua only gets to go through the Jordan River. There’s not much to that, is there? But then they pile up some stones where God has given them blessing. I do like this Joshua thing and how would you like for this to be a membership vow when they said, “Whatever you say we will do, if we don’t, kill us.” Wow!

Let me give you some better news. I’m not Joshua. There’s a certain way that Joshua’s life and ministry had challenged me and I’ve realized that, in fact in all of our

leaders here but please don't miss this. Moses is pointing to Joshua and Joshua is given to us as a little foretaste of Jesus. That's where you fix your eyes, it's on Jesus. Who is strong and courageous? It is our Savior. Who is it that did all the Word of His Father? It was Jesus. Who is it that has conquered all of our enemies, sin, death, hell, the grave and driven them out so that we're forgiven, renewed and have life? This Joshua of the Old Testament is pointing us to the Jeshua of the New Testament. It is the One that Moses is really pointing to and that is Jesus Christ our Lord. So God's people as they read this are certainly grateful for the replications of a Moses and a Joshua as the leaders of the church but they thank God for Moses that gave the Law so that we knew we needed a Savior and they thank God for Joshua who pointed to that Savior so that as we look at this we're to be Christ centered.

We have good news. We have the enemies driven out. We have a good news Gospel message and we have the presence of God not in partiality such as the Holy Spirit in the tabernacle. You now are the tabernacle of the Lord and the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon you and the Lord is with you. I will go with you. In other words, you can take Joshua 1 and run right over to Matthew 28 where He says "I will be with you to the end of the age by the power of the Holy Spirit. I have given you My Word, not five books in the Pentateuch which they had but I've given you 66, not five books pointing to what's going to happen but 66 that tells you what I have done and what I will do in you. I've not only given you the down payment of the Holy Spirit but I've given you the outpouring of the Holy Spirit." By the way, they worked on a couple of hundred square miles of land and that was just a down payment for as it says in Romans 4 "Abraham when he received the promise of the land knew that God had given him the inheritance of the world" so we go and make disciples of this nation, yes and all the nations – the world. This is my Father's world.

So here is a text that gives us encouragement but points to something so much grander and glorious with strength and courage to do the mission. So I have tried to put out just a very simple thematic statement. We are to be a Christ centered, Gospel driven, Spirit filled church because that's what God has given to us for 50 years and that's what the next 50 are to look like by God's grace. So we are to be a Christ centered, Gospel driven, Spirit filled church for the coming generations. Now, unless Jesus comes back first or He takes me home or you fire me, you're going to keep hearing me say this going into the next 50 years – for the coming generations. For the coming generations of pastors, missionaries, new believers and these covenant children that came forward to look at these dead stones that commemorate the work of God but the children are the living stones we want to build that will be there, God willing, 50 years from now with their children with another Ebenezer going up, another Jubilee. It doesn't just happen.

This coming week a delegation will be going up to New England to do the Embers to a Flame Conference. It looks like almost 100 are signing up for it. We are going through New England where the birth of this nation started, the Great Awakening and the great powerful churches were and now look at how dead and dormant it is. The next 50 years won't just happen. It won't be there's a building so there'll be a Christ centered, Gospel driven, Spirit filled church that's here. That church will be here if from this chapter in Joshua we are three things. One is fearless. Be strong and courageous. Don't be frightened. Secondly, we must be faithful and thirdly, by God's grace fruitful. I've already referred to it in this text.

God has given us three unconquerable blessings to get there. He has given us His presence, the Spirit of God. He has given us His Word, the Word of God. Again, we don't have five books we have all 66 books and all that we need to know who He is and what He has done. He has given us not only His presence, the Spirit of God, the Word of God, the Scriptures but He has also given us the power of God, by His Spirit and His Word in that Gospel. I love to sing about the power of the Gospel shall prevail. So we have those three unconquerable blessings.

Now this is crucial. I wish I could tell you that your previous pastor and your present pastor are marvelously intelligent and are overwhelmingly creative men. I can't speak for Frank but I can speak for myself. I am not. We're pretty ordinary. Now God has done something extraordinary. I think that's why He like to use ordinary people so that He gets all the glory and people say "How did God use those guys?" The presence of God, the promise of God, the power of God and the Word of God is what God has done.

Now what's been done to move us into the future? For this first 40 years God used Frank and his ministry. The last eleven years, I've been here. I can't wait for the day I'm not the new pastor anymore. I have a barber and his method of evangelism is for me to come in, pay money to get my hair cut and he tells people "Here's my preacher and he wants to talk to you." That's the way he evangelizes and he always introducing me by saying "I want you to meet my new pastor." I've been here 11 years when am I not considered the new pastor? One guy finally said "I'm not going to call you my new pastor anymore because now you're my old pastor." Can you come up with something else? I'm not sure what it would be.

Where does worship, evangelism, discipleship, loving one another, where do these created ministries come from? They all came from Christ centered, Gospel driven, Spirit filled and these two things which I don't want you to forget. It is an unstoppable commitment to prayer and the Word. All these things of worship, loving, learning, etc is downstream from a Christ centered, Gospel driven, Spirit filled church that is committed to prayer and the Word. I have asked Frank Barker to come and tell us a little bit about prayer then and now and then I'll take a few more moments about the ministry of the Word then and now.

(Frank Barker speaking) Harry mentioned about Joshua leading them into the land and right after they got across the River Jordon the first thing there was this big city of Jericho with walls around it. So Joshua marches around the city once every day and on the seventh day he marches around seven times. There was a missionary years ago named J. L. Frazier who was a missionary to China who went to a very dark area of China. No one had ever penetrated this area with the Gospel and everyone had a demon shelf in their home where they worshiped idols and all. As Harry read that about Joshua marching around the city it Frazier pictured Joshua surrounding the situation with prayer. Frazier wrote back to England to his mother and said to her "I want you to get everybody you know to pray for this area." He began to pray very earnestly and systematically about the penetration of the Gospel in China and dramatic things began to happen as he did that and exercised his faith. God answered those prayers.

When I was in Seminary there was an Air Force chaplain that was doing some post graduate work there who led me to Christ. It's always a good thing to become a Christian before you get out of Seminary. He disciplined me not in a formal way but about

once a month he would take me to a Christian bookstore and say “You need to read this biography of Amy Carmichael, Hudson Taylor...” and as I read the biographies of these great Christians who stepped out in faith, my faith grew and my heart for missions grew.

So when I started Briarwood I led a fellow who lived in Cahaba Heights to Christ and his name was Bob Barnes who is the father of my son-in-law, Billy, now. I gave him one of those biographies to read and he read it and came back the next week and said, “I want to learn to pray. I said, “The only way I know how to pray is to pray. So why don’t we get together and pray.” He said, “What do we pray for?” I said, “Pray for me. As I visit people here in the community I don’t have any trouble talking to them about the weather, sports or politics but I have a hard time talking to them eyeball to eyeball about their relationship to Christ. So let’s pray that I can do that.” We did and the next week I had the opportunity to talk to 18 people with in-depth conversations about their relationship to Christ. One of those fellows became a Christian and joined our group and another one and another one and another one.

There was another one who was coming to church with his wife and his name was Hilton Piper. He wasn’t a Christian and his wife was dragging him to church. He came to me with a problem and I listened to his problem. I said, “Hilton the only solution to that problem is prayer.” He said, “Prayer?! I don’t much believe there’s a God and I know He doesn’t answer prayer.” I said, “We have this group of guys that are meeting and praying and we have seen some interesting answers. Why don’t you come and sit in on the group? Maybe it will help you believe that God answers prayer.” He said, “Okay.” I picked him up the next Wednesday night and took him to the home where we were meeting. When we got there he said, “Look guys I don’t want to be here under false pretenses. I don’t believe in what you’re doing. I don’t believe God answers prayer but I’d like to believe it and I’d like you to help me.” The guys said, “How can we help?” He said, “The preacher says you pray for specific things and you have seen them answered.” They said, “True, some.” He said, “Just do it and let me watch.”

They said, “Did you have something specific in mind?” He said, “Yes I’ve been thinking about it. Frank said you have prayed for attendance at church to increase.” They said, “True.” He said, “Well, it’s down.” They said, “It’s the middle of summer and everybody is on vacation.” He said, “What’s that got to do with it? What about all those people out in the community that are not going anywhere? Why don’t you ask God to bring them to church?” We could explain the theology where we are supposed to go to them and they’re not supposed to come to us but we had done a good bit of going and they had not done a good bit of coming. So he had a point and they talked about it and they said “Okay we’ll ask God to increase the attendance.” He said, “No, I want you to ask God to fill the church this Sunday.” During the summer we had run about two thirds full and there was no prospect of it being filled before fall and so they talked about it and said “Alright, we’ll ask God to fill the church this Sunday but we need to agree on what we mean by “fill” because one person who says “it’s filled” might be almost filled to another. So what do we mean by filled?” He said, “You will have to bring in the green chairs.

We had rented two units from a shopping center for our church and one had been a barber shop and the other unit had never been rented. The barber shop was where we had the children and someone had given us some old wooden chairs that we had painted green that we kept where the children were. We had folding chairs in the other part. The

only time we had to bring the green chairs into the main meeting place was Easter Sunday. So that was like asking for an Easter crowd in the middle of summer with no promotion or anything. They said, "Man you are making this tough." He said, "Do you believe God answers prayer?" They said, "We believe." Then he made them promise not to invite anyone to come any more than they normally did and that we wouldn't tell anybody about it until it was over. So we went to prayer. I prayed from Wednesday to Sunday.

I went to church Sunday and it wasn't even two thirds filled and I was just sick. I thought "I've hurt him more than I've helped him." The choir led in a call to worship and I stood up to lead and open in a word of prayer and as I did I'm looking out over the heads of the congregation through the window into the parking lot of the shopping center and a lot of cars were turning in. We were the only thing open. I thought could it be and I prayed a long prayer. I got through and looked up and here are all these people standing outside the door and the ushers start letting them in. Then they started bringing in the green chairs and I said, "I see they are bringing in the green chairs." His face lit up and he was converted on the spot. He became a part of that prayer group for years and he was the one who instituted the number that was just a remarkable answer to prayer after that.

Prayer is so crucial and it's just like Harry was saying, it's all about prayer and the Word. As I look back over the history of the church and the amazing things God has done through prayer and what a blessing it has been to see so many of you who have been apart of that. It is so exciting and it has been so exciting to me that God brought Harry and Cindy here to follow me and my wife, Barbara. Let's have prayer right now.

Prayer:

Lord, we are so grateful for the privilege of communing with You in prayer and having access to You. We pray Father that You would make this more and more and more a praying church and enable us to lay hold of Your precious promises and appropriate the power that we might advance Your Gospel here and around the world, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

(Harry Reeder speaking) It's so grateful to see when I go into meetings and small groups how prayer has penetrated this congregation. The Friday group prays for our nation which I encourage you to participate in. I think of the prayer groups that meet on Wednesday and how it's not just events of prayer but prayer is built into every piece of it. I think about how in 2002 when Archie Parish came and called upon this congregation to pray for this crucial time of transition of pastors and he got over 1400 family units to come forward on Sunday and signed a commitment to pray for the leadership of Briarwood and the new pastor at their meal time. I am convinced that was one of the crucial moments in the life of our congregation.

The early church was conceived in a prayer meeting in Acts 1. There were 120 people. Then it was birthed in a sermon in the ministry of the Word found in Acts 2. There were 3,000 who came to Christ. Prayer and the Word is where it's at and that's where Joshua takes us back is to the Word. Joshua says three things about the ministry of the Word from this text in Joshua 1. The first thing he says is don't let this Word depart from your mouth. So if we're going to be committed to the ministry of prayer we want it in every persons life, every families life and into every aspect of this church. Not only do we want the ministry of the Word in your quiet time and every congregational community but that means every Lord's day we'll confess Biblical truth and read the

Word of God. In your personal home you'll read the Word of God. There will be preaching and teaching. Faith comes by hearing so the Word must be in our mouth. It's in your mouth as parents to your children. It's in the mouth of those who occupy this pulpit and those who lead those congregational communities and small group discipling. We bring the Word of God which is able to bring you to Christ and to grow you in Christ.

The second thing that is said from Joshua 1 is that you meditate on the Word day and night. You intentionally grasp it, study it and think through it. You can't have a sound life without sound doctrine. This is a very precarious moment that we're celebrating, our 50th. By the way, our denomination is approaching that. Covenant Seminary is just beyond that. Covenant College, Westminster Seminary, all these institutions and our own denomination are around this age. Why am I bringing this out? The next book of this Bible, Judges, tells you what happens between the 40 and 80 year mark. Either the people go to the next level or they begin to dissipate and walk away from the Lord. Do you know how important it is that our seminaries are reaching this 40 to 80 year mark? They are the ones who are bringing us our new pastors and missionaries and training them. Leadership is so crucial in this, like Joshua was called to lead and Moses had led. That's why I'm very grateful for Peter Littleback at Westminster, Neil Neilson at Covenant College, Brian Chapel at Covenant Seminary, Rick Canada at Reform Theological Seminary and for the leadership throughout our denomination.

I want these years to be ones where we can celebrate years of Jubilee and then say "God, we're not going to disconnect from the past but were not going to live in the past. We're going to learn from the past and praise your name and then connect to the present without conforming to it and we want to move into the future to change it for Jesus Christ until He comes again. So God make these next years even more glorious and great and God's grace is sufficient for the future." That's why we have to stay faithful to sound doctrine. We can't have sound lives without sound doctrine. So the Word doesn't depart from your mouth. You preach it, teach it, read it, and confess it. The Word is meditated upon and we intentionally grasp it and understand it.

Thirdly, he says to be careful to do all that I've commanded you. Now we want to live that Word in worship to You. We want to live that Word to bring it to the lost. We want to live that Word in each other's lives and our own lives. Some have already anticipated what I'm about to say because you have heard me say it off and on for the last 11 years. We want to be a W.E.L.L church. (W – worship, E- evangelize, L – love, L - learn) We want to worship God because that's our ministry to God, our ministry of up reach. We want to evangelize the lost because that's our ministry of out reach to the world. We want to love and shepherd one another because that's our ministry of in reach to each other. We want to learn so that we have something to give away to others so that we grow deep which is our ministry of down reach. Up reach is worship, out reach is evangelism, in reach is loving one another, and down reach is growing deep in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Lord, we don't want Briarwood to be five miles wide and one inch deep or five miles deep and one inch wide. God, would You be pleased for Your glory and by the way it could only be done by Your power and grace. Would You make us five miles wide and five miles deep and help us keep reaching believing in You.

The two life lines, the two foundational pillars are prayer and the Word. If we want to be Christ centered, Gospel driven and Spirit filled, fearless, faithful and fruitful,

then we have to be committed to prayer and the Word. A church like this has its stories and Frank just gave you the green chair story which is one of my favorite stories. Where I am standing on this stage there is a Bible underneath the foundation. I had the enormous privilege to serve this congregation as pastor 11 years ago and I had a lot of fear and trepidation, realizing my inadequacies and challenges. I heard something last night I hadn't heard before about this church when it first started 50 years ago. They not only had the barber shop for Sunday school and the shopping center to meet in for worship but they had a dry cleaners that let them have it as a session room to meet in. So when people became members they would go over and meet with the elders and Frank would say "When you join our church the elders would take you to the cleaners." Many of you know the challenges that would be there and the dynamics of it.

I do want to say to the leadership, fellowship and the membership of this church that Cindy and I are overwhelmed at how God has given you the grace to not only continue to love your pastor emeritus and his wonderful wife and all that they have meant but you've also made room for us and it's been a great joy to serve here these last 11 years. And we'll do so as long as the Lord God would allow us to do so. When I came the elders said let's have a time of appreciation for Frank and Barbara which we did and then we'll have an installation service for Harry which we did. Then they said they wanted to do a passing the mantel service. So Frank and I are thinking about Elijah and Elisha and I know what that mantel was but Frank says "What's the mantel?" I said, "Frank it's not a fireplace so don't hit me with the fireplace because that's not what it is." So it was really up to Frank to pray about that. What would be appropriate as a mantel given the history of this church? In that service he gave me this Bible. We preach, teach and live the whole counsel of God, the Bible.

One day I was sharing that story from this pulpit and a young man in our church who now works with Campus Outreach, at the time this building was built this man was working with the crews that were laying the concrete. So he slipped in here the morning before they poured the concrete, where I'm standing right now, and took his personal Bible and laid it on the foundation. Every Sunday when I open the Word I'm standing on the Word. He put his Bible right underneath this pulpit. It is all about the ministry of prayer and the Word.

We have been talking about the transition from Frank to me and we've done a lot of talking recently about that which has really been amazing to see God's grace and what He's done so we're grateful for that but there have been other transitions. One of the transitions I was most fearful of was the 'old Frank' elders and the 'new Harry' elders. You know the ones that had already come around Harry and the ones that had already come around Frank because that's where you usually get some unholy session meetings. There was a meeting where there were three of the older elders and three of the new elders and one of the older elders said, "Let's do this" and one of the new elders said, "Sure we will but could I suggest this." The older elder said, "That's a better idea than I had" and it was like daddy giving me the keys to the car and I saw that there wasn't an old guard, new guard but it was just God's guard and they came together. It was a marvelous transition and I praise the Lord for that.

So I want to do something here. If you were an elder or a deacon here at Briarwood prior to 1999 would you stand? Keep standing. Thank you and God bless you. We love you and we're grateful for all that you've done and how God has used you.

I'm grateful you are still here, faithful, fearless and fruitful. Now, if you have become an elder or deacon since 1999 would you stand? I thank God for you and that you have come along side these that have come before you and that now God is using you along with them. We had the chance to watch an interstate entrance ramp with this transition where you just kind of came in and they moved over and you joined them and everybody got up to speed together. I praise the Lord for that. Please be seated.

Now I want to do something else. If you became a member here at Briarwood in the 1960s would you please stand and if able would you continue to stand please. I thank God for you. If you became a member here at Briarwood in the 1970s would you stand? If you became a member in the 1980s would you please stand? If you became a member in the 1990s up to 1999 would you please stand? If you became a member since 1999 would you please stand? If you're still seated you probably ought to be a member. I speak on behalf of Frank and myself that we love you and are grateful for you. God has done a great work in you and through you and I'm so glad you are standing together in and for Christ. There is no old guard and no new guard, no Franks, no Harrys, it's just people that belong to Jesus, love His church and want to take the Gospel to the Kingdom.

Before we have the benediction I would like everyone else to please stand and join us. This building was built pretty well. My guess is it's going to be here 50 years from now. Who will be here then? Those little children we saw earlier, God willing, it will be them and their families, but who will be here? That's the transition we are looking for, to win and equip the lost – Christ centered, Gospel driven, Spirit filled, fearless, faithful and fruitful so that 50 years from now they are standing here and they are telling the stories of what great things God has done and that this place will be overflowing. And yes, 50 plus more churches will be planted and we are approaching almost 1,000 pastors and missionaries that have come in the past 50 years. There has been over 40 million dollars for world missions given and look at all the creative ministries that have come out of this place through God's people that have just been excited about the Gospel in Jesus Christ. Look at all of the things that God has done and what yet will He do? Revitalizing dying churches is something yet as well and all of those things are yet before us so let's be devoted to prayer and the Word and see what great things are yet down stream in the river of God. To God be the glory, great things He has done. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together at this time and thank You for the celebrations of this weekend. We are looking forward to this evening and the testimonies of Your people of what You have done in them and through them and their thanksgiving to you. God, we look forward also to the next 50 years. Now, Father, I have to confess something and that is I would really rather not be here for 50 years so please come quickly Lord Jesus but till the work is done we will walk by faith and that means we'll bend our knees in prayer that means we'll open our mouth to the Word and that means in prayer and with the Word our feet will run to do what You have called us to do in worship, in evangelism, in loving one another and in learning so that we can give it away to others as well. God thank You for You are glorious and great. We do not look to the future with dismay for the Lord is our strength. We give You praise to Him who has driven out our enemies and now calls us to the world to bring those who are at enmity to

God, to Him through Jesus Christ and watch them become the children of God. We give
You praise in Jesus Name, to God be the glory forever and ever, Amen.