

Drawing The Line

Inheritance: Unprecedented Opportunity

The Purpose of This Series: God wants us working together in His Kingdom, not just independently simultaneously. These four messages are to assist us in aligning us with God's purpose for our lives in His service as well as the mission of our church. Everyone has a purpose and DNA in Christ. To often we are out to reach a “destiny” when God has a “design” that He has for us in relationship with others.

The Purpose of This Message: We want to give ourselves to a worthy cause. But the bombardment of a self-serving society tempts and confuses us, “indulge yourself, fulfill your desires, satisfy your appetites, just pursue pleasure because it's all about you. One thing is for sure, if we leave the comfort and security of a safe place, servanthood will make life more fulfilling, more daring, growth will expand and you will find, IT IS WORTH IT!

*“LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The **boundary lines** have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.”*
Psalm 16:5-6

- **Boundaries- *chebel* (Hb.) 2256**

1) a cord, rope, territory, band, company... “a measured field, give to someone by lot, (Joshua 17:14; 19:9, and thus an 'inheritance, portion, possession.' “a portion has been allotted to me in a pleasant region.”

Have you ever crossed the line? You know, something you said or did? Have you ever done something inappropriate and as soon as you did it you realized it? Have you ever crossed your own moral code? Have you ever crossed someone else's lines?

When David looks at God, He has learned that God presents lines that are safe, protective and liberating at the same time. The boundary lines God gives us are not without challenge.

God's Mandate To Israel

“On the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho the LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you cross the Jordan into Canaan...’”
Numbers 33:50-51

*“...**drive out** all the inhabitants of the land before you. **Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess.**”*
Numbers 33:52-53

Four Principles Of Pleasant Places

1. Pleasant Places Are Inhabited With **Unpleasant** People

Our Response: Drive Them Out!

Pleasant places are just bad places without God!

2. **Pleasant Places Are Filled With Things That Do Not Worship God!**

America is filled with things that often take away the worship from the living God.

Our Response: Destroy

3. **Pleasant Places Are Known For It's High Places**

If we are experiencing the amazement of our own high places, I don't know what would be. From Government to sports, the high places are houses of worship.

Our Response: Demolish

Is this beginning to sound familiar?

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds."

II Corinthians 10:3-4

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

II Corinthians 10:5

4. **Pleasant Places Are Often Dependant Of It's Tenants To Be Fruitful**

"Take possession of the land and settle in it..."

We have to take action, we have to transition from one location to the next. You cannot conquer and lease the land, you must conquer and take possession of the land...you have got to settle there!

Our Response: Possess

*"LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The **boundary lines** have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance."*

Psalm 16:5-6

Boundaries

There are many ideas of what boundaries are. One is that it's a perimeter, in other words, a limitation. And, in some instances, it is. The Hebrew word, "*chebel*" has many meanings from a cord to a measured field, it is a portion of land, designated by it's boundaries. Boundaries can also be a beginning and an end. It is a set place for designation and process. It is the point in which all other things will respond to or be affected by. (A cone in the road, designates a warning and caution.

Joshua

As you read the first **twelve chapters** of Joshua you will learn that it covers **seven years** of Israel's movement into the promised land. It focuses on military **battles, strategy, and conquest**. But that's just to get into position to take their respective land. There were borders everywhere.

Joshua 1: Reminded the Israelites what they were involved in.

Joshua 2: They sent spies that were almost captured but escaped with the help of Rehab.

Joshua 3: They marched toward Jordan at flood stage to get to the first walled city of Jericho.

Joshua 4: They commemorated the parting of the Jordan and entering of the promised land.

*"Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to **take up a stone** on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?'*

Joshua 4:5-6

There are things that remind us of the God. They are places that reminds us of God's goodness and power. Often these get moved and eventually forgotten and we forget what God has done and what God can do. We need places in our lives that keep us focused in the right direction.

"...tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."

Joshua 4:7

"That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they revered him all the days of his life, just as they had revered Moses."

Joshua 4:14

You don't get the respect of Moses without the faith of Moses! This was a challenging time, but there was only one thing to do...OBEY!

Joshua 5: Fear filled the enemy land, all the males were circumcised and an angel appears and tells **Joshua to take off his sandals.**

Joshua 6: The walls of Jericho fell.

Joshua 7: Achan's sin- 36 men die and Israel's hearts turned like water,

"...all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since."

Joshua 7:25b-26

Joshua 8: Israel attacks and defeats Ai and kills 12,000. He kills the king (verse 28) and throws it down at the entrance of the city gate. **And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day. Then builds and altar and reads all of Deuteronomy to everyone.**

Joshua 9: Gibeonite Deception

Joshua 10: Joshua speaks to the **Sun and Moon to stand still** until the battle is finished with the **five kings**. At their death a huge amount of stones were placed over the cave where they defeated them.

A Pile Of Rock

Are you beginning to see a patten here? Everywhere they went they left a simple pile of rocks, but those rocks symbolized something. They set a perimeter, not necessarily around an particular community or plot of land, bur around an idea! When the the children would ask,

“Why is that pile of rock there?” Their mom's and dad's would tell them that it was the hand of God. When they would see the pile of rocks near Ai, their Mom's and Dad's would say, “That's a reminder not to lie, steal and take what the Lord says isn't yours.” When the pile of rock stands near where a cave opening once was, parents would tell their children, “God defeated five kings there and those rocks remind us of the mighty deliverance of God's love for His people.

This is a key and important point. LISTEN! The church is nothing but a pile of rock! Too many people have attempted to make it more than that, but let me tell you that it is nothing less than that! Again, gain the understanding of what I am trying to say. Many people say a church building is nothing because the church is the people, but I have to say, “You Are Wrong!” The church building is NOTHING BUT A PILE OF ROCKS, BUT IT IS NOTHING LESS THAN A PILE OF ROCKS! It stands as a representation of what my God has done in my life, killed the evil kings of my life, parted the waters before me, destroyed a hidden enemy and ruined the whole city that was once an interest to me. I have been delivered, yes by God, but the pile of rock, the church, not in ruins but open celebration, reigning, living rocks. Yes it is just a building, but it is a pile of rocks, a reminder of what my God has done. Don't dare make the church less than a pile of rocks!

The Cost Of “Free”

Someone once said, “There ain't no free lunches!” And there ain't not free, free! All freedom comes with a price. The promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey, the other side, what is ours, given to us by God must be fought for. Isn't it ours? Yes, but God relies on us to activate our faith for it...nothing is a “gimmie” in the kingdom.

Joshua 11-12: Joshua fought all the Kings and kingdoms and victories

“For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.”

Joshua 11:20

Change

Now comes Joshua **Chapters 13-24**, in contrast, focus **not on military battles** but on the **military administration**, Joshua has had to **shift roles** from **being the commander-in-chief** of the united armies to **being the military overseer** of the settlement process, which will end up taking **thirteen years**. But they had a problem. Coming out of a forty year Theocratic/Socialistic government, where God supplied all their needs, now God demanded that they fight for their land...what was promised to them. They were not used to that, free sounds... “free!” God was moving in a new dimension of their lives, teaching them to draw new lines in their life. Teaching them that things change, and the change here is to let God support them as they activate their faith against their enemies! Go, Fight, Win!

Joshua 15-16: The promise land was allocated, divided up by casting lots for the various tribes of Israel, particularly to Judah and to Ephraim. A verse in each of these two chapters helps us understand that everything is not going well with the conquest of the land by the specified tribes. Look at their response in the “Great Promised Land Dream.”

Judah

“Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah.”

Joshua 15:63

Judah could not get rid of the Jebusites, they were living in Jerusalem.

Ephraim

“They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labor.”

Joshua 16:10

Ephraim could not dislodge the Canaanites who were living in Gezer. Instead of obeying God in totally destroying the nations that inhabited the land, Ephraim made the Canaanites serve them in slavery, an area of disobedience on the part of Ephraim.

God never asks us to get close, He asks for total obedience. As one writer has put it this way:

“Partial obedience to God is disobedience to God.”

Manasseh (Joshua 17)

A portion of Manasseh had chosen to live on the west side of the Jordan River, the already conquered area.

“Yet the Manassites were not able to occupy these towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region. However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labor but did not drive them out completely.”

Joshua 17:12-13

After they received their allotment, the tribal leaders went to Joshua and complain that they needed more land because they were so numerous, (verse 14). Listen, at that time, land was not limited, it was there for the taking, it would not be a “give-me,” but it would be a battle, a war! After hearing their complaint, Joshua agrees with them and gives them the surrounding forested hillsides to clear and conquer the cities there.

“If you are so numerous,” Joshua answered, “and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites.”

Joshua 17:15

“The people of Joseph replied, ‘The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have iron chariots, both those in Beth Shan and its settlements and those in the Valley of Jezreel.’”

Joshua 17:16

There was a portion of land that was theirs, but it was theirs to take. Somehow they believed “iron chariots” was the “get-out-of-jail-free” card. You know, that land is full of liberals...or, that land is full of a spirit of pride and lust! Or, we could say, “That has such a political spirit on it.” See, we do the same thing, we just call it different things. It has two wheels and parades around as if it is something, so what do we do? We ask for other land. We look at world missions...not that that is not important, it just seems more possible to go half around the world than reaching half way down the block.

Scotland Yard

Many years ago I went to Africa and that was when you had to take pictures that had to be developed. So, to save on my pictures, I took all of them my last week while I was there. On my way back, I had a lay-over in London, England. I took the remaining three pictures that was left on my film and switched out to the next film as I was riding a tour bus around town. When the tour was over I jumped off the bus and was on my way only to realize that my film was still on the bus. It had already taken off down the road and turned.

I asked someone at the bus stand who I should talk to about the film. They told me that I should go to Scotland Yard, they deal with things of that nature. They pointed me in the direction that I was to go and about thirty minutes later I walk in to what would be the police station here in America. It never dawned on me the whole time I was walking that I was going to what would be similar to the New York police station to solve my lost film dilemma. I know the guys were biting their lips trying not to laugh but as soon as the words came out of my mouth the full revelation of the moment came to my mind. I had been had! Scotland Yard! "Can you help me get my film off the bus?" My ears were just a couple of degrees from being on fire, I was so embarrassed. It only took three or four blocks to drown out the laughing I heard from the Scotland Yard head quarters.

Joshua didn't care if the Canaanites had iron chariots, the land was there, did they want it or not? Here's how Joshua said it to Ephraim and Manasseh,

"You are numerous and very powerful. You will have not only one allotment but the forested hill country as well. Clear it, and its farthest limits will be yours; though the Canaanites have iron chariots and though they are strong, you can drive them out."

Joshua 17:17b-18

This reminds me of a saying that has become a favorite to me,

"Never underestimate my ability to believe you can get the job done!"

Basically, that's what Joshua was telling them, "You are numerous, you are powerful, you only have a few choices, clear it and it is UNLIMITED to what will be yours! Yes the Canaanites have iron chariots, and it will not be a knock over, but you can do this!

Manasseh was saying that it would be too much work as the cities were well fortified. The task was too hard. Their attitude was "We can't do it!" And so, they did not proceed into the hill country even after Joshua reassured them that God would enable them to drive out the enemy. This is often the statement of those who has been given everything,

"I can't do it. We can't do it. It is too hard. We have not done it before."

OC- We talked about the Outreach Center for three years, believing that we needed to get that off the ground. But we were in a building campaign. But there was so much to do. But this had not been done before. How many times do we begin a sentence in response to ministry opportunities with the word BUT? These are the very same words which the leaders of Manasseh used with Joshua. Why are we always looking for the easy road? Why do we always want everything to be quick and simple? If anything of significance is to be accomplished for God, then it will take lots of work.

Joshua encouraged Manasseh and God encourages us. With His help and His promises, we

can press forward to seize each opportunity for Him.

Draw The Line

As sad story about Joshua 13 to the end of the book, you never read about another pile of rock in the history of entering the promised land. You never see them having those moments of telling their children. You see some victories, but mostly it is a slow death. Free is not free, it's just for the taking, not asking!

God has given us boundaries in pleasant places but we must determine the starting line. Will it be here? Will it be now? What if you drew a line in the sand and say, "Today is the day!" I want rock piles in my past. I want stories to tell. I know I must engage for that to happen. I know that I can't do this without the help of God. I know that the enemy must be dislodged in the territory that God has already said is mine!

What am I going to do? LIVE! For the next two weeks I am challenging everyone in our church to believe that we will not die. Simply...live. Stop being afraid that something terrible will end your life, your job, your dreams, your future. That the economy, political system, global warning or some other substitute for life detraction will be there two weeks from now so you can lay it down for right now.

Second, ENGAGE! Jump in the middle of this and begin to do war! Fight for your family, your neighborhood, the employees at work, the city! Fight, pray in the Spirit, claim what is yours and do war!!!

Third, do it EVERYDAY for two weeks. Understand that God wants you to know what He is up to and He wants to build an alliance with you. Speak His kingdom over your city. Pray over every church in your city that grace would be released. If the move of God hits every church in our city it is a win/win! Too many people pray for the destruction of ungodly places, pray that those pile of rocks around your city will live again. LIVE! ENGAGE! EVERYDAY!