

Jos216 – We Need a Battle Plan – Joshua 13:1-6

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Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “We Need a Battle Plan.” Turn in your Bibles to Joshua Chapter 13.

We need a battle plan. In Joshua Chapter 11 (last message) our key verse was Joshua 11:23.

Joshua 11:23 (NLT)

23 So Joshua took control of (conquered) the entire land, just as the Lord had instructed Moses. He gave it to the people of Israel as their special possession, dividing the land among the tribes . . .

Joshua conquered the entire Promised Land on behalf of the people of Israel. But each Tribe of Israel had to appropriate (take possession of) the land that was given to them.

In the exact same way, Jesus Christ has won every victory, over every enemy in your Promised Life, on your behalf. But we still must appropriate (take possession of) the life that Jesus Christ has given us. *Every* victory and *every* blessing in our new life in Christ comes from us “Taking Possession of” (appropriating) what Jesus Christ has already won on our behalf.

So today we are going to start talking about how to do that; how we can begin to “*Take Possession of The Promised Life.*”

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, in the end we need to know how. We need to know who. We need to know it’s all you and we need to know how. We need to know how to appropriate the victory that you’ve won on our behalf, in our place and for us, Lord. We need to know how to walk in the possession of the victorious Promised Life. We need to know how to appropriate these victories to make them real in our lives, that we would be transformed, that we would be empowered to change and that we would be a living witness – a testimony – to your glory. And so, show us today some of the how. Inspire us, Lord, to get a battle plan and enact it. We pray it for your glory and in your name, Jesus, amen.*

Joshua 13:1 begins part two of the Book of Joshua. The remainder of the book is about the people of God either possessing or failing to possess the land (and life) Joshua has won on their behalf. So we are going to move into a very practical part two in our lessons in Joshua.

Part one was us learning about the Promised Life that Jesus won on our behalf and has freely given to us.

Part two is about us learning how to take possession of that Promised Life.

We ended with Joshua 13:1 in our last message and that's where we need to begin today.

We're going to read this verse out of the ESV (for a couple of key words.)

Joshua 13:1 (ESV)

1 Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the Lord said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess.

The NLT says, "***very much land to be conquered***" but it is not a good word choice because all the land had already been conquered – all that was left was to possess it.

So apparently Joshua was ***old and advanced in years***. He had conquered the entire Promised Land, victorious over every area of the Promised Life but ***there remained yet very much land to possess***. Joshua's victory was complete, but the possessing of that victory had just begun.

And so speaking of the historical enemies and illustrating the enemies that have already been conquered yet still remain inside our Promised Life verses 2-6 list them and their territories. There is a huge object lesson here, so watch for it.

From the NLT.

Joshua 13:2–6 (NLT)

2 This is the territory that remains (to be possessed): all the regions of the Philistines and the Geshurites,

3 and the larger territory of the Canaanites, extending from the stream of Shihor on the border of Egypt (very south), northward to the boundary of Ekron. It includes the territory of the five Philistine rulers of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron . . .

This enemy territory of the Philistines was on the coast from Egypt to up even with Jerusalem. This area became known as Philistia because Israel NEVER drove the Philistines out of it.

Over time the word **Philistia** became **Palestina** and over time **Palestina** became **Palestine**. The Philistines in the area described here were never driven out of the land and Israel never took possession of this land. And today, there are descendants of the

Philistines in this exact area *still terrorizing Israel* not with slings and spears anymore, but with rockets and bombs.

The lesson should be pretty clear. If you willingly leave an enemy inside *your* Promised Life, that enemy will always be terrorizing you with rockets. Ephesians 6:16 calls them “*fiery darts*” (missiles).

Moving on... continuing with the enemies that were still in the Promised Land.

Joshua 13:3(b)-6(a) (NLT)

3 . . . The land of the Avvites 4 in the south also remains to be [possessed] (NLT – conquered). In the north, the following area has not yet been [possessed]: all the land of the Canaanites, including Mearah (which belongs to the Sidonians), stretching northward to Aphek on the border of the Amorites;

5 the land of the Gebalites and all of the Lebanon mountain area to the east, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath;

6 and all the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, including all the land of the Sidonians . . .

WHAT are all these names? These are the enemies that were *conquered by Joshua* but still remained in the Promised Land and they represent the different enemies in our lives that have been *conquered by Jesus Christ* but still remain in our Promised Life. Would you take just a second and rename a few of these enemies? Rename them to the names of the enemies that are still holding areas of your Promised Life.

And then please listen to what the Lord says to the Israelites and to you and I today.

Joshua 13:6(b) (NLT)

6 . . . “I myself (the Lord says to Joshua) will drive these people out of the land ahead of the Israelites. So be sure to give this land to Israel as a special possession, just as I have commanded you.

The Lord says make sure my people know that I have given them victory over the enemy that still occupies this area of their life and I will drive out the enemies before them. But “*to drive out before them*” is a reference to *battle*. Meaning the Israelites will charge these enemies in battle, then God will go before them and drive the enemy out.

But if they are sitting on the couch holding hands with the enemy the Lord will not go before them and he will not drive that enemy out – because instead of *battling* the enemy they will have *befriended* the enemy.

For twelve chapters Joshua has conquered every enemy in the Promised Land on behalf of the Israelites and now he's going to give all of that victory as an inheritance to them. But we know by the chapter's that follow that Israel never possesses anywhere near all of the land that was conquered on their behalf by Joshua. Israel was given all of the Promised Land but they chose to possess only a small part of it.

And in varying degrees that is the same for every one of us today. The truth is we will *never* possess all that we've been given in Christ until we are glorified with him and in his presence.

And so no matter where we are at with Christ today we can always say, ***“Lord please lead me into more of the Promised Life with you” “Show Me – the next area – where there is MORE of the Promised Land YET to be possessed.”***

God has promised to never leave you nor forsake you. He's promised that nothing can ever separate you from his love. He's promised to finish the good work that he started in you. So be encouraged and keep moving forward, always possessing more and more of the Promised Life that Christ has won for you.

HOW? You know... HOW... How do I possess more of the Promised Life Jesus Christ has won for me?

The rest of the Book of Joshua is about possessing more of the Promised Life and so we going to start talking about how to do just that.

Now, I know you'd like to jump right in on some specific area in your Promised Life that you really need to possess the victory in. There's some struggle with your flesh, some sin, some battle with the enemy. But you *cannot jump in there*, right there. You cannot start there.

You have to start with the pre-requisite. You have to start with the *highest priority possession* in all the Promised Life because if you put some other area at a higher priority than *this area* then you will never experience victory in *any area*.

The number one area of our lives where we must possess “more of the Promised Life” is *knowing Jesus Christ*. Not knowing *about* him.” We must know him personally. We must have a personal, experiential, relational, ever-increasing knowledge of Jesus Christ as our Lord.

The truth is, if we would seek to possess more and more of this ever-increasing relationship with Jesus – *if this were truly our highest priority possession* – then

everything else would come to us (almost automatically) within (and through) that ever-increasing relationship with Christ.

Turn over to Philippians 3:8-11.

Philippians 3:8–11 (NLT)

8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9 and become one with him . . .

10 I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death,

11 so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!

This ever-increasing relationship with Jesus Christ must always be the highest priority in the Promised Life. Don't ever try to make any area of the Promised Life a higher priority than this, because your ever-increasing relationship with Jesus Christ is the source of everything else in the Promised Life.

The possession of every victory you need comes through your personal, daily, ever-increasing relationship with Jesus.

I could talk about this highest priority need forever, but let me suggest one series from Word By Mail. The series is called “**Abide.**” You can get this from Word By Mail's phone app (search Word By Mail in the app store), from the website www.wordbymail.com, or you can ask Pam after service in the back.

So once you truly understand that top priority and if you truly desire to run the enemy out of your Promised Life, and if you will truly have the courage to actually go to battle against these enemies – *the Lord will go before you and he will drive out every single enemy that stands between you and the Promised Life Jesus Christ died to give you.*

And so what you need now is a battle plan. If you truly understand the highest priority of an ever-increasing relationship with Jesus and if you truly have the desire and the courage to go to battle against your enemies in the Promised Life, then what you need is a battle plan.

We have always used the letters S.H.O. to share a three step battle plan. In the car world S.H.O. means “Super High Output.” In our world it means “Spiritual High Output.” And if you will fully embrace this three step battle plan I promise you that you will be well on your way to possessing more of the Promised Life.

Here's the first step. (The “S”). Turn over to Mark Chapter 8.

Mark 8:34–35 – Jesus speaking (NLT)

34 Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples (to those who were listening – but not yet following), **he (Jesus) said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways (repentance), take up your cross (die to the flesh), and follow me (obey me).**

35 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.

These are the words of *complete surrender* to Jesus Christ as true Lord of your life and that is the first step in the battle plan – SURRENDER. (Absolute and complete surrender.)

If you desire to possess true victory in your Promised Life in Christ then you must be fully yielded in complete, unconditional surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Jesus is truly on the throne of your life and you are truly surrendered to him as your Lord.

Again, I could talk all day on each of these three steps, but I can only give you a summary of the plan today. We do also have an eight part teaching series on surrendering your life to Jesus Christ. It’s called “**Give up**” and this concept is critically important in each of our lives.

The first step of the battle plan is COMPLETE SURRENDER.

The second step (the “H”) is connected to the first step and continues our ability to truly possess the Promised Life.

(Back to ESV) - Jeremiah 18:3–6 (ESV)

3 So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel.

4 And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled (marred) in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

5 Then the word of the Lord came to me:

6 “O house of Israel (insert your name here), can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand . . .

Let me ask you, in your relationship with the Lord are you happy to be the clay or are you trying to be the Potter. Do you trust the Lord enough to allow him to do with your life *as it seems good to him to do* – no matter what?

If God has “re-worked” your life *as it seemed good to Him to do* are you shaking your “little clay finger” at the Potter and telling him how he should’ve worked things out for you?

Step two comes when we stop demanding our own way and our own outcomes to life and we become glad that we are the clay and God is the Potter and we trust him to re-work us into the vessel that he chooses.

The second step in the battle plan is HUMILITY. Complete, Pride-broken humility. Not demanding your way but being grateful for God's way.

Again, SURRENDER and HUMILITY are *closely connected*, and we have two messages in the “**Give Up**” series on humility – “Brokenness” and “The Blessing of Brokenness.”

And finally it is the first two steps in the battle plan that prepare you for the FINAL step (The “O”) which brings you to possessing the victory you need.

We have SURRENDER. We have HUMILITY. And now turn back to Deuteronomy 26.

Moses is reviewing what God requires of Israel *before they can take possession of the Promised Land.*

Deuteronomy 26:16–18 (NLT)

16 “Today the Lord your God has commanded you to obey all these decrees and regulations. So be careful to obey them wholeheartedly.

17 You have declared today that the Lord is your God. And you have promised to walk in his ways, and to obey his decrees, commands, and regulations, and to do everything he tells you.

18 The Lord has declared today that you are his people, his own special treasure, just as he promised, and that you must obey all his commands.

***19 And if you do, he will set you high above all the other nations he has made . . .* (you will be victorious over your enemies)**

The third step is OBEDIENCE. *Courageous obedience.*

Some of the literal translations say here “*To do*” or “*Be careful to do*” because in the end there must be action. Courageous action in obedience to God.

The good news is God has not called us to OBEY (take action) in our own strength. But the same power that rose Jesus from the dead – *lives in us*. Yours is the choice – his is the power. You walk in right relationship with the Lord and make the choice to obey him and he will provide the supernatural power to *drive out* any enemy still holding ground in your Promised Life.

If you want to possess the victory that Christ has won over the enemies that remain in *your* Promised Life – here is a life changing battle plan.

Complete Surrender
Pride-broken Humility
Courageous Obedience.

S.H.O. – SURRENDER, HUMILITY, OBEDIENCE

SURRENDER unconditionally to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

HUMBLE yourself – being glad to be the clay instead of trying to be the Potter

Courageously OBEY God

Do these things and you will be well on your way to possessing more and more of the Promised Life. You will know Christ better and you will gain victory over your enemies.

Let's Pray. Lord Jesus, there's no better life to live. To walk with you in the Promised Life. To know you, to sense your presence, to be led by you. To hear your voice and to respond, and to know you better and better – and rout another enemy and another enemy and take more of the life and more of the life that you've given us. Until one day Lord, we finish the race and we find ourselves in your presence. Lord, we've had two dear saints show up in your presence this week. Pastor John Rutherford who ministered here for years. And Bob Sheldon, our good friend. Both took their last breath here and their first breath there. We pray for our friend Stephanie who is suddenly fighting to stay here and not go there. We know there is a moment when we will show up on your side and we will have won the race. But Lord, while we're here may we possess more and more of the Promised Life, knowing you better and gaining more and more victory over the enemies that still have strongholds in our life. Empower us by your Spirit Lord, for your glory, in your name, Jesus, amen.