

Foothold

Joshua 1:3-9 HCSB I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses. (4) Your territory will be from the wilderness and Lebanon to the great Euphrates River--all the land of the Hittites--and west to the Mediterranean Sea. (5) No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or forsake you. (6) "Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance. (7) Above all, be strong and very courageous to carefully observe the whole instruction My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. (8) This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to recite it day and night, so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. (9) Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

There have been many methods by which kings have granted land. One story has a man granted all the land he can ride around while the king sleeps through the night. Another man got as much as a bushel of barley could sow. Needless to say he spaced that seed out as much as possible! Even the American Indians were known to deed a man as much land as he could walk around in a set amount of time.

It is something of this same manner that God used to originally grant Abraham the land of Canaan and now the same method is used for Moses and by extension Joshua. They had a large promise but could only make good on it by their own exertions. This can be applied to us as well.

1. The Word of God.

We only possess as much of the Bible as we read, study, meditate on, and put into practice. While it may be a shock to some, a correct understanding of God's Truth does not come from reading more of the Bible. Outside of blatant disregard for the authority of God's Word, most erroneous deductions about the key doctrines of Christianity are rooted in hurried, thoughtless skimming of the sacred pages of Scripture. If some students of God's Word would have read their science, history, math, and English books as mindlessly as they presently read their Bibles, they would have never graduated from high school.

Bible reading, of course, is essential; for, you cannot understand a book you never read. However, a united interpretation of Truth will not come from Bible reading alone.

If less time were spent in Bible reading and more time were spent in Bible study, students of Scripture around the world would begin arguing less and agreeing more.

Bible study, in conjunction with Bible reading, has been most clearly prescribed by God in:

- **2 Timothy 2:15 HCSB** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.

The command to "correctly teach the Word of truth" could be considered as a key to understanding what God wants the world to know through His Word. While the Bible is more than a textbook, it should be given at least the same intellectual attention as a textbook, if not more.

In the non-religious world, people who have acquainted themselves with the facts through study usually agree on the major issues of their field. In the Christian realm, people who acquaint themselves with the facts through study will usually agree on the major issues.

While the Culturally Christian world seems to understand the importance of Bible reading, it seems as if Bible study still lingers in the shadows. The solution to the problem is not to

refrain from Bible reading. A solution will only be reached when Bible study is used to supplement Bible reading because Bible study is the process by which the inspired Words on the page shape the mind which then will shape the heart.

2. Grace.

Grace is a great gift but only so much as we appropriate through humble, faithful obedience actually applies.

- **James 4:6-8 HCSB** But He gives greater grace. Therefore He says: **God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.** (7) Therefore, submit to God. But resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, double-minded people!
- **1 Peter 5:5-7 HCSB** Likewise, you younger men, be subject to the elders. And all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because **God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.** (6) Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in due time, (7) casting all your care upon Him, because He cares about you.

3. Salvation.

It is a free gift to all mankind but

- a. "few find the way" (Matthew 7:13-14)
- b. "According to your faith be it unto you." (Matthew 9:29)
- c. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12-13)

What a vast unclaimed, untrodden land of promise Salvation is!

4. Spiritual capacity.

- **Matthew 25:14-30 HCSB** "For it is just like a man going on a journey. He called his own slaves and turned over his possessions to them. (15) To one he gave five talents; to another, two; and to another, one--to each according to his own ability. Then he went on a journey. Immediately (16) the man who had received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more. (17) In the same way the man with two earned two more. (18) But the man who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. (19) "After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. (20) The man who had received five talents approached, presented five more talents, and said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. Look, I've earned five more talents.' (21) "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy!' (22) "Then the man with two talents also approached. He said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. Look, I've earned two more talents.' (23) "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy!' (24) "Then the man who had received one talent also approached and said, 'Master, I know you. You're a difficult man, reaping where you haven't sown and gathering where you haven't scattered seed. (25) So I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have what is yours.' (26) "But his master replied to him, 'You evil, lazy slave! If you knew that I reap where I haven't sown and gather where I haven't scattered, (27) then you should have deposited my money with the bankers. And when I returned I would have received my money back with interest. (28) ""So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has 10 talents. (29) For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. (30) And throw this

good-for-nothing slave into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Messiah has given spiritual and ministry gifts to His people but unless they put them to use and multiply them (i.e. the parable of talents) He might as well have been the most miserly of monarchs!

Conclusion¹



In every case, our God has given us a large promise but we can only make good on it by our own exertions. It's as though He has granted us a foothold, a beach head if you will, on our given territory. He miraculously parts the water of the river Jordan so we can gain access, and places a terror of us in the hearts of our enemies, but we are still expected to take the cities and beat the giants.

This applies not only to our individual lives but to our corporate, ecclesiastical, church life. Hashem granted us this property about five years ago. At that time, some said it was foolish to

purchase such a large building, that we would likely never need so much space. Some argued against taking such a huge risk, taking on a \$250,000 debt. Yet, here we are today, sitting on a piece of property that will likely be assessed at \$1,000,000 with less than \$100,000 left on the bill.

That's Jordan-crossing faith my friends. Why did we take that risk 5 years ago? We took that risk because enough of us were convinced that our God expects us to actually do something about building and expanding His kingdom. A core group of this church determined in its heart that being content with reaching 100 people while 18,000 are dying and going to hell right outside our doors was simply not an option.

Now I'm asking you. God has given us this foothold in Mercer county. What are we going to do with it? I have been your pastor for ten years. Together we have gone from a church whose auditorium was as small as my adult Sunday School class is now, to where we are now. I have invested myself – poured myself into you because God gave me a foothold in your lives and I have determined to expand His kingdom in your hearts, minds, and families. I am telling you, in this church, in God's kingdom, COMPLACENCY IS NOT AN OPTION.

¹ Normandy Beachhead, France 1944