

Go in and possess the land

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I'd like to turn to some Old Testament scriptures this evening. I will be reading quite a number of scriptures. I don't apologize ever for doing that, and particularly in the Old Testament for a number of reasons, not least that I think the day is gone when you can refer to a couple of verses and expect that everybody will know the context. My experience is we don't know our New Testaments very well, and I don't think we know our Old Testaments even as well as we know the New Testament. So, mainly in the Pentateuch, beginning firstly in the book of Numbers, chapter 27.

Numbers 27.

Numbers, chapter 27, verse 1.

[00:01:01] Numbers 27, verse 1.

Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepha, the son of Gilead, the son of Mekah, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. And these are the names of his daughters, Malah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Melchah, and Terzah. And they stood before Moses, and before Eliezer the priest, and before the princes, and all the congregation by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Our fathers died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah, but he died in his own sin, and had no sons.

Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father, [00:02:01] and Moses brought their cause before the Lord. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right. Thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren, and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. Now, further on in the book of Numbers, Numbers 32, verse 1.

Numbers 32, verse 1.

Now the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, had a very great multitude of cattle. And when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle, the children of Gad, and the children of Reuben, came and spake unto Moses, and to Eliezer the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimra, and

Heshbon, and Eliezer, and Shebom, and Nebo, and Beon, [00:03:07] even the country which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle. Wherefore said they, If we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan. And Moses said unto the children of Gad, and the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them? Verse 14, And behold, ye are risen up in your father's stead, an increase of sinful men to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel. For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness, and ye shall destroy all the people. [00:04:04] And then in the book of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy chapter 8, Deuteronomy 8. Deuteronomy 8, Deuteronomy 8, verse 1, Deuteronomy 8, verse 1, All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swear unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manner which thou knewest not, [00:05:02] neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God to walk in his ways and to fear him. For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks and waters, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of oil, olive, and honey, a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it, [00:06:03] a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten, and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. And then the book of Joshua, Joshua chapter 14.

Joshua 14 and verse 6.

Joshua 14 verse 6.

Joshua 14 verse 6.

Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh Barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to espy out the land, [00:07:04] and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless, my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness. And now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old, as yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me. As my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war, both to go out and to come in. [00:08:04] Now, therefore, give me this mountain

whereof the Lord spake in that day. For thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fenced. If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh, Hebron, for an inheritance. And lastly, the first chapter of Judges. Judges chapter one. Judges chapter one.

And verse nine. Judges one, verse nine.

And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley. And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron. [00:09:01] Now the name of Hebron before was Kirjathaba. And they slew Sheshai, and Ahimon, and Talmi. And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir. And the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepha. And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepha, and taketh it, to him will I give Aksa, my daughter, to wife. And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it, and he gave him Aksa, his daughter. And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field. And she lighted from off her ass, and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? And she said unto him, Give me a blessing, for thou hast given me the south land, give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs. Verse twenty-two.

[00:10:01] And the house of Joseph they also went up against Bethel. Verse twenty-seven.

Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants. Verse twenty-nine. Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites. Verse thirty. Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron. Verse thirty-one.

Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Akko. Verse thirty-three. Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh. Verse thirty-four.

And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain, for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley. I remember about twenty-five years ago when very often those brothers at whose feet we sat took up the Old Testament scriptures.

[00:11:09] We used to sit there saying to ourselves, I wonder what they're going to say from these scriptures. So I want to say very plainly what I want to speak about tonight.

It's found in verse one of Deuteronomy chapter eight.

These are the words, go in and possess the land.

I don't know whether you found this, but I found that increasingly we don't take up the Old Testament scriptures. Probably says something about the fact that we don't know the Old Testament scriptures very well. There's no doubt from the way that they're used in the New Testament that the Old Testament scriptures cast marvelous light on the truths of the New. And what I want to do tonight is I want to speak very plainly about what the land is and what possessing the land means. [00:12:07] There's a good New Testament scripture as a parallel for Deuteronomy eight, verse one. Go in and possess the land. Paul's exhortation to Timothy is, lay hold on eternal life.

That's what we're talking about. Lay hold on eternal life.

So what I want to speak about is what the land is, valuing the land, being committed to the land, taking up the land, possessing it.

And then perhaps, God willing, at the end to speak a little about despising the land and failing to take up the land.

Just one thing before I touch on the scriptures that we've read. Some years ago, this was told me by an old brother in Findotti.

[00:13:03] So we're talking around the 1880s and 1890s.

A Scot went to America and he did very well.

And he was very mindful of his relatives, particularly a sister of his whose husband had died, leaving her with a number of children. And as he began to prosper, he began to send money back. And the first time he sent the money back, he sent a check. He sent it in a letter. And in the letter he said, thank God for the check and make good use of it.

But she'd never seen a check before. And he said, she said, when he speaks about making good use of it, she said, it must be some kind of an adornment. So she put a pin and she stuck it on the wall. And about two months later, she got another letter.

[00:14:03] And he asked the question, why have you not made use of the check as I wanted you to? So she thought, well, it must be so valuable, I'd better frame it. So she got the check framed. And after the passage of another two months, another letter arrived advising her to go and ask somebody to do something with the check. So she went and he actually asked the vicar. And the vicar said, I'd better come along and see it. So when the vicar saw it, he said, that's not the thing to do with the check. Take it to the bank and then you'll see exactly what the check promises.

And she did. She got the benefit of what was sent. And that's the kind of thing that I want to talk about tonight. Getting the benefit of what God has given.

I was having lunch at a business where I was working about ten days ago. And I was sitting at a table and I had a Bible open. [00:15:04] And a woman in her forties went by. And she said, is that a Bible? I said, yes, it's a Bible. She said, well, that's lovely. She said, I'm a Christian. She said, I would love to talk to you for ten minutes. She said, we don't get many Christians in this business. So I said, that's lovely, sit down. And she turned out to be a Pentecostal. And her first question to me, she said, do you speak with tongues? I said, no, I don't speak with tongues. That isn't my gift. She said, oh, everybody speaks with tongues. I said, that cannot be. The Bible says, do all speak with tongues?

And in the setting, clearly they don't. She said, I get such a blessing when I speak with tongues. She said, have you got the second blessing? I said, I've got every blessing. She said, how do you mean? So I opened the Bible and we turned to Ephesians, chapter one, and we read verse three. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, [00:16:03] who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

She said, I've never seen that verse before. I said, well, there it is. God says, every spiritual blessing. Yes, I've got the second blessing, and the third blessing, and the fourth blessing. And what I said to

her, I said, do you know, I said, when did you trust the Lord? She said, and she gave me a date. I said, well, I trusted the Lord on the 13th of February, 1953. And on that day, I became a son.

I became a child in the family of God. I became a member of the one body. I became part of the assembly.

I got justification.

I got sanctification.

I got reconciliation.

I got acceptance in the beloved.

I said, and for the past 30 years, I've been learning about it, and I'm beginning to enjoy it a bit. And that's what I want to talk about tonight in the words of Deuteronomy, [00:17:03] chapter eight, verse one, go in and possess the land.

The truth of Scripture is not for sitting in meeting rooms and talking about. That's what, go out and we live our lives as if it didn't matter.

The truth of God is given us to enjoy and to live in the power of it and to live in the light of it. That's what the New Testament talks about in the Old Testament language, go in and possess the land.

Now, I've told you a little about what is the land. That's what I said the first thing I want to talk about. What is the land?

Do you know, I remember about 25 years ago, we were preaching in the big market in the open air, and before we started, we used to get great discussions. There were the Pentecostals used to come, and they asked us the same kind of questions, you know, do you speak with tongues? And we had the British Israel people, and we used to get a lot of disputes. And one day, I remember this, and it sticks with me, [00:18:02] Norman Anderson, dear brother who was a great help to many of us, was talking in a group, and somebody shouted to him, Norman, come over here. There's a man who believes that reconciliation and justification and sonship, they're all the same thing. Norman said, poor man, he doesn't know what he's missing. Now, you might hear words like this. We've had many words like this about. The thing I want to ask you tonight is, do you enjoy them? We talk about reconciliation, being brought right home to God.

This morning, there was a knock on our door, and I was in the kitchen, doing the potatoes, and my daughter came in, she said, Dad, there are some Jehovah's Witnesses at the door, I think you'd better go. Well, I don't know whether you heard recently, but quite a remarkable thing, one of the board members of the Jehovah's Witness movement got saved. He read John chapter 3, and as a good Jehovah's Witness, [00:19:02] being taught from childhood that there are only 144,000 born again, when he read the words, accept a man, be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

He said, I'll never see the kingdom of God if I don't get born again. And by the grace of God, he got saved. They kicked him out, of course, when he told them that he'd been born again. What he said was this, he said, He said, if a Jehovah's Witness comes to your door, don't start disputing with them

about the deity of the Lord Jesus. He said, speak to them about your own relationship with the Lord. Tell them that the forgiveness of sins is a present, enjoyed reality. Tell them that you know something about what it is to be a child of God. Tell them about the fact that the Lord walks with you day by day. And he said, if they're seekers at all, they'll listen to what you say. [00:20:01] Many of them are seeking for light from the word of God.

This is the matter that I want to talk about. It's enjoying all these things.

I went through, you know, with the Pentecostal lady. We looked at one or two scriptures which said very plainly that the moment that we believe, Ephesians 1 verse 14, God seals us with his Holy Spirit. Think of that where you're sitting on your seat. Indwelling you is the Holy Spirit of God of whom the Lord said he shall lead you into all truth.

I'm sure the Lord meant not just that we get truth in our minds. That's a very important thing. That's what Peter says. As newborn babes desire the pure milk of the word that ye might grow up into salvation. But it's not sufficient to get the word of God in your divine and renewed minds. You want it in your heart to enjoy. We don't just want to talk about matters like sonship. [00:21:03] We want to know what it is to walk through this world with the light of the Father's favour upon us enjoying exactly the same joys that the Lord Jesus enjoyed. That's what he said, wasn't it? The night of his betrayal he said, these things have I spoken unto you that my joy might be in you and that your joy might be full. Now I referred to Deuteronomy chapter 8 because when you read in verses 7, 8 and 9 a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees you can understand the plenty after the scarceness of the wilderness. Through the wilderness there was no vast range of food for them to eat water was often a problem. But not like that in the land. God says when they got into the land they would eat bread without scarceness. It's a vast range of favour that God speaks about [00:22:01] connected with the land of promise flowing with milk and honey. Now that was an earthly blessing. When you come into the New Testament it speaks about a vast range of spiritual blessings.

I have a colleague at work who is a believer and I enjoy many happy times with him. He's a Calvinist as they would speak. That means that he doesn't believe in the rapture the Lord coming for his church. He doesn't believe in a millennium. And very often I say to him tell me a little bit about these words accepted in the beloved. He said I can't say very much because I've never seen anything written about them. Now I don't think that when the scripture speaks about being accepted in the beloved it's just something that we take account of and say oh yes that's right that's acceptance. I believe it means that we should be here in this world [00:23:02] exactly as the Son of God was enjoying the Father's face shining upon us.

You wouldn't have any doubt would you about the measure of his acceptance. Well that verse Ephesians 1 verse 6 says the measure of Christ's acceptance is the measure of your acceptance. No fear in the presence of God. In fact it should just be like a child with a father. Now that's what I think the New Testament speaks of when the Old Testament describes it as the land. Go in and possess the land.

Now I see the time is fast moving away. I leave you at your leisure to enumerate what Ephesians 1 verse 3 speaks about when it says blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.

That in New Testament terms is the land. [00:24:03] The issue though is valuing it.

Do you value it?

That was why I read to you the words in Numbers 27.

The daughters of Zelophehad came and they said to Moses their father had died leaving them without any sons and there was no provision for women. They said give us a possession in the land.

I think it must have gladdened Moses' heart. Here was somebody who valued the God-given land.

Years ago a full-time brother speaking on this he said what do you think Moses did? Did he get on the phone to brother so-and-so? He didn't. He took it to God.

And God said let's read the words because they're grand words to read. Verse 7 of Deuteronomy 27 [00:25:01] The daughters of Zelophehad. These are the words of God himself. The daughters of Zelophehad speak right. Thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren. They valued the God-given land.

It's a very challenging thing. Do you value heavenly things?

I've come to the conclusion that this matter of valuing heavenly things is absolutely fundamental.

Think of these words.

Philippians chapter 3 Paul says and he was a man who had everything that would distinguish him in this world. He says I count them but don't that I might gain Christ. You say that's a man who valued heavenly things.

Very often listen to my colleagues. As the world speaks there are fairly decent range of people. [00:26:03] They value vastly different things. One man is a great stock market man. He's done very well financially. He can tell you what stocks to get rid of before they begin to drop. Another man is a very keen yachtsman. All his money and his energies are directed toward the maintenance of his yacht. They value things.

The issue that is raised by the daughters of Zolothehad is do you value your God-given blessing?

It's fundamental.

They came to Moses and they said give us a possession.

Just like Paul they valued what belonged to Christ.

The issue is what value do you and I place upon heavenly favour?

It's fundamental really to taking it up this matter of valuing.

But it isn't sufficient just to value. That's why I read to you the words about Caleb [00:27:02] which again must have thrilled Joshua as much as the words of the daughters of Zolothehad thrilled Moses in his day.

Caleb was one of those who went with the twelve spies to spy out the land.

The Bible doesn't say but I have a conviction that the two men who brought back one bunch of grapes and mind you one bunch of grapes had to be born on a pole.

It must have been a large bunch of grapes. But I have a conviction that the two people who brought back the bunch of grapes were Joshua and Caleb.

But when he went in he said it's exactly as God has described it. He saw all the great people who were there but he said God's given us it. He'll give us the power to drive them out. And from that moment, the moment that he tasted Caleb was committed to the blessing of God.

[00:28:03] He was committed to the land.

I haven't sort of checked this out but in reading over the years I've noticed that Moses said of Caleb he wholly followed the Lord.

God says of it he wholly followed me.

Joshua says of him he wholly followed the Lord. And in the words that we read Caleb says of himself because I wholly followed the Lord. Caleb was totally committed to the God given blessing that lay before him. He tasted it.

He knew what it was.

And he was prepared for 40 years to go round in the wilderness as the children of Israel were disciplined by God until at last all those who'd sinned in the wilderness and refused the report of the two of the twelve spies had died.

[00:29:01] And here in the words that we read in Joshua 14 just on the borders of the land having got over Jordan Caleb comes to Joshua and he says give me this mountain.

He was a man who was totally committed to the promised land of blessing. It finds a parallel in the New Testament. I referred a few moments ago to some earlier words in Philippians 3. Paul says I count them but don't. He valued the blessing of God but he didn't only value it he was committed to it. If you move a little further down that chapter you find Paul saying words like these. He says forgetting the things that are behind and pressing forward to the things that are before I press toward the mark of the prize of the calling on high of God which is in Christ Jesus. Forgetting the things that are behind. I was talking to somebody a little while ago [00:30:03] who looked back on her Christian life and she said I've made many mistakes and bad thoughts about years gone by were ruining her enjoyment of the Lord. I said you know one of the things I've learned is I've made many mistakes but take them to the Lord confess them and forget them.

Don't let failures in the past rob you of the blessing at the present time. Paul says forgetting the things that are behind I press.

This one thing I do.

You say that man who uses words like that is totally committed to the favour of God.

So he was.

He wasn't taken up with many things he was committed to one thing valuing and committing are keys to taking up the promised favour of God. [00:31:02] That was why I read to you the early words in Judges chapter 1.

Judges chapter 1 verse 9 speaks of the children of Judah and when you read down through those words about taking Kirjath Arba you say to yourself those people were marked by the energy of faith.

The people who were going through the thing triumphant. Now we're talking about an actual physical battle there. They actually when you go through the book of Joshua you found how they erased town after town and they slaughtered men and women and eventually they took up the land that God had given them. Judah had an allotted part in the south of the land and they took it up.

They were prepared to do a bit of sacrificing for it. They possessed the land they made it their own. [00:32:02] Joshua chapter 1 says every piece that the sole of thy foot stands on shall be thine. The whole of the land the God given portion of the land was before them but it was only what they put the soles of their feet upon that they made their own. In the energy of faith They possessed it they drove out the enemies they were quite ruthless in the way that they worked. They drove out the enemies they possessed it and they enjoyed the favor of God. Now the New Testament speaks about that kind of energy of faith.

Ephesians chapter 6 you hear words like these Be strong in the Lord [00:33:01] and in the power of his might. We used to have a brother on Tyne's side who said to us on many occasions he used to say we're not a load of ragamuffins who are drifting to heaven we're many sons who are being brought to glory.

Hebrews chapter 2 and he used to say get right behind the captain of your salvation and you'll get there.

I am often puzzled by scriptures I look at scriptures and I say I don't understand them much more now than I did 30 years ago but a few months ago I think I got a little bit of light on a scripture which has been a puzzle to me. If you can explain it I'd appreciate your explanation afterwards. Colossians chapter 1 uses these words it says which is Christ in you the hope of glory.

I couldn't say very much about that for years [00:34:01] I can't say much more now but when I thought of it some weeks ago in the context of Joshua going into the land as a triumphant victor I said to myself yes, that's one thing that Christ in you the hope of glory must mean. Christ went in as an overcomer a conqueror I'm going in behind him I'm going in to possess the land that's the hallmark of Judah in Judges chapter 1 they dispossessed their enemies they possessed their allotted portion in the God given land so we're talking about valuing the blessing of God being committed to it and possessing it making it your own.

Now I know I've covered that very quickly and very simply but that I believe fundamentally is a challenge to us all you may not agree with this I long have come to the conclusion that our main problem [00:35:02] in meetings of brethren is we talk about things but we don't enjoy them to the

degree that we should do and we don't live in the power of them. It was my happy privilege right at the beginning of my Christian life to come into contact with a man in his eighties he used to say I haven't got any gift at all but in the village where he lived he radiated Christ he was known for his kindness he was known as someone who spread the gospel and despite the fact that he had many sorrows in his life he was known as a cheerful man I would think Tom Bright of Knighton in the Isle of Wight in the terms of Deuteronomy 8 verse 1 he went in and he possessed the land he made the blessing of God his own it wasn't just words to him it was something that he enjoyed within his heart of hearts [00:36:01] and he lived his life in the power of it.

Now not a long time but one or two sober looks at the other scriptures that we looked at despising the land it must have been an immense sorrow to Moses when two tribes came and said don't take us over Jordan give us a possession on this side of Jordan we've got plenty of cattle and this is fine land for cattle do you know when I was a young believer I went along with Tom Bright to see a believer who was dying it was in his 70's and all round his walls were beautiful pictures of yachts and diagrams of yachts drawn to scale he'd been a fine yachtsman he'd spent most of his life and most of his spare time [00:37:01] sailing round the Isle of Wight and elsewhere when we were talking to him he said I can't remember the names but he said that's I don't know Flying 15 or something it doesn't mean anything to me and he said he spoke about its masts he spoke about its sails he spoke about its capabilities and he went all round and then he said how I wasted my time you see when you read about the Reuben and Gad and in fact another half tribe the half tribe of Manasseh they despised the blessing of God typically they were what we would call today Christians but they despised the blessing of God God said Exodus 14 Exodus 15 rather the song of Moses and Miriam thou hast brought them out [00:38:01] thou shalt bring them in into the promised land of blessing two and a half tribes despised the land really they didn't value it it's got a New Testament counterpart you know Philippians chapter 3 yet again Paul says these words he says many walk of whom I've told you often and now tell you even weeping that they're enemies of the cross of Christ and right at the end of them he uses these words he says who mind earthly things heavenly favour and blessing is the thing that lies in front of us Paul says of some whose God is their belly who mind earthly things like the two and a half tribes Reuben Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh they despised the promised land of blessing that flowed with milk and honey [00:39:01] not taking up the land is the last thing that I want to speak about Judges chapter 1 I just read to you the words I haven't the new translation in front of me but I think if my memory serves me that where in Judges chapter 1 I kept reading the words neither did Manasseh drive them out neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites he uses the words neither did the tribe dispossess dispossessing one and possessing the other and to varying degrees that was true and I read to you on the last occasion where it said of Naphtali and Dan verse 34 and the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain and did not suffer them to come down out of the valley in New Testament terms [00:40:01] tolerating things in our lives which not just are a hindrance but which can bring absolute poverty as far as the things of God are concerned do you know about 15 years ago I was out working in business and I used to call in a certain office in a large organization for many many years and one day when I went in there was only one chap in the office I'd seen him and I'd said hello to him for about the previous seven years and he'd passed a few of us he used to preach in the open air outside this large engineering works and on this particular day I'd got my bible sticking out of my pocket and I said I wanted to see the manager and he said well he's occupied at the moment so I just sat passing the time of day with him and right in the middle of the conversation this man said to me I'm a Christian you know [00:41:01] I said well that's interesting when you say you're a Christian what do you mean he said well about 11 years ago I trusted the Lord as my saviour I said well why didn't you make yourself known earlier why didn't you come and join us outside the gate he said I've got into circumstances where I'm ashamed to say that I'm a Christian I

have to keep my light under a bushel I don't know what the circumstances were but when you come into the new testament the matter of people not dispossessing their enemies but tolerating them and then finding that they mar their enjoyment of the promised land of blessing that flowed with milk and honey it has plenty of parallels in the new testament think of the sad words that Paul uses almost his last words when he writes to Timothy and he writes as a man who's got heaven in front of him [00:42:01] I have fought the good fight I have kept the faith I have finished the course henceforth he says there's laid up for me a crown of righteousness and then he refers to one or two he says Luke alone is with me Trophimus have I left at my least a sick and then he says Demas has forsaken me having loved this present world and has departed unto Thessalonica that's somebody who in the terms of Judges chapter one has not dispossessed his enemies somebody who loved the world and certainly enjoying the promised blessing of God can't go hand in hand with loving the world tolerating in your life some cherished habit allowing things down here to get a greater place [00:43:01] in your heart and in your mind than they warrant and in a thousand and one ways the kind of thing that's repeated in the words that come time and time again in Judges chapter one neither did they dispossess neither did they dispossess can have a sadder parallel in the case of us if we allow things in our hearts and our lives which stop us in enjoying the favor of God now I see the time has just about gone it's a very solemn story really when you read these words in Judges chapter one I don't want to end on that kind of note buried away in a genealogy in the early verses of first Chronicles if my memory serves me are these words, two verses only it says Jabez [00:44:01] was more honored than his brethren Jabez cried to God and said O that thou wouldest enlarge my border and richly bless me and let thy hand be with me that it might not keep me from evil that it might not grieve me and the scripture says and the Lord granted that which he requested that's a positive note to finish on I understand that when he said O that thou wouldest enlarge my border he was saying because the word for border is the same for lot he was saying give me a larger share of the promised land of blessing, that's how you and I ought to be, you know at the moment that the Lord comes all the other things that might have deflected us down here in a moment will be laid aside and heavenly blessing [00:45:01] will be ours for eternity the challenge is the degree to which we enjoy it now, Old Testament language, go in and possess the land New Testament language is lay hold upon eternal life to which thou art called God doesn't want us down here as poverty stricken believers, but rather those who don't only know about the favour of God but those who enjoy it as we go through this world and those who live in its power and as much as we do that then, let me take you back to Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 10 then when thou hast eaten and art full then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee that's how God wants us to be [00:46:01] people who are full and satisfied and whose hearts are constantly responsive to God in the light of the things that he's given. Now I know that's a sort of faint outline that's the thing that was laid upon my heart enjoying the favour of God and if in some little measure it leads us to the kind of cry that arose from the lips of Jabez, oh that thou wouldest enlarge my border and richly bless me if that's the kind of cry that arises from our hearts we'll have exactly the same experience as Jabez God grants those kind of requests