

A Look Back and a Look Forward (25th Anniversary)

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Preacher: Ted Christman

[0:00] In Deuteronomy 7, we find God's instructions to the people of Israel as they enter the promised land that God had given to them.

! And they were to drive out the nations before them. We're going to read the first six verses to see the instructions God gave them as they entered that land. And then we'll turn over to Joshua chapter 1. So please stand together with me for this reading from God's Word from Deuteronomy 7. We'll read the first six verses.

The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. And then turn over to Joshua chapter 1, where we find the commission of Joshua to lead the people after Moses.

Joshua 1, we'll read the first nine verses. This is by way of background for the message this morning. Joshua 1, verses 1 through 9.

[1:59] After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, son of Nun, Moses' aid, Moses, my servant is dead.

Now then, you and all these people get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give them, to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon and from the great river, the Euphrates, all the Hittite country, to the great sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you. Do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

[2:59] Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified. Do not be discouraged. For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. May God bless the reading and the preaching of his holy word.

After we pray, we're pleased to welcome Pastor Ted Christman from Heritage Baptist Church in Owensboro, Kentucky, to preach the word to us.

He was my pastor for 11 years. He's been a part of significant events in the life of our church family. Here for the dedication of our first building. Here for my ordination.

And we're glad to welcome him here today as we commemorate 25 years of God's faithfulness to us. So thank you, brother, for coming. Well, I'm deeply, deeply grateful for the privilege of being with you on this particular day, this happy occasion in the life of Grace Fellowship Church.

[4:12] I do love you all. Our church loves you. And we thank the Lord for this bright light that he has put in this community. Your pastor, John, is dear to us.

He mentioned this morning in Sunday school how he came down at a strategic time in the history of our church and ministered to us, putting his life at risk on a few occasions.

Aaron is dear to us. We're so thankful that he came out of the loins of our church. His father had a tremendous influence on him, and his dad will be preaching for us tonight.

We love you, and we truly rejoice in this particular occasion that brings us together. I would like to ask you to turn in your Bibles, please, to Joshua chapter 23.

Pastor Aaron has read for us what God told the people of Israel they must do once they arrived at the promised land.

[5 : 29] And then we heard what God told Joshua he must do as the successor of Moses. And when we come to this 23rd chapter of Joshua, we have Joshua's final message, or next to his final message.

Chapter 24 is perhaps, in fact, his final message. He is an old man. No one knows for sure exactly how old he is, but he is soon to die, and we do know that he died at the age of 110.

And so the old, venerated leader of Israel who took the place of Moses delivers what is virtually his last message to the nation.

I want to read for us this entire chapter. A long time afterward, when the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies, and Joshua was old and well advanced in years, Joshua summoned all Israel, its elders and heads, its judges and officials, and said to them, I am now old and well advanced in years.

And you have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake. For it is the Lord your God who has fought for you.

[7 : 07] Behold, I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the West.

Just as the Lord your God promised you.

Neither to the right hand nor to the left. That you may not mix with these nations remaining among you, or make mention of the names of their gods, or swear by them, or serve, or bow down to them. But you shall cling to the Lord your God just as you have done to this day. For the Lord has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day.

One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the Lord your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. Be very careful, therefore, to love the Lord your God.

[8 : 42] For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you, and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you.

But they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the Lord your God has given you.

And now, I am about to go the way of all the earth. And you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you.

All have come to pass for you. Not one of them has failed. But, just as all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things, until he has destroyed you off this good land that the Lord your God has given you, if you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you.

And go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you.

[10 : 25] If you were a coach, and your team, the underdog, was winning the big game, the really big game, the championship game, and it was halftime, what would you say to your team?

Let me change the illustration just a little bit, and ask you to assume that you are a Christian coach, and all of the members of your team are Christians, and you knew you were going to be facing this colossal opponent.

You knew you were the underdog, and you had been preparing for the game, and in addition to practicing, you had been praying. And you agreed together as a team, under the leadership of your coach, that you were going to play this game for the glory of God, and that you were going to play according to his rules.

And now it's halftime, and you're ahead. You're winning. What would you say to the team?

Wouldn't you say something like, Way to go, team! Do you see how God is helping us? And you know what, team?

[11 : 50] He will continue to help us if we play for his glory, and according to his rules. Let's go out there, and let's play to the best of our ability for the glory of God, and let's be very careful not to

blow this victory.

I think you'd say something like that. I think that would be very sensible. Well, I'd like to introduce myself to you this morning as Coach Chrisman.

And I want you to listen in with me at a halftime speech, so to speak. By Coach Joshua. Halftime for the team is not halftime for him.

He's going to die before the game is over. And I think as you listen to him in the passage that we have just read, you will, in essence, hear him say something like, Look what God is doing for you. He will continue to do that. But you must be very careful. Or you could forfeit this victory.

[13:07] Now, I would submit to you, dear congregation of Grace Fellowship, that you and your church, in a sense, are like the children of Israel.

You have been graciously delivered out of an Egyptian bondage to sin. That's what conversion is. And you have come together because God has made you a people.

And we heard about how he began to make you a people this morning. It was precious to me. I was so blessed.

I'm so blessed just to be in this new sanctuary. I'm overwhelmed with what God has done for you.

But we remembered this morning how he began to make a people out of you.

Individually, but now I want you to think corporately, you have been delivered, by God's grace, out of the bondage of Egyptian sin.

[14:13] And now, you have a conquest. Now, I know that in the record of the Old Testament, it was bondage in Egypt, followed by wanderings in the wilderness for 40 years, and then the conquest.

And I want to just take that middle section out for a moment because the wandering in the wilderness was not necessary, and there's no necessity of God's people doing that now.

And I want you to think in terms of what comes after the Exodus. What comes after the Exodus, what should have come after the Exodus, was conquest.

And I submit to you that in a way that is somewhat analogous to the experience of God's Old Covenant people, you are now in the conquest.

So, that's really all I'm going to say about the passage in terms of its historical setting. This is God continuing to preserve His people so that someday they would produce a Messiah.

[15:28] And so, I have come among you this morning really basically to encourage you. I want to say to you, dear people, look what God has done for you.

I want to say to you, you can be absolutely sure that He will continue to fight for you if, and I'm going to fill in the blank, and I want to say to you this morning, but, you must, you must love Him and be faithful.

Because if you don't, in the fourth place, I must submit to you that you could forfeit the blessing of God upon this ministry.

That's the burden of my heart today. So, let's just think for a few moments about these four things. You notice, if you will, maybe you didn't notice as I first read it, I wouldn't expect these things to jump out for you as they have become clear to me.

But I would have you notice in verse 3 that the first thing that Joshua does for them is he reminds them of what God had done for them.

[16:51] Look at verse 3. You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake.

And I really want to underscore that for a moment. For your sake. For it is the Lord your God who has fought for you. That's what was promised in the passage in Deuteronomy that Pastor Aaron read for us.

That's what is emphasized here. What had God done for these people? He had given them a large measure of victory. They were already in the promised land.

That's what verse 1 says. He had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies. They were in the land of Canaan. It is true that there were many Canaanites yet in the land and there were more victories that had to be obtained.

But God had blessed them. And as we go on in the passage you will remember that a second time in verse 10 they were reminded that it was God who was fighting for them.

[17:58] He had driven out these strong and great nations by what kind of an army? An army of shepherds. He had given them supernatural assistance.

Joshua says to them that no man was able to stand before them. He says to them don't you remember that one of you was able to put a thousand to flight?

How can that be? It can only be by divine supernatural help. God had wonderfully and graciously given them victory and given them the land in such great measure that Joshua was able to say and I've already allotted it to you now you know where your tribes are going to live.

God has blessed them. Let me hurry to the second thing and then I'm going to and the third and the fourth and then I'm going to come back and make applications.

That's the first thing he says. This is what God has done. You can see it. You can see it with your own eyes verse 3. And then I want you to notice verse 5. Now Joshua tells them what the Lord is yet going to do for them.

[19:22] This is what he has done. This is what he will do. Look at verse 5. The Lord your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight and you shall possess their land just as the Lord your God promised you.

You see that's why we always refer to this as the promised land because God promised it. But you see they hadn't completely occupied the land. There were still Canaanites.

There were still these seven nations that Pastor Aaron read for us again this morning in the Deuteronomy passage. There was more territory to be taken. There were more victories to be gained.

There were more enemies to be subdued. They were in the land. They had rest but the conquest was not over. And what is the promise? The promise is that God is going to continue to fight for you. He's going to push the enemies out before your very face and you are going to completely possess the land. And then in the third place Joshua turns his attention to what they must do for God.

[20:33] Let me review. First he tells them what God had done for them. Then he tells them what God was still going to do for them. And now he says, but here's what you must do.

It's the first imperative. It's the first command. And we find it in verse 6. Therefore, in light of what God has done for you, in light of what he is yet going to do for you, here is what you must do.

You must be very strong to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses. Now I'm going to submit to you that really there are three things that he's telling them that they must do.

The first thing he says is you must be obedient. The second thing he says to them is you must be holy. Though the word holy is not really used, notice verse 7, you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of their names, of the names of their gods, or swear by them, or serve them, or bow down to them.

But the reason, of course, is that if you start talking their talk, you'll start walking their walk, you'll start looking upon idolatry and wickedness with less disdain, and the first thing you know, these people that you thought were so wicked are really pretty nice after all, and you're going to start being assimilated into their culture, and the next thing you know, you will be intermarrying with them, and then the next thing you know, you will be worshipping their false gods.

[22:10] You must not do that. You must be obedient to the word of God. Again, that's what verse 6 is about. Be very strong to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses.

That was their Bible. You must obey the word of God, Joshua says, and you must not intermingle with these people. You must continue to be a separate people.

You must continue to be a holy people. And thirdly, this is what you must do. You shall cling to the Lord your God.

Verse 8. I'm not sure what word the NIV uses there, but I do know this, that the Hebrew word translated cling, or whatever word you have there, can also be translated hug.

You must hug the Lord your God. And if you will notice verse 11, he says in this same vein of thought, be very careful therefore to love the Lord your God.

[23:18] And I think perhaps he mentions this last because this is foundational to and fundamental to the other things. You must be unswilled swervingly obedient. Remember he said don't turn to the right, don't turn to the left, don't deviate, be focused, unswervingly obedient, uncompromisingly holy.

Do not mix. And now he says in verse 8 and verse 11, you must be unrelinquishingly devout. you must be madly in love with God. Because if you don't love God, you will not obey his will. If you don't love God, you will not be separate from the culture.

These are the three things. Obedience, separation or holiness, and devotion to God. And then the last thing Joshua does in this passage is he tells them what God will do to them.

If. Okay, you with me? First, what God has done for them. Second, what God will yet do for them. Third, what they must do for God. And then he ends with this very, very sobering warning concerning what God will do to them if they don't obey and be holy out of love for God.

[24 : 55] And you see it beginning in verse 13 or verse 12. He says, for if you turn back and hug, if you will, the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes until you perish from off this good ground that the Lord your God has given you.

And then again you see it beginning with verse 15, that warning, but just as all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things until he has destroyed you from off this good ground that the Lord your God has given you.

If you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God which he commanded you and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given you.

So in essence what Joshua is saying is I must in faithfulness to your souls, says Joshua, warn you, even though this is what God has done, even though this is what God will do, even though this is what you must do, if you don't do what you must do, God will have to banish you from this land. And you know what's sad? That's what God had to do. I wish I could tell you otherwise, but you are familiar with the history.

[26 : 33] And as soon as we get into the book of Judges, there's a victory or two under the tribe of Judah, and then the first thing you know, the tribe after tribe after tribe did not subdue the Canaanites and all of these other nations.

And they began to associate, and they began to swear by their gods, and they began to intermarry, and they began to worship the false gods, and they apostatized from God, and he punished them from the land, and they are taken off into Babylon, and other places.

So it was a real serious threat, but they didn't have hearts to embrace it and to respond to it. Okay, now, how does this fit to Grace Fellowship Church?

What does this have to do with Grace Fellowship Church? Very simply this, I want to say the same four things to you. We heard Coach Joshua, and though I'm really not a coach, in any regard, I'm going to try to function as one.

Folks, I don't know if it's halftime, or if the game's close to over, or if it's just beginning. For some of you, it probably is almost over.

[27 : 58] But I just want to say to you, look what God has done for you. I really want to encourage you. It's really beautiful. It's glorious. It was heart-touching for me this morning.

And it's been good to see what God has done in Bremen over these 25 years from a distance. First of all, just spiritually, He's redeemed you, most of the members except those that were prayed for this morning by your pastor.

He's redeemed you out of the sin of Egyptian bondage. And He's made you His children. And He's brought you together into this fellowship.

And He's formed a church. And He's given you not one, not two, but three pastors. Pastors who love God passionately and care for your souls.

He has given you conversions. He has given you unity. He has supplied your needs. He has given you this building my understanding is that you only owe about a hundred thousand dollars.

[29 : 08] It may seem like a lot of money and it is. But in terms of what it costs, God is blessing this church. He's given you 25 years of blessing.

You have been in a conquest. And God is giving you victory. And it's so important that you pause more than just on your 25th, and I'm sure you will.

But frequently in days to come and just stop and say, look what the Lord has done for us. See with our own eyes what the Lord has done.

How good he has been. How gracious. And find that to be a motivation for greater obedience and greater faithfulness.

And that's where it can actually get dangerous because you know, there's something about prosperity and success that breeds carelessness and thanklessness.

[30:07] It's kind of like, it's really dangerous to be in a place of blessing sometimes. And so, I just urge you to keep seeing what God has done and be thankful.

And the second thing Joshua did I want to do for you, I want to say to you and remind you this morning that the Lord is going to continue to fight for you. He's going to continue to be your great deliverer.

He's going to give you victory. You have many enemies yet to conquer.

You have territory to occupy. There is the enemy of the devil. There is the enemy of the world.

There's the enemy of the flesh. There's the enemy of worldly philosophies.

There is the enemy of ignorance in Bremen. There is the enemy of false understanding about what is Grace Fellowship Church about. What do those people believe over there?

[31:12] You have lots of opposition in a sense. But the biggest one is that in this community there are probably thousands, and I know it's a small town, only maybe 8,000 or whatever, but there are hundreds, probably, almost certainly thousands of people who are dead.

They're dead. They're under the power of the devil. They're in a kingdom of darkness. They desperately need the gospel.

gospel. And many of them don't look upon you or the gospel or your Savior with favor. In a certain sense, they are enemies.

You must not view them as your enemy. They may view you as their enemy. They're desperately in need of conversion. There is a kingdom of darkness.

The Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, they're here. And if you can't find them in Bremen, then just go down the road a little bit to South Bend.

[32:25] They're all around here. They're in Plymouth. But the word of encouragement, that's really what I'm trying to give you, is that God will continue to fight for you.

He still has that power that keeps any man woman or university professor from being able to stand before you by his word, by his spirit.

He is still able, in a sense, to use one man, one woman, one high schooler to put a thousand people to flight.

fight. And that's the confidence that we must take into our witnessing opportunities and into our evangelistic endeavors.

We feel so inadequate. We feel fearful. We feel like little Davids facing Goliaths. But that's the whole point.

[33:32] If God is on our side, and we are seeking to please him, and live according to his word, and be separate from the world, even though we live in the world, not embracing its culture, not being sucked in by it, loving God with all of our hearts, then, as you, you dear brothers and sisters of Grace Fellowship Church, continue to try to have an impact on your community, and continue the conquest, he's going to be with you, he's going to bless you.

And, as has been prayed repeatedly, if the Lord Jesus tarries, 25 years from now, there'll be a 50th anniversary. And, I don't know, I don't think Pastor John will be here then.

You may be though. You look like you're preserving real well. People come to me and they say, you know, Pastor Ted, you used to look like a plum and now you look like a prune.

What happened? And I looked at you this morning. I even said that to Pastor Aaron. I looked at the picture and said, John looks the same. What is it? Maybe he will be. But if you're faithful, and many of you will not be here 50 years from now either, but a lot of you, I hope you will be.

And God will give you other pastors, and he will enlarge your borders, and this church will have more more and more and more of an impact upon this community and the world at large as you embrace world missions as part of your conquest.

[35:16] So, be thankful, be hopeful, and thirdly, be diligent. You must do what God told these people to do.

You must focus on being obedient, on being holy, and on being madly in love with God. And remember, the latter is what will enable you to do the former.

People who do not love God cannot really love his law and obey it. And people who do not love God cannot really keep themselves back from just being assimilated into an ungodly culture.

So, what must you do? You must be faithful, and you must keep fighting. You have a warfare to carry on, and you must not quit.

God and I want to urge you, dear people, and your pastors, to be more and more passionate for the glory of God, to become more and more compassionate for the souls of men, and to continue to set forth before this community a worship of God that is more and more joyful and exuberant.

[36:58] You should hope, and you should work toward this end, that when unconverted people, or even genuine Christians who come from weaker ministries, come through these doors and sit in here, and listen to you worship, and listen to you preach, and watch you work for the salvation of this community, and the souls of this community, and see you demonstrate a practical compassion for needy people with a view to winning them to the Lord Jesus Christ, what you want people to say when they visit Grace Fellowship Church is wow.

Wow. those people, they've got some strange doctrines, you know, I hear they believe in divine sovereignty in a different way than we do, everybody believes in it in some way, and everybody's a Calvinist when someone dies, well, God is sovereign, but those people believe that he has chosen a people, and that Christ redeemed the people, and that he has invincible grace, and they believe those strange doctrines, and I don't know what to think about those doctrines, but when I come to that church, when I see those people at the workplace, in the community, in their worship, I am amazed.

I have to go out of the doors of Grace Fellowship Church and say, wow. We should so live and so worship that people say, I don't know about what they believe, but I'm attracted to that ministry.

And so I urge you, Coach Christman, love God with all of your hearts. Obey his word.

Be separate from the world, but be compassionate for it. And then lastly, I want to say to you, by way of caution, and in a way, I must confess to you, I wish this weren't the fourth thing in the passage, and I thought, well, you know, I could slip it in and make it third, and then end up on a positive note, but I chose, you're mature people.

[39:30] It's in the text. I'm giving you the order. First Joshua shows them what God had done. Then he tells them what he's going to do. Then he tells them what they must do.

And then he says, this is what God will do to you if you don't love him with all of your heart and be faithful. What is it?

Well, we've already seen he would banish them from the land. You say, how does that apply to new covenant Christians? I thought the new covenant blessings were far superior to the old covenant blessings and that there was no way to be disenfranchised from the new covenant and you are absolutely right.

And I hope that you understand that when you read your Old Testaments and you see what happened to the nation of Israel again and again and again and again, you say, oh God, I thank you that I'm a new covenant Christian because had I been an old covenant person, I probably would have perished with the masses.

There was never more than only a remnant. But in the new covenant, everyone knows the Lord and everyone will persevere because the new covenant blessings have secured perseverance.

[40:43] The old covenant didn't secure that or they would have persevered. So is there a warning here for new covenant Christians?

I think there is because even new covenant Christians must persevere. They must obey. They must love God.

They must continue to the end. That's what Jesus said. He who endures to the end shall be saved. Read the book of Hebrews if you don't believe that Christians aren't warned about the possibility of apostatizing.

But the truth is that a genuine Christian will not. But that doesn't negate the truth that we must persevere. We will persevere, but we must persevere.

And we must persevere in obedience and in faith and in holiness and in love. But I'm here to talk to you corporately and primarily today because this is the 25th anniversary of a church.

[41:56] And here's the way that I believe there is an analogy. And it is simply this. that though you as individual Christians can never fall from grace and can never be disenfranchised from God's covenant mercies, it is still a fact that this church could so live, so practice, and so change over the next few decades that it could cease to be a true church.

church. That's what history proves. Churches can become non-churches biblically. That takes some time and it happens when the word of God is not faithfully preached, and when the ordinances are not faithfully observed, and when church discipline is not faithfully exercised, and when church membership procedure is not carefully biblically guided, and when pastors no longer deal faithfully with the souls of their people, and when eventually the corners of the gospel are knocked off, and you begin to take into your membership those who don't give real credible evidence of true conversion, every church is just really one generation away from becoming a non-church if we're careless.

And that's the kind of thing that made the words of Jesus to the church in Ephesus so sobering. Do you remember what he said to the church of Ephesus? Well, the message was that they had fallen away from their first love, and he called them like the other churches almost without exception, to repent.

But do you know what he said to the church of Ephesus after he told them to repent? He said, or else, or else what? Or else I will remove your lampstand.

This is a lampstand. Grace Fellowship Church is a bright lampstand. But if you don't continue to be faithful to God's word, and love him with all of your heart, and roll up your sleeves, and persevere in the conquest, then as a church, you could lose your lampstand.

[44 : 36] Do I think that's going to happen to grace community? No. Do I think it could happen? Yes. And the way it won't happen, is by the fear of letting it happen.

If these people had taken Joshua seriously, they would have said, let's call for a prayer meeting. Oh God, what are we going to do when Joshua leaves?

Give us another man who will deal faithfully with our souls. We find in ourselves a tendency to mention the names of the gods of the Canaanites.

we haven't bowed down to them, but we're using those names. We feel the pull of the culture. Oh, let's pray. But they didn't respond in that way.

And it wasn't long before they experienced the very things that God threatened. Wasn't that fearful when you read that? When Joshua says, just as not a single word of God has failed, all the good things that He promised, you need to realize that not a single word will fail of all the bad things He has threatened.

[45 : 57] And God, true to His word, had to banish these people. My prayer for you, and I know what your heart's desire, is that 25 years from now, this will be a stronger, purer, more enterprising, more conquering darkness church than it is even today.

And it can be by the grace of God. Well, I conclude with this. Dear people, Grace Fellowship Church, do you see what God has done for you?

Do you see what He will yet do for you? Do you embrace what you must do for Him? Then be very careful.

When you see what He has done for you, you may be thankful. When you see what He will yet do for you, you may be hopeful. When you see what you must do for Him, you must be diligent.

And when you see what He could do to you, you must be careful. And if you, out of a supreme love for the Lord Jesus Christ, will be faithful, obedient, separate, holy, persevering, etc., you will succeed.

[47 : 37] The conquest will be won. And someday, you will enter into the real land of Canaan.

The old land was symbolic. It was a type. Heaven, or the renewed earth, is the antitype. And someday, you as individuals, will say, the conquest is over.

Isn't that great? That's what's beautiful about death for the believer. Someday, it'll be over for all of us. Can you even imagine what it will be like to be upon this renewed earth, and to be in the presence of our Savior, and to be with the saints of all ages, and to be without sin, and to be without the potential of sin, and to have no more death, and no more disease, and no more devil to deal with.

And we'll say, we're here, and there are no more Canaanites. That's the prospect, and it is ours, through faith, and through faithfulness.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we see so much of ourselves in these, your old covenant people, and yet we know that you have made us different, and we praise you for that.

[49 : 18] Lord, we say with the songwriter, as we sang this morning, oh, to grace, how great it that are daily unconstrained to be. May that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee, prone to wonder, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.

Here's my heart, oh, Lord, take and seal it. Seal it for thy courts above. Lord, may that be the corporate prayer of this church.

we do thank you one more time for what you have done for this church, for what you will do for this church, and we ask that you will give them grace to do for you what you call them to do, and may they never, ever, ever, forfeit your blessing.

We ask in Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.