

Sunday AM Service ~ June 4, 2023

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

King David wrote in Psalm 145 about the Lord *"I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. ² Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. ³ Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. ⁴ One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. ⁵ They speak of the glorious splendour of your majesty— and I will meditate on your wonderful works. ⁶ They tell of the power of your awesome works & I will proclaim your great deeds. ⁷ They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness."*

Let us come worship the Lord this morning, let us pray...

Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways. For we have forgotten who is the boss. We have neglected to worship the one who rules the world and instead we have exalted ourselves, we have put others before you & we have failed to worship in thought word and deed this last week. Please forgive us. And place within us your Holy Spirit so that we want to put you in the pre-eminent spot in our lives. We want to worship you, serve you, love you and follow you in all that we do and say. Draw us closer to you this day through word and song. Help us to be committed more and more to your ways and to your thoughts and to your will. And then send us out to people the people of God in your place and your time so that all may see that you are our King and that you are worthy of all praise for ever and ever. Amen.

Song – God is our strength & refuge

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCJ78TzBJPg>

1 God is our strength and refuge,
our present help in trouble,
and we therefore will not fear,
though the earth should change!
Though mountains shake and tremble,
though swirling floods are raging,
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

3 Come, see the works of our maker,
learn of his deeds all-powerful:
wars will cease across the world
when he shatters the spear!
Be still and know your creator,
uplift him in the nations-
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

2 There is a flowing river
within God's holy city;
God is in the midst of her-
she shall not be moved!
God's help is swiftly given,
thrones vanish at his presence-
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

Bible Reading – Joshua 13:1-14 (NIV)

13 When Joshua had grown old, the LORD said to him, "You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over. ² "This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites, ³ from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite though held by the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron; the territory of the Avvites ⁴ on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek and the border of the Amorites; ⁵ the area of Byblos; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath. ⁶ "As for all the inhabitants of the mountain regions from Lebanon

to Misrephoth Maim, that is, all the Sidonians, I myself will drive them out before the Israelites. Be sure to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have instructed you, ⁷ and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh.” ⁸ The other half of Manasseh, the Reubenites and the Gadites had received the inheritance that Moses had given them east of the Jordan, as he, the servant of the LORD, had assigned it to them. ⁹ It extended from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and included the whole plateau of Medeba as far as Dibon, ¹⁰ and all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, out to the border of the Ammonites. ¹¹ It also included Gilead, the territory of the people of Geshur and Maakah, all of Mount Hermon and all Bashan as far as Salekah— ¹² that is, the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei. (He was the last of the Rephaites.) Moses had defeated them and taken over their land. ¹³ But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day. ¹⁴ But to the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance, since the food offerings presented to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he promised them.

Announcements 4/6/23

Focus for the month – Mission. Our Church has a number of link church partnerships, two in Vanuatu (Hog Harbour Presbyterian, Walaha Apostolic) and one in Australia (Wee Waa Presbyterian). We think our focus should not just be on our own backyard but doing what we can to help the wider Church be more involved in the great commission. Is there any way you could be involved in helping us with one of our link Churches?

Hamilton Proposal. Many thanks to those who engaged with the elders last week over the Hamilton proposal. It is still at a very early state of discussions and we got some good feedback. We will keep the congregation informed of what is happening and the idea is that there will be a decision made as to our involvement in July/August.

Lords Supper at all services TODAY. Please prepare yourself spiritually for the bread and the wine.

Session will be meeting this Wednesday and so if you have any concerns or questions for the elders, please give them to Ross Logan by this Tuesday.

Church membership. Are you interested in becoming a member of our Church. If so please see Stephen, Jon or one of the elders and we will talk you through what the process looks like.

Compassion Sunday. We have invited a speaker from Compassion to talk to all three services about child Sponsorship on Sunday 18th June.

QUIZ BIZ. Trivia ... But not as you know it. Saturday 24th June from 7:30pm. More details see our Facebook page.

Pledges. Our pledge campaign has formally ended (but of course you can still pledge or give any time into the future). Currently we have received approx. \$200,000 worth of donations towards our Church redevelopment. We still have one pledge outstanding from 2021 of \$27,000 which will be paid upon the passing of the DA. In the last couple of months, we received another 19 pledges for approx. \$90,000. It was great to see the support from all aspects of the Church – the pledges ranged from \$300 to \$20,000. This brings the grand total raised/to be raised to \$327,000. Thank you one and all, for prayerfully considering this work.

Offerings for April.

Budget Offerings for April	\$31,333
Actual Offerings for April	\$30,802
Deficit for April	\$531
Deficit for Jan to April	\$424

Rhema. Do you know that our church runs a weekly radio station on Rhema 99.7? It is called God’s Word for God’s World and it airs on Sundays at 7:30am. This is a great way for us to get the message of the gospel to a wider audience.

Family Fellowship. Next family fellowship is scheduled for Sunday 25th June from 2-4pm. Meet at Green Point Car Park then a walk/scooter for 45 minutes, have an afternoon tea (each bring a plate) and then a walk back home. All families with kids in the Year 3-9 age are invited.

Elvanto. Are you currently receiving our weekly emails? If not now is the time to give us your contact details and we will add you onto our Church Management System (which is called Elvanto).

Pastoral Prayer Points

Walaha Village, Vanuatu. Church repair committee to be active and to continue to meet and plan activities for the repair. Members of the church to continue attend services and to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour over their lives. Youth and Mothers convention to be held in Vila in August. Our church, community and school development plans. Pray for unity within our community. Special prayer for our church leaders to be proactive in their planning and for God to give them the strength to continue to lead as God wants.

Pray for Turkey: Pray for a radical change in deep-seated prejudices and biases against Christianity. Pray for wise leadership to peacefully navigate tensions between nationalists, radical Islamists, and Kurds. Pray for the Gospel to advance in power amid increased hostilities and persecution.

Pray for Upper Hunter Presbyterian Church: Pray for Rev. Tim Lee, as he serves the church faithfully. Pray for God's strength and love to drive the ministry forward and the gospel would continue to go out. Pray God would gather the lost from the area, and the saints would be built up.

Pray for gospel renewal: Pray as we take the Lord's Supper together today, that Christ would dwell in our hearts by faith. That we would comprehend the breadth, length, depth and height and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that we would be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:17-19).

Song – O Breathe of Life [O Breath Of Life \(Acoustic\) // Emu Music - YouTube](#)

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| 1. O Breath of life, come sweeping through us,
Revive Your church with life and power.
O Breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us,
And fit Your church to meet this hour. | 2. O Wind of God, come bend us, break us,
Till humbly we confess our need;
Then in Your tenderness remake us,
Revive, restore, for this we plead. |
|---|--|

Chorus:

O Breath of love, come breathe within,
Renewing thought and will and heart;
Come, Love of Christ, afresh to win,
Revive Your church in every part.

Chorus

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| 3. Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating
While harvest fields are vast and ripe?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,
Equip Your church to spread the light. |
|--|

Chorus

Bible Reading – Joshua 14:6-15; 17:1-6

⁶ Now the people of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. ⁷ I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, ⁸ but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. ⁹ So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.' ¹⁰ "Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! ¹¹ I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. ¹² Now give me this

hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.”¹³ Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.¹⁴ So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly.¹⁵ (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.) Then the land had rest from war.

17 This was the allotment for the tribe of Manasseh as Joseph’s firstborn, that is, for Makir, Manasseh’s firstborn. Makir was the ancestor of the Gileadites, who had received Gilead and Bashan because the Makirites were great soldiers.² So this allotment was for the rest of the people of Manasseh—the clans of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hopher and Shemida. These are the other male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph by their clans.³ Now Zelophehad son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons but only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah.⁴ They went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders and said, “The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our relatives.” So Joshua gave them an inheritance along with the brothers of their father, according to the LORD’s command.⁵ Manasseh’s share consisted of ten tracts of land besides Gilead and Bashan east of the Jordan,⁶ because the daughters of the tribe of Manasseh received an inheritance among the sons. The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the descendants of Manasseh.

Sermon – Claiming the Inheritance (Stephen Taylor)

In 2007, a Portuguese aristocrat named Luis Carlos de Noronha Cabral de Camara was dying, and so he gathered some friends as witnesses and divided up his estate. And then after his death, his lawyers reached out to each of the seventy beneficiaries in turn that Mr. de Camara had chosen. And without exception, all seventy were astonished at the windfall that they received. You see, there was a total lack of personal connection between de Camara and each of the seventy. What happened that day before those witnesses was that Mr. de Camara pulled out a telephone directory and began randomly flicking through the pages and dropping his finger on a name and on each of the seventy names upon which his finger pointed to, received a portion of his estate.

Imagine that? Getting an inheritance that you didn’t deserve? A life changing gift that you had no right to expect is now to come your way. But that’s what each Christian is about to receive. A home in the new heavens and earth created just for us. But God didn’t randomly put his finger on a list of names which had everyone who has ever lived in this world and choose some to receive his inheritance. He actually chose people before the creation of the world, he then made promises that they would be adopted as his sons and daughters and then he sent his one and only true son Jesus to claim that inheritance on our behalf.

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And there is a foretaste of what this will look like in Joshua 13-21. For in these chapters, we see the promises of God coming to their fulfilment & the people of Israel receiving the inheritance that God has won for them. The promised land. Truly a life changing event. This was way beyond what they deserved. But it gives us a glimpse of what God will do for us in Christ.

So that is how we are to read this part of God’s word. Now I know at first glance and maybe even at the hundredth glance, these chapters look extremely boring for us. Because we are not a part of any of the 12 tribes of Israel. We have never set foot on much of or any of this land. We don’t recognise any of the place names and we are not personally related to any of the people groups. And here before us is 8 chapters of endless lists of names and places. As one person has said, the war movie of Joshua chapters 1 to 12 is now over and we now have 40 minutes of credits rolling before us in Joshua 13-21.

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Really, they are not the most inspiring part of the Bible, are they? And I bet you were glad that you weren't down to do the Bible reading this morning! In fact, it is passages like these that cause some not to go on the roster! But what if the words of the apostle Paul are really true. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16, *"All Scripture is God-breathed & is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* All Scripture. Even Joshua chapters 13 to 19.

Matthew Henry once wrote, *"If God has a mouth to speak and a hand to write, we need to find an ear to hear, an eye to read and a heart to profit."* So, let's hope that God gives us all today an ear to hear, an eye to read and a heart to profit. For in these verses first we see

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1. Ordinary Obedience (chapters 13,15,16,17)

Now there is no doubt that when we read chapters 13 to 21, we notice a different atmosphere. Joshua is no longer the leader of the troops of Israel but he is the town planner, dividing up God's inheritance. You see he is getting old, very old but the success in claiming the promised land doesn't rely upon Joshua because Joshua's God is the one who will give his people their inheritance, the land of Canaan.

And that is why we hear the word inheritance 50 times in the next 9 chapters. The Jews inherit the land. They don't win the land through their battles, they don't purchase the land through their money, they inherit it because of God's promise. Actually, they get a permanent lease on the land, for the land is still the Lords, but they get to enjoy all the good things that God will give them as recipients of this land.

But they still need to exercise faith in claiming this inheritance. Because there is still land to take. And chapter 13:2-5 tell us about *"all the regions of the Philistines & Geshurites, ³ from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north;... the territory of the Avvites ⁴ on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek and the border of the Amorites; ⁵ the area of Byblos; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath."* So, there is still plenty to do.

But God had given them the whole land, the parts they had taken and the parts they had not yet taken so it was time to divide it up among the 12 tribes. And so, as we read Joshua do this in chapters 13-17, we realise the work of God involves the exciting, the battles won and lost as well as the mundane, the everyday attempts to live trusting in God's promises.

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For example, in the last few weeks I have preached sermons, run bible studies, written denominational reports, conducted a funeral, helped chair meeting and retreats, all quite high-profile things to do. But most of what I do, most of what you do is just simply trusting and obeying God in everyday life. Walking by faith. Let me give you an example.

This morning I woke up and received life and breathe for a new day. I walked past my kid's rooms and was reminded of the blessings of children. I had breakfast, God had given me again his daily bread. I went over my sermon, God is calling me to be faithful with his word again today. I said good bye to Kaylene what a blessing she has been to me for 26 years. I walked past the bins and the rubbish in them reminded me of all the things God has given me in the last week. I drove in my car down good roads, past a beautiful place to live in, to a Church where I have the privilege of being part of a special group of believers.

You get it? I could take all of these blessings for granted. Or I can remember that God has been so gracious to me that I want to respond to all of these things with faith. Live in the light of these things by faith. Respond with ordinary obedience in the mundane and the everyday as well as the exciting and extraordinary.

And isn't that what the Christian life is all about? Obeying the commands of God whether the spotlight falls on us or whether no one will ever notice what we do. Whether we are in front of the cameras or just washing the dishes. Sometimes Christian obedience is extra ordinary like winning a battle, but mostly is ordinary, like reading an account of this territory or that, this town or that, this boundary line that goes this way or that. But faithfulness is grasping Gods promises in ordinary obedience and with

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2. Sustained Strength (14:6-15)

For in the midst of the division of the land we come across Caleb the Kenizzite. And he is an example of someone whose faith is exceedingly strong, despite his old age. Remember it was Caleb and Joshua who were part of the spying mission that went through the land of Canaan 40 years ago and disagreed with the majority report that the people of the land were too strong to dislodge and said, "let us go in and take the land that God has given us."

Caleb reminds his long-term mate Joshua, ⁹ "So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance & that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.'" Now Caleb wants to claim what was promised to Him. He has been waiting a long time for this to happen. But he still is willing to trust God's word to him.

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¹⁰ "Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! ¹¹ I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. ¹² Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said."

Wow, what a man. If God promises it, that's good enough for me. Even if the people in the land are giants, I will look at things from God's perspective and not man's perspective. And here is a man who has the passion to serve God even when others are looking for a quiet retirement. "Anakites, Smanakites", says Caleb. I am not looking for an easy task, give me the toughest job that there is and I will do it, **in the Lord's strength.**

God has given this senior saint, supernatural strength. Sustained strength. Enough to take on these giants. And isn't that something that God promises all of his sons and daughters?

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Promises like Isaiah 40:31, "Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew **their strength.**" Or Ps 84:5-7, "Blessed are those whose strength is in You. They **go from strength to strength.**" 1 Peter 4:11, Peter calls those who serve to "**serve in the strength that God supplies.**" Or Paul praying in Ephesians 3:16 that God might "**strengthen us with power through His Spirit in our inner being.**"

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Friends, life gets hard. Old age can wear you out. Hard tasks can knock you down. Inexperience can put doubts in your mind. But God will supply his children with **all the strength** they need to do **all the tasks** that God is calling us to do. But don't look for strength within yourself. Look to him. Don't pray for tasks that you can do easily, pray that God would give you tasks beyond your ability to do on your own. So that you might experience the strength that God provides to those who like Caleb completely trust in Him.

Now don't expect that this strength will come to you in some dramatic infusion of power like Bruce Banner turning into the Incredible Hulk all of a sudden. You know, you were puny and now suddenly you are mighty. That's not how it will be. No, as preacher David Strain has put it "*here's how it will likely go. One day you will find yourself on the far side of some terrible season of trial, some deep, dark, sore, sad thing*

*that often drove you to your knees and threatened to break you. And one day you will find yourself on the far side of it wondering, "Now how did I ever get here? How did I make it through?" And it's then that you'll realize actually you made it through. You didn't see it at the time, but looking back you realize you made it through **because God sustained you with strength, with grace.**"*

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You see if God promises to be with us and promises to give us the strength to serve him no matter what, then whether we are a Christian teenager standing up to mocking of a crowd of school kids or a Christian businessman trying to lead a business with biblical ethics, or a Christian mum or Dad exhausted trying to deal with a young family or a Christian leader pointing uncommitted or backsliding members of their Church back to Jesus, God will give you the courage to keep going and the strength to continue to claim Gods promises.

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3. Ordinary Obedience, Sustained Strength but notice the **Subtle Sins**

Because not all believers will react like Caleb does. Some will see the giants in the land, the long list of regions still to conquer, the difficulty of the task still ahead of them and want to take a rest from the demanding work of being a follower of God. These people allow subtle sin to take hold and like a small hole in a big balloon, that sin, if left unchecked, will take all the air out of the balloon and over time leave it completely flat.

You see in Joshua 13: 13, we read *"But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day."* And again, in Joshua 15:63, *"Judah couldn't dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah."*

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What about Joshua 16:10 ¹⁰*"They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labour."* Lastly Joshua 17:12-13, *"Yet the Manassites were not able to occupy these towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region. ¹³ However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labour but did not drive them out completely."*

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Complacency sneaked in. We have done most of the hard work. It's time to sit back and take a break. Those guys look too strong for us, let's wait for a while before we drive them out of the land. And that time to drive them out? Well, it just never happened. Or we don't want get rid of them completely, why not force them to be our slaves and so we have cheap labour into the days to come? But God had warned them that if they remained in the land in the future, they would turn their hearts away from Him. But we don't have to do everything that God wants us to do, just enough to enjoy the inheritance he is giving us.

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But one tribe actual went even further not just complacency but discontent. ¹⁴*The people of Joseph said to Joshua, "Why have you given us only one allotment and one portion for an inheritance? We are a numerous people & the LORD has blessed us abundantly."* ¹⁵*"If you are so numerous," Joshua answered, "and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest & clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites & Rephaites."*

But they don't want to do that. *"They, they, they have iron chariots down on the plain. Just give us more land, we want to take the easier way."* And this minor unfaithfulness meant that these people were a thorn in the side of the Israelites for years to come. In fact, the very next book Judges will show us that the seeds of complacency and discontent when planted in the promised land will lead to apostasy and warfare for generations to come.

And it reminds us that subtle sin like compromise or complacency or laziness or putting the things of God on the backburner can have devastating effects on our lives as well as the life of our family and Church

family. Friends we just can't afford to have minor sins in our lives go unchecked. As John Owen once said "you are either killing sin or sin is killing you."

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That's why Jesus says *"If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. If your hand causes you to sin chop it off. It is better to enter the kingdom of God without an eye or a hand than to miss out on eternal life completely."* So do you have an anger problem, a lying problem, a wandering eye, a love of money, a thirst for power or influence? Bring it to the Lord now. Look for his strength to deal with it now. Don't allow it to get bigger and bigger over time.

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4. Instead have a **Feisty Faith** (Joshua 17:3-6)

Like the daughter of Zelophadad. *"They went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders & said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our relatives." So Joshua gave them an inheritance along with the brothers of their father, according to the LORD's command."*

The reader of the Bible first met these 5 ladies in Numbers 26 & 27. Zelophadad had no sons but was blessed instead with 5 daughters, which meant he had no male to keep his land in his family. So, Moses promised that his daughters would inherit his share of the land. Now here, they had the courage of their convictions to stand up and ask for what had been promised them. And even though they had waited years upon years for this promise to come true, they too trusted and knew without a doubt that God would keep his promises.

Likewise, we too need to have the boldness, the feisty faith to believe the promises God has given us in the Scriptures and to ask for them. "Ask for anything in my name and it will be given to you", Jesus said. The problem is according to James we don't get because we don't ask. So, today and every day we are to know our Scriptures, believe in the Scriptures and pray the Scriptures, asking God to fulfil the promises he has made to us in his word.

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5. Then there is the **complete commitment** required by the Levites

You may not have noticed but four times in our passage the Levites are mentioned and each time we are told they will not get any portion of the land themselves because God is going to give them something even better. Now what's better than real estate, I wonder?

Joshua 13:14, *"To the tribe of Levi, Moses gave no inheritance. The offerings by fire to the Lord God of Israel are their inheritance."* Or Joshua 13:33, *"To the tribe of Levi, Moses gave no inheritance. The Lord God of Israel is their inheritance."* And again, in Joshua 14:4 *"the Levites received no share of the land but only towns to live in."* And lastly in Joshua 18:7 *"The Levites however do not get a portion amount you, because the priestly service of the Lord is their inheritance."*

These guys missed out on the land but they got something even better. They got God Himself. What was due to him. They got to serve and worship Him. They miss out on something but gain something even greater. And that's true also of the Christian life.

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Jesus says *"Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you."* Or what about Jesus again *"Whoever has given up a house or a brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms for My sake and the gospel's sake, will receive a hundred time as much in the present age – along with persecutions and in the age to come, eternal life. "*

Really, what do you want? House and land or God Himself? Physical blessings or eternal blessings? The gifts in God's hand or the hand of God itself? The Levites got the Lord, they got to serve the Lord, they got to stay close to the Lord and that was what the land was to signify in the first place. This was where God

dwelt, where God was to dwell with his people. Surely that is the inheritance you and I should want more than anything else.

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For the inheritance that is kept safe and sound in heaven is not just God's blessings but God Himself. Paul says in Ephesians 1³ *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with **every spiritual blessing in Christ.*** ⁴ *For he **chose us** in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **he predestined us for adoption to sonship** through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.* ⁷ *In him **we have redemption** through his blood, the **forgiveness of sins**, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us... In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, **might be for the praise of his glory.**"*

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That is our inheritance. And like the people of Joshua's time, we have received some of it today, but not all of it. Not yet anyway. So we have to wait for the second coming of Jesus to receive it fully. But in the meantime, we need to serve the saviour, we need days, weeks and years of ordinary obedience, we use his supernatural strength and rely on the feisty faith he places with us but we are also warned about subtle sin. Because what God wants to see in his people is the courage to ask, the trust in His word and complete commitment as we seek Him. Not just things but the God of all things. Not just blessings but the Lord of blessings. Not just gifts but the giver of gifts.

The battle is the Lords. He has won the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ but there is still work to do. There is sin & unbelief to be rooted out of our hearts, billions of people in spiritual darkness, there is the God's kingdom to grow, the church to purify, family and friends to be won. Now is not the time to be complacent. Today is not the day to take your foot of the accelerator. You have not received your inheritance through luck, a count didn't picked your name randomly from the phone book. You were chosen. So, serve your Saviour.

You have had the first course of blessings, but the main course and desert is still to come. An it involves God Himself. Knowing Him and being known by Him. Wow. Shat an inheritance we can claim now and in the days to come.

Song – God is for us <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPZnFLhltzQ>

1. We won't fear the battle, we won't fear the night
We will walk the valley with You by our side
You will go before us, You will lead the way
We have found a refuge, only You can save

Chorus

Sing with joy now, our God is for us
The Father's love is a strong and mighty
fortress
Raise your voice now, no love is greater
Who can stand against us if our God is for us

2. Even when I stumble, even when I fall
Even when I turn back, still Your love is sure
You will not abandon, You will not forsake
You will cheer me onward with never-ending
grace

Chorus

Bridge x 2
Neither height nor depth can separate us
Hell and death will not defeat us
He who gave His son to free us
Holds me in His love

Chorus x2

Benediction

“Whoever has given up a house or a brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms for My sake and the gospel’s sake, will receive a hundred time as much in the present age – along with persecutions and in the age to come, eternal life. “