



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Joshua 13:1-33

"A New Service For An Old Soldier"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Mark. Our text for this morning is in the Book of Joshua. We're looking at Joshua 13 this morning and I'm not going to read the entire chapter. Much of it has to do with place names. It sets for the most part the boundaries of the tribes of Israel—what they would inherit. So this is about the inheritance that Israel would have in Canaan. And so Joshua is about to apportion the tribal regions to the various tribes.

I'm going to read the first eight verses, gives you a sense of the text. And then also read verse 22 because what it demonstrates is there's a lot of background material that the author, the historian here, assumes that we know; and a lot of it comes from the Book of Numbers. I'll comment on that in a moment, but verse 1 of chapter 13,

<sup>1</sup> Now Joshua was old *and* advanced in years when the LORD said to him, "You are old *and* advanced in years, and very much of the land remains to be possessed. <sup>2</sup> This is the land that remains: all the regions *of* the Philistines and all *those of* the Geshurites; <sup>3</sup> from the Shihor which is east of Egypt, even as far as the border of Ekron to the north (it is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines: the Gazite, the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite, the Ekronite; and the Avvite <sup>4</sup> to the south, all the land of the Canaanite, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorite; <sup>5</sup> and the land of the Gibalite, and all of Lebanon, toward the east, from Baalgad below Mount Hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. <sup>6</sup> All the inhabitants of the hill

country from Lebanon as far as Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians, I will drive them out from before the sons of Israel; only allot it to Israel for an inheritance as I have commanded you. <sup>7</sup> Now therefore, apportion this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh."

<sup>8</sup> With the other half-tribe (*that is that other half of Manasseh*), the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance which Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as Moses the servant of the LORD gave to them."

Joshua 13: 1-8

And then, the rest of the chapter, with the exception of mentioning the Levites in two verses, verses 14 and then at the end of the chapter, are about the apportioning of the east side of the Jordan to those three tribes. And so there are a lot of place names in this passage that I'll make some comments on and also some interesting statements that the LORD makes just throughout.

For example, in verse 22, "The sons of Israel also killed Balaam the son of Beor, the diviner, with the sword among *the rest of* their slain." Now, if you're not acquainted with the Pentateuch, with the first five books of the Bible, that might be a mysterious statement to you. But Balaam is found in the Book of Numbers; Balak the king of Moab ... which is just south of the tribe of Reuben, and then the land of Edom is south of that ... hired, the false prophet Balaam, to curse the tribes. And, as you know if you're familiar with the Book of Numbers, that he failed. Every time he tried to curse them, God caused him to give a blessing, which frustrated Balak. But that was the consequence of trying to do that. And so at the end of all of that, Balaam is put to death by the sons of Israel.

Well, may the LORD bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of studying it together. Let's pray.

*"A New Service For An Old Soldier" by Dan Duncan*  
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Father, we do thank You for Your goodness to us. We thank You for Your mercy and grace. And we can find that even in this passage that seems somewhat prosaic, somewhat uninteresting in and of itself. But there are things to be gleaned here, and I pray that as we do that, You would help us to see Your grace and Your goodness—and Your severity, in some senses, because You remind us here that sin is serious and it is dealt with. But we can see shining through all of this, through the events that lie behind some of these place names, Your grace. And we give You praise for that; and Your sovereignty because You give the great promise in here of the driving out the enemies of Israel. We're reminded from that that ultimately it's all Your work. And so we praise You for that, praise You for Your sovereignty, and thank You that Your sovereignty is channeled through Your grace toward us. And so we can speak of sovereign grace that gives us life and brings us through the difficulties and the challenges of life. And promises to finish the work that You began, and brings us into the promised land that we have, the greater Canaan—the Canaan above—and the promised land of the kingdom to come. So, Father, we praise You. Thank You for your blessings upon us.

We pray for those that have particular needs. Bless those, Father, who are sick, but give them healing and health and protect them. LORD, we pray you would bless the finances, the economy of each individual here, the work that we have, the jobs that we have, the companies that some of our members own, and businesses. Bless them, preserve them. LORD may we see Your hand of blessing in our lives. We will—we can rest confidently in that, and trust You. Give us patience. Give us perseverance. And LORD, may we see that to Your glory.

Bless us now as we sing our next hymn, bless our special music, bless our time of study and worship together. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

In 1951, General Douglas MacArthur was relieved of command in Korea. His long and distinguished career came to an end. It was over. In April of that year he gave a farewell address to Congress. At the end of it he recalled the refrain of a popular

barracks ballad that was sung when he was a cadet at West Point. "Old soldiers never die. They just fade away." And likening himself to the old soldier, he said goodbye.

When we come to chapter 13, Joshua was an old soldier. The chapter begins, "Now Joshua was old *and* advanced in years." He was maybe around 100 years old. The LORD reminded him of that in verse 1, "You are old *and* advanced in years." And then He said, "...very much of the land remains to be possessed." Joshua had led the nation in many battles and to many victories. Canaan was now under Israel's control but battles remained to be fought, though Joshua was too old to engage in them and to fight. It was time for him to lay down his sword.

But he wouldn't just fade away. God had a new work for him. Having conquered the land, having now possessed the land, he would now distribute the land to its conquerors—to Israel. And that is what the LORD instructed him to do in verse 7, "Now therefore, apportion this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh." That became the main task before Joshua. And that is the major subject of the second part of the Book of Joshua.

So the book moves from the conquest of Canaan by the tribes to the division of Canaan among the tribes. It was a great day in Israel's history. It marked a definitive change in the nation's life. For centuries the people had been a nation without a land—a nation of slaves in Egypt. The generation that crossed the Jordan river into Canaan under Joshua had grown up in the Sinai desert, moving about from place to place like Bedouins living in tents. Now they possess the land and it was time to settle down in it. It was all a gift of grace. They fought for it—but God gave it to them. He was the power behind their effort and the reason for their victory. Before they crossed the Jordan, God promised to give them cities that they did not build; with houses filled with goods that they did not fill; vineyards and trees that they hadn't planted. It was all a gift of God to the nation. So there's grace to be found in this chapter.

In light of that, it was time to receive the gift, to settle down in the land, to serve the LORD, to be a light to the nations. It was a time for joy—but not a time for rest. There was still much to do. The LORD had reminded Joshua of that." ...very much of the land

remains to be possessed." And, in verses 2 through 6, He lists the regions that remain to be conquered.

In verses 2 through 3, the region where the Philistines lived and the Geshurites lived is also given. The Philistines occupied the areas of the south along the Mediterranean coast. This is the first time in the Book of Joshua that the Philistines are mentioned. They were in the land before this, for they were in the land in the time of Abraham. But now it's really later in history with this is taking place around 1400 BC at the time of Joshua and the conquest. Then 200 years later, in 1200 BC, there's an invasion by the Philistines. They begin to settle there. They're part of this group known in history as 'the sea peoples' that were repulsed from an invasion of Egypt. And many of them settled along the coast of what was Israel at that time—the 'Levant'. But they're already located there now in these five cities that are mentioned.

Well, when David was on the run from Saul, you may remember, he lived among the Philistines for a time. And while he was living among them he secretly made raids on the Geshurites. So both of these groups that are mentioned here at the beginning of chapter 13 would still be there 400 years later, which implies something that we'll consider in a moment.

In verses 4 through 5, the LORD cites the regions to the north around Lebanon and Mount Hermon, where the enemy remained. So to the north and south the enemy was present and entrenched—and was still a threat. The nation needed to be reminded of that. The fact that they possessed the land was reason to rejoice—but not to relax. The LORD said, "Very much of the land remains to be possessed." The assignment, the mission that had been given to them was not yet fulfilled.

This new situation for Israel would be one of both war and peace—as it is with us. We are at peace with God. We are secure forever with God. We, meaning believers in Jesus Christ, have that assurance. 'We are seated with Christ in the heavenly places', as Paul says in Ephesians 2, verse 6. That's our position. Still, we are in a spiritual war. We have to be aware of that and continually in the fight—fighting the good fight of faith and against temptation and all that's around us. And Israel was in that situation. They

had entered into their inheritance but it still had work to do—battles to fight. Only now, conquest would be the responsibility of individual tribes to subdue the enemy within their territory.

So the LORD alerted Joshua and Israel to the reality of their situation in order that they would guard against experiencing a letdown. Now I say that because this is a protracted conflict, an ongoing conflict. And war can wear a person down. The battle can get to an individual and particularly when it's a long battle. And so to guard against that let down they are reminded that, 'this is the way it is, this is the situation. There's very much more that needs to be conquered; the war goes on'; and so they were not to be discouraged. They were to set their minds to doing the work that the LORD had before them.

But the LORD addressed any discouragement that they might have with encouragement. He concluded, in verse 6, the familiar words, reassuring them, "...I will drive them out from before the sons of Israel." Now that's incentive to continue to fight on. They're not alone in this war. Now God had already proved Himself faithful in the past. And He would be faithful in the present and in the future. He promised to drive out the enemy. But they were to work. They were to fight. They were to carry on the warfare.

It's the same incentive that's given to us in various places. For example, in Philippians chapter 2, verses 12&13. But what Paul is telling the Philippians there is, 'obey'. Be earnest in the Christian life, and obey the LORD. But he puts it in this way, "...work out your salvation with fear and trembling." (vs12). The salvation that has been placed within you, the new life that's there, bring it out, 'work it out.'

And then he explains how we can do that. It's not of our own strength. He says, "For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to do, *(or both to will and to work)*, for His good pleasure." We're to do what we're to do, but we can do it because God is doing it within us. So walk by faith, knowing that God is enabling us to do it at every step. And that's the assurance that He was giving to Israel as well. He was going to fight for them and with them and drive out those enemies.

But in the meantime Israel was to begin enjoying its inheritance and Joshua was instructed to begin the division of the land. So the old soldier is now an elder statesman and judge. What remains of the chapter is largely about the boundaries that mark off the tribal territories and cities within them. It's been likened to reading a real estate deed. I'm not in real estate, and so Mark, and some of the other men here, would be better qualified to characterize a real estate deed and what it is to read one, (but it doesn't sound to me like very interesting reading). And this chapter itself, on the surface of it, lacks a lot of that kind of interest, particularly from what we've seen so far in the Book of Joshua.

But real estate deeds are important. And to the tribes of Israel this document was very important. It gave them the dimensions of their inheritance. This was a legal document that established in writing the territorial dimensions of each tribe's inheritance. So it was an objective standard and authority. They could appeal to this to know where they belonged and what was theirs. That's essential. It's what the Bible is for us. It is authoritative because it is God's revelation. It is the Word of God. We appeal to it; we study it; we seek to know it in order to know right from wrong. How can you know what's right and how can you know what's wrong if it's just left to our own imagination? Well that's everyone doing "right in his own eyes." Everything is relative at that point.

But not everything is relative. There are absolutes. There is right and wrong, and we know that from the Word of God. And not only that, we know who God is from His revelation. And, because we know who God is, we know who we are. All of that is contained in the Word of God—the objective standard that is written out for us in our Bible. So, to the Israelite this passage, these passages here, are important. They were sacred. Under the old covenant, God's blessing on the people was tied to the land that they were being given. It was connected to fields and trees and harvest—to war and peace.

And the details, the detail given here in documenting all that the LORD had given the tribes, was a demonstration of God's faithfulness to His people. He keeps His

promises and does abundantly for them. So the division of the land was a great moment in Israel's history. In temporal matters, it was the inheritance. What the Israelite had hoped for while a slave in Egypt was now realized. That hope was a reality for them.

The division began with the land east of the Jordan that was divided among the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, (the half-tribe of Manasseh), which is the half-tribe of the tribe of Joseph. Now that's what the rest of the chapter covers. Moses had already allotted land to these tribes on condition that they would cross the Jordan with the other nine and a half tribes, with their brothers, and they would help them conquer their part of Canaan. —And they had done that. —They'd done that faithfully. And now they had a written record of the land that they were given. The details are largely geographic, so we'll deal with them briefly, giving attention to a few select verses.

Verses 8 through 13 give a survey of the whole region and lay some stress on the fact that Moses promised it to the three tribes. So it's twice he's mentioned here in that way, verse 8, with the other half-tribe, (that is Manasseh), the Reubenites, and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as Moses, the servant of the LORD, gave to them.

Now Moses' connection with the inheritance of the two and a half tribes is emphasized here because they were beyond the Jordan. That area is referred to as Trans-Jordan—beyond the Jordan. And that river separated those two and a half tribes from the other nine and a half tribes. But their territory was as much a part of God's inheritance to the nation as Canaan was on the west side of the Jordan. So Moses' connection with the Trans-Jordan tribes is emphasized here, in order to maintain unity among all of the tribes. Israel was not a nation of nine and a half tribes, but of 12 tribes. Unity is essential for the people of God.

Now that's the lesson here for us as well. —We need to maintain unity. And with things like this pandemic can make that difficult. And other natural things can make that difficult. All kinds of things can interfere within an assembly, a church, to disrupt unity. But unity is vitally important and it was vitally important for the nation Israel.

But there are other lessons we have here besides that and we have some significant sites that are listed in this region that's given to Reuben. In verse 11, for example, mention is made of Gilead and the territory of the Geshurites. Gilead was an important place for Israel. You've heard about Gilead. Well, this is where it's located. And I say it's an important place, that's obvious because it's mentioned so many times in the Old Testament. I think Gilead is mentioned over 100 times in the Old Testament. It was part of the lands of all three tribes.

It was a fertile region at that time, at high elevation, with forests and abundant grazing lands. It produced olives and grape vines grew on its western slopes. But it was especially known for its medicine. Its healing balm, made of a resin, was produced there and is well known to students of the Bible from the prophet Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 8, verse 22 he asks a question, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?..." And he's asking a rhetorical question. The answer is, yes, there's a balm there. It's famous for this healing balm, and yes, there is a physician there. So he asks, "Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?" So Jeremiah was using the famous balm produced in Gilead to speak of spiritual medicine that could cure Israel.

Later that became the text of an old spiritual that interpreted it of salvation in Christ. You're familiar with it, I know: "There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole, there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul." Those lyrics are, I have to believe, the result of deep meditative reading of Scripture. Take this one verse out of this large Book of Jeremiah, out of all the Old Testament, and to find such rich meaning in it. And I think it's well applied in that hymn.

But Gilead had an important place in Israel's history. It was the home of the prophet Elijah. He's first mentioned in 1 Kings 17, verse 1, "Now Elijah, the Tishbite of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab...". So Gilead's an important place in the Bible, and it's first mentioned here for us in these tribes in the area of Reuben, but it was in the others as well.

The Geshurites and the Maacathites are mentioned with Gilead. They are mentioned again in verse 13, "But the sons of Israel did not dispossess the Geshurites or the Maacathites, for Geshur and Maacath live among Israel until this day." That was also true of the Philistines that are mentioned earlier. And that's significant, (and I mentioned, I think, a moment ago that the significance of that), that 400 years later they were all still there when David was active. And that's significant because it reminded Israel of its failure to finish its mission. I said this is a protracted conflict, this is a challenging conflict. And they did not meet the challenge. They were still with Israel, and that would have long term consequences for the nation.

Absalom, David's son, was born to a Geshurite princess. He fled to Geshur for refuge after killing his brother Amnon. When he returned he formed a revolt against his father that almost succeeded. Had Israel been obedient, not been careless in its duty, a tragic episode in its history would have been avoided. What we don't do has consequences for us and for those who come after us. What we do, as well, has consequences for ourselves and for those who follow.

The tribe of Levi is mentioned here in verse 14, and then again in verse 33 at the end of the chapter, "But to the tribe of Levi, Moses did not give an inheritance..." They weren't given land, "...the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as He had promised to them." They were the priestly tribe. They didn't have a specific territory or region given to them for their inheritance. They lived in priestly cities. There were 48 of them throughout the land. They had cities in these three tribal areas. That's why they're mentioned here—and then they're mentioned again later, in chapter 14, verses 3 and 4. They're scattered throughout all of the tribes of Israel, which shows the importance of the Levites. It was their responsibility to minister to the nation. —They had the greatest responsibility, really. And in that sense they had the greatest inheritance—the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance.

It's another example of grace, which I think we find implied throughout this chapter. Levi, the son of Jacob, along with his brother Simeon, slaughtered the people of Shechem. It was an act of vengeance. It's in Genesis, chapter 34. Because of that, Jacob,

on his death bed, cursed their anger, and prophesied that they would be scattered in Israel, (Genesis 49, verse 7). But God turned that curse into a blessing. The Levites were scattered throughout the nation, but scattered as the priestly tribe that would minister throughout those 12 tribes. Now that's grace, redeeming grace, that can take those that have failed and transform them and make them useful.

Now in verses 15 through 23, the territory of Reuben is described. It was located in the southern region, east of the Jordan, along the northern half of the Dead Sea, (probably would be best for you just to look at your maps at the end of the Bible), but it's located there. And in verse 17, Bamoth-baal is listed as part of the inheritance. That means 'the heights of Baal', —Baal the false God. It was at this place that Balaam ascended to the top of the mountain and cursed Israel in Numbers 22, verse 41—rather tried to curse Israel.

In verse 20 Beth-peor is listed as part of the inheritance, and the slopes of Pisgah. It's from Mount Pisgah that Moses was given a view of the promised land that he was not allowed to enter, (and that seems unreasonably harsh to some, I think). You remember the story; Moses was told to "speak to the rock" when they were thirsty. This is years after he had done this before. And instead of speaking to the rock, Moses struck the rock with his rod in his anger, and water came out, and people had the water that they needed. But because he smote the rock instead of speaking it, God prevented him from entering into the land.

And while that may seem harsh, what is really a reminder is that there's no insignificant sin. We might find ways to excuse things like that. Everybody gets mad. Everybody loses his temper at some time. Everybody does what's wrong at some time. But nevertheless, there is no small sin. Sin is serious. But there is grace in this, too, because with his service done, the LORD brought Moses home to the greater Canaan above. He didn't enter into that Canaan, but he entered into something far greater. That's the reward that grace brings.

Contrast to Pisgah is Beth-peor, where the false prophet Balaam got a view of the tribes of Israel, and where again he tried to curse Israel. But God changed his curses

into blessings. Verse 22, which we read in our Scripture reading, records the rest of the story regarding Balaam stating that, "The sons of Israel also killed Balaam the son of Beor, the diviner, with the sword among *the rest of* their slain." There's no grace in that, other than God's patience with the 'mad prophet', as Peter calls him, is justice. And again, it shows the seriousness, the great weight of sin. It will be judged.

But the encouragement to Israel here was the reminder in these place names that God is sovereign. When they read these names, and they thought about these, they would think about the events that happened there, and what all is contained in just the names of these places. And they would be reminded that God is so sovereign, so much in control of things, that He can thwart evil and destroy the enemy that's against them. He could turn curses into blessings—He's able to do that. And He does that. That's Psalm 76, verse 10. It says, 'He makes the wrath of man to praise Him.'

So they'd be reminded of that as they looked through this real estate deed, as it were, this document that set out their inheritance. He does that. He defeats the enemy. He defeats strong enemies. He defeats great kings. Verse 21 describes this area where the tribe of Reuben settled as the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites. And so, when the LORD said, "...I will drive them out from before the sons of Israel..." (vs6), the sons of Israel had every reason to believe that the LORD would do that, and that He would act in faith. He'd already done that. He'd proven Himself more than once. Here with Sihon, this great king, this Amorite king, He defeated him.

In verses 24 through 28, the territory of the tribe of Gad is given. It comprised most of the entire Jordan valley, east of the Jordan river. It was bounded on the south by the north shore of the Dead Sea, and on the north by the south shore of the Sea of Galilee. In other words, it's between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. According to verse 27, this was the rest of the kingdom of Sihon, king of Heshbon. So now Reuben and Gad possess his kingdom.

Territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh is given in verses 29 through 31. Manasseh was the half-tribe of the tribe of Joseph. The tribe of Ephraim is the other half of that tribe. But the tribe of Manasseh was divided in half as well. One half was on the

east side of the Jordan, the other half was in Canaan on the west side of the Jordan. So it's a large tribe. The eastern territory extended from Gad's northern border, around the Sea of Galilee, all the way up to Mount Hermon, to the border of Lebanon.

Verse 30 states that Manasseh took possession of all the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan. Og was a giant and the second Amorite king defeated under the leadership of Moses. In Deuteronomy, chapter 3, in verse 2, before the battle the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand..." Again, that's God's sovereign grace. So all three of the eastern tribes had reminders of that—reminders of God's sovereign grace that their inheritance was given to them by God. He had overthrown Balaam, the magician. He had defeated both Sihon and Og. It was both proof of His power and proof of His faithfulness. In Genesis 22 verse 17, the LORD promised Abraham that his people would "possess the gates of their enemies." —And they were doing that. The chapter concludes with a summary and statement regarding the tribe of Levi.

And so this is what Moses had done. That is, he had distributed the inheritance of the three tribes. He had allotted that to them. And that was the pattern for Joshua as he began his new work and service to Israel.

But what does all of this mean to us? It does have meaning to us, even the seemingly mundane portions about real estate. I think we can say that, because in 1 Corinthians, chapter 10, Paul wrote about Israel's exodus from Egypt, and God's provision for the people in the wilderness. And he wrote, Paul wrote, in verse 11, "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." Now I think that gives us a principle of interpreting the Old Testament. Its events happened for our instruction. It has 'types' and examples for us that foreshadow greater persons, places, and events.

Joshua, whose name is 'Jesus' in Greek, pictures Christ as our leader and conqueror, in the first part of the book, the 'captain of our salvation'. That's what the author of Hebrews calls Christ in the Book of Hebrews, in chapter 2, verse 10, and later

in the book as well. The word 'captain' can be translated 'leader' or 'author' of our salvation. But you see the LORD Christ leading us as our captain, our leader, through this world, conquering as we go, and ultimately to the Canaan above—the fulfillment of all that's pictured here.

Well, in the second half of the book, Joshua is a type of Christ in his work of distributing the land. Because Christ, who gained salvation for us, gives every believer his or her share in that. And Israel's inheritance in the land reminds us of our eternal inheritance. —It pictures that. They possessed the land, but they still had much remaining to be possessed.

The Christian is like that. Upon faith we are forever saved. We have righteous standing with God that can never be removed. And we have a life of privilege—a life filled with privileges. "Our citizenship is in heaven..." Paul told the Philippians in Philippians 3:20. We have not yet entered into it, and so Paul told them, "...we eagerly wait for a Savior..." And when the Savior comes, the 'Greater Joshua', then will come our full possession of our inheritance, our eternal inheritance.

So in the meantime, we live among the Canaanites, so to speak. And we must continue to fight the good fight of faith with the sword of God's Word, trusting Him, living faithfully until Christ comes or we go to heaven—which is our inheritance.

As the author of Hebrews wrote in Hebrews 4:11, "Let us be diligent to enter that rest..." We're not passive in this life. We're to be active in this life in obedience to Him. We're to be vigilant and diligent to overcome the world. And as we do that, the LORD blesses us. In fact, we are very much like the tribe of Levi in our passage. In Revelation, chapter 1, verse 6, John wrote that Christ "...has made us to be a kingdom, priest to His God..." "He made us a kingdom" does not mean that He made us kings, but that He established us as a people over whom He reigns. The honor is not our sovereignty, the honor of that passage is our citizenship—what we have. We are citizens of heaven. We're citizens of a great kingdom.

And He's made us priests. Now there we do function, and we are constituted as a worshiping people. And that's what we are, and what we are to be doing now. All of us

are to be doing that. We're to be bearing God's Light to people in this world. We are to know God, and we are to serve Him among His people—and within this world, shining as lights. That's something that Israel failed to do. It was to be a light to the nations—and it didn't fulfill that. But that's what we are to be, as we give the Gospel and live the life of a faithful saint. And we do that knowing that we have a glorious future that will soon be upon us.

The church lives between Christ's two comings, which have been compared to D-Day and V-Day. —After the Normandy invasion in WWII and then the final defeat in Japan, Victory Day. When the allied forces won the beaches of Normandy in 1944, the war was essentially over. It was just a matter of time until victory over Hitler was final. And it's that way with the LORD's first coming. He won the victory over Satan, sin, and death, on the cross when He said, "It is finished." The resurrection was God's affirmation of that. By raising Christ from the dead He demonstrated that He had accepted Christ's sacrifice for us and gained for us life over death.

Well now we are waiting the LORD's second coming, when the enemy shall be totally defeated and surrender finally and completely. So, in between we carry on, living actively, obediently with confidence of ultimate victory because of Christ's victory at Calvary. That is all of us, every one of us, even the oldest of us, who are like Joshua, an old soldier who came to that time in life when he had to lay down his sword—who was still used of God, nevertheless. He had a new service to perform.

And that's true for us. We never retire from the Christian life. We retire from our profession, whether it's school teacher or physician or lawyer. Whatever one's profession may be—come to a point where that ends. But the responsibilities of the Christian life never end. We may be limited in what we can do, and we certainly will be—but God uses us still. Our service may be that of giving counsel, or importantly, being a man or woman of prayer and exercising that. That is of great importance.

Joshua, I think, should be a great encouragement to us and a motivation to us. We don't just fade away. We serve the LORD, the God of grace, in His power and

according to His leading—as long as He gives us breath and ability to do that. And as we do that, He will drive out the enemy before us.

Well, in 1 John, chapter 2, the apostle writes to three different types of Christian in the congregation: to little children who are forgiven, to young men who have overcome the evil one, and to fathers who know God. John describes the young men as strong. They fight battles. Fathers are the mature believers—they know God. They have a long walk with God. They know His Word and they have wisdom to give. That was Joshua. No longer a young man able to fight the battles, but a mature man of God; able to give help and direction to the nation; able to give wise counsel. That's what we should aspire to. And may God make all of us spiritual fathers.

But if you're here without Christ, you first need to become a child—God's child. You were lost and you need the balm that heals the sin-sick soul. Come to Christ. He's medicine for the soul. He is the Savior because He died for sinners. He bore their sin in judgment, and took those sins away for all who believe in Him. Come to Christ. Believe in Him.; and by God's grace, and in God's grace serve Him. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for this text of Scripture and this time of study in it together, and pray that You would bless it to our understanding and help us to see our lives as being lives of service to Your people—service to You. And we're to be active, engaged in the spiritual conflict that is going on around us. —And yet we can do that in the confidence that You are in it all the way, from beginning to end. And You guarantee success, victory, for the faithful believer, those who act in obedience. May we be that. May we do that. And we can do all of that because of what Your Son has done for us.

And so, as we turn our attention to the LORD's Supper now, we pray Your rich blessing upon us, and we pray that You would help us to focus our attention correctly on Him, and be benefited as we reflect on what He's done for us. Thank You for Him, for His death for us, and it's in His name we pray. Amen.

*(End of Audio)*