

Joshua, Our Pattern



Walking Through the Land of God's Promises (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you out of truths that have made the difference between success and failure in my life, and can do the same in yours. For the theme of my talks this week I have chosen a title that's different and exciting, "Walking Through the Land of God's Promises."

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests.

In my previous talks on claiming our inheritance, I've emphasized two important and related truths. First, God's provision for His people is in His promises. The key Scripture for this is 2 Peter 1:3-4:

> "[God's] divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." (NIV)

In those verses we need to notice the two things that are stated in the perfect tense as things that have already been done. In verse 3, God's divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness. God is not going to give us, He has already given us. And then in verse 4, that's explained in the statement, "[God] has given us his very great and precious promises…" So we see that God has given us everything we're ever going to need, but He's given it in the form of His promises.

I sum this up by saying, "God's provision is in His promises." Let me repeat that, it's so important. God's provision for His people is in His promises.

The second point that I've made and that goes along with the first is that the promises are our inheritance. There's that vivid comparison between the Old Testament and the New

Testament. In the Old Testament, under a leader named Joshua, God led His people into a promised land. In the New Testament, under a leader named Jesus, which is the same name in the Hebrew form, God leads His people into a land of promises. So the promises are our inheritance. And in our talks this week we're going to be walking through the land of the promises, viewing our inheritance and seeing how we can possess our inheritance.

In my talks this week I'm going to deal specifically with various needs or problems that commonly arise in our lives and I'm going to show you, in a very practical way, how we can meet our needs and solve our problems by locating and claiming the specific promises of God that are appropriate for each particular situation. But first of all, in my introductory talk today, I'm going to consider the promise which is, in a certain sense, the key to claiming all the promises. This is the promise that the Lord gave to Joshua at the time He commissioned him to lead His people into their inheritance. It is found in Joshua 1:8. This is what the Lord said to Joshua:

> "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success." (NAS)

First of all, let's look at the promise. I suppose there is no promise that gives more complete assurance of complete success than this promise given to Joshua. "Then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success." Two things are combined, prosperity and success. Now you might say, "Well, that was Joshua and I'm not Joshua." Well, that's true, but remember that God is no respecter of persons. In other words, He has no favorite. If you meet God's conditions laid down in your life, God will do for you exactly what He would do for Joshua or for any of His other great servants. It isn't the personality that impresses God, it's the obedience to His conditions. So that's the promise. "You will make your way prosperous, you will have success."

I've discovered in my dealings with human beings over many years that nobody really wants to fail. There is born in every human being a deep desire and longing to succeed. So, the people who fail don't fail because they want to fail, they fail because they don't know how to succeed. But this verse that we've looked at tells us how to succeed. It's God's guaranteed pathway to success.

Now let's look at the conditions. There are certain key phrases. "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth." Notice the word "mouth." Then, "you shall meditate on it day and night." Meditate refers to the heart and to the mind, to the inner being. Then, "so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it." The key words are mouth, meditate, and do. In other words, and I'm going to change the order for a moment, what do you have to do? You have to think God's law, speak God's law and act God's law. Right meditation, right speaking and right action. The rightness is determined by their being in accordance with God's law.

Now Joshua only had the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, the books of Moses; but we have a much more complete revelation of God, the total Bible, containing 66 books. If the five books of Moses would do that much for Joshua, how much should we anticipate from the total revelation of the Bible, all 66 books? Our revelation is greater but the principles that we have to act on are just the same. We have to think God's law, speak God's law and act God's law.

Now we look at a passage in the New Testament which states the requirements for salvation according to the New Testament. This passage is in Romans 10:8-10. Paul is speaking about the word of God and he says:

> "But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart', that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." (NAS)

A more literal translation would be "with the heart man believes to righteousness and with the mouth he confesses to salvation." Notice that all through is the joining together of the heart and the mouth. We'll go back to that in a moment and study the order in which Paul presents it.

First of all, we need to explain two important words that are used. The word "confess" has a special meaning in the Bible. Its literal meaning is "to say the same as." So when we confess, we are saying the same with our mouth as God says in His Word, whatever that may be, about sin, about salvation, about healing, about prayer. Confession is making the words of our mouth agree with the Word of God.

Now the word "salvation" is an all-inclusive word that covers all the benefits provided for us through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. It includes spiritual benefits, physical benefits, material benefits, benefits in this life and in the next,

in time and in eternity. Bearing this in mind, let's look now at what Paul says in this passage about the relationship between the mouth and the heart. He uses that pair of words three times, once in each verse. In verse 8 he says, "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart." Notice mouth comes first and then heart. In verse 9 he says, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." Notice again that mouth comes before heart. But in verse 10, where he repeats that pair of words for the third time, he reverses the order, "for with the heart man believes unto righteousness, with the mouth he confesses unto salvation." There the heart comes before the mouth.

Now I believe there's a very practical reason for this. That many times the way to become convinced of God's truth in experience is to make the right confession. Even when you don't feel exactly in your heart that you believe that particular truth of God's Word, you believe it is God's Word, you believe that it's true from the beginning to the ending. Because God says it, you're willing to say it. In a certain sense, you humble yourself and you abase your own carnal mind before the authority of the Word of God. And so, because God says it, you say it with your mouth and from your mouth it moves on into your heart. You say it twice with your mouth and by that time it's established in your heart. Then it's natural for you to say it because it's in your heart, so it comes out of your heart to your mouth. In other words, this is the way you establish yourself in the truth of God's Word. You confess yourself into the salvation of God, first of all with the mouth, and from the mouth to the heart, then from the heart back to the mouth. Confession is made unto salvation. Then, after it's established in your mouth and in your heart, you act it out. James 2:17 and 26 says this:

> "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (NIV)

And then again:

> "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." (NIV)

In other words, it's not enough merely to believe and merely to say it, but you have also to act it out. So we come back to exactly the same principle that was established for Joshua: think God's Word, speak God's Word, act God's Word. The result is guaranteed: success.

All right. Our time is up for the day. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be dealing with a theme that is of vital importance for every one of us, "How to Receive God's Forgiveness." I'll explain how you can know with absolute assurance that your sins have been forgiven.

Radio Program

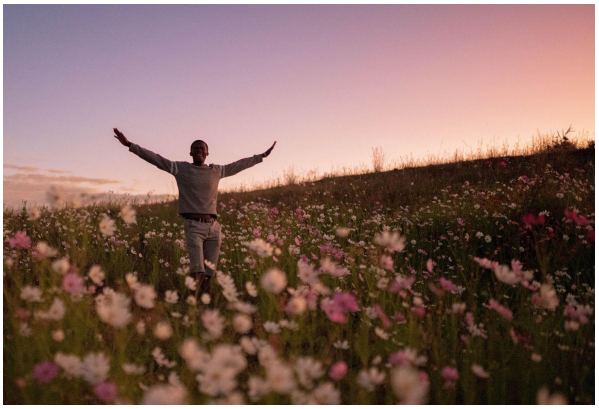
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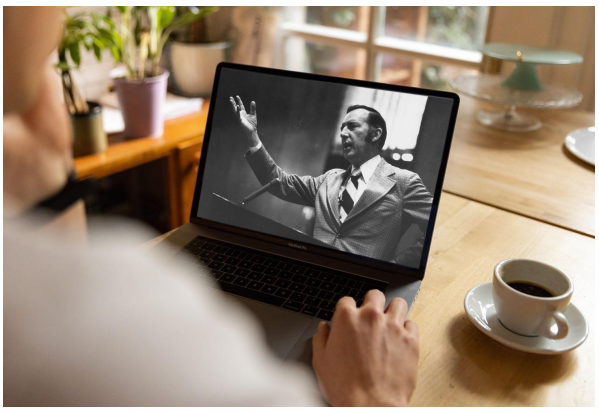
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