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How To Take Possession Of God's Promises

Intro: There is over \$400 billion in unclaimed money in the US. People who have left their estates / inheritances to no one! They have these web sites that you can go to and search out lost unclaimed money that belongs to you! Think of it...some long distance relative who has died years ago left money that you can possess. Oprah says that 9 out of 10 Americans have money unclaimed.

- God's promises are a lot like an unclaimed inheritance. I bet 9 out of 10 believers have promises unclaimed! There are blessings and fulfillment that God promises that are simply unclaimed by believers. God wants us to take possession of these gifts...but how.
- Today we're going to be looking at how we do this corporately as a church. God has given us some promises, (our destiny) but how do we go about experiencing them.

Summarize Joshua 3-4 (Israel's crossing of the Jordan River)

- Already been in the desert for 40 years / Joshua is now the new leader
- Conquered the kings east of the Jordan River (Sihon / Og / Balak) They were occupying their cities and enjoying their plunder
- Now they camped on the east banks of the Jordan River at flood stage. The fulfillment of God's promises to Israel lay across the Jordan River. The promised land was in view. They could see it.
- God told Joshua what He was going to do. He was going to repeat a miracle that happened 40 years earlier at the Red Sea. Just as God made a way so Israel could escape 40 years earlier, now He was going to make a way so Israel could enter into what was promised. (Explain)
- After they crossed, God instructed Joshua to set up memorial stones for future generations.

There are some great truths for us in this story as it relates to taking possession what God has promised.

I. Refuse To Settle For A Partial Fulfillment

A. Israel could have just settled on the east side of the Jordan

1. They had some of the land / they had houses – vineyards – pastures – flocks – even cities they didn't build. They conquered all the kingdoms on that side of the river.

2. Why put yourself at more risk trying to possess more land? Why not just play it safe and protect what you have? Why fight more battles?
3. WHY? Because it wasn't God's plan for them to stop there! God wasn't done showing the world who He was through them!

Josh. 4:24 "He did this so that all the nations of the earth might know the power of the Lord..." (NLT)

4. Partial fulfillment wasn't a testimony about the greatness of God. Partial obedience would have been the same as complete disobedience.
5. It's the display of God's miraculous power through the nation of Israel that was to be a testimony to the world. How would the world know about God if Israel would have been satisfied?

B. We could be satisfied with our current situation

1. We could be satisfied with our growth / our influence / even with our lease...after all if we just lease, we're not responsible for the building.
2. We've already experienced so much from God, isn't this enough? Why do something so risky?
3. Because it's not God's plan for us to stop here! He's not done showing this community His greatness through us. Partial obedience would be the same as complete disobedience.
4. How is this community going to be confronted with the reality of God's power until a church finally trusts God for everything that He has promised!
5. 40 years earlier, the nation of Israel faced a similar test (explain numbers 11) I don't want to spend 40 years out in the wilderness because we refused to believe God for all that He's promised

I Cor 10:11 "All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close." (NLT)

C. How does the purchase of the building = fulfillment?

(share slides about how with the property there is greater fulfillment.)

II. Refuse To Be Intimidated By The Obstacles

A. Israel had a host of obstacles before them

1. The Jordan River was at flood stage. (I don't think it was a coincidence that God had them there at that time of the year. God loves it when it looks impossible.) 3 million people across a flooded river.

Josh. 3:15 "Now it was the harvest season, and the Jordan was overflowing its banks." (NLT)

2. They were entering into an area they had never been before. They had the obstacle of the unknown. What's waiting for us on the other side?

3. They were also facing a host of other kingdoms and people groups who were wanting to destroy them. They weren't moving into a friendly neighborhood. It was a hostile environment!
4. Their reputation had already preceded their arrival. The news that they had already conquered all the Kings East of the Jordan was creating quite a stir.
5. There were plenty of obstacles, but they went forward anyway!

B. We have obstacles before us as well

1. We can be intimidated by the price of the property. (2.5-2.7 million) We can obsess over that figure and let it create fear / hopelessness / faithlessness
2. We can be intimidated by the amount we need to raise for a down payment. (Minimum of \$1 million)
3. We could be intimidated as we look at our own resources (How can a group of ordinary people come up with this much money?) You may feel that financially you're always at flood stage because of bills.
4. We could be intimidated by the prospects of trying to raise this enormous amount of money and yet continue to keep current ministries running and growing at the same time. (We can't sacrifice what we're already doing!)
5. It is a test of our faith. Do we really believe that God is bigger than the obstacles we face? Do we really believe that He wants to prove Himself to us? Do we believe He wants to use us as a testimony to this community?
6. We have the choice between fear and faith.
Josh 1:9 "I command you – be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (NLT)
7. To live by faith is to move forward despite the obstacles believing that the presence and power of God is greater!

III. Resolve To Live By Faith In Order To Experience God

A. Look at Israel's resolve to live by faith

1. Joshua told the people to consecrate themselves / purify themselves.
Josh. 3:5 "The Joshua said to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.'" (NASB)
 - Consecrate means set apart for the service of God!
2. They saw this as a spiritual issue not a physical one. They saw the need to be right with God in order to live by faith. To deal with the obstacles spiritually!
3. They went forward right into the obstacle. They put themselves in a place to see the power of God...or drown!

4. They did this in unity. There wasn't anyone left on the other side of the river. They trusted God together as a group!
5. They built a memorial to help them remember what God had done for them. 12 stones. "What do these stones mean?" It's about the future generations.
6. The result was experiencing the miraculous power of God, and a testimony to the other nations.

B. We must resolve to live by faith as well

1. We need to see this as a spiritual journey, not a physical one. It's not about money / building / but about experiencing God. God wants us to grow spiritually through this process. We must deal with this spiritually.
2. We must put ourselves in a position to see the power of God. To put ourselves in a position where the only chance of success is going to be God.
3. We also must do this in unity. We must move ahead together. I don't want to leave anyone on the other side of the river. It can't be something where 50% move ahead and 50% sit on the other side of the river.
4. We need to give future generations a memorial about the greatness of God. Do you see these 12 stones on this platform? (explain – 4 years ago on the first Sunday in January was our first Sunday in this building.)
5. If we resolve to live by faith, we will experience God like we never have! I believe God is wanting to do miracles in our midst and He is wanting this area to know that He is real.

Heb. 10:35-36 "Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord, no matter what happens. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now(resolve), so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that He has promised." (NLT)

- To help us resolve to live by faith, I am asking each of you to take a 40 day spiritual journey with me. As we begin this Kingdom Advance Campaign, I want us to start it spiritually. Just like Joshua did...He went through the camp of Israel and said, "Consecrate yourselves, for the Lord will do wonders among you!" This is what I want us to do!!! Set yourself apart for the service of God! HOW?

C. 40 Day Spiritual Journey to a more Generous Life book

1. Explain the book – one per family – begin reading on Wednesday
2. Discuss it as a family / in your home groups / weekly application projects
3. 2 worship and prayer events (Jan. 14 & Feb. 04)
4. Each Sunday message will relate to our growth and obedience in this issue.
5. Culminates on Sunday February 18th – Pledge cards and love gifts turned in. (That week is Valentines Day – We will express our love for God through our gifts and pledges to Him. "Where your treasure is there is your heart also.")

6. Our goal is to see God provide through His people a minimum of \$1 million in 16 months. We will culminate this process May 2008. WHY? We want to give everyone enough time to participate in this.