

A Stop by Quiet Waters

By
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“God Will Fight For You”

Joshua 13:1-7 offers a fresh and encouraging way to look at the ministry the Lord has called us to. Joshua was now an old man and the Lord spoke to him, *“You are growing old, and much land remains to be conquered. The people still need to occupy the land of the Philistines and the Geshurites.”* Then the Lord described the boundaries of the land yet to be conquered, and concluded by telling Joshua, *“I will drive these people out of the land for the Israelites. So be sure to give this land to the Israelites as a special possession.”*

God declared the land was theirs and he would drive their enemies out of it for them. This must have really lifted their hearts because Joshua was now too old to lead them into battle. The people still had to fight battles for the land, but as they did so God said he would give them victory. Some of the tribes went on to conquer all the land God had given them, even though it took them years, but some of them never did. There’s a principle in all this for us.

I encourage you to look at your ministry in the same way the Israelites looked at the land. God has called you to pastor where you are and has given you your community as your “land.” He will enable you to “possess” it, but you must fight for it. You will see people come to Christ for God has put you there for this to happen. He never told the Israelites it would be as easy for them to take the land as it had been for them to take Jericho. Jericho was an object lesson God gave them so they would know that God was indeed with them.

God has not called you just to be a chaplain to your congregation, as important as this element of pastoral ministry is. We have been called to go and make disciples, which we know is a difficult task here in New England. God knows this, just as He knew it would be very difficult for the Israelites to drive the Canaanites out from some parts of Israel. He wants to see people in your community, young and old, brought into his redeemed family. He has chosen and anointed you (yes, **you are anointed by God** for the work he has called you to) as his witness to reach people in your town with the Gospel. Because he has called you to this he has promised to give you victory in this assignment.

The Israelites had flesh and blood enemies to fight, whereas you are struggling against the powers of darkness who are unwilling to release their hold on the “land” given to you. At times I suspect you feel as though you will never see a spiritual breakthrough in your town. Well then, go for just one person at a time. Our Father in heaven has promised to give us whatever we ask for in prayer if it is in his will.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him. . ¹ John 5:14-15 NIV

It is his will that lost people come to saving faith in his Son. It is also his will that you and I be effective witnesses in this process. Even in this though, he has not said we will see people come without a struggle, for, like the ancient Israelites, we have to **fight** to “take the land.”

I expect there are some of you who are already seeing people come to Christ on a regular basis. But for those of us who are not seeing this happen, I want to present a challenge. Let's begin to pray every day from now on, in the light of the above biblical promise, that the Lord will give each of us opportunities on a weekly basis to speak to individuals outside the church about God's love for them and about Christ and salvation, and that we will have the great privilege of leading people to the Lord Jesus. If we pray this way in faith the opportunities will come! God has promised it. All we need do is be ready for them.

God will break the hold of the powers of darkness over these people as we seek to proclaim the gospel in one-on-one sharing, and he will drive the hellish powers out them so that we will see people come to Christ. But like the Israelites in Joshua's day we must fight the battles. Pastoral ministry is truly spiritual warfare at every point. The forces behind the battles we fight are seeking to keep us from possessing our territory. Fight against them with prayer, the Word of God, and love for the lost, and you will experience victory and see people come to Christ.

I urge those of you in a John 17:23 Fellowship group to make such praying for each other a part of your prayer time together. For those of you in another pastoral support group I urge you to do the same thing. For those of you not in any pastoral support group I urge you to reach out to another pastor and ask him/her to pray with you and for you in this effort, and pledge yourself to pray for him/her in the same way. (Jesus never even sent one apostle alone to get a donkey.)

Let's do as our Lord has commanded us to do, go and make disciples, and not let the difficulties and struggles of evangelism in the North-East discourage and defeat us. *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"*

Standing with you and praying for you in this challenge,

Dick Germaine