

Sermon notes 23/02/20

Possess, plunder and prosper

Part 3

Opening Text: Exodus 23:25-30

As God was bringing people out of Egypt so they could serve Him, He made them 4 powerful promises:

- Provision - *'He will bless your bread and your water'*
- Healing - *'I will take sickness from the midst of you'*
- Life - *'I will fulfil the number of your days'*
- Victory over the enemy - *'will make all your enemies to turn their backs to you'*

However, in regard to the taking over of the land, He said that it was not going to happen all at once, in one year. It was going to be gradual. Now, this is specifically about the land – not the other promises. *Provision* was theirs to enjoy, *healing* was theirs, *life* also... in the 'now', in the present tense!

What God said in verses 29 and 30 was only concerning the actual, physical occupation of the land. He said:

²⁹ I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. ³⁰ Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.

1. **The timing** of the fulfilment of this promise was different: it was not for 'now', not in 'one year' even, but *little by little*.

God is not just a 'short-term God' but He has plans for our lives that are much bigger and not always immediate. He is not just a God of *immediacy* but also a God of *legacy*. In fact, God has plans that are generational, even 'eternal' plans - plans that extend beyond the end of our physical lives.

2. The *timing* of the promise was different and so were the **conditions** for that promise.

Something had to be in place for that promise to come to pass:

"Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased"

Clearly the issue was that they still needed to *increase*, they still needed to grow in a lot of ways – firstly in number, but also in skills, in capacity, in organisation etc. A lot needed to be in place so they could successfully steward the blessing that God was giving them.

**God wants to make sure that you *have* what it takes
For you to *stay* where He takes you.**

There were risks if they occupied the land all at once: here were simply not enough people to physically occupy the land, at that time. Also, the land could become desolate (unfruitful) in the absence of agricultural systems, infrastructure and manpower.

Here's a few more thoughts regarding this passage:

1. We should trust God with the issue of timing.

We don't always know the behind-the-scenes of a situation, how God is working, what God is seeing that we don't. One thing is sure: what God said will come to pass. At the end of his life, Joshua testified to the integrity of God's word:

Joshua 23:14 - *Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.*

"Timing" is always an uncomfortable thing, but the bible says that there is a time and a season for everything under the sun. While we wait, we just need to persevere and stay consistent. If we do so, we will inherit the promise.

Hebrews 10:36 - *For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.*

There is great power in endurance and consistency – in doing the basics and persevere in them.

2. We should still believe *big*, when all we see is '*little*'.

"Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased "

Most of us don't like long-term and most of us don't like *little by little*... we don't like *little*. Period. Everyone wants the big things, the big events in life, the 'big time', the big promotions. However, the Bible speaks much about the potential of '*little*'.

- **Isaiah 60:22** – *A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time.*"

Elijah the prophet believed in the potential of *little*:

- **1 Kings 18:44 NLT** - *Finally the seventh time, his servant told him, "I saw a little cloud about the size of a man's hand rising from the sea." Then Elijah shouted, "Hurry to Ahab and tell him, 'Climb into your chariot and go back home. If you don't hurry, the rain will stop you!'"*

He so believed the potential of the *little cloud* that he declared a *flood*.

On another occasion he declared abundance of provision to a widow when all she had was "*a little oil in a jar*":

- **1 Kings 17:12** - ¹² So she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”

15-16 - ¹⁵ So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah.

Jesus said that we are to be faithful in the *little things*. What we do with the little things matter, the little opportunities matter.

- **Luke 16:10 NLT** - “If you are faithful in **little things**, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities.

“Little by little I will drive them out from before you

Little by little, day by day, one by one, the enemies were going to be defeated! Moses and Joshua ended up defeating 31 kings, but little by little, one by one:

- **Joshua 12:7, 9-10, 24**

⁷ And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, ...

⁹ the king of Jericho, **one**; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, **one**; ¹⁰ the king of Jerusalem, **one**; the king of Hebron, **one**;

²⁴ the king of Tirzah, **one**—all the kings, thirty-one.

One by one, by one, by one, by one... little by little, battle by battle, day by day.

We should still believe big when all we see is little, we should be faithful in the little things and we should stick to God’s long-term plan of victory and make every day count, every opportunity count – little by little, day by day, one enemy at a time.

3. We should desire God to increase our capacity

One last thought out of this passage:

“Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased “

As we saw earlier, Israel needed to increase - and so do we. We need to grow in God, grow in the revelation of His Word, grow in character, in perseverance, in maturity, so that we will be able to stand where He is taking us.

Israel wasn’t ready yet...and that was not going to happen in one year. There was some time involved. There was a *process* to their *progress*. Possessing everything God has for you will require a commitment to growth – a commitment to going deeper.

Conclusion

I believe that this is going to be a decade of great conquests. Remember that

- God has a long-term plan for your life.
- His plan is made up of little moments, little victories, bit by bit, day by day, little by little – determine to stay the course, last the distance and, at the end see the faithfulness of God
- God wants to grow you, to expand, to increase your capacity. Determine to go deeper in 2020.