

Labor Day Weekend Devotional
Be Strong and Courageous
Claiming What Is Yours

Happy Labor Day Weekend!

Today is Family Sunday. Even though we aren't having a traditional church service today, we don't want you to miss out on growing in your faith.

This devotional connects right into our sermon series through the book of Joshua: Be Strong and Courageous. Over this weekend, I challenge you to read through Joshua 13–21. There is a lot happening in these chapters that we will need to keep in mind for our return to the series next week.

Let's look at what we find in Joshua 13–21.

1. When God gives us gifts, we have to step into the spaces He designed for us.

In Joshua 13–21, the major battles are mostly over, and the work of dividing up the Promised Land among the twelve tribes of Israel begins. The word "inheritance" appears over 50 times in these chapters. The Israelites didn't buy this land, nor did they earn it; God gave it to them as a gift—one that the previous generation missed out on. Even though the land was officially theirs, each tribe still had to step out in faith, move in, and live there.

The New Testament shows that in Christ, God has given us an inheritance as well. We are called sons and daughters of God and joint heirs with Christ, blessed with peace, forgiveness, joy, and hope. Just like Israel, we have to trust Him daily to actually experience and live in those gifts.

2. Being a "borderline believer" comes with a high cost.

When it came time to settle, two and a half tribes (Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh) chose to live outside the main borders of the Promised Land because the land east of the Jordan River looked ideal to them. Moses allowed it, but living on the outer edge left them vulnerable to outside influences and attacks later on.

We can't settle for being borderline followers of Jesus. Staying as close to the edge of the world as possible while still calling ourselves Christians often leaves us outside the will of God and exposed to spiritual attacks. God's plan for your life is always better than anything on the outside.

3. You are never too young—or too old—to do what God made you for.

When the land was being handed out, an 85-year-old man named Caleb walked up to Joshua. Instead of asking for a quiet place to retire, Caleb asked for the tough, mountainous terrain where giants still lived because he trusted God completely. On the flip side, young leaders and entire families stepped up to claim their places, too.

Faith isn't about your age; it's about your heart. God uses middle schoolers, high schoolers, parents, and grandparents to do bold things for His kingdom right now.

4. God provides a place of refuge.

These chapters also introduce the "Cities of Refuge." If someone accidentally hurt someone or made a critical mistake, they could run to one of these cities to be completely safe and protected.

Jesus is our refuge. When we mess up, sin, or feel afraid, we don't have to hide from God. We can run straight to Jesus, where we are safe, forgiven, and loved.

Over the two weeks following Labor Day weekend, I will be preaching through all nine of these chapters (Joshua 13–21), hitting the high points and diving deeper into what God has to teach us. Give Pastor Justin some grace as he tries to read and pronounce all the difficult names and places—seriously, try saying "Timnath-serah"!

If God can bring His people through long wilderness journeys and hard-to-pronounce places, He can certainly guide you through whatever you are facing this week.

Enjoy your Labor Day weekend, rest up, and we can't wait to see you next Sunday as we dive back into Joshua together!

Things to think about or talk about with someone... (The "So What Now?")

- **What is one promise or gift from God (such as peace, joy, or forgiveness) that you want to rely on more this week?**
- **Caleb trusted God even when facing "giants." What challenges or "giants" should we be tackling in faith right now?**
- **How can our church family help each other stay fully committed to God instead of drifting toward the edges?**