

A Piece of the Promised Land

Sunday Plan

SCRIPTURE

Joshua 13–21

MEMORY VERSE

Joshua 21:43; Ephesians 1:11

Joshua 13–21 shows that God's promises aren't just for the nation as a whole — they're personal. Every tribe, every clan, and every household receives a place with their name on it, proving that God's faithfulness reaches all the way down to real people with real lives.

Welcome & Introduction

Opening Questions:

Imagine Your family buys a brand-new house. It's huge, beautiful, and full of potential — but none of the rooms are assigned yet. Everyone wanders around looking at the bedrooms, the backyard, the living room, the kitchen. The house *belongs to the whole family*, but it doesn't feel real until someone says:

- “This one is yours.”
- “This is where you'll sleep.”
- “This is your space.”

Suddenly the house isn't just a building — it's *home*. It becomes personal.

TRANSITION

That's exactly what's happening in Joshua 13–21.

Israel already has the land, but now God is giving each tribe, each family, and each person a place with their name on it. The promises stop being general and start becoming personal.

Unfinished Business

Joshua 13:1–8

Teaching Points

- These chapters are about inheritance, and inheritance is a gospel concept. The land isn't a reward Israel earned. It's a gift God promised to Abraham centuries earlier. The Levites received no land at all because Yahweh Himself was their inheritance, the most prized portion of all. Paul picks up this same language in Ephesians 1:11–14, where believers receive an inheritance through Christ. The land distribution isn't just ancient real estate; it's the fulfillment of a promise that extends to every Christian today.
- There were still large areas of land not yet conquered. Instead of this being a sign of failure, God names the remaining territory and reaffirms His promise. God isn't intimidated by what's unfinished in our lives.
- God's faithfulness extends across generations. The land divisions in verses 2–8 remind us that God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses are still unfolding. We can see that God's story is bigger than any one person and that they're part of something long-lasting and meaningful.

DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think God still gave Joshua responsibilities even when he was old? What does that say about how God views people's value and purpose?
2. God promised the land, but Israel still had to take steps to claim it. What's an area where you know God wants you to act, but you've been hesitant to move forward?

KEY TRUTH

God calls His people to participate in His promises. Even though God promised the land, Israel still had to step into it, fight for it, and settle it. God's promises often involve partnership — He provides the power, but we provide obedience.

Caleb's Claim

Joshua 14:6–15

Teaching Points

- God doesn't forget what He promises. Caleb reminds Joshua of the promise God made to him decades earlier. Even when people forget, circumstances change, or time drags on, God's word remains steady.
- Caleb asks for the hill country where the Anakim — the giants — still lived. He wasn't looking for the easy assignment. Courage means trusting God even when the challenge looks intimidating.
- A life of faith leaves a legacy. Caleb's strength at 85, his confidence in God, and his willingness to take on giants all point to a life shaped by trust. His example becomes part of Israel's story.

DISCUSSION

1. Caleb didn't ask for the easy land — he asked for the hard hill country. What's an area in your life where you've been choosing "easy" instead of trusting God with something harder but better?
2. What promise of God is hardest for you to believe right now, and what might help you hold onto it more confidently?
3. Are there any Christians, a generation or more older than you, whose faith inspires you to be more faithful?

KEY TRUTH

Caleb followed God with his "whole heart" (Joshua 14:8), using language that echoes the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:5). This isn't just personality; it's covenant obedience. Caleb is the model of what all Israel was supposed to be. His faith is not great faith in God, but faith in a great God. He takes the promises of God, turns them into prayers, and pleads them back to God. The tension between Caleb's faithfulness and the rest of Israel's half-heartedness is the tension that drives the entire book of Judges.

Faithfulness over the long-haul matters. Caleb followed the Lord "wholeheartedly" for 45 years — through wandering, waiting, battles, and leadership transitions. His story shows that faith isn't just about big moments; it's about consistent loyalty over time.

Unfinished Work Creates Future Problems

Joshua 15:20, 63; 16:5–10

Teaching Points

- Small compromises become big problems. Judah "could not drive out" the Jebusites (15:63), and Ephraim "did not drive out" the Canaanites (16:10). Whether it was fear, convenience, or apathy, the result was the same: long-term trouble. Compromise feels small in the moment but grows roots.
- Both tribes began well but didn't complete what God asked. This mirrors a common Christian experience: starting strong in faith, habits, or commitments but losing momentum. God calls His

people to follow through, not just begin.

- Comfort can quietly replace courage. Ephraim allowed the Canaanites to stay and eventually turned them into forced labor. That probably felt easier than fighting. But choosing comfort over courage always weakens spiritual strength.

DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think Judah and Ephraim settled for partial obedience? What similar pressures or fears make it hard for you to fully obey God?
2. How would allowing the pagan influence of the Canaanites in their land threaten the security and faithfulness of the Israelites and future generations?
3. Can you recall a time when you postponed doing something that required much more work and effort to deal with later?
4. Where do you see the temptation to “leave something undone” in your life — a habit, a responsibility, or a step of faith you know God wants you to take?

KEY TRUTH

Both Judah and Ephraim receive large, generous territories. God provides, but He doesn't force His people to enjoy or fully claim what He's given. God often places opportunities in front of us, but we still have to walk into them.

Daughters' Bold Request

Joshua 17:1–6

Teaching Points

- They didn't appeal to fairness, emotion, or personal preference. They appealed to God's command given through Moses. Their boldness wasn't rebellion — it was obedience. They trusted God's word more than the expectations of their society.
- In the ancient world, inheritance almost always passed through sons. Daughters were typically dependent on fathers, husbands, or brothers. The daughters of Zelophehad stepped into a male-only space and asked for something unheard of — land rights. Their courage stands out precisely because the culture didn't make room for them.
- Their courage exposed Israel's growing passivity. It's striking that these women had to remind the leaders of what God had already said. This hints at a pattern: Israel is becoming slow to act, slow to obey, and slow to claim what God promised. Their boldness contrasts with their tribe's hesitation, as well as other tribe's failure to claim the land promised to them.

DISCUSSION

1. These women stepped into a space where they weren't “supposed” to speak. When have you needed courage to do what's right even when it felt socially risky?
2. Read Numbers 13:5–9 - Why do you think the leaders needed to be reminded of God's command? What does that reveal about how easy it is to drift into passivity or forget what God has said?
3. We've seen that some tribes were failing to claim the inheritance God promised them. How do you think such boldness as displayed by the daughters of Zelophehad can influence others?

KEY TRUTH

The daughters of Zelophehad receive an inheritance because their father was faithful and they trusted God's promise. This shows that God sees individuals, not just tribes, and He honors those who cling to His word even when it's costly.

Cities of Refuge

Joshua 20:1–9

Teaching Points

- In the ancient Near East, there were no police forces, no court systems like ours, and no neutral investigators. If someone was killed — even accidentally — the victim's family was expected to avenge the death. This wasn't seen as revenge; it was considered a family duty.
- Because of that, an innocent person who caused an accidental death could be hunted down before anyone knew the truth. Cities of refuge were God's way of protecting people from this cycle of blood-feud violence. They provided a safe place where a person could flee, receive a fair hearing, and be protected until justice was properly determined.

DISCUSSION

1. Cities of refuge protected people from unfair revenge. Where do you see people today needing protection from snap judgments, assumptions, or "instant justice"?
2. The person who caused harm had to run toward God's appointed place, not hide. What does it look like for you to run toward God when you've messed up instead of trying to cover it up?
3. God built mercy and fairness into Israel's justice system. How can you show that same mix of truth and compassion in your friendships, especially when someone has hurt you?

KEY TRUTH

Cities of refuge replaced the chaos of personal vengeance with the order of God's justice.

Land for the Levites

Joshua 21:1–4, 43–45

Teaching Points

- The Levites didn't receive a large territory like the other tribes. Instead, God gave them cities scattered throughout Israel, ensuring they were supported while serving as spiritual leaders. This shows that God takes responsibility for those who devote themselves to His work.
- God places spiritual influence everywhere. By spreading the Levites across the land, God ensured that every tribe had access to teaching, worship, and guidance. Their presence was a reminder that God wanted His people shaped by truth, not just by geography or politics.
- God keeps every promise — down to the last detail. Joshua 21 ends with one of the most powerful

summaries in the whole book: “Not one of all the Lord’s good promises failed.” After centuries of waiting, wandering, and fighting, God delivered exactly what He said He would.

DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think God wanted the Levites spread out instead of gathered in one place? How does that challenge the way you think about spiritual influence today?
2. Israel’s rest came after obedience and perseverance. Where in your life do you need to keep going — even when you’re tired — so you can experience the “rest” God wants for you?
3. Joshua 21 says God kept every promise. What’s one promise of God that you struggle to believe He’ll keep, and why?

KEY TRUTH

Israel finally experiences “rest on every side.” This wasn’t accidental — it came after years of trusting God, fighting battles, and following His lead. It’s a reminder that spiritual rest isn’t passive; it’s the fruit of walking with God consistently.

Memory Verses & Closing

Memory Verses

- Joshua 21:43
- Ephesians 1:11

Challenge for the Week: This week, choose ONE area of your life where you’ve been hesitant, passive, or only halfway obedient — and take a clear, concrete step to finish it.

Joshua 13–21 shows tribes receiving land but not fully taking it, daughters boldly stepping into God’s promises, Levites being placed to influence others, and God keeping every word He spoke. The big idea is simple: **God gives opportunities, but His people must step into them with courage and follow-through.**

So, here’s the challenge:

1. Identify one “unfinished area.”

This could be:

- a habit you started but didn’t keep
- a relationship you need to repair
- a spiritual step you’ve been avoiding
- a responsibility you’ve been putting off
- a sin pattern you’ve been ignoring

2. Write down ONE step you can take this week to move forward.

Not the whole thing — just the next faithful step.

3. Do it — and tell someone you trust.

Courage grows when it’s shared. Accountability helps you finish what you start.

4. End the week by thanking God for His faithfulness.

Joshua 21 ends with “not one of all the Lord’s good promises failed.” Let that truth fuel your obedience. Close in prayer.