

## **GET READY!**

### **INTRODUCTION**

God has a plan for each one of us and He has a plan for Christian Heritage Church. Around 4 years ago He gave us this message from Acts 18:10, "I still have many people in this city". Clearly, our role is to reach this city for the Lord and we have made strides in that direction, but as I was asking the Lord for direction for 2018, I felt the Lord leading me with this, our focus for 2018 must be to "Take this City".

That is our goal as a church. Last week I spoke about Jesus being the "Restorer of Dreams". Most of us, as individuals have goals and dreams we want to achieve this year too. We have a personal Promised Land to claim and cities to take. These goals run parallel, and we need to get ourselves ready.

When we say we are going to "Take the City", we are effectively declaring war. Someone has the city right now, and they are not simply going to hand it over. As we consecrate ourselves through the fast and through decisions we will make today, we are effectively preparing ourselves, undergoing training and getting ready to go to battle.

Today we will deal with some of the preparation that is necessary as we get ready to "Take this City".

### **MESSAGE**

When it was time for the Israelites to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land, Joshua instructed his officers to tell the people to prepare themselves:

**Joshua 1:10-11** (NKJV) Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess.'"

### **PREPARATION STEP 1: PREPARE PROVISIONS**

When I was in the army, if we were doing exercises or patrols, we would be issued with a cardboard box containing food. A few small tins, an energy bar and some glucose sweets, some condensed milk, some doggy biscuits matches and some fuel tablets to warm our water and food on. That was food for one day. In addition, we had to fill our water bottles, pack our back packs, have the right clothes and sleeping bags packed, and of course our rifles had to be cleaned and ready for use. We couldn't just march out into the bush that could have been deadly!

Jesus spoke about being ready for war:

**Luke 14:31** (NKJV) Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

Those Israelites could never have just got up one morning and said, ok, today we will quickly cross the Jordan and go to war for a few months. They had to pack up, making sure they had enough supplies and weapons before they could even consider crossing the river.

For us to "take the city" and to claim our personal Promised Land, we need to be prepared. How do we prepare?

- We ensure we have plenty spiritual food – Jesus is the bread of life. We need to satisfy ourselves with plenty of Him by spending time in His presence, ingesting His word and making sure we believe it!
- We need to drink of living water: **John 7:37-39** (NKJV) On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; - we should not even consider going into battle without the Holy Spirit – **Zecnariiah 4:6** says "**its not by might, nor by power but by My Spirit**"
- We make sure our armour is on and ready, we make sure there are no chinks or weaknesses in our amour: The belt of truth, the sandals of the readiness of the Gospel, The helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, The shield of faith and the Sword of the Spirit.
- We sharpen our weapons - the weapons of our warfare are mighty in God for tearing down strongholds and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Our main weapon is God's Word. We need to memorize it, meditate on it and live it and we need to pray.

### ***Are you prepared?***

- ***Do you need to spend more time with the Lord? Do you believe in faith or do you only have head knowledge of the things of God?***
- ***Are you full of God's Spirit?***
- ***Have you been memorizing scripture?***

## **PREPARATION STEP 2: CONSECRATE YOURSELVES**

**Joshua 3:5** (AMPC) And Joshua said to the people, Sanctify yourselves [that is, separate yourselves for a special holy purpose], for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you Joshua told the people,

A far better word which is used in some translations is "consecrate" in other words, to "set apart".

One of the main reasons we start the year off with a Daniel fast is so that we can enter the year consecrated to the Lord. If we consecrate that which is first, God will bless that which comes after. If we deal with our flesh and carnal nature now, we can be spiritually strong in the year that lays ahead.

### **1. We make sure we are consecrated by aligning our lives with God's word.**

**John 17:17** says, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." The word of God is the means by which God sanctifies His people.

As we read God's word during this time of the fast, we are being sanctified. The Lord will show us His truth that He wants us to obey, He may even challenge us. The key will be obedience!

#### ***Are we willing to obey and be part of what God is doing?***

### **2. Consecration means we choose to live as living sacrifices.**

**Romans 12:1** (NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- When we fast, we bring our body into subjection to our spirit. We make sacrifices regarding all the tasty and nice things we love to eat.
- Fasting takes our focus off the secular and carnal things that have been a distraction to our lives, and we focus on God.
- When we fast, we are endeavoring to present ourselves before God, as a holy and acceptable sacrifice.
- As we fast, our thinking becomes focused on God, and the things of God and as a result we draw nearer to Him.
- As we consecrate our lives to God, we align ourselves with His instruction, "Be holy as I am holy",

There is a famous story about a young Jewish boy who sang the song "Jesus I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee". Many who heard him sing were crying because they knew the boy's life circumstances. His father had told him he must either leave the Sunday school or leave home forever, and the words of the hymn showed what he had given up to follow Christ. Some in the church came together and helped him from that day on.

#### ***What is there that we need to sacrifice as we get ready to take this city?***

### **3. Consecration means separating ourselves from those who are bad for us.**

**2 Corinthians 6:17** (NKJV) "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."[

**1 Corinthians 15:33** (NKJV) Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

***Consecration sometimes means tough decisions...who is there in our lives that is actually pulling us away from the Lord? At this time of fasting, possibly its time to end some relationships that are not good for us.***

#### **4. Consecration means to abide in Christ**

Once we have aligned ourselves with God's word, made our lives a living sacrifice and dealt with unholy relationships, its time to draw near to God in a new and totally dependent manner.

**John 15:3-5** (NKJV) You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

When we abide in Christ, we are enabled. Without Him we can do nothing, bit in Him, we can do ALL THINGS, and that includes "Taking the City" and taking our Promised Land.

Jesus wants us to abide in Him. He wants us to love Him and seek fellowship with Him!

**Revelation 3:20** (NKJV) Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

**Song of Solomon 2:16** (NKJV) My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies.

**Song of Solomon 2:4** (NKJV) He brought me to the banqueting house, And his banner over me was love.

"My beloved is mine and I am His and His banner over me is love". See how, when we are in that abiding place of a love relationship with Jesus it always involves food and feasting!

Now we are at the place where physical food no longer matters! We want to feast on spiritual food, food provided at the Lord's banqueting table!

Jesus invites us to feast on His love for us today. He wants to spend time with us, sustain us and bless us. Let us open our hearts today to receive the love

of Christ. It will transform our whole life and we will be ready to enter and take our promised land.

## **CONCLUSION**

Before we can cross our Jordan and take this city, or claim our personal Promised Land, we need to "Get Ready" we do this by:

Preparing provisions

- Spending time in God's word.
- Making sure our armour is on.
- Praying.

Consecrating ourselves.

- Aligning ourselves with God's word.
- Becoming living sacrifices, not conformed to the world.
- Being separated from those who are bad for us.
- Abiding in Christ.

Let us make the right choice this morning as we get ready for our Daniel fast. This is an opportunity the Lord has given us to "get ready". As I sing the old song, "His banner over me is love", let us gather around the altar area here and spend some time getting ready for the year which lays ahead.

Finally, just a cry from my heart: Don't let worldly pursuits blocks your vision of your spiritual inheritance.

**Numbers 32:1-2 & 5** The Reubenites and Gadites, who had very large herds and flocks, saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock. 2 So they came to Moses and Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the community, and said, 5 If we have found favour in your eyes," they said, "let this land be given to your servants as our possession. Do not make us cross the Jordan."

Here were two and a half of the tribes of Israelites on the wilderness side of the Jordan who had many cattle, and they wanted to remain there in Gilead and not go over Jordan into the Promised Land. So they went to Moses, and said, "Look, we know that God's inheritance for us is on the other side of the Jordan but we don't actually want that. What we want is what we see here, this land is really good for our earthly business, which is grazing stock. We don't want what God has got for us on the other side of the Jordan; we want this area that we see here."

***This morning, don't say, "I'm happy here on this side of the Jordan, I don't want to enter the Promised Land. I encourage you to join us!***