

Getting Ready to Possess July 12+13 2008

God's best is "ripe for the picking" but sometimes you must pause for His purposes before you can possess it. This pause may not make sense to us, but it does to God who does everything purposefully for our best. Joshua 5: 1-15

Why did God have His people pause before they fully possessed the land? What were His purposes in this?

1) Restore their covenantal relationship with Him and all the blessings that come through that covenantal relationship! Genesis 17:1-12a

2) Really test their faith before He really tested their faith. Passing this test positioned them to pass a bigger test that was quickly coming.

Joshua 5:8 - After all the males had been circumcised, they rested in the camp until they were healed.

3) Remove their reproach and shame from past faith failures. God knows that guilt and shame over our past failures can keep us from fully possessing our future.

Joshua 5:9 - Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the shame of your slavery in Egypt." So that place has been called Gilgal to this day.

4) Reinstitute the Passover and replace one form of faithfulness with another.

Exodus 12:48 - But no uncircumcised male may ever eat the Passover meal. Joshua 5:11-13

5) Remind their new leader again that God was truly with him as he faced his greatest battle. Joshua 5:15

God hasn't changed, nor has His purposes for pauses, only His covenant people have changed. We become His covenant children when we receive the Holy Spirit's circumcision of our own hearts and repent of all our sins. **Hebrews 9:15**

Baptism, not circumcision is the symbol that "marks" us as His new covenant people. **Colossians 2:11-12**

As His new covenant children we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ but He wants us to live as His holy children so we can possess them.

Ephesians 1:3-4, 1Thessalonians 4:7 - God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. Peter 1:14-16

1) Holiness is living who you are in Christ

2) Holiness is using what belongs to Christ for Christ's purposes. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

1) Am I living like His chosen, beloved, holy, new covenant child, using what is holy for His purposes?

Purity of speech, Purity of thought, Purity of behavior, Purity in what I wear, Purity of attitude, Purity in finances

Daily prayer and weekly worship are "purity pauses" to remind me who I am and what I live for. It's time to reclaim my purity through honest confession. 1 John 1:9

2) Am I cooperating with Christ in the purposeful pauses " He uses to position me for His best? "Jesus... what's the purpose of this pause?"

a) Is it a much needed time of heart and mind surgery?

b) Is it a testing of my faith so I am ready for even bigger challenges?

c) Is it removal of shame over past failures so I'm free to possess Your best?

d) Is it a time to remind me of Your past faithfulness so I can attack and defeat the Jerichos of my life with confidence?

e) Is it a time to redirect my life for more fruitfulness?

There is a purpose in all of God's pauses. As you press in to those purposes you position yourself to possess His best!

Matthew 5:8 - Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Discussion Questions:

1. When has God put your life on pause? How did He do it? What was the purpose that you discovered later for that pause in your life?

2. Review the five purposes God had for Israel in their pause. Isn't it amazing how purposeful that pause was? Do you think they understood it when they went through it? What pause have you gone through that didn't make sense to you, but now you know God had a purpose in it?

3. What does it mean to you to be holy? Where do you battle to live holy? How would practicing "purity pauses" help you? How can we pray for each other so that we can live as God's holy covenant children?