

Joshua 15

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Date: 09 December 2018

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[0 : 0 0] let's pray as we go back there father we thank you that we've been told in scripture that every passage all scripture is is uh breathed by you and is useful for us in teaching and correcting and rebuking and encouraging uh lord we sometimes have to work hard in passages to understand how they impact us but we thank you that every passage does and we thank you that in every passage we are pointed to look to to jesus the one who was promised and the one who came and lived and died and rose so that we could have the offer of eternal life we thank you that jesus is king and that he will return and we pray that we would be found ready for that return that our hearts would be ready to to to meet with jesus and we thank you that even as we thought with the children this morning we can be ready as we confess our sin and ask that you would cast it out wash us in the blood of christ and lord that you would enter into our lives by faith so hear our prayers and help us we ask as we turn to your word in jesus name amen boys and girls it's good to have quite a few of you here uh tonight so we will finish for seven o'clock i want to just begin um by asking you a question or two and you can answer these questions kind of like a children's talk um tell me about christmas morning what do you like about christmas morning katie all coming together see how good she is all coming together and to open our presents yeah yeah that's good great answer jonno say that again i missed it opening your presents straight away we'll come back to that in a wee second yeah lois always a bit frightening when your own children start to speak about um what we do yeah yeah good answer yeah anything else no the young one's over this one yeah these are all great things for christmas morning you're looking forward to christmas morning see jonno you you answered me a second ago and you said you just go downstairs and you you tear all the presents open do you do that or is there a bit of an order so you have to wait till everybody's awake do you know why that might be why i well let me tell you a story when i was about your age one christmas morning i wanted to go downstairs and i wanted to open all my presents and i was told you're not going downstairs until eight o'clock and i wasn't very keen to wait till eight o'clock and so what i did was i just went down a bit early and i got down before anybody and there was all these presents under the tree with my name on them so you know what i did before my mother was there with her notepad do you know what i did i just opened them all and it was great for about 15 minutes and then when my mum came down with her notepad and her pen she said who gave me the car i don't know who gave me the jigsaw

i don't know what about the action man i don't know it's just papers everywhere presents everywhere but i didn't know where they'd come from and when you don't know where things come from it's hard to say thank you but it's right for us to say thank you isn't it i think every child can probably remember and experience the thrill of christmas morning even the old grey heads in the congregation of which i'm becoming increasingly worn we remember the magic of coming down on christmas morning and seeing the presents under the tree and being able to open them that was the thrill but i also remember some pretty painful experiences mid to late january when my mother dragged me to the kitchen table and said take that pen take that paper and write your thank you letters i was never quite as keen to write the thank you letters never quite as enthusiastic to thank the people who'd given me the things for every single thing that had come through now joshua chapter 15 is a passage that we come to and it might not on first glance fill us with a whole lot of enthusiasm because it's so dense with names and details at this point in the history of israel the people of israel who were promised the land had received the land they had entered into the land in large measure and they were enjoying living there a bit like the child who's opened his present on christmas morning and has spent 10 days playing with it and enjoying the activity or the playstation or whatever it is that he or she are playing with but here in joshua 15 joshua in a sense he kind of hauls the children of israel and us with them back to the maps and he digs out the lists of all the

names and the places the areas of land that god had given them and as these areas of land were recorded and as they were read and as they were remembered the children of israel who were long promised this land would be prompted to say thank you they were enjoying the land they were in the land but they needed to remember to thank god for the land that he promised and then he gave them and we need that prompt regularly don't we remember the account of the 10 lepers that jesus healed luke chapter 17 you don't need to go there i'll just read this short passage now on his way to jerusalem jesus traveled along the border between samaria and galilee as he was going into a village ten men who had leprosy met him they stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice jesus master have pity on us when he saw them he said go show yourselves to the priests and as they went they were cleansed one of them when he saw he was healed came back praising god in a loud voice he threw himself at jesus feet and thanked him and he was a samaritan jesus asked were not all ten cleansed where are the other nine was no one found to return and give praise to god except this foreigner and the answer was that's right jesus no one but this one man returned thanks for what you had done joshua 15 is a chapter where god's people are encouraged to return thanks to him because they are reminded of the fact that what god promises he delivers that's our first point for tonight we see in verses 1 to 12 a promise kept a promise kept and if we want to see this in detail we actually need to go back to to genesis chapter 12 and genesis chapter 15 you can go there just for a moment we won't spend much time in these chapters but just to demonstrate the reality of this we're taken way back to genesis 12 genesis 15 and in these chapters we overhear the lord making a promise to to abram or abraham of the land that he would give to abraham's people so god says in genesis 12 well it says in genesis 12 here abraham traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of more at shechem at that time the canaanites were in the land the lord appeared to abraham and said to your offspring i will give this land so he built an altar there to the lord who had appeared to him then if you flick on to genesis 15 if we had the time we could have read a bit more about but just read a couple of verses here genesis 15 and verse 7 he also said to him i am the lord who brought you out of our of the chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it we're given detail there and then verse 18 says on that day the lord made a covenant with abram and said to your descendants i give this land from the river of egypt to the great river the euphrates the land of the kenites kenizzites kadmonites hittites perizzites rephites amorites canaanites gergesites and jebusites so in that passage or these two passages way way way back in time god made a promise to abram and said this land i promise will be given to your descendants who will be many and this is a promise that may have seemed unlikely at the time and yet god pressed it and he reiterated it and he repeated it at various points in israel's history to reassure them and to make clear to them that he had not forgotten the fact that he made this covenant he made this promise and that he would make good in this promise it's a promise that's reiterated at the beginning of the book of joshua in chapter one we hear the lord again underlying the fact that the land that he had promised he would lead them into and here in joshua 15 verses 1 to 12 what we see here in detail is the fact that god makes good on his promises and i haven't got time and i don't really have the technical expertise to be able to put a map on the wall and show you that every promise and every aspect of what god promised to abraham is actually seen in the boundaries that are that are drawn out

for us in word pictures in this passage but you know if you're that way inclined if that's the kind of detail that thrills you you can pull out the maps and you can look at the place names and you can look at the people groups and the more you look at the detail of this the more it serves to show the fact that god kept his promise god kept his promise there are some firms that make promises and they're very quick to make promises but they don't like to keep them especially if it's going to cost them i've seen kathy ann over there on the right and i remember dunda one day and he was becoming very animated because there was a certain double glazing firm that i won't name and the windows and the doors that they installed in one of the houses in kylos scalp they had a lifetime guarantee no matter what the weather they wouldn't leak but they were leaking so dunda got on the phone and he made very clear to this firm that this promise that they made did not seem to be worth the words that were used to make it so he demanded that they come back to kylos scalp to put this right that was their promise if things went wrong there was water leaking they would come back lifetime guarantee and they would fix it but this firm who were in the mainland obviously realized this was going to cost them a lot of money to repair or replace these windows so they were not keen to stick by their promise tammy's been getting a bit frustrated of late the internet in the gym has been broken for over four weeks and the internet provider has been promising and promising and

promising kami that they would come and fix it but promise after promise after promise was being broken and not kept isn't it good for us this evening with Joshua 15 open to be reminded of the fact that

God our God always keeps his promises we get frustrated in this world with people and firms governments organizations they make promises but they don't keep them we get frustrated with ourselves when we make promises and we're just not able to deliver on them isn't it an encouragement to remember that God keeps his promises where do we see that well we see it in Canaan the land that God promised his people we look at the boundaries we look at the place names and we see that he has now delivered everything that he promised to his people we see evidence of that at Christmas it was promised as we sang in that carol the words caught my again as we were singing it 588 was it yes he amid the winter snow born for us on earth below see the lamb of

[15 : 51] God appears promised from eternal years God promised that the Messiah would come he promised that the Messiah would save his people from their sin it's a promise that goes all the way to the Old Testament it's amplified as time goes on and we see that promise is kept when Jesus is born so we see the fact that God keeps his promises as we look at the maps of Canaan we see the fact that God keeps his promises as we think about the wonder of Christmas we see the fact that God keeps his promises as we go back to Calvary the promise of salvation for you and I was a costly one if we were to be saved the son of God would have to die his blood would have to be shed if we were to be forgiven and yet what was promised from

Genesis 3 wasn't it was kept because the saviour did die but praise the lord he rose again and he did in showing in doing that he showed that salvation from sin and Satan and death and hell was now freely available to all who trust him God is the God who keeps his promises are you trusting him this evening you and I may have good reason to doubt the word of many people but we have every encouragement to trust God he keeps his promises no matter what the cost no matter how huge and far fetched they may seem to us remember Abraham and Sarah and yet what God promises he always delivers so we see the promise kept the second point we'll see here is faith rewarded and we see that in verses 13 through to verse 19 now whose faith are we talking about here where we're talking about Caleb's faith we think back to last week we focused for a fair bit of time on

Caleb Caleb was the man who at 40 years old was willing to take God at his word and wanted to go and take the land that he promised along with Joshua but the other 10 spies said no we're not doing that this is impossible they drew back and they ended up in the wilderness for that period so at 40 Caleb is a man full of faith at 85 years old when others would have been fading Caleb is still strong he's still faithful he's still fired up he's still trusting God he still has a great zeal for God's glory and he has great faith and ambition to see that the name of God lifted up so we find him last week in Joshua 14 and on the threshold of the land that he was looking towards he's saying to Joshua this is the land I want to go for yes there's giants there yes there's mountains I know the terrain is rough I know it's going to be difficult but

God has promised and I believe so let me at the giants so that was last week what happened what happened next well verses 13 to 19 of this chapter make clear that God gave Caleb the land the mountains didn't stop him the giants who were in the land didn't stop him Caleb moved into the land he swept the side the giants he navigated the rough terrain and the reason he did that was because God was with him and God rewarded his faith and we're given the details of that there verse 13 to 19 in accordance with the

Lord's command to him Joshua gave to Caleb son of Jephunneh a portion in Judah Kiriath Arba that is Hebron the area that Caleb was clutching at last week Arba was the forefather of Anak Anak is the giant people from Hebron Caleb drove out the three Anakites Sheshai Ahiman and Talmi descendants of Anak one verse is all we're given there isn't we we're talking about a whole army of giants and yet when God is for us as he was for Caleb who can be against us the giants aren't a problem they're swept aside and Caleb said verse 16 I will give my daughter Axa and marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath and so on it goes and we see there in the verses that are detailed that

[21 : 46] Caleb's faith is rewarded it wasn't that Caleb had great might it wasn't that he had great strategic insight he had faith in God and God honoured Caleb because Caleb trusted God I know also here we see the faith of Caleb passing down through into the younger generation one of the

commentators says this some of Caleb's daring faith rubbed off on his son-in-law Othniel who later became a judge in the land and we read about that in Judges 3 Caleb's faith also touched his daughter for she had faith to ask her father for a field and then for springs of water to irrigate the land Caleb's example of faith was more valuable to his family than the property he claimed for them read that again

Caleb's example of faith was more valuable to his family than the property he claimed for them that's something that we need to take on board don't we as older generations the example of our faith in God is more valuable to our families than any property any money any social security that we can manage to acquire for them Caleb was a man of faith and his family saw his faith and that faith affected them and that faith goes from generation to generation to generation so we see faith reward it and that doctrine in itself it takes us from the Old

Testament to the New Testament very readily how are we saved if you're a Christian tonight how are we saved it's not by our good works it's not by our religious activities it's not by the chairs that we sit on in these hours on this day we are saved by faith in Christ we are saved by grace alone through faith alone and Christ alone and that again as strange as it may seem to us it takes us to Christmas Joshua 15 it takes us ultimately to Christmas the birth of Jesus Christ it's an event that we remember annually it's a promise of God that we are thankful for because we see and we celebrate the fact that he kept it but if this promise of

God of this work of God of the incarnation is to benefit us personally if you and I are to be saved if you and I are to actually be people who will get to move into Emmanuel's land when we're passing from time into eternity we need to have faith we need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because we're promised that when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ we are saved so we see here the promise that's kept we see here the faith that is rewarded and we see here finally from verses 20 to verse 63 the fact that grace is in evidence I have no time to go into this it's time up now but as you go away tonight and as you glance through this section and as you maybe glance back through the book of

Joshua and glance back through the experiences of the people of Israel over the years what you will see is that they were a people who were far from perfect they were wayward they were rebellious they were riddled with doubts they were inconsistent they were sinners and yet God remained faithful they were undeserving of every reward that God promised them and yet their unfaithfulness did not negate God's promise to them and did not negate the reality of the land that he gifted them and what is that that's grace when they deserved the worst

[27 : 27] God still gave them the best that's grace and these verses and this whole account gives ample evidence of the fact that as we sang our God is slow to anger he's abounding in love and grace and that again causes us to finish with our thoughts on Christmas we celebrate the fact that Jesus came was it for deserving people no it wasn't he came for sinners like us was he welcomed no he wasn't Herod tried to have him killed Matthew chapter 2 gives that horrible account of what he did was Jesus loved as he grew up when he entered into ministry no he was despised and he was rejected and he was hated and he was killed and yet he came knowing all this would be he came in accordance with the plan and the promise of God to seek and save these people people like us rebels against

God infected by the same sin undeserving and yet in Christ we are shown and offered such amazing grace grace evidenced have you received that grace have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ his promise is that all who believe will be saved and he's a God whose promises are always kept trust him on that heavenly father we pray that you would help us to trust you on that we thank you that the gospel is an offer we thank you that all that Jesus did he did for us and we thank you that we receive the benefit of that when we put our faith in him so help us Lord we pray to believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ and to receive the salvation that he paid so dearly for and we ask this in Jesus name amen we're going to close the with the carol 493 for the wire