

How to Conquer the Promised Land (“Devotion”)

Joshua 5,6, and 7

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Prayer

Lord God, we pray that you would break down the wall and that we would hear you, that we would commune with you, that we would know you. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we pray—and we say, “Come Lord Jesus.” Amen.

Message

I titled this message, “How to Conquer the Promised Land” because I think we each have a Promised Land that we’d like to conquer. And we come to church hoping to get some “info”—knowledge about how to do just that.

You have a Promised Land that you’d like to conquer and not only that, I think you have Promised Land that you’re supposed to conquer. And the Sanctuary has Promised Land that we’re supposed to conquer . . . just like the children of Israel, were called to conquer Promised Land. But the “how to” . . . is a little more confusing.

Some people think the Bible is a “how to” book, and in the Old Testament, there seems to be a lot of “how to,” and we call it the law. Unfortunately, Israel seems to constantly break the law and lose the land.

In the New Testament, in the ESV, the phrase, “how to,” appears just nineteen times . . . and just ten times in the Gospels. Not one of those ten times refers to obtaining Promised Land or the Kingdom, but half of those ten times refer to religious people trying to figure out “how to” crucify the King of the Kingdom—that is Jesus. That’s not many “how tos,” and so we religious types write “how to” books to fill in the gaps.

I literally have hundreds . . . and I brought just a few:

- How to raise your children.
- How to have a good marriage.
- How to be a man and handle the temptations of being a man.
- How to pray for healing
- How to cast out demons
- How to build a church

See? They could all be titled, “How to conquer the Promised Land.”

Well, in Joshua 6, the children of Israel actually do conquer the Promised Land—or at least start to conquer a little piece of the promised land—and the Bible tells us how it happened . . . how the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

In the fall, we plan to preach through the Revelation (I preached through it years ago and I’m excited to preach through it again), and the Revelation is like Joshua 6 on steroids. It’s all about how seven little churches—and, really, all churches conquer.

Well, the Revelation is one reason I wanted to preach on Joshua chapter 6 today, and this is the other: Three times in the last four years, when praying for the church, my wife has come to me and said, we're supposed to read Joshua chapter 4.

In Joshua 4, Israel crosses the Jordan, and sets up a monument of twelve stones. That's why we have twelve stones around the base of the cross at the downtown location of our church—to remind us that we've crossed over and shouldn't go back.

In Joshua 5, they all get circumcised (at a place called the hill of foreskins), celebrate Passover, and then the conquest of the Promised Land begins. I don't expect us to fully understand this, or the Revelation for that matter. In fact, it might be best if you didn't think of this as a teaching . . . but something more like a devotional

So, are you ready to get devoted?

Joshua 5:13-14a

When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand.” [A drawn sword in that day was like a raised assault rifle today . . .] And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” Or “Now I am come.”

Joshua asks, “Are you for us or our adversaries?” which seems like a thoroughly logical question if you've been told to conquer the Promised Land. And I'm sure Joshua hopes that he's for Israel, because he'd like some information on how to conquer the Promised Land:

“Are you for us or for our adversaries?”

And the Commander answers by not answering—He says “No!”

“No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord...”

As if to say, “The Lord's Kingdom is not on this side or that side; the Lord's Kingdom is entirely undivided and has no sides—not even any insides or outsides.

- As if, everything that is anything worships the Lord.
- As if, He could hear what John hears in Revelation chapter 5, when he hears “*every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is within them, saying, ‘to him who sits on the throne and unto the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.’*”
- As if, He could see what God sees on the Seventh Day of creation, when “it is finished,” and everything is “good.”

See? That's an undivided kingdom with no “sides.” And yet, this commander has a drawn sword. He's about to attack something. He's opposed to something . . . What do you suppose it is?

Well, the Commander of the Lord's army is this man and yet, he must also be The Lord, for Joshua worships Him, and the Commander doesn't stop Him. This is the Angel of Yahweh, the Lord of Hosts, the God-man. This has got to be Jesus.

Next verse

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.
—Joshua 5:14b-15

Joshua has 40,000 men ready for war.

He wants direction on how to conquer the Promised Land, and this is step one:

"Take off your shoes... this is Holy Ground... Here and Now with Jesus."

"Now, I am come," He says.

"Now is the point that eternity touches time."

"Now is the day of salvation. The acceptable time is now," says Scripture

And now, in case you still think this isn't about you...it's interesting to note that the name Jesus is just the Anglicized version of the Hebrew name Joshua. SO

- This is the first Joshua talking to the *Eschatos*, ultimate or final Joshua.
- This is the first Adam talking to the last Adam.
- This is the old man of flesh talking to the New Man—who is Christ.

Remember how Paul wrote, "*It's no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.*" It is "no longer I who live but the Commander of the Lord's Army who lives *in me*"—"in me." How does the Commander get into me? I have a wall around my heart.

Well, Joshua takes off his shoes and worships, and now chapter 6, the Lord tells him what to do.

Joshua 6:1 "*Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in.*"

Just note: Israel means "wrestles with God," Jericho is shut up inside and out because they don't want to be people that wrestle with God.

They want to be safe, and now, they're safe as Hell.

A city is a communion protected by a barrier, in this case, a wall, but if nothing comes in or goes out—the city is dead, even though it thinks it's alive.

Your body is a communion protected by a barrier, but if it's shut up [Peter holds his breath . . . then gasps for air], so nothing gets in [Peter gasps for more air, refusing to exhale] and nothing gets out, it's dead.

Scripture claims that we were "all dead in our trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), alienated, cut off, from the life of God (Eph. 4:18).

Jesus is eternal life (1 John 5:20), which is the death of death (Rev. 20:14).
And He is the Commander of the Lord's Army (Rev. 19:14).

And now He tells Joshua what to do:

And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him."

—Joshua 6:2-5

Hopefully, that clears things up for you 'cause that's how you conquer the Promised Land.

So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the Ark of the Covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD."

And in the next ten verses, they do it . . . they just do it . . .

I mean they've got to be pretty devoted to do it:

- 40,000 men prepared for war—this would not be *their* judgment.
- This is the Judgment of the Lord of Hosts.
- They surrender their Judgment to the Judgment of God. And they do it.
They're devoted.

But remember this devotion happens after 400 years of slavery in Egypt . . .

And forty years of wondering in the wilderness . . .

During which time everyone dies, except Joshua and Caleb.

So if you ever think, "*I'm having a bad day. I haven't seen any miracles; this Christianity thing is not working...*" Well, don't be so sure that it's not working.

Verses 15-16

*On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on **that** day that they marched around the city seven times. And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city."*

Now they couldn't comprehend how this worked, and yet God had given them some amazing pictures to tell them *what* it was . . . or *who* it was that was working.

The conquest happened on the seventh day, the seventh time around, at the blast of the seven trumpets, by the seven priests before the Ark, when they all shouted, *because* the Lord *had given them* the city.

1. It happened on the seventh day (there's a problem with that)—that's the Sabbath Day when Israel was commanded to rest, for in six days God made the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day He *rested*.

Rest . . .

They are commanded to do *no* labor on the seventh day, under *penalty of death*. That means that the Commander of the Lord's army has devoted them to destruction! The Lord commands them to conquer the Promised Land on the Sabbath.

Which means that the Lord is devoting them to destruction,
OR that all their labor is now somehow rest,
OR . . . maybe . . . it means both.

2. It happened when the seven priests blew the seven ram's horns—shofars.

In Leviticus 25, the priests are commanded to blow the shofar on the Day of Atonement that begins the year of Jubilee, which followed seven times seven years, a Pentecost of years. At Jubilee, property was returned, prisoners were freed, and all debts were forgiven. It was like they shared everything in common.

Jubilee began on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest went behind the veil and sprinkled the blood of sacrifice on the mercy seat on top of the ark.

The Sacrifice was a gift, and the gift was *confession* before the throne of God on top of the ark.

3. The Ark of the Covenant was also called the Ark of the Testimony.

It was literally the law on stone tablets, placed in a box, covered in Mercy—that is, the mercy seat (an atonement seat) and throne of God.

The pillar of fire would rest on that mercy seat on top of the Testimony, between two Cherubim, like those that guarded the way to the tree of Life...

And all Israel would *contemplate* the Testimony—the Ark of the Testimony.

4. From the Fire on top of the ark, The Lord would speak to Moses. And before the ark, all of Israel would *commune* with God . . . literally feasting on sacrifices and offerings—communion.

5. So they conquered on the Sabbath with rest—before the Ark—the place of confession, contemplation, and communion. They all shouted because the Lord had given (it was a done deal) them the city, and yet they were still standing outside the walls.

So, Joshua says, "Shout for the Lord has given you the city."
... And yet they're still standing outside the walls.

Scripture says, "*All things* are yours..."
And yet I say, "Well, the bank doesn't seem to agree..."
And Jesus replies, "So who do you believe? Shout anyway, that's how you conquer the Promised Land; that's worship."

Israel shouts, and their worship comes into harmony with the eternal worship surrounding the throne. Israel shouts, and the walls of Jericho come tumbling down...

The Covenant is eternal and the Testimony is eternal. The ark was kept behind a curtain that divided this age, from God's age. In the Revelation, a lamb stands on the mercy seat, as if it had been slain . . . and it has been slain from the foundation of the world . . . and everything is good, for every creature worships the Lamb on the throne. That's the Seventh Day and it's happening *NOW*.

Israel shouts, and their worship comes into harmony with the eternal worship surrounding the throne. Israel shouts, and the walls of Jericho come tumbling down...

That's weird and wild, but now things get really weird and downright terrifying. At the seventh trumpet, there is an Apocalypse...

Verses 16-17

And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction [cherem]."

Joshua says, "*the Lord has given you the city*"—wow what a gift!—"So now, burn it, devote it to the Lord for destruction." That's weird.

God gave you your life... and then Jesus says something like: "If you save your life, you'll lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake, you'll find it." Weird.

"All things are yours," writes Saint Paul "and you are Christ's and Christ is God's" which means, He is Lord and you must constantly surrender all things to Him. That's weird and when you chew on this verse a bit terrifying . . . like genocide is terrifying, only worse, it's the command of God.

Verses 17-21

And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction [cherem]. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction [cherem], lest when you have devoted them [charam] you take any of the devoted things [cherem] and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction [cherem] and bring trouble upon it. But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to

the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.” So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. Then they devoted [charam] all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

The phrases, “Devoted to the Lord for destruction,” “thing devoted to destruction,” “devoted thing,” and “thing for destruction” are all one Hebrew word, that we obviously struggle to translate. It’s the word, *cherem*.

Charam is the verb (to devote), and *cherem* is the noun (devoted thing).

And *cherem* can not simply mean “devoted to destruction,” for God says “the entire city and all that is within it is *cherem*,” and then, commands them not to destroy some of the *cherem*—namely:

- A harlot named Rahab and her family. And . . .
- All the silver, gold, bronze and iron, which if you think about it, are pretty hard to destroy with fire, for they’ve already been through the fire . . . and pretty hard to destroy with a sword for that is what swords are made of.

The silver, gold, bronze, and iron are *cherem*, but they are to go into the treasury of the Lord.

Pop quiz: Do you know what you keep in a treasury? . . .
Treasure.

And treasure isn’t something you despise, but something you treasure.¹

In the interlinear [Lexham] *cherem* is translated “Consecrated possession.”
The New American Commentary defines it as “the paramount offering to the Lord.”

Because of bad theology, we tend to think that God hates things that are sacrificed, but the whole point is that sacrifices are, in fact, offerings—they’re holy! And *cherem* is most holy.

In Leviticus 27:28 God says to Moses “...no devoted thing (*cherem*) that a man devotes (*charam*) to the Lord, of anything that he has, whether man or beast, or of his inherited field, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the Lord.”

In other words, you can’t un-devote a devoted thing—because God really wants it—it is most Holy to the Lord.

Actually, the Arabic word “*herem*,” comes from the same root as the Hebrew word *cherem*...

- You don’t mess with the King’s *herem*.
- You don’t mess with the King’s bride; she is his most sacred treasure.

¹ God treasures our faith, which, as gold, is refined by fire.

Rahab is devoted to Yahweh and ends up married to an Israelite named Salmon.

Rahab and Salmon commune in a covenant with no walls (and probably no clothes); the two become one flesh and give birth to a life—actually “the Life” in the form of a seed—a seed that gets passed down through generations until it is born as a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger.

- His name is *Joshua*, or as we pronounce it, *Jesus*...

And He is the Commander of the Lord's army.

Of course, He's not for one side or the other side.

On one side of the wall of Jericho is his grandfather Salmon . . . the Israelite

And on the other side of the wall is his grandmother Rahab—the Canaanite whore.

Maybe He doesn't hate the devoted things...

He hates the walls they build, which keep them from communion with God and with each other.
His Life is literally their communion.

In Leviticus 27:28 God continues explaining to Moses, “...every devoted thing is most holy to the Lord. ²⁹No one devoted (*cherem*), who is to be devoted for destruction (*charam*) from mankind, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death.”

So once you've been devoted, you *will* be devoted.

—That looks like the treasury for silver and gold, bronze, and iron.

—It looks like marriage and a honeymoon for Rahab the harlot bride.

—And it looks like human sacrifice for all humanity.

- And it is human sacrifice...

- And humanity is The Lord's Bride...

- And humanity is the Lord's treasure...humanity is Christ's Body—an undivided Kingdom wherein each member sacrifices for every other member, circulating blood in a communion called life—eternal life. Eternal, for life devoted cannot be *undevoted*.

And you say, “Sure... I guess that is kinda cool, but it's still human sacrifice!!!”

Yes, it is.

[Images of the atomic bomb explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki]

Seventy-two years ago, we dropped two bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing at least 129,000 people, most in a way far more painful than any Israelite sword thrust through a chest.

You may say, “But they were bad people.”

Do you think they were worse than the Canaanites in Jericho, worshipping Baal?

And you may say, “But that's different.”

Yes, it is: we sacrificed the Japanese to no one, but ourselves.

But God made it very clear: “Israel, you are delivering the residents of Jericho to me. They are not yours to rape, torture or enslave. They are sacred to me. They are my *cherem*.”

Now, of course, they must encounter the consuming fire that is God.
And they must be cut by the sword that is His Judgment.
But then they will no longer be a city shut up, all alone, both inside and out.

In the New Testament, the Commander of the Lord's army tells us to "*turn the other cheek.*"

And He gives us a new weapon . . .

That cuts to the division of soul and spirit . . .

That can set people free from their prison of self,

And give them life—even before their body dies.

Whatever the case, Jericho is *cherem* translated "devoted to destruction."

But in the next chapter, it turns out that Israel is also *cherem*, for an Israelite had taken a devoted thing—and hidden it in his tent.

- Through Isaiah God says that Jacob/Israel is *cherem* (Isaiah 43:28).
- And through Jeremiah, He pronounces that Judah and Jerusalem is also *cherem* (Jeremiah 25:9).
- Actually, in Isaiah 34:1-2 we read that *everyone* is *cherem*:

Draw near, O nations, to hear, and give attention, O peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it. For the Lord is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction [charam], has given them over for slaughter.

Get the picture?

Everyone has been devoted by God, and keep in mind, *nothing* devoted can be *undevoted*.

Zephaniah 3:8 "*In the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed...*"

Now if you say, "Dang Peter, that's fascinating, but you're not making me feel any better," listen to the next line:

...all the earth shall be consumed. "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord.

—Zephaniah 3:8-9

What is God describing?

- He's describing a day when everything is good, when all have entered His rest, and are joined in an ecstatic communion of praise.
- He's describing the Promised Land...

Everyone gets there *through devotion*...

And now you may say, "Cool Peter, but it still sounds terrifying; I don't want to be devoted."

Well, listen to the Gospel. This is the Good News:

- You *will* want to be devoted.

- In other words, you *will* love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength...
- And you *will* present yourself a living sacrifice... *because* you want to do so with every fiber of your being, *for* it's not only *how* we enter the Promised Land; *It is* the Promised Land.

In the next chapter Joshua is sure that they now know how to conquer the Promised Land, so he sends a group to conquer a little city named Ai . . .

And they're unable to conquer it.

God reveals that someone has taken some *cherem*
And they won't be able to conquer until Israel surrenders the *cherem* . . . that is until they devote the devoted thing—until they *charam* the *cherem*.

There's a breathtaking scene in Joshua chapter 7, wherein Joshua judges Israel, narrowing her down by families. He takes Judah, and then others from Judah until he arrives at Achan and Achan is aching because he has a devoted thing in his tent. He confesses, "I have the *cherem* in my tent."

And so they stone Achan and burn him with fire. They devote the devoted thing in the Valley of Achor . . . and then, they conquer Ai—no sweat.

It's such a weird story for according to Leviticus all of Israel is still *cherem*, for you cannot *undevote* a devoted thing, and so Israel must still be devoted.

Well, we don't hear of the Valley of Achor until Isaiah prophesies that it will become like a garden, and then, through Hosea, in Hosea 2:14 the Lord says, "...*behold, I will allure her*. He's speaking of Israel His harlot bride.

"...behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope." "I will... make the Valley of Achor a door of Hope."

—Hosea 2:14

I think that means that one day you will find yourself, or perhaps have already found yourself, in the Valley of Achor. Achor means trouble.

Joshua will say, "Someone has *cherem* and is *cherem*." And you'll realize that everything in your tent—everything you think you possess, including your life—is *cherem*, and you are *cherem*. And just as you're about to step forward and say, "I have the *cherem*," someone else calls out, "I have the *cherem*." You look and realize it's the Commander of the Lord's Army.

They take Him, and flog Him, and nail Him to a tree. And you know, "*cursed is every man that hangs on a tree*." He cries, "Father forgive . . ." and He says your name. The sky grows black the earth shakes, and then you hear, "*My God my God, why have you forsaken me? ...It is finished*," and then He does something that up until this moment, no adam, no man, has ever done:

He lifts His head, and devotes Himself utterly to God, crying, "*Into your hands I commit my Spirit*."

In the Valley of Achor, you see that the Lord has devoted himself *for* you, and *in* you, and *with* you, and therefore, *to* you... and suddenly you *long* to devote yourself to Him with every fiber of your being. You freely will to devote yourself with every fiber of your being.

The walls that surround the citadel that is your heart suddenly come crashing down. You drop to your knees exclaiming, "*Surely this man was the Son of God.*"

Now, there is no more separation.

He is not on one side and you on the other.

He is the Commander of the Lord's Army and you are His treasure.

You are His bride.

You are His Promised Land, and He is your Promised Land and you will give birth to more Promised Land.

You are His Body . . . fully devoted to God's will.

And what you thought was a horror, turns into the greatest communion of delight.

It is Love. And Love is Life. Life is an undivided kingdom where every member sacrifices for every other member in relentless joy; it's the Promised Land.

That must happen, is happening, and will happen.

And now I'm trying to say:

Everyone must be devoted . . . but, you can be devoted or you can be devoted.

- You can be devoted from the outside like a city that will not surrender

- Or devoted from the inside like the Roman Centurion who dropped to his knees confessing, "*Surely this man was the son of God.*"

- You can be devoted like frightened Canaanites in Jericho,

- Or you can be devoted like waiting disciples in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

- *You can devote yourself, in the *hope* that you would be devoted.

Listen to Acts 1:13-14, 2:42

And when they had entered [Jerusalem], they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.

*¹⁴ All these with one accord were **devoting themselves** to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*

They were devoting themselves, and the devoting was not so much a "how to," as much as a "how *not* to." They were waiting and praying. They were not exerting their will but sacrificing their will.

Then, when the day of Pentecost arrives, there is the sound of a mighty wind, and tongues as of fire, descend and come to rest on each of the disciples, just like the pillar of fire would rest on the mercy seat on top of the Ark—the Testimony.

- And they begin to testify to the glory of God, in all the languages of all the people that have gathered to hear what they have to say.

- Peter preaches, walls come down, and three thousand souls are added to the Body *that day*.

*And they **devoted themselves** to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

—Acts 2:42

With the faith they had, and *already* devoted, they devoted themselves even more.

- Signs and wonders manifested through the apostles...
 - And all who believed were together and shared all things in common—not cause they had to, but because they *wanted* to . . .
 - They worshiped together, and ate together with glad and generous hearts.
- It was the Promised Land, and it began to grow.

The Revelation describes it as “the New Jerusalem coming down.”

- It's not a city that we build, but a city that *God* has built.
- It's not a city that enslaves people; it's a city that is people and whose gates are never shut.
- It's the Promised Land—the Kingdom of God.

So how do you conquer the Kingdom of God?

Well, you must allow the King to conquer you.

How do we conquer the Promised Land?

We devote ourselves, for we have been devoted.

And how do we do that?

Well, I think that's what Jesus was describing to Joshua on the plains of Jericho.

Have a Devotional,

Set aside some time for:

- Rest
- Confession
- Contemplation
- Communion
- Worship

It's hard to describe because it's not so much something that we do...

But something we cease to do, that is, in fact, done to us.

It's Rest. And devoting yourself is “striving to enter that rest” (Heb. 4:11).

So, I hope you all take time to rest and do it unto the Lord.

With our work, we all build walls that become prisons.

The walls come down on the Sabbath Day, the Seventh Day.

It's Rest, and rest is a form of confession.

We confess our sins, and then, we see that we must confess ourselves.
It's our ego that builds the walls.
It's our ego that takes knowledge from God and constantly uses it to judge.
We usually call it thinking.
Devotion is surrendering your judgment to God's Judgment.
And God's Judgment is standing on the mercy seat on top of the Ark. God's judgment is Grace.
It's rest, confession, and contemplation...
Lately, I've been learning to stop my incessant inner babble, silence my soul, and just sit in God's presence,
And there I see that I am not the "me" that I have created,
And that, that "me" is the prison in which "I am" trapped,
And in those moments, just exposed to the Light, the walls come tumbling down...
And I begin to commune... and communion with God is not torture, but Ecstasy—and I once tasted it.

Rest, confession, contemplation, communion, and worship. . .
If I want to lose the "me" in which I am imprisoned, the very best way to forget about me is to focus on the throne of God.

It's to worship, and I don't just mean singing, though it's often singing. I mean devoting myself to prayer, the apostles' teaching, and finding Jesus in my neighbor while breaking bread with a glad and generous heart—the things they did in Acts chapter two and that we do here every seventh day.

Have a Devotional,

Set aside some time for:

- Rest
- Confession
- Contemplation
- Communion
- Worship

(Get devoted. It's how we conquer the Promised Land.)

That's devotion & how we conquer the Promised Land.

People ask, "What does the Sanctuary need?"
Just one thing: We need you to *be devoted* to the Lamb on the Throne.
Not exercising your will, but surrendering your will to God's Will.

We must all be destroyed—I mean our flesh, our psyche, the prison of self must be destroyed. But we are not devoted to destruction. We are devoted to Jesus—to Jesus, who is the death of death, who is Eternal Life, Commander of the Lord's Army and our Husband. When we surrender to Him, fruit *happens* . . . and we each discover our gifts like body parts discover their function—when surrendered to the Head, *the* Commander.

Recently, I was rather discouraged about my inability to figure out how to conquer the Promised Land, and I asked my wife to pray. She came into my office and said, “Peter as I was praying I suddenly saw a raging fire and we, the Sanctuary, were gathered around that fire. Embers went up from the fire, were caught by the wind and traveled around the world. And where they landed the fire would spread...”

Then she said, “The temptation is to take torches and start lighting things on fire, but it will just burn things up and won’t do the work of the embers.” I said, “Cool. Thanks Honey.” Then, about an hour later I called Deb Synott, just to see how she was doing, and she asked how I was doing, and I told her Susan’s vision.

She said, “Oh Peter, I was just praying with Stephen Hahn on the phone, and I had a vision. I saw members of the Sanctuary walking with countless refugees. When one of us would see someone weeping; we might go weep with the one that was weeping. If someone was dancing we might join in his or her dance. But Peter, there was one thing that didn’t make sense—as we did this I noticed that we each had these like little black specks in our hands. Now I know: they’re the embers.”

*Jesus is our vision and worship is our strategy.
Devotion is our strategy.*

Communion

How do we conquer the Promised Land?

[Peter pushes a large collection “how to” books off the communion table and onto the floor.]

The Commander of the Lord’s Army took bread and He broke it saying, “This is my body given to you. And He took the cup, saying, This is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you.”

And then He surrendered (he devoted) His life—just outside the walls of Jerusalem. You are Jerusalem and so now Jerusalem, devote yourself to *Him* with every fiber of your being—because you want to. Come drink from the communion cup, for it is the life-blood of the Commander of the Lord’s army.

Benediction

So, do you know what Achan had in his tent? I think it was a little gold, a little silver and a beautiful cloak from Shinar. That was bad because those things were most holy to the Lord. They belonged to the Lord and so Achan was devoted. God can turn gold into existence. Do you know what you have in your tent? [Peter points to the communion table.] You have the life of the Commander of the Lord’s army in you.

Do you think that’s most holy to the Lord?
And is this good news or bad news?

What has been devoted cannot be *undevoted*. What just happened at communion? Well, I think it’s good news! God is going to finish what He started. Let’s just do this right now. Let’s devote the city to the Lord.

Prayer

Lord God, we're tired of fighting against you. We're tired of doing life under our own power. We're tired of resisting your love. We don't put it in those terms but I think that's what it is because you are constantly trying to break down the boundaries of our own selfishness. So, in the name of Jesus, the Lord God, we surrender the city. My life is your life. My city is your city. My things are your things. May my will be your will, for I'm beginning to see that your will is good. You are Love. In Jesus' name help us surrender. Maybe someone is sick and you want to pray that they are healed. Well, do it. You can do it. I don't know what will happen. I don't know if we'll be wandering in the wilderness for forty or 400 hundred years in bondage or maybe a revival will break out, but that's not really our business because we are surrendered to the Commander. That's good news. You can rest. You are free!

And now, do what you think God wants you to do. Maybe it's to weep with someone who is weeping. Maybe it's to dance with someone who is dancing. You conquer for you've been conquered—by the King of the Promised Land. God's will has become your will and nothing is impossible for you.

You will be entirely devoted—you will love with all your heart mind soul and strength.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.