

THE OBEDIENCE BETWEEN
THE PROMISE
AND THE POSSESSION
JOSHUA 5:13-15

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY
RODMAN STREET CHURCH 9.13.26

THE OBEDIENCE BETWEEN THE PROMISE AND THE POSSESSION!

JOSHUA 5:13-15

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY

9.13.26

Title: The Obedience Between the Promise and the Possession

Sermon Summary: Drawing from Joshua 5:13-15, Pastor Canady preaches on what stands between God's promises and their fulfillment in a believer's life — obedience. The context happens outside Jericho, where a divine encounter reshapes everything Joshua thought he knew about leadership, strategy, and faith. The sermon establishes that possession of what God has promised does not come through getting God to endorse our plans, but through surrendering our plans to God. The sermon is structured around three essential requirements of obedience: the presence of God, the posture of humility, and personal participation. The overarching message is that while God supplies the promise, the power, and the victory, the obedience belongs to the believer. Walls and obstacles are not signs that God has changed his mind, but may in fact signal that the breakthrough is near. True obedience means acting on God's Word even when it does not make sense, trusting who God is rather than demanding an explanation of how He will work.

We are challenged to stop treating God as an assistant who signs off on our agendas and start positioning ourselves as servants who receive His instructions. That reframes everything. The obstacles we face in our own lives, the unanswered prayers, the doors still closed, the walls still standing, may not be signs that God has changed his mind. They may be signs that we are closer than we think. The journey from promise to

possession runs directly through a place called obedience, and this message invites us to walk that road with fresh courage and renewed surrender.

Chapters

Chapter 1: Standing Between the Promise and Your Jericho

God has placed our names on promises, but between those promises and their fulfillment stands a place called obedience. The walls we face are not proof that the promise was canceled, but may be evidence that we are getting closer to our breakthrough.

Chapter 2: Obedience Requires His Presence

Before Joshua received any strategy for Jericho, God first showed up to remind him he was not alone. God's presence does not always change what we face immediately, but it changes how we face it.

Chapter 3: Obedience Requires Our Posture

Joshua fell face down before the commander, demonstrating that before the walls of Jericho could fall, Joshua himself had to fall in humility and surrender. Before God changes our circumstances, he often must change us.

Chapter 4: Obedience Requires Our Participation

The final words of the text, 'and Joshua did so,' capture the heart of obedience: it is not merely agreeing with what God says, but actually doing it. God's promise does not cancel our participation.

Key Points:

- Possession of God's promises comes through surrender, not strategy — before Joshua could command an army, he had to submit to the Commander in Chief

- Obstacles and walls are not proof that God's promise has been canceled; they may be evidence that the breakthrough is approaching
- Obedience requires God's presence — God answered Joshua's problem not with a plan first, but with the assurance of His presence
- Knowing who God is matters more than knowing how God will work — if you know the who, the how does not matter
- God's presence does not always immediately change what you are facing; it shows you how to face it
- Obedience requires the right posture — before the walls of Jericho fell, Joshua had to fall on his face before God
- Humility is the pathway to elevation — in God's Kingdom, the way up is down
- The shift from "are you for us?" to "what does my Lord have for his servant?" reflects the transformation that surrender produces
- God is not our assistant; we are His servants, and true lordship means following his direction before making major life decisions
- Obedience requires participation — agreeing with God's Word is not enough; the believer must act on it
- God's promise does not cancel human participation; Noah had to build, Abraham had to leave, Moses had to stretch out the rod
- Sunday worship must translate into Monday action — prayer and worship should eventually produce participation

Scripture Reference:

- Joshua 5:13-15 (primary text) — Joshua's encounter with the commander of the Lord's army near Jericho, where he is told to remove his sandals because the ground is holy
- Psalm 121:1-2 — a declaration that help comes from the Lord
- James 4:7 — the call to submit to God
- Romans 12:1 — offering oneself as a living sacrifice as true worship
- Luke 22:42 — Jesus in Gethsemane declaring not his will but the Father's
- Luke 14:11 — those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted
- Philippians 2:8-9 — Jesus humbled himself in obedience to death, and God therefore exalted him
- 1 Peter 5:6 — humble yourselves under God's mighty hand so he may lift you up in due time
- John 12:26 — whoever serves Christ must follow him
- Luke 6:46 — the challenge of calling Jesus Lord while not doing what he says
- James 1:22 — the call to be doers of the word and not hearers only
- Isaiah 55:8-9 — God's thoughts and ways are higher than human thoughts and ways
- Proverbs 3:5-6 — trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding

Stories:

- Joshua's encounter with the commander of the Lord's army outside Jericho, where he moves from a posture of self-assertion to one of humility and surrender, asking not whose side God is on but what God wants from him
- The pastor's personal account of traveling and identifying his suitcase by his name tag among many identical black suitcases, used to illustrate that God knows each person by name among billions
- A reference to his wife's pregnancy and the intensity of labor near the end, used to illustrate that the hardest moments often precede the breakthrough
- The illustration of skyscrapers looking enormous from the sidewalk but small from an airplane, used to illustrate how perspective changes what we perceive as overwhelming
- The pastor's account of slipping on carpet after applying lotion to his feet without putting on socks, used humorously to illustrate perseverance despite setbacks
- A boyhood memory of his grandfather's authoritative instruction — "be here when I get back" — used to illustrate that authority does not always require explanation before obedience
- The account of a young boy at the school mishandling equipment after being told not to, used to illustrate why God's instructions should be followed even when we think we know better
- A quote attributed to Reverend James Barron of Wilson, North Carolina, spoken at a funeral: "The older I become, the smarter my parents are," used to illustrate how obedience precedes understanding

- Biblical narratives cited as examples of participation within promise: Noah building the ark, Abraham leaving home, Moses returning to Egypt, Moses stretching out the rod at the Red Sea, Jesus turning water to wine at Cana, the healing of the man with the withered hand, the healing at the pool of Bethesda, and the raising of Lazarus

QUOTES

Don't confuse an obstacle with a denial. Your Jericho does not mean that God has changed his mind. Your Jericho doesn't mean that the promise has been canceled.

The wall is not proof that the promise was wrong. The wall may be proof that you are getting close to your breakthrough.

See, if you know the who, the how doesn't matter. The who can handle the how. The who can handle the why. The who can handle the when. The who can handle the what. The who can handle the where.

Sometimes God's presence does not immediately change what you are facing. God's presence shows you how to face it.

Before God brings Jericho down, Joshua has to go down. Before the walls fall Joshua has to fall. Before Jericho bows Joshua has to bow. Before there is a possession there must be a submission.

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles standing between us and what God has promised isn't always the Jericho in front of us. Sometimes it's the Joshua inside of us. Because before God changes my circumstances God has to change me.

Obedience isn't merely agreeing with what God says. Obedience is doing what God says.

God supplies the power, but we participate through our obedience.

The promise is God's. The power is God's. The victory is God, but the obedience is yours.

If I have to understand it before I obey it, that's not faith. Faith says, God, I don't understand, but I trust you.

THE OBEDIENCE BETWEEN THE PROMISE AND THE POSSESSION!

JOSHUA 5:13-15

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY

9.13.26

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

From Promise to Possession: Walking in Obedience

Day 1: God Knows Your Name

Reading: Isaiah 43:1 -- God declares that He has called His people by name and that they belong to him.

Devotional: In a world of billions, it can feel easy to get lost in the crowd. Yet God is not a God of masses -- He is a God of names. He knows your history, your heartbreak, and your hope. Like a traveler whose name is already on the luggage before the journey begins, your name is already on what God has prepared for you. No wilderness season, no closed door, and no unanswered question changes that. Your circumstances do not

erase your identity in God. Rest today in the certainty that the God who created the universe knows exactly who you are.

Reflection: In what area of your life have you felt overlooked or forgotten? How does knowing that God calls you by name change how you face that situation today?

Practical Application: Write your name at the top of a blank page. Beneath it, write three promises from Scripture that God has spoken over your life. Carry that page with you as a reminder that your name is already on what God has prepared.

Day 2: Do Not Confuse an Obstacle with a Denial

Reading: Joshua 5:13-15 -- Joshua encounters the commander of the Lord's army standing near Jericho with a sword already drawn.

Devotional: Walls are not always signs that God has changed his mind. Sometimes a wall is simply proof that you are getting close to your breakthrough. Joshua stood near Jericho -- not far from it, not lost from it, but near it. The obstacle was real, but so was the promise. God did not remove the wall before showing up. He showed up first, sword already drawn, ready to fight a battle Joshua was never meant to fight alone. Whatever is standing in front of you today is not evidence that God has abandoned the promise. It may be evidence that you are almost there.

Reflection: What wall in your life have you been tempted to interpret as a denial from God? How might your perspective shift if you viewed that wall as a sign of nearness to your breakthrough?

Practical Application: Identify one obstacle you have been avoiding out of fear or discouragement. Take one small, concrete step toward it today

-- not because the wall is gone, but because God is already on the other side of it.

Day 3: The Who Is Greater Than the How

Reading: Psalm 121:1-2 -- The psalmist declares that he lifts his eyes toward the mountains and affirms that his help comes from the Lord.

Devotional: We are a people obsessed with the how. How will the finances recover? How will the family be restored? How will the vision be accomplished? But God rarely answers the how before he answers the who. When Joshua faced Jericho, God did not hand him a battle plan first. He handed him his presence. The commander showed up. That was the answer. When you know who is with you, the how becomes secondary. The who can handle every how, every why, every when, and every where. Stop demanding an explanation from God and start resting in His company. His presence is not a consolation prize. It is the answer.

Reflection: Where in your life are you demanding a how from God when He is offering you His presence? What would it look like to trust the who today?

Practical Application: Spend five minutes in silence today -- no requests, no petitions. Simply acknowledge God's presence with you in whatever you are currently facing. Let that be enough for today.

Day 4: The Posture That Precedes Possession

Reading: James 4:7 -- Believers are called to submit themselves to God, with the promise that resistance to the enemy will cause him to flee.

Devotional: Before the walls of Jericho fell, Joshua fell. That order is not accidental -- it is instructional. God does not bring Jericho down for a Joshua who is still standing in his own pride and self-sufficiency. Submission is not weakness. It is the posture that positions you for possession. Many of us want elevation without humility, promotion without preparation, and blessing without surrender. But the Kingdom of God operates on a different mathematics: the way up is down. When you stop asking God to sign off on your plans and start asking what His plans are, everything changes. The question shifts from "are you with me?" to "what do you want from me?"

Reflection: Are you currently asking God to bless a decision you have already made, or are you genuinely surrendering your plans to His will? What is the difference between those two postures in your own life right now?

Practical Application: Write out a current plan, desire, or decision you are holding tightly. Beneath it, write the words of Luke 22:42 in your own words as a prayer of surrender. Return to that prayer each morning this week.

Day 5: Now Get Up and Do Something

Reading: James 1:22 -- Believers are warned not to merely listen to God's Word but to act on it, lest they deceive themselves.

Devotional: Worship is not the finish line -- it is the starting line. Prayer is not a substitute for participation. There comes a moment when God has spoken clearly enough, when you have studied long enough, when you have discussed it with enough people, and the only thing left is to obey. Joshua looked up, bowed down, and then got up to do what God commanded. That movement -- look up, bow down, get up -- is the full

arc of obedience. God supplies the power. God holds the promise. God guarantees the victory. But the obedience belongs to you. Whatever God has been calling you to do, the time for preparation has not replaced the time for participation. Get up and do what he said.

Reflection: What is one thing God has clearly spoken to you that you have been praying about, studying about, or discussing -- but have not yet done? What is standing between your hearing and your obeying?

Practical Application: Identify the one next step of obedience God is calling you to take. Set a specific date and time this week to take that step. Tell one trusted person in your life what you are committing to do, and ask them to hold you accountable.

THE OBEDIENCE BETWEEN THE PROMISE AND THE POSSESSION!

JOSHUA 5:13-15

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY

9.13.26

Small Group Guide

"The Obedience Between the Promise and the Possession"

Based on Joshua 5:13-15

OVERVIEW

This guide is designed to help your small group move beyond simply hearing the Word to actively living it out. The sermon drew from Joshua's

encounter with the commander of the Lord's army to explore what stands between God's promise and our possession of it: obedience. Use the questions and applications below to spark honest conversation and personal reflection.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Possession does not come from getting God to endorse our plans. It comes when we surrender our plans to God.
 - God often answers our "how" questions with a "who" — reminding us that His presence is the foundation of every promise.
 - Before Joshua could see the walls of Jericho fall, he had to fall on his face before God. Humility precedes possession.
 - Obedience is not merely agreeing with what God says. It is doing what God says.
 - The promise is God's. The power is God's. The victory is God's. But the obedience is ours.
-

OPENING REFLECTION

Before diving into discussion, take a few quiet moments individually. Ask each group member to answer this question privately in writing, then share with the group if they feel comfortable:

"What is one area of your life right now where you can clearly see what God has promised, but a wall still seems to be standing in the way?"

SECTION ONE: Obedience Requires His Presence

Joshua 5:13

In the sermon, the pastor noted that before Joshua received any strategy or marching orders, God first showed up. The presence came before the plan. Joshua looked up and saw the commander standing there with his sword already drawn, ready to fight.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you are facing a difficult situation, what is your first instinct — to look for a plan or to seek God's presence? What does your honest answer reveal about where you place your trust?
 2. The pastor said, "If you know the who, the how doesn't matter." Do you genuinely believe that in practice, or does it feel easier to believe in theory? What makes trusting the "who" difficult when the "how" is unclear?
 3. Think about a time when God did not immediately change your circumstances but instead changed how you were able to face them. How did His presence make a difference even when the situation did not immediately shift?
 4. The sermon pointed out that God showed up with his sword already drawn, meaning God was already prepared to fight on Joshua's behalf. How does it change your perspective on a current struggle to consider that God may already be engaged in the battle on your behalf?
 5. Joshua had to look up to see the commander. What habits or practices help you "look up" when you are tempted to stare only at the size of your wall?
-

SECTION TWO: Obedience Requires Our Posture

Joshua 5:14

Joshua began the encounter standing, asking which side the commander was on. After he realized who was before him, he fell face down. His question changed from "are you for us?" to "what does my Lord have for his servant?" The posture of humility transformed his entire perspective and his relationship to God's authority.

Discussion Questions:

1. The pastor drew a contrast between two questions: "Are you with me?" and "What do you want from me?" Which question more honestly reflects how you typically approach God in prayer? What would it look like to shift toward the second question?
2. The sermon suggested that sometimes the greatest obstacle between us and what God has promised is not the Jericho in front of us but the pride inside of us. Can you identify a time when your own ego, agenda, or need for control was the real barrier? What happened when you finally let it go?
3. The pastor said, "God is not my assistant. I am his servant." How does that statement challenge the way you tend to bring requests to God? In what ways do we subtly treat God as someone who exists to approve our decisions rather than direct them?
4. James 4:7 calls us to submit ourselves to God. Romans 12:1 describes offering ourselves as living sacrifices. In practical terms, what does submission to God look like in your daily life — not just in a church setting, but in your decisions, relationships, and priorities?

5. The pastor noted that calling Jesus "Lord" carries real meaning — it implies that He directs our steps, not just blesses them. Is there an area of your life where you have been calling him Savior but not fully surrendering to Him as Lord? What would it take to change that?
-

SECTION THREE: Obedience Requires Our Participation

Joshua 5:15

The commander gave Joshua a simple, specific instruction: remove your sandals, for this is holy ground. The text closes with four powerful words — "and Joshua did so." The sermon emphasized that obedience is not nodding in agreement with God's Word. It is acting on it.

Discussion Questions:

1. The pastor said, "There comes a point when you prayed enough, studied enough, discussed enough, and analyzed enough. At some point, you got to do what God said." Is there something God has been calling you to do that you have been preparing for, praying about, or talking about — but have not yet actually done? What is holding you back?
2. The sermon listed several biblical figures — Noah, Abraham, Moses, the disciples — who each received a promise from God but still had to participate through a specific act of obedience. What does this pattern tell us about how God typically works? Why do you think God partners our participation with his power rather than simply acting without our involvement?

3. James 1:22 warns against being hearers of the Word who deceive themselves by not doing what it says. In what ways can regular church attendance, Bible knowledge, or even enthusiastic worship become a substitute for actual obedience? How do we guard against that in our own lives?
4. The pastor said that sometimes God's instructions will not make sense until after you have obeyed. Can you think of a time when you obeyed God without fully understanding why, and the reason became clear only in hindsight? What did that experience teach you about the relationship between faith and understanding?
5. The sermon closed with this statement: "The promise is God's. The power is God's. The victory is God's. But the obedience is yours." How does it feel to hold both of those truths at the same time — that God does what only God can do, and yet your participation genuinely matters? Does that feel like freedom or pressure? Why?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Use these action steps individually or as a group commitment for the week ahead.

1. Identify Your Jericho Write down one specific promise you believe God has given you that still has a wall standing in front of it. Commit to praying over it daily this week, not asking God to explain how, but thanking Him for who He is and trusting that He is already present in that situation.

2. Examine Your Posture Set aside 15 minutes this week for a posture-focused prayer time. Begin by physically bowing or kneeling if you are able. Ask God the question Joshua asked after he fell: "What message does

my Lord have for his servant?" Then be still and listen. Write down anything that comes to mind.

3. Take One Step of Obedience Identify one specific thing you believe God has been asking you to do that you have been delaying. This week, take one concrete step toward doing it. Share that step with a trusted member of your small group so they can hold you accountable.

4. Shift Your Prayer Language For the next seven days, intentionally begin at least one prayer each day with "God, what do you want?" rather than "God, here is what I need." Notice how this changes the tone and direction of your conversation with God.

5. Memorize a Key Verse As a group, choose one of the following passages to memorize together this week and recite at your next meeting:

- Proverbs 3:5-6, which calls us to trust God fully and not rely on our own understanding
- James 1:22, which challenges us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only
- 1 Peter 5:6, which promises that God will lift up those who humble themselves under his hand

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPTS

Close your group time in prayer, using these prompts to guide you:

- Thank God for His presence, which goes before you into every situation you face.
- Confess any area where pride, self-reliance, or fear has kept you from full surrender.

- Ask God for the courage to take one specific step of obedience this week.
 - Pray for one another by name, that each person would move from promise to possession through faithful, humble obedience.
-

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

The following passages connect with the themes of this sermon and are recommended for personal study before your next group meeting:

- Joshua 1:1-9, in which God commissions Joshua and calls him repeatedly to be strong and courageous
- Psalm 121, which speaks of lifting our eyes to God as the source of all help
- Luke 22:39-44, in which Jesus models the ultimate posture of surrender in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Hebrews 11, which traces a long line of men and women who acted in obedience before they saw the fulfillment of God's promises

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The sermon draws a distinction between God answering 'how' versus answering 'who' -- in what areas of your life are you still demanding a 'how' from God when he may be calling you to simply trust the 'who'?
2. Joshua's posture shifted from standing and questioning to falling face down in surrender -- what does your own posture before God reveal about whether you are treating Him as your assistant or your Lord?

3. The pastor suggests that sometimes the greatest obstacle between us and God's promise is not the Jericho in front of us but the Joshua inside of us -- what personal attitudes, agendas, or pride might be standing in God's way more than your circumstances are?
4. The sermon teaches that obedience is not merely agreeing with what God says but actually doing what God says -- where in your life is there a gap between your agreement with God's Word and your active participation in it?
5. Joshua 5:13-15 describes a moment where Joshua encountered the commander of the Lord's army before receiving any battle strategy -- how does this order of presence before plan challenge the way you typically approach God when facing a major obstacle?
6. The pastor describes Jericho not as a denial of God's promise but as evidence that you are getting close to your breakthrough -- how does reframing your current obstacle through that lens change the way you respond to it?
7. The sermon draws on Proverbs 3:5-6 to argue that we should not let what we do not understand keep us from obeying what God has said -- can you identify a time when delayed obedience cost you something, and what did that teach you about trust?
8. The pastor points out that God's promise did not cancel the participation of Noah, Abraham, Moses, or Joshua -- each still had to act -- what specific step of obedience might God be waiting for you to take before the walls in your life begin to fall?
9. The sermon contrasts the world's instruction to promote yourself with the kingdom principle of humbling yourself, citing 1 Peter 5:6 and the example of Christ in Philippians 2:8-9 -- in what practical ways does genuine humility look different from what the culture around you celebrates?

10. The pastor closes by stating that the promise is God's, the power is God's, and the victory is God's, but the obedience is yours -- how does accepting personal responsibility for your obedience while releasing the outcome to God reshape your relationship with both faith and action?

**YOUR MIRACLE IS
ATTACHED TO YOUR
OBEDIENCE.**