

Forward: Claiming the Life God Gave You
The Commission – Part 1
Joshua 1:1-5

Introduction: Today we begin our study of The Book of Joshua. It teaches us the exhilarating story of how God led His people to claim the land that He had given them. This land was to be the place they would not only prosper as His nation, but more importantly fulfill His promise to bring forth His eternal Son who would pierce through the darkness of this world and bring us life -- Jesus! As such, studying this book provides all kinds of motivation and practical illustrations on how we should move forward and claim the life God has already given us through the New Covenant of Christ.

However, to truly understand the story of Joshua we need to spend some time looking at the things that led up to it. It all began when God told a man named Abraham (at the time Abram) to relocate his family and business. The Bible records,

1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. (Genesis 12:1-7)

The promise that God gave Abraham was then renewed with Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26:1-5) and then again with Abraham's grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:10-15). There was all kinds of drama in the life of all three of those men that God used to demonstrate His glory and grace, but perhaps none was bigger than what happened with Jacob and his sons. His sons actually sold one of their brothers (Joseph), the favorite son of Jacob, into slavery. To cover it up they told their father he had been eaten by a "fierce animal" (Genesis 37:33). Ironically however, after another wild and crazy story, Joseph ends up running Egypt for Pharaoh! The timing of this was an unmistakable work of God because eventually a horrible famine struck the land of Canaan and God sent Jacob, and his entire family and business, to Egypt. Egypt was a place they would have otherwise not found any favor, but because Joseph was running Egypt that was not the case. In addition, after the incredible drama that led to Jacob finding out that Joseph was alive and well and running Egypt, God said something to Jacob that set the stage for the events that led up to the book of Joshua. In Genesis 46 we read,

1 So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here am I." 3 Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. 4 I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes." (Genesis 46:1-4)

As encouraging as that dream had to have been to Jacob, he had no idea how things were going to play out. Exodus 12:40-41 tells us it was 430 years to the day when the descendants of Jacob finally left Egypt to go back to Canaan! Their initial experience in Egypt was awesome. Even after Joseph and his brothers died, the people continued to prosper in Egypt. Exodus 1:7 tells us,

7 But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them. (Exodus 1:7)

However, eventually there arose a Pharaoh who had no concern for their history of friendship with the Hebrew people, and instead saw them as a threat. The Hebrew people had become so large and so prosperous, that the Egyptians feared they might align with their enemies and take over the land. Therefore, they ruthlessly enslaved the Jewish people, and with extreme brutality, forced them to accomplish the harshest labor needs of the Egyptian empire. Nonetheless, the Book of Exodus tells us the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob continued to multiply. God made a promise to make them into a mighty nation, and as such, nothing the Egyptians did could stop that from happening.

Finally, 430 years to the day when all 70 of the Hebrew people had entered Egypt (Exodus 1:5), Moses writes he left with 600,000 fighting men, and an untold number of women and children as well (Exodus 12:37). This however is a highly debated number, as in its way too big to be accurate, not just from a logic standpoint, but from other historical accounts in the Bible itself that suggest it had to have been a much smaller number. There are some very acceptable arguments among conservative scholars that suggest it is an incorrect translation of the Hebrew and should be a much smaller number (e.g., fifty to sixty thousand¹), as well as that it should be took metaphorically² to simply mean it was a lot of people. Either way, for our purposes the point is that 430 years after entering Egypt God raised up a man named Moses to lead a much larger and stronger people back to the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In their journey to Canaan, they eventually got to the Red Sea where God miraculously parted it and dried up the dirt so that the entire nation safely crossed. God then unleashed the water behind them to destroy Pharaoh's army that was pursuing them (Exodus 14). From there, they continued on their journey with God demonstrating over and over again that He was going to do what He promised. On at least two different occasions God

¹ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Ex 12:37). Chicago: Moody Press.

² Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

miraculously provided them water (He turned the bitter water to sweet water in Marah (Exodus 15:22-25) and He provided water from a rock at Meribah (Exodus 17:1-7), which should not be confused with the disobedient way Moses got water from a rock in Meribah in Numbers 20 when he was to speak to the rock but instead struck it with his staff twice). In addition, Exodus 16 says daily God miraculously provided them with bread called manna.

Sadly, after all that God did to demonstrate He was going to do what He said He was going to do through them, when they finally got to Canaan and were poised to take the land, they chickened out. Numbers 13 and 14 tell us what happened. God told Moses to send twelve spies into the land, not to decide whether they should go or not, but rather to get the information they needed to devise a battle plan and to bring back some of the bounty of the land to show the people just how awesome the gift was that God had given them. Their job was to come back and give a report that would motivate the people to go forward in faith with God! However, when the spies got back, all of them but Joshua and Caleb discouraged the people from going! Ten of the spies' conclusion from their trip struck such fear into the people, that they were going to kill Joshua and Caleb for trying to convince them to go into the land (Numbers 14:10)!

As a result, God brought judgment on all the adults who had seen Him work miracle after miracle, after miracle, to bring them to this point. God declared that every adult, minus Joshua and Caleb, would die before He would allow them to enter into the promise land. They spent the next forty years wandering in the wilderness as a nomadic people with no home until the very last person died that God had placed His judgment on. Surprisingly, this ultimately included Moses himself.

God allowed Moses to lead the people to conquer two of the Kingdoms east of the Jordan, but He made it real clear that He was not going to let Him cross the Jordan into the heart of the promised land. Moses was the greatest leader the people of Israel ever knew. God used Moses to lead them out of 430 years of captivity, to form them as a nation with a Covenant called The Law that spelled out exactly how the relationship with God was going to work, and on at least two occasions because of the sin of the people, begged God to not destroy them from the earth and start over with Moses' descendants (Exodus 32:7-14 and Numbers 14:11-38)! This incredible leader, that had endured 40 years of wandering in the wilderness with them, leading them through all kinds of drama, including constant attempts to undermine his leadership, died just as the people of God were gaining momentum to march into the heart of the promised land! Deuteronomy 34 records,

1 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, 2 all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, 3 the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4 And the LORD said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, 'I will give it to your offspring.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." 5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, 6 and he

buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day. 7 Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated. 8 And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended. 9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. 10 And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, 11 none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, 12 and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel. (Deuteronomy 34:1-12)

Now, not only does the end of the book of Deuteronomy show us how huge of a leader Moses was, but it also shows us that Joshua was already established as the one who would assume leadership of the people. Did you notice what it said in verse nine,

9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. (Deuteronomy 34:9)

This was not something that just happened overnight. Moses had already declared that Joshua was going to replace him and for over 40 years Moses had been equipping Joshua to be the next leader of the people. To be a truly great leader is not only to lead people to accomplish great things while you're leading them, but to set them up to do even greater things when your gone! This is exactly what Moses did with Joshua.

The Bible introduces us to Joshua in Exodus 17:8-16. After crossing the Red Sea Amalek came against Israel with his army. In response Moses told Joshua to form an army and lead them to fight Amalek's. During the battle, whenever Moses had his arms raised Joshua and his army would prevail, however, when Moses got tired and lowered his arms Amalek prevailed. Realizing what God was doing through Moses, Aaron and Hur held up his arms for him until evening came when Joshua and his army finally defeated Amalek. Right after that battle we get a huge hint that the guy named Joshua, whom we just met, was being prepared by God to do something even bigger than the awesome task of leading the fighting men of Israel into battle. In Exodus 17 we read,

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." (Exodus 17:14)

Obviously in writing the Word of the Lord down the purpose would be to make God's Words available to everybody, however, God adds an extra step in telling Moses to make sure he teaches them to Joshua. We don't know what kind of relationship Moses had with Joshua prior to this battle, obviously Moses knew something about him, or he wouldn't have assigned him the job of forming and leading an army. However, it is at this moment that we find out God has set Joshua apart to be uniquely mentored by Moses.

Once we get to Exodus 24, we find out that Moses had made Joshua his official assistant and as such his understudy. Moses was well aware that he was going to eventually die, therefore, somebody needed to be ready to take the reins, and Joshua was that guy.

The investment by Moses into Joshua was of no small measure. In Exodus 24:13 Moses leaves all the Elders of Israel to go up Mount Sinai to meet with God, but he didn't go alone – he took Joshua with him. It is not emphatically stated that Joshua was standing near Moses while God gave Him the Law, but it seems to be implied. Additionally, the Bible tells us that when God finished speaking with Moses in the Tent of Meeting, Moses left Joshua in the tent, implying he may have been in there the entire time (Exodus 33:11). Finally, the book of Deuteronomy eliminates any doubt that God had not only called Joshua to be the next leader of Israel but that He also told Moses to be sure Joshua understood it and was fully ready for it! After they had conquered two of the Kingdoms on the east side of the Jordan, Moses was anxious to cross the Jordan and start claiming the heart of the land God had promised to give them. Here's what happened,

21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings. So will the LORD do to all the kingdoms into which you are crossing. 22 You shall not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.' 23 "And I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, 24 'O Lord GOD, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours? 25 Please let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.' 26 But the LORD was angry with me because of you and would not listen to me. And the LORD said to me, 'Enough from you; do not speak to me of this matter again. 27 Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and look at it with your eyes, for you shall not go over this Jordan. 28 But charge Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he shall go over at the head of this people, and he shall put them in possession of the land that you shall see.' (Deuteronomy 3:21-28)

So, when Moses died Joshua was equipped and ready to lead the people into the promised land, but he himself had yet to hear from the Lord on what and how he was supposed to do it. Moses had been preparing Joshua to follow God but at this point all Joshua had done was follow God by following Moses. It was now time for Joshua to follow God himself, and this brings us to Joshua 1:1-9. I know I've read a lot of Scripture to you already, but, as we begin our study through this book, will you stand with me as we read these opening words of the book of Joshua and then let's pray for God to use this study to teach us to live in the incredible life that He has already called and commissioned us to live in!

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as

the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:1-9)

There are three distinct parts to God's commissioning of Joshua in Joshua 1:1-9. However, because we took the time this week to go through the back story of what led up to the events in the book of Joshua, today we are only going to look at the first two parts of the commission, then next week we will look at the final part.

Proposition: Joshua 1:1-5 demonstrates two distinct parts in God's commissioning of Joshua to lead the Hebrew people.

The first distinct part in God's commissioning of Joshua is that,

(1) God called Joshua to lead Israel into what He had already given them! (1:1-4)

- A. **1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory.**
- B. We've already talked about what led up to Joshua taking Moses' place, the land that God had promised them, and why God had not allowed them to settle it yet. What I want to focus in on now is this seeming contradiction that God tells Joshua He is "**giving**" it to them in verse two, but then in verse three says "**I have given**" it to you. Which is it? Is God in the process of giving it to them or has He already given it to them? The answer is both! God had already given them the land but as it is with any gift, until you claim it, it's no good to you!
- C. Let me begin by first making sure you understand this is not land that they claimed, then by faith believed God would give it to them, but rather land that God decided belonged to them and now they needed to follow Him into it. This

is key for us to properly understand what it means to live by faith. You and I have no right to lay hold of anything that God has not given us. The Bible says,

- D. **“1 The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1)**
- E. God didn't give Israel the entire earth. He was very specific in His instructions as to what land He had given them. The universe, and all that is in it, belongs to Him, and therefore He alone decides who gets what. Whether it be land, money, time, or life; nothing in this universe is ours to take, but rather ours to have only if He has given it to us. Thus, the notion that as Christians we can name something as ours then claim it, is Biblically absurd!
- F. This is also why its ridiculous for people to claim eternal life because they are religious. Religion is an effort to claim something that doesn't belong to you! Eternal life doesn't belong to you, that is, a relationship with God doesn't belong to you, and can't belong to you unless God gives it to you. However, all who repent and believe in Jesus have been given eternal life, which means you have Him!
 - 1. **36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. ... 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 3:36; 17:3)**
 - 2. **13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)**
- G. Therefore, if you are in Christ and trying to claim His life as your life, then you are not trying to claim something that isn't yours, but rather something that is very much yours because He gave it to you!
- H. However, in the same way the Jews had been given the land but still had to go claim it to actually live in it, you and I have been given new life, God's life, but its meaningless if we don't actually walk in it! The land had been given to the Jewish people long before Moses ever even led them to it, and even though they got right up beside it forty years prior, they lacked the faith to go live in it!
- I. Imagine if we bought you a beach house and gave you the key to go live in it, but you didn't believe we actually bought it for you. Every few weeks you would drive to the beach, park your car outside of the house but then sleep in your car dreaming about how awesome it would be to live in it in one day, if only you had some way of buying it! You see, owning something is meaningless unless you first believe you own it, and then second, you actually use it! Thus, when it comes to God's life we read,

1. **10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10).**

Note: They have been prepared for us, but we have to walk in them to experience them. Elsewhere Paul wrote,

2. **6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him. (Colossians 2:6).**

Note: We have been given life in Christ, but it has no impact on our life if we don't walk in what we received!

3. **4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4).**

- a. His death has given us the opportunity to walk in His life, but the opportunity to do something, and actually doing it are two different things. Without Christ you wouldn't have the opportunity to live in God's life, but having the opportunity doesn't mean your living in it! You won't experience the life of Christ until you have the faith to walk in what He gave you. Paul made it real clear in this letter to the Galatians that we can have His life, but then take that life and submit it to religion which results in everything opposite to His life!

- b. Later in Romans Paul got really blunt about choosing to walk in what we've been given from God rather than what we were born into as sinners. He writes,

4. **12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:12-14)**

The second distinct part in God's commissioning of Joshua is that,

- (2) **God personally committed to never leave Joshua. (1:5)**

- A. **5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.**

- B. When God said no man will be able to stand against you, He wasn't saying that because of how talented or powerful Joshua was, but rather because God would be standing with Him. Whoever stood against Joshua would also be standing against the Lord, which no man can do and win! Hearing that part of it was certainly encouraging to Joshua, but it wasn't clarifying because Joshua likely already knew whoever God was with wasn't going to be defeated! J.E. Smith notes,
- C. **"With his own eyes Joshua had seen the supernatural intervention with which the Lord had come to the aid of Moses in crisis after crisis."**³
- D. However, for God to personally commit to be with Joshua was huge. Joshua didn't have to wonder what his standing with God was, because God made it real clear! God saying, I will NOT leave you or forsake you was an unconditional commitment from God who cannot break His promises. Therefore, no matter how crazy things might get in the future, Joshua could know that God would not leave Him or forsake Him. Even if Joshua tried to rebel and run from God it wouldn't work, because God wouldn't leave Him or forsake Him!
- E. There is nothing more worrisome or exhausting than constantly feeling as if you can lose something, especially when that something is someone you love. Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about because you grew up with a parent who treated you that way. I didn't, but I know plenty of people who did. It's heartbreaking to hear stories of people whose parents made them constantly earn their love. Some people however chose to enter into or stay in these types of relationships all on their own, that is, they continue to try and be friends with somebody that is constantly requiring them to perform in order to receive the benefit of their friendship. It sucks the life out of people to try and maintain relationships with those who require you to constantly earn their love and affirmation!
- F. Unfortunately, too many Christians don't understand that God isn't like the people in their life who are always demanding a performance from them in order to be loved and affirmed by them! God has made the same commitment to us that He made with Joshua and Moses! Listen to God's Word,
- G. **18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)**

³ Smith, J. E. (1995). [*The Books of History*](#) (p. 53). Joplin, MO: College Press.

- H. **16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. (John 14:16-20)**
- I. **31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ... 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31, 38-39)**
- J. Listen church, if death cannot even separate me from the love of God, then I have nothing to fear! Not even death can stand against me because even in death I will still be basking in God's presence and love, and actually more so! Its why Paul wrote,
- K. **21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)**

Challenge: Are you living as one who believes Christ is with you?

There are variety of ways this reality can manifest itself in our life, but I want to quickly talk about three of them.

Some people choose sin simply because they don't think God knows about it. It's a foolish proposition but it's crazy how often we all do it. We choose sin over obedience thinking somehow God isn't right there with us as we walk into it!

I'll never forget the time Ari and a group of his teammates went completely crazy in our basement after I had told them to be quiet and go to bed. I was one of the Assistant Coaches and we had a huge game the next morning. It was pushing midnight, and frankly I needed some sleep, so I turned the lights out, unplugged the TV and told them to go to sleep! I went back upstairs to my room and got in bed, but just as my head was hitting my pillow it sounded like all of them had suddenly been struck with insanity! When I looked at my security camera it appeared Wrestle Mania was being broadcast from my basement! They all knew there was a camera in the basement pointed at the back door and as such everything that took place in the basement could be viewed on that camera, but when I came storming down the steps they all got stupid quiet and tried to act like nothing had ever happened; they even asked me why I was so upset because they claimed they hadn't done anything wrong! After I reminded them of the camera, they all looked at me with a stunned look and began wondering if I was actually going to make them all go outside and start running sprints up and down my street in the middle of the night. If I had not been so exhausted, I probably would have! Luckily, they had mercy on me and went to sleep after

that, so I didn't have to spend the next hour of my life running them, or have to explain to the Head Coach, John Rudisill, why they were all so wore out when we got to the game!

Other people end up choosing sin over faithfulness to the Lord, because they simply don't believe what they have in a relationship with Christ is significant enough for it to make sense to choose obedience to Him over obedience to their flesh. It's not that don't believe they have access to His life, it's that they believe His life isn't better. They have an overinflated view of what sin provides them, and an underinflated view of what it means that Christ is with them, and thus, the life we have access to by living in submission to Him! If this is you, cry out to God to open your eyes and heart to the beauty of His life so that you can long for it more than you long for the sin that is destroying you and everybody around you!

Finally, people end up choosing a life of rebellion against God, or at minimum a masked form of rebellion, that they like to tell themselves is just isolation/being absent from Him because they believe God has abandoned them - as if walking away from a King is ever anything but rebellion! But nonetheless, they are both rooted in the same thing and end the same way. Typically, people end up this way because they decide the truth about God, His love for us, and the life He's given us, is not seen in the Gospel, but rather in how they themselves interpret the circumstances of their life and world. It's an incredibly lonely place to be. To isolate yourself down to what you in your own ability can perceive about life and the world is a dangerously foolish place to go. For some this may sound harsh, but nonetheless it's incredibly arrogant to go down this path, and ironically, it always leads to loneliness. Arrogance ALWAYS leads to loneliness. When we feel our interpretation of God is more correct than what He has said about Himself and demonstrated through the death and resurrection of His Son then we are totally setting ourselves up to spend our lives wandering around aimlessly in the wilderness. Repent from your insistent refusal to trust God at His Word and watch how you begin to walk in the promised land of His life!