

Sermon: Bootcamp - Preparing to Possess the Promise: "Discern"
Nov. 28, 2021,
Impact Church London

Recap: Declare — In Jesus God has taken us across the river. Jesus has stepped down into our impassible, impossible Jordan of death, poverty, sickness, and curse. He has pushed back the currents of these forces and we are on the other side.

As we face difficulty, transition, impassible and impossible crossings in our lives now, we draw the strength, courage, and faith to cross over these circumstances through the knowledge of our already having crossed in Jesus. That faith empowers forward action and future victory in battle.

This faith is proclaimed, encouraged, inspired and nurtured through the personal, intentional, and generational DECLARING of what God has done for us as. We remember and declare it for all to see and hear.

Psalms 145:4

"One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts."

Intro: Discern

Now having crossed, we're ready to go. Attack in every direction!

Joshua 5:1

"So it was, when all the kings... heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel."

But sometimes GOD says, "not so fast, we've got to do something first."

Joshua 5:2-3

"...Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time..."

Circumcision is about being able to distinguish:

1. Identity
2. Authenticity
3. Spirit from Flesh

Sermon - Distinguish

Joshua 5:7

“Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.” — WHY?

There was generation of Israelites who didn't know who they were, who had not known the covenant they had with God, and who were raised up outside the markers of covenant reality.

Genesis 17:9-11 (NASB 1995)

“God said further to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations...And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.”

The act of circumcision cuts to the heart of identity, authenticity (God sees you for who you really are, nothing is hidden), and it cuts off the flesh.

1. Discern True Identity

The Israelites in the wilderness had gotten out of Egypt but not been taught who they were, nor about the covenant they had. It's like believers who know we are saved, but have yet to find identity in Christ, still identifying themselves by performance, actions, contributions, relationships, service, job etc.

Circumcision cuts at the root of identity. It cuts off is the extra, excess fleshly identity markers, and leaves you with who you really are in Christ.

Revelation 12:10

“...the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.”

The devil accuses you and labels you. But...

Colossians 2:9-12

“...When you came to Christ, you were “circumcised,” but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. 12 For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with

him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead."

Circumcision is one of the heart, in the spirit, done by Christ at the cross. My sinful nature and old identity, all that I was, is cut off forever at the cross, and I was raised up as something new altogether.

I am by Paul Ellis - footnote below, E2R article "Who Do You Think You Are?"

"I am a saint (Rm 1:7, Eph 1:1, Php 1:1 Ju 1:3), a trophy of Christ's victory (2 Cor 2:14, AMP); born again (1 Pe 1:23), a new creation (2 Cor 5:17); complete in Christ (Col 2:10) and perfect forever (He 10:14);

I am a child of God (1 Jn 3:1), the apple of my Father's eye (Ps 17:8); one with the Lord (1 Cor 6:17) and the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19); eternally redeemed (He 9:12) and completely forgiven (Col 2:13); seated with Christ in heavenly realms (Eph 2:6); summoned by name and His (Is 43:1, 2 Cor 1:22);.

I am dead to sin and alive to God (Rm 6:11); free from guilt and condemnation (He 10:22, Rm 8:1); righteous (2 Cor 5:21), holy and blameless! (Eph 1:4); healed (1 Pet 2:24) and strong in the Lord (Eph 6:10); hidden in Christ (Col 3:3) and eternally secure (He 6:19); loved with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3); highly favored (Eph 1:6 charitoo);

I am my Beloved's and He is mine (Son 6:3);

I am the head and not the tail (De 28:13); blessed with every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3) and a joint heir with Christ (Rm 8:17);

I am a competent minister of the new covenant (2 Co 3:6); bona fide and qualified (Col 1:12), chosen (Jn 15:8, Col 3:12, 1 Th 1:4, 1 Pe 2:9) and anointed (1 Jn 2:27); His royal ambassador (2 Co 5:20), a missionary to the world (Mt 28:19); a stranger on earth (He 11:13), a citizen of a city whose maker is God (He 11:10,16, 12:22);

I am pressing on to know Him more (Ph 3:14); He will finish what He started (He 12:2, Ju 1:24, 2 Co 9:8);

I am a king and a priest (Rev 1:6); a carrier of the Lord's authority (Lk 10:19); a healer of the sick (Mark 16:18) and a demon's worst nightmare (Mt 10:8); king o' the world (1 Jn 5:4) because His victory is mine (1 Co 15:57); as bold as a lion (Pr 28:1) and

more than a conqueror (Rm 8:37); a testimony of the Spirit's power (1 Cor 2:4, 12:7, 2 Co 1:9); the salt (Mt 5:13) and light of the world (Mt 5:14); the sweet smell of Jesus to those who are perishing (2 Cor 2:15); a tree planted by the water (Ps 1:3, Jer 17:7), and a fruitful branch (Jn 15:8); the disciple whom Jesus loves (Eph 1:6) and by the grace of God I am what I am (1 Co 15:10). Hallelujah!"¹

2. Discern Authenticity

Brene Brown defines it as "the daily practice of letting go of who we think we are supposed to be and embracing who we are."²

Circumcision cuts away what is not truly us. Much like identity, it cuts off and pulls back what is in our life that is inauthentic, pretend, and fake. There are a bunch of reasons for why we hide: guilt, fear, shame, pain, rejection, lack of vulnerability and the resilience it requires.

Genesis 3:7-8

"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

Hebrews 4:13

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

God sees us as we are, not as we think we need to be, or think anyone wants us to be.

Joshua 5:8

"So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed."

Internalizing the love of and acceptance of God towards ourselves can sometime be a painful experience. We feel like if we let our authentic selves be exposed God

¹ "I Am" by Paul Ellis. <https://escapetoreality.org/2011/04/24/who-do-you-think-you-are/>

² Brene Brown. The Gifts of Imperfection."

will surely hate what he sees and punish us for it. That is the voice of shame, not God.

Galatian 5:25-26 (MSG)

“Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.”

3. Discern between Spirit and Flesh

Romans 8:9

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

You are in the Spirit, if the Spirit dwells in you, not if you live and act and behave a certain way. So our starting place is Spirit, and we can't fall out of that!

Romans 2:28-29

“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”

What does this mean for us? Doesn't this happen right when we are saved, when we cross over? Yes, it does, but often times it takes time for us to have it settled in our hearts that not only is salvation an act of grace by the Spirit, but all of our life with God is that too. We need to let go of fleshy mindsets that would try to get us to qualify for the gift of the Spirit that is given by grace, and to unlearn trying to prove ourselves, earn or qualify ourselves for the things that only come by grace.

We have to have answer this questions well before we set out:

Galatians 3:5

“Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—”

Of course it is by the hearing of faith, and this is how we discern between walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh. If we are in faith, we are NOT JUST EXISTING IN THE SPIRIT, BUT OUR LIFE IS BEING ANIMATED BY THE SPIRIT. If we are in works

or performance mode, we are most likely existing in the spirit but our contribution is empowered by an old fleshly way of doing things.

Joshua 5:10-12

"...And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day...and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year."

God had been rescuing them and supernaturally sustaining them, but now, with the flesh cut off, he wanted them to see the work of their own hands, produce and bear fruit for themselves. This only happens empowered by the Spirit.

Hebrews 4:11-12

"11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The word of God can help us discern between what is done in the rest of faith, and what is done in the stress of the flesh.

Summary

Very important to embrace circumcision, not one we do to ourselves, but the one that happened by Christ at the cross. He cut away false identity, the sources of pain, shame, fear, and pride that drive us to be inauthentic and hide, and he cut away the flesh forever and established us in the Spirit. We must learn to walk by faith so we not only exist in the Spirit, but our actions are deeply connected to the realities we carry in our union with Christ.

If we fail to stop, to take the time to be exposed and to heal, down the road it will trip us up. A hidden wound will surface to attack you at the place of broken identity, and moment of inauthenticity will cause a comprise for which you can't reverse out of, and though we find ourselves in the spirit, we may find our selves at times acting in our own strength and thereby bringing limitation and narrowing to what only the Spirit can broaden and bless.

Galatians 5:16-18 (MSG)

“My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God’s Spirit. Then you won’t feed the compulsions of selfishness... Why don’t you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence?”