

## No Wall Too Tall

Pastor Ken

Week 1, April 7, 2024

Stuck in the land of pause, living in the land of Oz, no longer in Egypt, but not yet in Canaan.

I will refer to this little piece of poetry, throughout the weeks in the series, No Wall Too Tall. You will hear me saying it in your ear, chair time and even in your sleep. I believe this poem to my toes.

*<sup>43</sup> So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. <sup>44</sup> The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hands. <sup>45</sup> Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled. (Joshua 21-NIV)*

What is the geography of **Kansas** shaped like? Center of US! Shaped like a rectangle with a bite out of the upper right-hand corner.

What is the geography of **Texas** shaped like? Texas thinks it is the largest state in the USA. Shaped like a boot, because of the protruding heel.

What is the geography of **Alaska** shaped like? Largest state. Shaped like a bear leaving hibernation.

What is the geography of **Florida** shaped like? Most southernmost state. Shaped like a handgun.

Let me give you a geography quiz to start our series-No Wall-Too Tall.

**Why Pastor?** Because so much of the book of Joshua and the possession by God's people is best understood when you know some geography. **Let me illustrate.** When God's people entered Canaan, the Promised Land, they came in through the back door-crossing from Moab (Jordan) into Jericho. That is called the back door.

When you identify the length of Israel, the size of New Jersey, you will see the biblical text says, often says from Dan(north) to Beer Sheba in the south. <sup>20</sup> *And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord. (1 Sam 3:20-NIV)*

What is Israel shaped like? It looks like a flint knife with a place to insert your fingers.

This picture reminds us God's purposes for Israel- *Zech 12:3, On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem and immovable rock for all of the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.*

Everything in the world centers around Israel. God is working and winding human history toward this future event. And it is here that God will reveal himself to the Jewish Nation of Israel.

Look a little further down the chapter and you will see what purpose God is orchestrating by allowing a global conflict to be directed at Israel. The current conflict is a key puzzle piece moving the nation of Israel closer to God's end time destiny.

*<sup>10</sup> "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced,*

*and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. (Zech 12:10-NIV)*

In the bible God uses geography as theology.

God uses land and locations as lessons.

God uses territories as truths.

God uses people as principles.

God uses Israel as insights.

God is inviting you to the Promised Land.

The only condition is that you have turn your back on Egypt and the wilderness. (Sinai Desert)

*And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt." (Numbers 14:4-NIV)*

If the Promised Land is the picture of a Christian life that is characterized by victory, then the wilderness is the Christian life characterized by defeat.

We too have traveled from Egypt to the wilderness and now to Canaan. We too were once in the slavery of Egypt. Enslaved to sin and shame. Then our sin-bearer and Savior- Jesus Christ came.

Jesus today. Moses back then. Jesus today. Joshua whose name means savior, back then.

In Egypt, the Israelites were enslaved to Pharaoh.

In the wilderness the Israelites were entrusted to Moses.

In the Promised Land the Israelites were expected to obey Joshua.

We are liberated from an old life of sin and offered a new life in the Promise Land. Canaan. Israel. The Holy Land. Palestine.

A Promised Land and life, where we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us. No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! (Rom 8:7-NET)

God is using the story of Joshua to illustrate several spiritual truths:

No Wall, Too Tall. How to Take Possession of God's Promises.  
The Joshua generation has arrived!

But like the Hebrews many would rather wander in the wilderness than to move in and take possession. One of the reasons we don't possess God's promises is because in front of us stands **a wall that is too tall**.

So, into the time out chair Israel went- The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. (Josh 5:6-NIV)

They wandered over the same path.  
They ate the same food.  
They fought the same enemies.  
Day after day. From sunup to sundown.

The same hills became their shade. The same lizards became their kids' pets. The same food-manna! Angels' food cake.

Their lives were characterized by monotony. Sameness. Bland. Vanilla. 40 years earlier they stood at the door and turned away.

Just as the Promised Land represents the victorious Christian life, the wilderness represents the defeated Christian life.

For 40 years God hit a pause button. And daily the nation of Israel dug a deeper rut until everyone in that generation died. In fact, when God's people entered the Promised Land, only Joshua had an Egyptian birth certificate. Removed from Egypt, but Egypt was not removed from the Hebrews. Redeemed but not released. Saved but not strong enough to fight.

The Promised Land is given to Israel as an eternal covenant. (Gen 13:15) Keep His decrees and commands ... so that ... you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you **for all time**. (Deuteronomy 4:40)

The door to Canaan, the Promised Land was not locked by God, but by a fearful people. <sup>27</sup> *They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. <sup>28</sup> But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. <sup>29</sup> The*

*Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.”*

*<sup>30</sup> Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” <sup>31</sup> But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” <sup>32</sup> And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it.*

*We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.” (Numbers 13-NIV)*

And instead of taking responsibility they blame everyone and everything. We are like grasshoppers to the giants of the Promised Land. We will be stepped on. Crushed. Eaten. Devoured.

And the excuses continue today in each of us who wander and wish we had the faith. The courage. The strength to possess Promised Land living. What holds us back? **Walls that are too tall.**

So many Christ followers never live out their inheritance because they do not know they have one. (Josh 1:3)

We are stuck in time out or pause, not in Egypt but not home in the Promised Land.

Stuck in the land of pause, living in the land of Oz, no longer in Egypt, but not yet in Canaan.

For so many it seems like the door to spiritual growth and Promised Land abundance is locked and everyone else has the code but you! The Promised Land is not just for the Hebrews. It is for each of us sitting here today! (Eph 1:3)

It is easy like the Hebrews to blame everyone else. They blame their church. They blame their pastor. Not sure what to do, maybe changing church is the answer.

More people change churches for the wrong reasons than ever do for the right reasons! America is the only part of the body of Christ in the world that has floating Christians.

And this is not limited to church, people change jobs prematurely. Spouses. Bible translations.

\*The problem here is, I am just not being fed.

\*The problem here is, the pastor just does not get me.

\*The problem here is, leadership is fake.

Perhaps you need some enemies removed from your life. You don’t need to defeat the Canaanites, but you need to defeat addiction, anger, and anxiety.

Can I give you a piece of advice? These excuses and so many others, all they do is send you right back around the mountain in the wilderness. God is going to leave you there until you take responsibility for your own missteps, misdeeds, mishaps, and quit blaming everyone else.

I would guess I am talking to many who could relate. A Promised Land awaits, but you are stuck in the wilderness. Why not start at the beginning of Joshua and claim verse 3, *I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. (Josh 1:3-NIV)*

Don't make the same mistake the Moses generation made, choose to be a part of the Joshua generation!

*<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So, the place has been called Gilgal to this day. (Josh 5:9-NIV)*

### **1. Let Go of Your Past. (Eccl 3:1; Ps.32:3-NCV)**

You must own your painful past; so, your painful past does not own you.

*Eccl 3:1, There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:*

...Then Solomon identifies 14 contrasts—a time to be born and a time to die (2a); a time to plant and a time to uproot (2b); a time to mourn and a time dancing (4b); and a time to search and a time to give up searching (6a) and for you hoarders, a time to keep and a time to throw away (6b).

Your past is like heavy clothes that weigh you down when you are drowning. So many don't drown because they can't swim, they drown because of the weight of the clothes they are wearing, and it pulls you down.

How do I let go of my past? Be fully in the season; learn everything you can in that season; and then move on!

When you don't let go of your past, it stunts your growth. Puts a ceiling on your potential. And keeps you from living life in the moment.

What happens when people get stuck in the past or won't let go of their past? You suppress it—consciously. You repress it—subconsciously. Why not express it and confess it?

Many of us carry a load of past pain the size of a dump truck. If you don't dump that load, you will live too often dwelling on past pain.

Dump that load!

Dump that load!

Dump that load!

If you don't talk it out, you will take it out- either on your body, on someone else.

Because you have not let go of your past pain, many of you are reacting to things today, because it is a memory of yesterday. Why not stop reacting today, to something that happened a long time ago?

If you don't, you will lose important relationships. You will be left alone. People will stop calling. The grandkids will walk away. You will live in the most miserable existence on the planet.

When you swallow negative past emotions, you get indigestion. So, you could say, "it is not what you eat, it is what eats you."

David points out this truth in *Psalms 32:3-NCV*, *When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I **moaned** all day long.*"

Look at the word moan, on the screen. **I moaned all day long.** When you go through life and get hurt. Sin a blue streak. Lose a friend. Make a bad decision. You will either mourn or moan.

*Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted. (Matt 5:4)*

*When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I **moaned** all day long." (Ps. 32)*

Mourning is the positive post to the truck's battery.

Moaning is the negative post to the truck's battery.

Pastor and author Mark Batterson reminds us not to get stuck in the past. If we fail to move on from the past, we will be held in a proverbial tomb of depression. From 1837 to 1901, Queen Victoria ruled the British Empire.

Her 63-year reign set the record in Britain, only broken by her great-great-granddaughter Queen Elizabeth 2. Not long after assuming the throne, Queen Victoria fell in love with Francis Augustus Charles Emmanuel. Shockingly, she proposed to him five days after he arrived at Windsor Castle, and they were married on February 10, 1840. For the purpose of our topic, let's fast forward to the death of Prince Albert. The royal couple was married 21 years when he contracted typhoid fever and died. Victoria entered a period of profound grief from which she would never recover. She had Albert's room turned into a shrine.

Every day for the rest of her life, she had linens on Albert's bed changed, his clothes laid out, and a basin of water poured his morning shave. She even slept with Albert's night shirt in her arms. (Win The Day, pg. 4)

When we experience loss, a piece of us is lost forever. A piece of us dies with the person. The queen stopped living. The Widow of Windsor rarely left the palace, and she wore black for the rest of her life. Queen Victoria died on Jan 22, 1901, but she stopped living the day Albert died on Dec 14, 1861. If you do the math, that adds up to 14,283 days.

That is a lot of days to not Live In The Day. She failed to Live in the Day, so she languished in the day. She was unable to Live the Day, so she lost the day. She failed to Live the Day, so she lacked the day. I wish this story were true only of a queen, but it is also true of you and me. When we are stuck in depression, we stop living before we stop breathing. We become a prisoner of our past.

Past mistakes. Past hurts. Past offenses.

When we fail to bury dead yesterday, we aren't just hurting ourselves; we are hurting everyone else that matters. We are cheating everyone we love, most of all God. Give your depression and all your past pain, problems, and people a proper eulogy. Once you do, let them rest in peace. You are not ready to Live In The Day until you bury your dead yesterday's six feet under. We live in a culture where so many are uncomfortable with grief, loss, and sadness. We are uncomfortable with the passage, the pace, and the pain of grief.

You must own your painful past; so, your painful past does not own you.

## 2. Let Go of Regret. (Phil 3:13; Joel 2:25)

While regret might be easy to identify, it is difficult to define. Regret is the painful emotion associated with some activity or inactivity you have taken, resulting in an outcome that is less than what you had hoped for. Planned for.

Regret happens when we compare an actual outcome with an outcome, we wish were different. Regret brings together two unique human qualities: **remembering the past** and **thinking about possible future** outcomes all at the same time.

We are both seasoned time travelers, and this is where we find depression and skilled futurists, and this is where anxiety is lurking.

I think this is why Paul reminds us, *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this. Instead, I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead. (Phil 3:13-NET)*

Suppose you made a bad choice, and the outcome is miserable. This is not regret. This is sadness, grief, or despair. The emotion becomes regret when you **board your time machine**, setting the destination into your past while contrasting and comparing what might have been. **The clear and captivating voice of regret comes through comparison.**

Regret is the stomach-churning memory of a life that would have been better and a future brighter if only a person had not made such a poor choice. Regret is the unpleasant feeling associated with some decision and action that caused an outcome he or she wishes was different.

Everybody has regrets.

Regret reminds us that we are broken and sinful. The only people living without regrets are **babies**, those with **dementia**, and **sociopaths**. So, the rest of us have regrets.

We regret selecting a bad restaurant.

We regret getting a tattoo.

We regret buying that truck, house, or pet.

We regret having an affair, neglecting our health, and failing to repair a relationship.

So, how do people handle or cope with regret? **First is denial**. As they say, “Denial is a river in Egypt.” When people find themselves in a place of denial, their reoccurring thought is, make it go away. 3x. This is an elementary response, often sending a person into the fetal position or sliding into a sense of worthlessness. We are not trying to deal with the regret; we are just attempting to **erase it**. Please vanquish my feelings of regret. This is our hope when regret takes hold.

Next, **people struggle with confusion. Bewilderment**. Even powerlessness. When I slip into this second reason, I struggle with regret, I openly want to yell out loud, Why did I do that? I know better. I am smarter than that. How did I not see that coming? This will often lead down a path of fault finding. Which can lead to the next way people cope with regret.

**People then cope with regret by punishing themselves**. A common reaction is I could have kicked myself. This is a serious threat to your emotional safety. Why? It opens the door to a deep-rooted sense of failure and often a sense of worthlessness. Or self-loathing. And when you are stuck in failure or worthlessness, depression is often lurking around the corner. Come to the alter, tell a prayer partner what it is and leave it with God.

*“I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—  
the great locust and the young locust,  
the other locusts and the locust swarm—  
my great army that I sent among you. (Joel 2:25)*

### **3. Grow Your Faith.** (Heb 11:6; John 2:7; Luke 17:14)

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Heb 11:6-NIV)*



So, today I am suggesting if you grow your faith, you will shrink your past. If you grow your dependency on God, you will shrink your regret. If you grow your attitude of trust, you will shrink your past pain and regret. **How do I do this you are asking?** Let's start in the gym.

How do I make my biceps stronger? Go to the gym and do more curls. How do I make my pecs stronger? Do more bench pressing or some more push-ups. We all know how to make our bodies stronger, but if the question is how do I make my faith stronger, do the answers come so easy? How do I get stronger in my faith? Some of you are thinking, I should **show up at church more**. Yes, you should. Every week. Jesus went every week as was His custom. Even if the weather is bad or you don't feel like it.

*He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. (Luke 4:16-NIV)*

Maybe I should pray more. Maybe I should read my Bible more. You know that I am an advocate for 15 minutes in a chair. In a chair that you enjoy. Coffee or tea? Let God speak to you through that text.

These are all good activities, and they can add muscle to your faith. But if that was all we needed to get stronger in your faith then why do so many of us who love God, pray, read our Bibles, and serve the poor, why do we suffer from spiritual weakness as often as we do?

**These questions have haunted me personally for years.** I would say, if the God whom I love and serve is the possessor of limitless power and if dozens of verses in the Bible indicate he is more than willing to infuse and release His power to me and through me, **then why do I walk around feeling as weak as often as I do?**

Why do I fall so easily into temptation? Not just once. Not just twice. But again, and again? Why do I cop a bad attitude? Why do I fail to be obedient in the areas of my life God has stated clearly, he wants me to act in faith on a certain matter? Why don't I take more risk for God? If only I were stronger for God? Right?

Now, to get to the answer I want to frame. A principle from God's Word explains why each of us often lack faith. Perhaps, a couple New Testament stories will help. One takes place at a wedding. The other takes place amongst people with leprosy.

<sup>7</sup> *Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.*  
<sup>8</sup> *Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." (John 2-NIV)*

<sup>14</sup> *When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. (Luke 17-NIV)*

Here is the principle: God is going to intervene somewhere between here and there.

As you start pouring water, it will become wine. As you start walking toward the health care czar, leprosy becomes healed bodies.

As you release your painful past and regret, you gain joy and peace. There can be little movement or improvement in your painful past or with your regret unless you start pouring or start walking. There can make little movement or improvement in your past and in your regret unless you start growing your faith.

Keep collecting water pots, keep walking toward the medical clinic. Would you have bought an answer like that?

God is saying, you just trust me with your faith and collect water and walk toward the priest and I will intervene, you will see.

What God is promising is a pattern we see in scripture—it is FAITH along the way. Somewhere between here and there, God will do a miracle. God will heal you of your painful past. God will lower the RPMs of your regret.

God is going to intervene somewhere between here and there!

Stuck in the land of pause, living in the land of Oz, no longer in Egypt, but not yet in Canaan.

God, Lord Jesus, grant me the supernatural provision of Your grace to heal from my painful past and let go of my regret. Give me the faith to accept Your sovereign plan that YOU will intervene somewhere between here and there.

Possessing faith along the way to believe You will turn water into wine (provision) and heal me of leprosy (illness).

In Jesus' Name Amen.