

August 2, 2015
"Promises, Promises"
Joshua 1:1-9

A dying materialistic man who love his money, want to take it all with him when he died. So he gives each of his best friends an envelope containing \$25,000 in cash and asked them to promise to place it in his coffin.

A week later the man dies and the friends each place an envelope in the coffin as promised. Several months later the three friends get together. One of them confesses that he only put \$10,000 in the envelope. He felt guilty and promised to take the remaining \$15,000 he kept for himself and send it to a mission in South America.

With that another friend confesses that he too didn't keep his promise. His envelope had only \$8,000 but, he said he'd donate the rest to a medical charity.

The third friend was outraged, "I am the only one who kept my promise to our dying friend. I want you both to know that the envelope I placed in the coffin contained my own personal check for the entire \$25,000."

"Promises, promises." Have you ever heard the expression, "Promises were made to be broken?" I don't necessarily agree with that. We don't like it when people break their promises to us. When they do we feel betrayed. We've all been there, we've all experienced broken promise. It hurts when we are disappointed like that.

We are all aware of political promises that were broken.

Vote for the man who promises least; he'll be the least disappointing.
- Bernard Baruch

God on the other hand is a promise keeper & when makes promise never disappoints.

Psalms 18:30
God's way is perfect.
All the LORD's promises prove true.
He is a shield for all who look to him for protection.

Psalms 145:13a
The LORD always keeps his promises.

Today I want to talk about Joshua and we going to read Joshua 1: 1-9. I don't know about you but I'm always encouraged when I read these first few verses from Joshua.

Joshua 1:1-9
1 After the death of Moses the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come

for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. **3** I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you— **4** from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.' **5** No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

6 "Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. **7** Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. **8** Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. **9** This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua is told the same thing three times

(v6) Be strong and courageous.

(v7) Be strong and very courageous.

(v9) This is my command—be strong and courageous!

And Joshua was strong and courageous. Why was Joshua able to be strong and courageous? I believe it is because of what the Lord says to him in (v3a), "I promise you what I promised Moses."

Joshua would choose to be strong and courageous because he believed God was a promise-keeping God. God made promises to Joshua, and Joshua believed God, trusted God. And what promises did God make to him?

(v3b) Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you

(v5) No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

(v9) Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

Those are great promises aren't they. Promises of God. Well, here's the thing - these promises of God are also for you. God say to you too: You will have the inheritance I promised, wherever you set foot I will be with you to give you that place. No one will stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, I will not fail you, I will not abandon you, I the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

These same promises are for us and our God is a promise-keeping God, therefore no matter what we face we are to live courageously. He leads us to victory just as He did with Joshua.

You can live strong and courageous because God has promised that He will be with you, you can be strong and courageous because God has promised that He will never fail you, You can live strong and courageous because God has promised to never abandon you. You are commanded to be strong, you are commanded to be courageous, you are commanded not to be afraid or discouraged because God has promised that He will be with you wherever you go and The Lord your God keeps His promises.

Joshua himself gave this testimony late in his life:

Joshua 21:45

Not a single one of all the good promises the LORD had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything he had spoken came true.

Joshua followed Moses, what kept Moses going? Same thing that kept Joshua going. What kept Joshua going? The promises of God. If you live by the promises of God you can make it ... by the grace of God.

We say we believe in these promises of God... until things get tough. When things go bad we ask why God? Why did this happen? We want explanations. But you know what, we don't live by explanations. We live on God's promises. Explanations don't make you feel better.

I heard of a boy away at summer camp. He was playing baseball, got a hit and was on base. Another batter got a hit and the boy took off running, he would try to score and decided to slide into home. The problem was that they were using a cement block for home plate. I guess it was a low budget camp. Well he hit that cement and he broke his leg. An ambulance came took the field and took him to the hospital.

Now, imagine if doctor came in with an arm full of x-rays and said, "I'm going to explain to you how you break a bone and what happens when you do. Then goes into all the medical reasons and explanations of how and what happens when we break a bone.

Do you think that explanation made that boy's leg feel any better? No. But when doctor said, "don't worry in 2 months you will be as good as new and you will be walking again." Now, that the boy could live with.

You see, promises make you feel better, but you have to trust them. When things go bad there is a **danger of looking back** (looking for explanations) rather than looking forward (living on the promises).

When things get tough there is not only a **danger of looking back**, there is also a **danger of standing still**.

Moses had died, Joshua was to take over. It was Joshua's time. I heard of a man who had a friend from Michigan and one day he asked him, "What is the death rate in

Michigan?” and his friend said, “One a piece!” That’s true right? We only get one shot. This is it, we are not coming though this place again. So use the time you have to take the inheritance God has given you, and be strong and courageous serving the Lord where He puts you. The inheritance is not only in heaven, it is the place God places you at right now. (v3) I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you.

There is a **danger of standing still** when God wants you to move standing on His promises. If you are not moving your going backward. If you stand still you will sink. There is a song we used to sing called “Standing on the promises.” Someone once said most people instead of standing on the promises their just sitting on the premises.

(V3) I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you

God is saying here’s my promises now get moving. Step out in faith. Move ahead by claiming the promises of God. Remember when the apostles saw Jesus walking on the water? Peter wanted to come out to Jesus walking on the water to Jesus. I know he sank when he took his eyes off Jesus and focused instead on the wind and waves (**danger of looking back and of standing still**), but I wonder if apostles were any help. They were not out there with him, but were they encouraging him? I could hear Thomas saying, “oh no here comes another wave, it’s a big one.” We have to encourage one another. For there is another danger, **a danger of giving up**.

The Lord had Moses send 12 men, one from each tribe to scout out the country of Canaan (KANE un). They came back and reported that it was just as God had said (how about that! It was just as God had promised). The land was indeed bountiful, a land flowing with milk and honey; there were all kinds of fruits; they brought back a cluster of grapes so large it took two of them to carry it back, BUT – uh, oh there’s that dangerous word - they said, everything is as God promised, BUT the people are powerful, the place is well fortified, and there are giants there. “But” is the fine print. There is the **danger of giving up**. God gives promises but the way is not always easy and it’s always to soon to quit. Joshua and Calib were the only ones out of 12 that silenced the others and said let’s take the land now, we can do this. The others wanted to quit; Joshua kept going because of the promises of God (it’s always too soon to quit).

Warren Wiersbe said there are three geographical locations spiritually:

1. Egypt: that’s the world keeping people in bondage
2. Promise Land or the land of inheritance. Not only heaven, but what and where you are call to by God in this life. You were in bondage (Egypt) but you were delivered by the blood of the Lamb. Jesus took you from the world and it’s bondage and calls you to a new place, a new ministry, a new life.

3. In between Egypt and the Promised Land, is the wilderness. That is where you have to trust in the promises of God, not give up, not look back, not stand still.

(vv5-6) No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

"Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them

Look at the promise God makes to Joshua: I will not fail you or abandon you. God made the same promise to Isaac, God made the same promise to Jacob (a few times) I will never leave you. God made the same promise to Moses and through Moses God made the same promise to Israel. Just flip a few pages back to...

Deuteronomy 31:6 (Moses speaking)

So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the LORD your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you."

So God makes this promise over and over again, not to fail or abandon and He makes the same promise to us. Look at...

Hebrews 13:5

Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."

(vv7-8) Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

If we are to live on the promises of God, where will we find those promises? In the Word of God.

Joshua 1:8 NKJV

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth

I thought, "That's a strange place to keep your bible." But NLT makes it clearer; the Bible is to be studied, meditated on, and obeyed. Start your day in God's Word or make time at another time of day, but you must study, meditate and obey God's Word, the Bible. You have to get your directions from God. You need to know His promises, well you can't know God's promises unless you know God's Word, and you will not know God's word unless you read it, study it, meditate on it and obey it. You can't claim God's promises unless you know them, and you can't claim them unless you pray.

The spies saw giants and walls well they should have looked higher than the giants, and above the walls to see God, God is higher than the giants, God is above the walls.

Are you in the book every day? Are you before God every day? The most important part of your life is the part only God sees. Joshua worshiped God.

Joshua 5:13-15

When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, "Are you friend or foe?"

"Neither one," he replied. "I am the commander of the LORD's army." [It was Jesus]

At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. "I am at your command," Joshua said. "What do you want your servant to do?" [That's a good question to ask the Lord at the beginning of each day]

The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did as he was told.

Begin your day at the feet of your Commander claiming the promises, receiving your orders; worshiping Jesus; and going out to do as you are told. Then everywhere you go is holy ground, because Jesus will be there.

Joshua 6:1-2

Now the gates of Jericho were tightly shut because the people were afraid of the Israelites. No one was allowed to go out or in. But the LORD said to Joshua, "I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors."

The promise is: You have already won the battle.

You are not alone, don't be afraid, God is with you wherever He sends you. And you have already won the battle.

Do not give up, do not look back, do not stand still, but trust in the promises of promise—keeping God.