

01-07-18 – Joshua – Strong and Courageous

Joshua 1:1-18

The party aboard ship was in full swing. Speeches were being made by the captain, the crew, and the guests enjoying the week-long voyage. Sitting at the head table was a seventy-year-old man who, somewhat embarrassed, was doing his best to accept the praise being poured on him.

Earlier that morning a young woman had apparently fallen overboard, and within seconds this elderly gentleman was in the cold, dark waters at her side. The woman was rescued and the elderly man became an instant hero.

When time finally came for the brave passenger to speak, the stateroom fell into a hush as he rose from his chair. He went to the microphone and, in what was probably the shortest “hero’s” speech ever offered, spoke these stirring words: “I just want to know one thing – who pushed me?” (Ted Engstrom, Motivation to Last a Lifetime)

READ: Joshua 1:1-18 – MSG

After the death of Moses the servant of GOD, GOD spoke to Joshua, Moses’ assistant: “Moses my servant is dead. Get going. Cross this Jordan River, you and all the people. Cross to the country I’m giving to the People of Israel. I’m giving you every square inch of the land you set your foot on—just as I promised Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon east to the Great River, the Euphrates River—all the Hittite country—and then west to the Great Sea. It’s all yours. All your life, no one will be able to hold out against you. In the same way I was with Moses, I’ll be with you. I won’t give up on you; I won’t leave you. Strength! Courage! You are going to lead this people to inherit the land that I promised to give their ancestors. Give it everything you have, heart and soul. Make sure you carry out The Revelation that Moses commanded you, every bit of it. Don’t get off track, either left or right, so as to make sure you get to where you’re going. And don’t for a minute let this Book of The Revelation be out of mind. Ponder and meditate on it day and night, making sure you practice everything written in it. Then you’ll get where you’re going; then you’ll succeed. Haven’t I commanded you? Strength! Courage! Don’t be timid; don’t get discouraged. GOD, your God, is with you every step you take.”

¹⁰⁻¹¹ Then Joshua gave orders to the people’s leaders: “Go through the camp and give this order to the people: ‘Pack your bags. In three days you will cross this Jordan River to enter and take the land GOD, your God, is giving you to possess.’”

¹²⁻¹⁵ Then Joshua addressed the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. He said, “Remember what Moses the servant of GOD commanded you: GOD, your God, gives you rest and he gives you this land. Your wives, your children, and your livestock can stay here east of the Jordan, the country Moses gave you; but you, tough soldiers all, must cross the River in battle formation, leading your brothers, helping them until GOD, your God, gives your brothers a place of rest just as he has done for you.

They also will take possession of the land that God, your God, is giving them. Then you will be free to return to your possession, given to you by Moses the servant of God, across the Jordan to the east.”

16-18 They answered Joshua: “Everything you commanded us, we’ll do. Wherever you send us, we’ll go. We obeyed Moses to the letter; we’ll also obey you—we just pray that God, your God, will be with you as he was with Moses. Anyone who questions what you say and refuses to obey whatever you command him will be put to death. Strength! Courage!”

Strength and Courage – Sounds simple enough, but let’s look at the life and circumstances of Joshua and try to get a grip on these simple words.

We are going to take you on a little journey in the life and death of Joshua. The book after his name is the first book after the Torah (Pentateuch) in our Bibles. This book that bears his name has much to tell us about **conquering the battles of life**. This little series will take us to Lent.

The book of Joshua is divided into three sections:

1 – 12 – the conquest of the Land (Canaan)

12-22 - the distribution of that land by lot to the 12 Tribes of Israel

23-24 – the farewell and death of Joshua

Something we sometimes neglect to see is that God has the sovereign right to give land to anyone and to any group He chooses. We think about nations taking possession of land because of their strength and power, but really it is all part of God’s plan and could not happen without His allowing. How strong – really – are peoples, nations, armies, etc. Only God has complete control of the land He created. We need to get that into our heads.

“Nations and people may own much real estate, but **the earth really belongs to the Lord**. Therefore, individuals and nations are only tenants on earth.” (p. 14)

Joshua, a Servant

Josh. 1:1-2 (NLT) After the death of Moses the LORD’s servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ assistant. He said, “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.

Notice – Moses is called “servant of the Lord.” There is no greater title a person could have. This title is still available to us today. Wouldn’t you like to be known as the “servant of the Lord?”

Joshua served Moses as his attendant for years. To be a good leader, Joshua needed that experience as a servant. God usually prepares a person through lowly, routine duties. As we prove faithful in those little things, He elevates us to bigger things.

I didn't start off as a pastor, or ever a music director. I started off as a student of the Word for my own understanding and growth as a child of God. People like to start at the top, but God doesn't work that way. We couldn't handle that. We have to grow into the calling of God, whatever that is for you.

The name, Joshua, in Hebrew is Yeshua or Hoshea, which means savior. In Greek it is translated, Jesus – savior. So the names Joshua and Jesus mean the same thing. After his name the words Son of Nun are added – not because he was an orphan (son of none) LOL, but to show that this Joshua (savior) is not the Messiah – savior.

Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim. This is another indicator that he was not the Messiah (Judah). He was born in Egypt and was a slave there for 40 years. After the Exodus from Egypt, Moses chose Joshua to be the captain of the armies of Israel, to fight against the Amalekites. He also accompanied Moses part-way up Mt. Sinai, where God met with Moses for 40 days. He was one of the 12 spies chosen to spy out the land of Canaan (the promised land) as we heard last week. Only Joshua and Caleb brought back a good report that Israel could take the land God had promised as long as He was with them.

During their 40-year journey in the wilderness, Joshua was a behind-the-scenes guy. It is believed he was 85 when Moses appointed him the leader of Israel and commissioned him to lead the people across the Jordan to the Promised Land that flowed with “milk and honey.”

It is the Word of God in the life of every believer that yields power, strength and courage. God often uses the weak person and the nobody to be His special channel to bless others. Each of us can be a conqueror in Christ if we have the Word of God in us to rely upon.

Land Promised

Josh. 1:3-4 (NLT) - I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you— 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.'

God promised all this land to the Israelites – promised it – the Promised Land – the land of Canaan. He laid out borders so they would know exactly what was to be theirs. However, they were only going to claim the land they walked out. There was responsibility on the part of the Israelites in acquiring this land. They never realized all of what God promised because they didn't physically walk out all of it. It was not going to be handed to them on a platter. They had to fight for it, stand up for it, and work for it. “God only gives us victory according to our faith and obedience.” (p. 16)

Success Secret

Josh. 1:5-7 (NLT) 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. 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.

God had instructed Moses to tell Joshua to be Strong and Courageous; it was a command. It would be what Joshua needed to be the strength to venture, persevere and withstand danger, fear, and difficulty. It was promised to Joshua earlier in the Torah (the Law of Moses)...

Deut. 31:5-6 - (NLT) - The LORD will hand over to you the people who live there, and you must deal with them as I have commanded you. 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.

Meditate on the Word

Josh. 1:8 – NLT - 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.

God gave instructions to Joshua that are wise advice for us today as well. In order to walk in the faith and strength we need to face what is before us, we must have built an arsenal by reading and meditating on God’s Word. The more we think on Scripture and the promises of God, the more we can face situations without fear and defeat. If we are not prepared in this way, the devil will come in and poison our minds with fear and defeat and all kinds of evil lies. He is a master at messing with our minds. Unless we can come back at those times with memorized Scripture and the reassurance of God from within, we will be rattled at best.

God promised Joshua success, and the secret was – faith and obedience (Trust and Obey). To have God’s power, Joshua must set his heart on God’s word and meditate on it day and night.

Joshua – Be Strong and Courageous

Josh. 1:9 – NLT - 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.

This is the fourth time Joshua is commanded to be strong and courageous. Sounds like it is a pretty important lesson to learn if we expect to have God’s blessings in our lives.

I'm sure Joshua knew he was weak in his own strength. I'm sure he was somewhat afraid of bringing the Israelites into the land of Canaan and conquering it for Israel. Knowing this was ultimately the promise of God, I'm sure he had his moments of doubt and fear. However, rather than focusing on his fear, he diverted his focus by faith to God's word and the promise that God would be with him in this venture. Faith saw what God could do.

Rom. 10:17 – NLT – ***So faith comes by hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.***
KJV – ***So faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.***

Eph. 6:10 – NLT – ***A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.***

The Ephesians were aware of satanic power, so Paul admonished them to be strong instead in the Lord and His power that can overcome evil. So we must do the same thing.

Wait 3 Days

Josh. 1:10-11 – NLT - Joshua then commanded the officers of Israel, “Go through the camp and tell the people to get their provisions ready. In three days you will cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you.”

The people had three days to get their things together before moving into the Promised Land. Many times God makes us wait before fulfilling a promise. He always has a reason for the wait. In this case, a heathen woman named Rehab would come to faith in God because of the wait. We won't go into that whole story now, but it's a good read on your own.

Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh

Josh. 1:12-15 – NLT - Then Joshua called together the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. He told them, “Remember what Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded you: ‘The Lord your God is giving you a place of rest. He has given you this land.’ Your wives, children, and livestock may remain here in the land Moses assigned to you on the east side of the Jordan River. But your strong warriors, fully armed, must lead the other tribes across the Jordan to help them conquer their territory. Stay with them until the Lord gives them rest, as he has given you rest, and until they, too, possess the land the Lord your God is giving them. Only then may you return and settle here on the east side of the Jordan River in the land that Moses, the servant of the Lord, assigned to you.”

These three tribes decided they didn't want to go into Canaan to live there. They settled in on the East side of the Jordan river. However, while God allowed this, they weren't off the hook of helping the rest of Israel battle the inhabitants of the land and subdue it. Once Israel was at peace in Canaan, they could return to their parcel on the other side of the river that Moses gave them.

There are times when God will grant us promised relief in our situations, but we may still have to pay our dues in the process as required by God.

3 Tribes say, Be Strong and Courageous

Josh. 1:16-18 – NLT - *They answered Joshua, “We will do whatever you command us, and we will go wherever you send us. ¹⁷ We will obey you just as we obeyed Moses. And may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. ¹⁸ Anyone who rebels against your orders and does not obey your words and everything you command will be put to death. So be strong and courageous!”*

“The three tribes pledge to do all that Joshua commands, and to go where he sends them, and also to follow Joshua like they followed Moses.” (p. 19).

Then the three tribes say the exact words to Joshua that God had said...

Be Strong and Courageous.

“They realized how import this was for their leader, for if he failed, they would fail.” (p. 19)

Everyone must have been praying for Joshua. This was a big task on his hands – to defeat the inhabitants of Canaan..

When Satan and his forces tempt us, **we need to be strong and courageous.** It’s a mental decision and a mindset of faith. It helps us to repeat to ourselves, **“I will trust God in this matter.”**

Four times Scripture states, “The just shall live by faith.”

For - it is faith that brings victory in our lives, not our trying... (p.20)

So, here is your challenge... Will you trust God enough to obey Him? Do you have the Word of God inside you to bolster you up in times of need? Are you meditating on His Word day and night? If so, then **you too can be strong and courageous** – like Joshua.

I would encourage you to come out on Wed. at 7:00 downstairs for a new Bible Study led by Pastor John called, “The God I Never Knew.” It is a study on the Holy Spirit. This is how we grow in the Word together.

“Christians who do not believe God can, or will, give them victory over their problems or situations, always wander around in a spiritual wilderness. But, the book of Joshua challenges us to move forward in faith, rather than doubting and considering ‘retreat’ from God. When we act in faith and move on, it helps us avoid yielding to temptations.” (p. 20)