

July 16, 2006

COURAGE

Opening: Story “Old Goat”

Quote : What is courage? The cowardly lion from the Wizard of Oz knew what it was that he didn’t have, we look at the heroic acts of others and judge what we think courage is?

With the launching of Korea’s ballistic missiles, the threats of Iran and the retaliation of Israel threatening to ignite what could be a nuclear world war, courage is something that you can not have enough of but what is courage?

Text: **Joshua 1: 1 – 9 Mark 12: 30,31** *Read*

God gave Joshua four specific orders

1. Go over the Jordan River (**Take Action!** Seize the Day)
2. Be strong and courageous (these two are always combined – formula for success)
3. Cause this people to inherit the land (God’s promise to you is more than just about you)
4. Observe to do everything according to the law (Where do I start? Mark 12: 30,31
Thou shall love the Lord your God with all your: **heart - soul - mind - strength**)

We will focus on the **First and second** points today

- I. Joshua is instructed to arise and go ... **They had to occupy the land in order to receive it from God** ... The Hebrew term or participle is “ I am about to give you...”
It wasn’t done without their action and obedience.

Christians must claim and appropriate their spiritual blessings

Christian commentaries tell us that the Jordan River was flooded at that time, the most difficult time to cross.

Why Doesn’t God make it easy for us?

Following the leading and direction of God often is not easy or simple.

We are under the impression that when God is leading us everything will just fall into place. Sometimes that is true ... but often it is not.

If it all works and goes smoothly it must be God and if it **does not**, it is not God’s will.

- In this case with Joshua it was definitively God’s will and time for them to go across the Jordan and take the Promised Land.
But guess what, it had been God’s will 40 years earlier! But the people saw themselves as insects compared to the giants that lived in the land.

Why does God so often make following his plan for us so difficult???

The German poet Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (go te) wrote ... *"Treat a man as he appears to be and you make him worse. But treat a man as what he potentially could be, and you make him what he should be."*

Psychologist Robert Rosenthal's famous classroom study.

Taken from ... A Life Worth Living by Max Lucado **Read page 134**

God **does not** always make it easy in fact, he pushes us to discover the person he intended us to be.

The entire equation of who we are and what we can do completely changes when we are tied into his awesome power. (Joshua and the battle of Jericho)

→ Jennifer has this quote hanging on our refrigerator door. *"Those who say they can and those who say they can't are both right."*

Has God given you a command or a promise?

The command might come in the form of directions for your life.

Generally God gives a promise first, the promise might come in the middle of a life shaking ordeal or even a meeting just like this.

Time may be required between the promise and the command to take specific action. There will be whispers of doubt and obstacles in your path.

Confusion and frustration will inevitably play a role in knowing what specific action to carry out especially when you continue to pray for God's help.

Every man and woman in the Bible that was mightily used by God faced these same issues including Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, David, Daniel and Paul.
(If you don't know who these people are you need to attend a cell or church bible study)

II. Be strong and courageous (3x)

Three times God tells Joshua ... be strong and courageous and these two are always together. Why? What does it mean?

Have you ever been so sure one minute and just as unsure the next? The way that we feel is so often connected to the way that we think.

Jesus response to the question which is the greatest commandment was ... The Lord our God is one and you shall love the Lord your God **with all** your:

Heart – Soul – Mind and Strength

That kind of dedication produces fertile ground for God to deliver promise and the means to get it done.

The two terms in the **Hebrew** are both *prime roots*.

Strong is **chazaq** (Khaw-zak') meaning... fasten upon/seize

Courage is **amats** (aw-mats') meaning ... "to be alert"
steadfast minded, strong, stronger, establish-fortify, harden, increase, prevail, obstinate

To be strong is to set your mind and heart with determination
Being courageous is continually building upon that decision despite all obstacles

The third time God makes it crystal clear ... "Have I not commanded you, be strong and of good courage!

→ **This is a command** on God's part **but** a decision on our part. God is not going to leave us but are we willing to stick with God when the going gets tough?

Story of John and his 19 year old daughter ... once he made up his mind John said he was transformed.

Courage is not the absence of fear but the willingness to move ahead in spite of fear!

John thought he had made the choice to walk home by a different route but it was the greater hand of God at work

Has God given you a promise? But it just doesn't seem to be happening?
Are you looking for answers to questions that only God can answer?
Do you want to follow the Lord but you don't know where to start?

If this is all new to you then you begin by understanding that God has provided a bridge for you that connects you to him by his son Jesus Christ. You begin by surrendering your life to him.

Read devotional ... Daily Bread **HE WANTED TO** July 13

Call others up for prayer