

Be strong & courageous –
Joshua's Story

Joshua 1: 1-9

Share and Discuss ...

We are all familiar with “being afraid”

- What would be the top 3 items on your list of “Things I am most afraid of” ?

Share and Discuss ...

The command to “be strong and courageous” appears at least 15 times in the Bible; the apostle Paul concluded 1 Corinthians with this same command: *be courageous; be strong*. (1 Cor. 16: 13b)

- How do you take this command:
metaphorically/spiritually ?
or ... literally / physically ?

Who's Joshua?

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord,
the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide ...
(Joshua 1: 1)

- ❑ son of Nun
- ❑ Moses' aide (assistant)

~ 40 years earlier ...

The Lord said to Moses, ² “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

³ So ... Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites.

⁴ These are their names: ... ⁸ from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea son of Nun; ... ¹⁶ (Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.)

(Numbers 13: 1-4, 8, 16b)

- ❑ Hoshea = “salvation”
- ❑ *Yehoshua* = Joshua = “The Lord is salvation”
- ❑ *Yeshua*
- ❑ In Greek = *Iésous*
- ❑ In English = Jesus

Joshua's resume at ~ age 40

- ❑ Birth place: slave camp in Egypt
- ❑ Father's occupation: slave
- ❑ Education: none
- ❑ Work experience: hauling stones; cutting them; stacking them one on top of the other

Joshua's resume at ~ age 80

- ❑ Moses' right hand man
- ❑ Victorious general; brilliant military strategist
- ❑ He and Caleb were the only 2 spies who brought back a positive report from Canaan 40 yrs earlier
- ❑ Only person who accompanied Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24-31)
- ❑ Person responsible for staying outside the "Tent of Meeting" (Ex. 33: 7-11)
- ❑ Successor to Moses; to lead ~2.5 million Israelites into Canaan

Emotional context of Joshua 1

- ❑ Moses is dead
- ❑ He disobeyed God; allowed the pressure of those he led to get to him and acted in unbelief
- ❑ Moses commissioned Joshua to carry on his unfinished task
- ❑ An entire generation of Israelites has died because of unbelief

Moses has died ... but nothing of God died

“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.”

(Joshua 1: 2-5; NLT)

God's conversation with Joshua

- ❑ Moses is dead; you're now in charge of leading the people into Canaan (vv. 1-2)
- ❑ Be strong and courageous (v. 6; ESV)
- ❑ Only be strong and very courageous (v. 7; ESV)
- ❑ Be strong and courageous (v. 9; ESV)

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“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.” (v. 6; NLT)

- What is Joshua’s assignment?
- What is involved with this assignment?

Why this command?

- ❑ If you were Joshua, would you be afraid?
- ❑ Courage \neq I am not afraid
- ❑ Courage = I trust God above everything else
- ❑ Courage = I am afraid. But I fear God more than I fear anything else

Courage is rooted in a clear assignment from God

- We are courageous for something
- No need for courage if we're not doing anything
- God-sized assignment will be too big for us
- No need for faith if we're not facing a huge challenge

My courage will rise ...

- when I am clear on what God is calling me to do and I respond obediently to it

Courage is rooted in the assurance of God's presence

“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.” (v. 5)

“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.” (v. 9)

God's call = God's promised presence

9 Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. 10 Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh.

You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.”

11 But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?”

12 God answered, “I will be with you.”

(Exodus 3: 9-12)

If God has called you, He is with you

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Jeremiah's call

4 The Lord gave me this message: 5 “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”

6 “O Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I can’t speak for you! I’m too young!”

7 The Lord replied, “Don’t say, ‘I’m too young,’ for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. 8 And don’t be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!” (Jeremiah 1: 4-8)

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Courage

- ❑ ≠ I am not afraid
- ❑ = I trust God above everything else
- ❑ = I am afraid. But I fear God more than I fear anything else.
- ❑ = I trust in God's protection more than I fear the threats of men
- ❑ = I trust in the resources of God more than the resources of men
- ❑ WHY ? Because God is with me. Because God is calling me to do this!

God is not bound by ...

- our personality traits
 - how we're wired
 - our perceived weak points
 - etc., etc.
-
- Jeremiah: I'm too young
 - God: Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you

■ Moses: “O Lord, I’m not very good with words. I never have been, and I’m not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.” (Exod. 4: 10; NLT)

■ God: “Who makes a person’s mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say.” (Exod. 4: 11-12; NLT)

Courage is rooted in total obedience to God

- Courage is like a muscle. It only gets stronger when we use it
- Leadership is a verb; it's not a position
- Leadership is strengthened by acts of obedience

Courage is rooted in ...

- a clear assignment from God
 - assurance of God's presence
 - total obedience to God
-
- Do you know what God is calling you to do today?
 - When God gives you an assignment, it comes with His promise to be with you. Do you believe that?

Courage is rooted in ...

- a clear assignment from God
 - assurance of God's presence
 - total obedience to God
-
- What “excuses” have you been using to avoid obeying God's call?
 - Are you willing to totally obey God?

■ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Eph. 2: 10: NLT)

■ “Don't pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.”

– Phillips Brooks