

Weekly Reflection – Joshua (part1) – Be Courageous

- ***"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 ESV***
- "Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear-not absence of fear" - Mark Twain
- "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." — Nelson Mandela
- "Courage to me is doing something daring, no matter how afraid, insecure, intimidated, alone, unworthy, incapable, ridiculed or whatever other paralyzing emotion you might feel. Courage is taking action...no matter what. So you're afraid? Be afraid. Be scared silly to the point you're trembling and nauseous, but do it anyway!" — Richelle E. Goodrich
- "Courage is not the absence of fear but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear." — Franklin D. Roosevelt
- "Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway." — John Wayne
- "Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently." - Maya Angelou
- "Christian courage is the willingness to say and do the right thing regardless of the earthly cost because God promises to help you and save you on account of Christ" - John Piper
- "The true follower of Christ will not ask, 'If I embrace this truth, what will it cost me?' Rather he will say, 'This is truth. God help me to walk in it, let come what may!'" A. W. Tozer

"After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel." Joshua 1:1-2 ESV

Joshua is the account of Israel's conquest of the promised land. Seven powerful nations of considerable size and strength stand in their way. As we will see time and time again, it is only because God sovereignly intervenes on behalf of His people and fights their battles for them that Israel is successful in entering and taking possession of the land.

"Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come." (1 Corinthians 10:11 ESV) What I hope that all of us learn from it is that we can count on God, we can trust Him, we can put our confidence in His promises, and that He will bring them to pass. The God who led Joshua and Israel to victory over their enemies and into possession of the promise is the same God we serve and love and worship. He makes promises to us, He does not lie, and by faith we will inherit whatever He has granted to us in the true "Joshua," Jesus Christ.

In Joshua we learn much about the attributes and characteristics and features of God's personality and His will, truths that will sustain and strengthen us in the present day even as they strengthened Israel 3,500 years ago.

Joshua is a book about warfare. We, too, are engaged in a battle, but not with flesh and blood, says the Apostle Paul. Unlike Joshua who battled literal, earthly, human armies in order to enter into His inheritance, we battle principalities and powers, the spiritual forces of darkness in heavenly places, which is to say, Satan and his demonic hosts. The good news is that the same God who empowered and brought victory to Joshua and Israel will bring power and victory to us today!

Joshua

Who is this man Joshua, anyway? Why did God select him to succeed Moses? How had God prepared Joshua for this job? And what lessons can we learn for ourselves from his life and his place in God's purposes?

Joshua had experienced the gift of God's saving and redeeming grace.

- We know that Joshua was born in Egypt, the first-born son of Nun. His grandfather's name was Elishama (1 Chronicles 7:26-27).
- The significance of this is found in the 10th and final plague that God poured out on Egypt. (Exodus 12:12-13)
- Joshua no doubt vividly remembered that night and was reminded of it every year at Passover celebration. He would never forget that he had been spared because of the mercy of God and the shedding of blood.

Joshua had experienced the connection between prayer and God's power.

- Consider his experience at Rephidim, described in Exodus 17:8-16.
- There the Amalekites attacked Israel and Moses sent Joshua to do battle with them while Moses interceded in prayer. As long as Moses' hands were raised in prayer, Israel prevailed. When they fell to his side, Israel suffered loss. Finally, Aaron and Hur came beside Moses and held up his hands so that Joshua and his army might prevail.
- Joshua must have learned from this that real power is in God, not in the military might of a nation.

Joshua had experienced the glory of God.

- We must also look to his experience on Mt. Sinai with Moses, as described in Exodus 24:9-13.
- Joshua's mind and heart must have been forever branded with a deep sense of God's glory and beauty and holiness and splendor.
- If you are tempted to wonder why Joshua was so brave and courageous, perhaps it is because he had "seen" God and was captivated by the majesty of the One he served.

Joshua loved to be in the presence of God.

- Look also at Joshua's experience at the tabernacle in Exodus 33:11.
- He was so overwhelmed by God's presence he refused to leave!
- Much of what Joshua would accomplish can be traced to his sense and delight in the abiding presence of God.

Joshua trusted in the promises and the faithfulness of God.

- Then there is Joshua's experience as one of the 12 spies whom Moses sent into the land of Canaan to learn about the people who inhabited it. How many are there? Are they strong or weak? What is the land like? (Numbers 13)
- When the spies returned, all but two said: "We have no chance against them. They are stronger than we are. Let's go elsewhere!" The two who were confident of God's superior power and had faith that He would bring victory to Israel were Caleb and Joshua. (Numbers 14:1-12)
- Clearly, Joshua was a man of deep faith in the goodness and greatness of God, a man who feared nothing so long as he knew his God was standing with him.

Joshua was anointed with power by the Holy Spirit.

- ***"Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, 'Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.' So the Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight.'" Numbers 27:15-19 ESV***

Joshua had been disciplined by Moses.

- Surely the example of Moses was a powerful influence in Joshua's life. Joshua saw him succeed and saw him fail. He saw him in strength and weakness, in prayer and in power, in victory and defeat. He learned much from the model of Moses.

What, then, do we see in Joshua that accounts for his courage, confidence, and competency; the things that we pray by God's grace would be found in us?

- A profound awareness of God's redeeming grace.
- A sense of the urgency of prayer.
- A vision of God's glory.
- The pursuit of intimacy with God / abiding in His presence.
- Faith in God's power to fulfill his promises
- The presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- The example and influence of other godly believers.

No Turning Back

"I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still. My past is redeemed, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, live by prayer and labor by His power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable and my mission clear. I cannot be bought, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up or let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up and preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a a disciple of Jesus. I must go 'till He comes, give 'till I drop, preach 'till all know, and work 'till He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me." —Anonymous

Do you want these words to be yours?

Do you want to be courageous?