

Joshua 1: 1-11; 16-18 (New International Version, ©2011)

¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷ "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

¹⁰ So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: ¹¹ "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.'"

¹⁶ Then they answered Joshua, "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. ¹⁷ Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. ¹⁸ Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!"

OASIS: Taking the Land, Joshua 1: 1-11 & 16-18

Preface: Welcome to our 4th LC Bible study in our sermon series “Living God’s Story.” This year we are working our way through the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. So fasten your seat belt—it is quite a ride! These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading.

BIG idea in this study: When following God leads us into conflict, we prevail through prayer, obedience and courage.

Possible starter question: Think about a “pep talk” you have received or given. We often get a pep talk in a challenging context, sometimes in business, school, sports or even family situations that are challenging. What are some ingredients that make for an effective pep talk? What ingredients might undermine the overall effectiveness of a pep talk?

Transitional comment: The 40 year’s of wilderness wanderings designed to prepare God’s people to receive God’s promise of land are now finished. The people are on the verge of a new day, new land and new experience. In today’s passage, the LORD provides Joshua and the new leadership with their final instructions (it is probably around 1,240 BC). It is a kind of spiritual pep talk.

(Ask someone to pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study, opening everyone’s eyes and hearts.)

Let’s listen as our passage is read: Who would like to read this aloud for us? (3 parts, 1-9 as the LORD speaks; 10-11, as Joshua speak to his officers or leaders; and 16-18 and the officers respond to Joshua).

Personal time to re-read: Take several minutes (2-3 min.) to read this again on your own. What words and ideas are repeated or similar? What key contrasts do you note? How does the passage develop or unfold?

Overview together: What repeated words and ideas did you observe? What key contrasts?

Study Discussion Section I, the LORD addressing Joshua (1:1-9):

O In the first two verses, what important facts and insights are given about the context?

I What do you think it would have felt like to Joshua to “follow in the footsteps” of Moses?

O In vs. 2-6, the LORD provides Joshua with some final instructions or charges. Identify these and try to identify which ones depend on God and which depend on Joshua or the people

(n.b. The first is to get ready to cross the Jordan. The second has to do with the giving of the land. The third is that no one will be able to stand against you. The fourth is God’s promise to always be with Joshua. The fifth is the exhortation to be strong and courageous.)

I What aspects do you think would be most exciting? Which ones might be most challenging? Why?

O In vs. 7-9, what instructions does the LORD reiterate?

I Why does the LORD think it important to reinforce these? Why might Joshua be afraid or discouraged?

O What are the practical “how-to” instructions that the LORD adds? How are they to learn and internalize the Book of the Law?

(n.b. What the LORD says to Joshua in this section echoes many passages in Moses’ teachings in Deuteronomy, which is identified as the Book of the Law. The LORD wants them soaking in the Scriptures so that they are immersed in living out the covenant between them and Him.)

O What difference will it make if Joshua and the people are responsive and attentive?

I What do you think are the connections between being strong and courageous, being successful and prosperous, and God's presence are?

A What are some patterns for "meditating" on the Scriptures that could strengthen your life?

A Think of a situation where you tend to be susceptible to fear and discouragement?

Section II, Joshua addressing the officers of the people (1:10-11):

O What do you observe about Joshua's orders to the officers?

O In what ways are there multiple step process being taken?

(n.b such as the Lord preparing Joshua and Joshua doing the same for his leaders; also crossing the Jordan is just the start, then the work of taking the land begins.)

Section III, the officers responding to Joshua (1:16-18):

O Analyze the officers enthusiastic response to Joshua. What is encouraging and positive?

I What do you think should be concerning to Joshua?

Summary reflection:

Question: It is crucial to realize that the exhortation to "be strong and courageous" must be understood in the context of relationship with God.

- ❖ What does it mean for you to "be strong and courageous" in your life as a Christian?
- ❖ In what situations must you find new resolve to "trust and obey"?
- ❖ As we draw close to Global Awareness Week, are there any particular "new opportunities" for ministry or outreach for which God is preparing you?

Prayer together: Pray for one another—that you each will be able to be spiritually strong and courageous in the key contexts, challenges and opportunities that are before each of you.

Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

- a. Key verse: Joshua 1: 9: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."
- b. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge)

Advice to study leaders:

- c. Complement OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- d. Determine the core questions you'll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- e. Always reword questions in words that are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn't make sense to you, then discard it.) You want to "own" each question.
- f. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- g. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- h. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
- i. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching," rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- j. I recommend the 1 vol. New Bible Commentary, Revised (21st Century ed, IVP). Well worth \$35.