

Moving Forward

Joshua 1:1-9

June 28, 2009

Intro

We have now come to the book of Joshua. Moses has died, but before his death he commissioned Joshua to lead the people of Israel into the land of God's promises. This book then, is an account of the nation of Israel entering in and conquering the land of Canaan.

There have been some who have written that Israel entering into the land is a picture of our entry into heaven. I do not see that at all. When God brought Israel out of the land of Egypt that is a picture of when God brought us out of the world. Israel's journey through the wilderness is a picture of our own in maturity in Christ. Therefore, Israel's crossing of the Jordan River is a picture of the believer who enters into the fullness of God's promises; the believer who walks in the maturity of his faith.

There are many promises that we receive simply by being in Christ. But there are other promises we receive because we walk in the maturity of faith. In other words, in order to receive all that God promises us, we also must move forward.

Things are about to change for Israel. Their leader, and in fact a very good leader, who has led them for 40 years is gone. They no longer have the pillar of fire by night or the cloud by day to direct their steps.

So God took Joshua aside and spoke these words of encouragement and insight to him. And the beautiful thing here is that we also get to drink from the same well. These words also become a great encouragement to us because God wants us also to move forward and receive the promises he has for us.

I. Be Strong and Courageous

- 1 Three times in these verses and four total in this chapter, God told Joshua to be strong and courageous.
- 2 In verse nine, God told Joshua, "Do not tremble or be dismayed." In other words, Joshua is not to be discouraged by the great challenge before him, but he is to lead the nation of Israel into the promises that he has for them.
- 3 Similarly, Paul wrote to his son in the faith Timothy, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."
- 4 We need to understand the things that prevent us from moving forward spiritually in our lives.

A. Let go of the past

- 5 "Moses my servant is dead," God said to Joshua, "now therefore arise."

6 Talk about big shoes to fill, in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses is described as the greatest prophet that ever lived! By Moses, the entire Egyptian army was defeated, the waters of the Red Sea were parted, manna fell from heaven, and water came out of a rock.

7 But it's time to let go of the past. Moses is dead.

2 Corinthians 5:17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

8 Joshua grew up a slave in Egypt. He lived under the heavy hand of oppression and abuse. But whatever happened in the past, he must let go of it. He must arise and move forward into God's promises.

9 Joshua has been a servant to Moses for 40 years, but now God is calling him to be a leader.

10 We see in scripture that God calls us to be both servant and leader.

Matthew 20:25-28 Don't be like the world in how you lead

Illus – I remember when we were meeting as a church over at the academy. One day, no one showed up to help move all the sound equipment and room dividers. I started complaining in my heart and that's when I learned a great lesson about leadership.

11 Joshua must let go of the past and arise to become the leader God has called him to be.

12 Whatever has happened in the past must be the past. We can't change what lies behind, only what lies ahead.

Illus – You can't go back; you can only go forward. I remember when Jordi was about to give birth to our first baby...

Philippians 3:13-14, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

B. Don't just stand there – keep moving

1 In verse 3, God told Joshua, "I have given you every place on which the sole of your foot treads."

- 2 But Joshua is going to have to arise and move forward to obtain it.
- 3 No doubt there would be those who would want to stay in the comfort and the predictability of the desert. After all, they had manna to eat. It may not have been tasty, but it was predictable.
- 4 But here's the application: to stand still is to sink. Life was going to change one way or the other. God was no longer going to provide manna for them.
- 5 There are areas in our lives that have to change.
- 6 "That's just the way I am," I've heard many people say. God also loves you the way you are; and he also loves you so much that he won't let you stay that way.
- 7 We come to God, "Just as I am," but then He begins the process of change.

Illus – I came to faith with the song, "Just as I am," and one of those verses captures the thought very well.

**Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

Romans 12:2, And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

C. Don't fall short

- 8 Verse 4 describes the land that God was going to give them. In order for them to have the land that God promised them, they would need to press on to the end and not fall short.
- 9 Joshua knows something about Israel falling short. He was there at Kadesh Barnea when Israel sent 12 spies into the land of Canaan to bring back a report. In fact, he was one of them.
- 10 He and Caleb tried to encourage the people to trust God and move in to obtain the promises that God gave to them.
- 11 But 10 of the spies discouraged the people, telling them that there were giants in the land, that the problems were just too great.
- 12 So here's the lesson for us as well. There is a connection between faith in God

and being strong and courageous.

Isaiah 41:10, “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

Hebrews 13:5-6, for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,” so that we confidently say, “The Lord is my helper I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?”

II. God Gives the Key to Success

- 1 There are all kinds of books out there to help you get successful, but the book we are studying here has the best lessons of all.
- 2 After God told Joshua to be strong and courageous, he then gave him the keys that would bring him to the success and prosperity that God intended for the nation of Israel.

A. Live according to God’s Word

- 1 In verse 7, God told Joshua to be careful to do according to the Word which Moses gave him.
- 2 He then told him not to turn from it to the right or to the left... So that he would have success wherever he went.
- 3 There would be no more pillar of fire. Now Joshua would be led by the word of God. And he would find success if he would walk according to it.
- 4 God’s word is filled with the treasures of wisdom and insight into life that will lead us into a successful life, if we would only trust that this is true.

App- we need to begin by properly defining success. The world defines success according to how you compare to others. God defines success very differently.

Revelation 3:17-19, Gold refined by the fire

- 5 Notice that God says that those He loves He reproves and disciplines?
- 6 God directs us in His Word and even disciplines and trains us so that we can live as God intended for us to live.

2 Timothy 3:16, All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- 7 Our problem is that we resist and insist on doing things our way.

Illus – We wanted to take our granddaughter for a walk. She wanted to take the stroller and then she insisted on pushing the dog, but she couldn't push in straight and wouldn't let me help!

8 Yet God's Word is so much better than what the world has to offer!

Illus – Have you had someone give you this wisdom?

2 Don't cross your eyes, they'll get stuck that way.

3 Sitting too close to the TV will ruin your eyes.

4 Swallowed gum stays with you for 7 years.

5 Coffee will stunt your growth.

B. Meditate on God's Word

9 That may at first seem a little strange to hear because we are used to thinking that meditation is bad.

10 But here God tells Joshua that he needs to meditate on it day and night so that he would be able to do what the Word tells him.

App – To meditate the eastern way is to empty your mind, but to meditate God's way is to fill your mind what is good.

Philippians 4:8, Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

11 Why is this true? Because....

Proverbs 23:7, For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. KJV

12 God ends the message by saying that Joshua is not to tremble or be dismayed..." for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

13 Moses is dead – now look to me.

Hebrews 12:1-2, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.