

## Joshua 1:6-9

### “Be Strong and of good courage”

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#### I. Intro

I lay in bed on Wednesday night thinking of why more people don't press after the promises of God's blessing, why is it that at some point we just stop and say by our actions that 1/10 of what He has for us is enough. I awoke with the answer at least for me; it is because **at some point I don't value the prize as much as I fear the work.** The longer I stay in my 1/10 the more I forget how gloriously enjoyable obtaining them was. You see the prize was in discovering Jesus with every new step into the promise land and this far out weighs the gathering of more land. In this section verse 6-9 God reveals a threefold provision of grace given to Joshua:

1. Vs. 6 **The promise of the land:** This is important for three reasons:
  - a. The land was already in God's possession, and He was desirous to give them what He already possessed. As far as God was concerned the land was already theirs all they needed to do was go in and possess it.
  - b. The land was an enormous blessing in size as well as quality. Truly God knows how to give good gifts to His children Matt. 7:11. Oh dear saint, how little we recognize the size of God's inheritance for us. Consider Paul's word in 1 Cor. 2:9 *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*
  - c. God not only promised the inheritance of the land He guaranteed to go with him to strengthen him and not fail him. In other words, the land is yours and God will go with you to get it.
2. Vs. 7-8 **The power of the Word:** There are those who claim that the bible was never thought of as inspired until after the 9<sup>th</sup> century before Christ but verse 8 dispels this. Success defeating the enemies and obstacles that currently inhabit our inheritance is based upon our continual reliance of the “sword of the Spirit” the word of God.
3. Vs. 9 **The presence of the Lord:** Finally, God promised His continual presence to be with Joshua in victory as well as defeat, that He would not leave nor forsake him. Simple put this provision is that victory is not based upon our performance but rather dependence upon His.

## II. Vs. 6 The promise land

Vs. 6 In Exodus 3:7-8 we see that the goal of God was not just the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt (a typology of the world) it was “*to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey*”. The deliverance from the world was and is only preparation for the enjoyment of the land of promise. Even before this in Genesis 13:14-17 with God’s promise to Abraham that the fulfillment was in the possession of the land. Literally this phrase is “Be strong and rally your heart” and it will be repeated 4 times in the first chapter.

Friends there will always be enemies in the land of blessing and their expulsion is the only way for us to enjoy our inheritance. God’s Word of encouragement to His servants is to believe Him and obey His commands. God’s promises are prods, not pillows. Ah but this is why the Lord tells Joshua first in verse 5 that no one will be able to stand before him and that the Lord will not leave or forsake him, which is followed by the thrice repeated encouragement to be strong of good courage. Victory was assured the possession granted all Joshua needed to do now was walk into it which would take two things:

1. Courage
2. Obedience

In Zech. 4:6 Zech the Lord said “*This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of hosts.*” God’s not asking Joshua to be or do something that He himself hasn’t provided. Saint’s God is calling is to walk into what HE has promised and provided in the energy and strength of His power not our own. In Exodus 4:12 when God called Moses to go to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let His people go God promised Moses that “*go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.*” What great assurances God gives those He calls, yet the truth remains it is a fearful thing to step into the promises that God has for us. Remember Jesus words at the commissioning of the disciples in

Matthew 28:18-20 where He came to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." I don't know about you but I'm fine with the All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth...I am with you always, even to the end of the age" part of this it's the **GO** part that I have a problem with! "Go?", "Can't you just make it come to me?"

Now you may recall in verse 5 God gave Joshua a threefold assurance that He would equip Joshua to accomplish all that He had called him to do:

- 1. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life**
- 2. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you**
- 3. I will not leave you nor forsake you**

Yet with those great divine assurances we read that the Lord still had to three times repeat the admonition to be strong and courageous. Friends listen up God's assurances are never an invitation to inactivity instead they are a challenge to get up and get moving into what He has for us as Paul wrote in the final sentence of 1 Cor. 15:58 "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*"

Remember friend there were far more enemies and obstacles in the land of promise then in the wilderness:

- There were races of giants who were famous for strength and stature.
- There were others who were had better armed with iron chariots
- There were the obstacles of fortified cities
- There was the challenge of supplies for when they were in the wilderness God had provided the water for the rock and manna from heaven.

Now put with this the fact that those whom God had called to walk into the land of promise were inexperienced, unqualified and prone to rebellion. How many times I wonder did Joshua have to remind himself of those three promises of verse 5:

- **No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life**
- **As I was with Moses, so I will be with you**
- **I will not leave you nor forsake you**

What more do we want or need than these assurances and His presence and power to walk where He has given us to walk so that we may enjoy fully the blessings of these promises?

I was reading on Fox News about the “*Over night Oil Millionaires*” in Beulah N.D. 83 year old Oscar Stohler who was born in a sod house on the property he has raised cattle on for all his life they found oil and he became an over night millionaire. Saints there is a great truth as it relates to us in old Oscar and that is he was living right above the wealth his whole life and never knew it and it wasn't even he who dug the oil well someone else did he just reaped the rewards as he said, “*It's the easiest money we have ever made.*”

### **III. Vs. 7-8 The power of the word**

Vs. 7-8 This is not a mere repeat of the above assurance but rather a specific application of it with regards to the word of God. How interesting to me that the man called to conquer the land of promise was a maverick in obedience and submission instead of a man that Frank Sinatra sang about one “*who did it my way*”!

Notice hear that God tells Joshua that the “book of the Law shall not depart” from his mouth. This is important as it tells us that the first five books of the law were already in a written form by this time the last being Deuteronomy. The events described by Moses were pinned during this time not many centuries latter as liberals would suggest. Joshua knew Moses, he knew he was just a man, he knew that he was a sinner and yet immediately right after Moses death Joshua accepts the first five books of Moses as God's word which suggests that Joshua

realized that the books were written by God through the pen of Moses. It didn't take 100's of years before God's people realized that this was inspired writing they received it as such immediately. "Victory", says the Lord "Depends upon adherence to the Word of God". Take these 5 books and walk in obedience and you won't need to fear any enemy because I'll be walking with you. God doesn't promise that we won't have any enemies only that we will be able to defeat them by His presence and His word. John Bunyan the author of Pilgrims Progress had written in the front of his bible, "*This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book.*"

Friend we have a valued lesson right here and it is this that the man who will lead others into the promise land must first be a man who is willing to follow the Lord their, His way! We must first be those who are "strong and very courageous" to do according all the Word of God. Joshua's commissioning was that he would be regulated by the Word of God not his own opinions or understanding nor the opinions or understandings of others. He was to be a God pleaser with full obedience not partial over his life as Canaan would not be defeat in a day but over a long period of time. Jesus asked in Luke 6:46 "*why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?*" Obedience is the pathway to possessing the promises as the Lord tells Joshua that "you may prosper wherever you go". The immediate tie here is that possession of the land of promise is set around first possessing the word of God personally. Friend we learn here that **prosperity is not a direction it's a decision; a decision to follow the Lamb where ever He goes!** God didn't tell Joshua that His word should not depart from his bookshelf or the glove box of his chariot but rather from his mouth. You know what means Christian? It means that God is saying that Joshua was to be a man of the Word, a man who took up the word of God and read it dug deep into its treasures. How does a person do this?

There is four ways in which Joshua was to do so:

1. Vs. 7 “*That you may observe to do according to all the law*”: First the use of the word “*observe*” suggests that Joshua was to know the word, to study it and make note of it in his life. There is a reason the first five books of the Bible was not placed in the ark of the covenant out of sight only worshipped inside the box. The Bible is a Holy book that is to be handled poured over like the love letter that it is, gone over and squeezed out as a thirsty man for every drop of refreshment that it contains.
2. Vs. 8a “*This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth*”: Second Joshua was to talk about what he observed on a daily bases in everyday conversations. The Bible is so practical and is based served with conversation about what the Lord is revealing about Himself and us to each other.
3. Vs. 8b “*You shall meditate in it day and night*”: The Hebrew word translated “*meditate*” means “*to mutter*” as it was the practice of the Jews to read Scripture aloud and then to talk about it to themselves and to one another. Meditation goes beyond mere knowledge of something and onto reasoning and deducing things that we can personally apply to our lives. The goal of our meditation in the word isn’t so that we can quote the bibles to others but rather that our lives will do the quoting. Warren Wiersbe says, “*If you don’t talk to your Bible, your Bible isn’t likely to talk to you!*”
4. Vs. 8c “*That you may observe to do according to all that is written in it*”: Finally we see that the Lord tells Joshua that the goal is obedience to the Word of truth. We have a descent number of literate Christians with regards to the word but we have far too few who demonstrate their knowledge by obeying the Bible. Our problem does not lie in that we don’t know what to do it lies in that we don’t want to do what we know what to do.

#### **IV. Vs. 9 The presence of the Lord**

Vs. 9 Literally this phrase is “*Do not be struck with awe or terror neither be shattered*”. In Luke 1:37 in the ASV of the bible the angel Gabriel tells Mary the mother of Jesus “*no word from God shall be void of power.*” Friends God commands are His enablement’s for can not command that which He will not enable.

Every Christian ought to remember the promise God is making to Joshua here, “*For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*” Oh I’m in such a place right now, what a mess I can’t see the end of this one. Yeh but the Lord says that He is with us wherever we go, so what

are we afraid of He has already promised that He will not leave us nor forsake us. Three times the Lord tells Joshua “*Be strong and of good courage*” which tells us two things:

1. Joshua wasn't strong and courageous
2. That the Lord was going to supply what he needed to do so

The final encouragement from the Lord is that success into the land of promise didn't hinge completely upon Joshua and the nations faithfulness to the word but upon the Lord's faithfulness to go with us where ever they went. There are three questions we need to ask ourselves:

- Am I obeying the will of God?
- Am I empowered by the Spirit of God?
- Did I serve to the glory of God?

If we can answer yes to these questions, then our ministry has been successful in God's eyes, no matter what people may think.

Folks, I think it is important to realize that God was placing a huge responsibility upon Joshua and it was right for him to be afraid and to feel that he was totally inadequate to hold the responsibility. Do you realize that your inadequacies? In 2 Cor. 2 after speaking to the Corinthians of the responsibilities of the believer he asks in verse 16 “*who is sufficient for these things?*” Then in the third chapter verse 5 he answers the question that he posed saying, “*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God*”. How great it is to realize that God will never call us to do anything that He won't first equip us to do in His power. So how about you, do you feel as if your not sufficient for the Journey God has placed upon you right now, are you just a wee bit afraid? No worries my friend as **our Father won't call us down a path that He won't provide the strength to our feet of faith to walk the path of His calling.** Our inabilities become our enablings in Jesus my friend so press on to what He has for you. It seems that their greatest obstacle they would face was not an outward army or a geographical barrier; but rather it was the failure to:

- Magnify the Word of God with their mouths
- Encourage their hearts by remembering its truths
- Strengthen their steps by its application

The enemies and obstacles in the land would be nothing because God would be with them where ever they went. Friends the enemies in the land must be driven out, (satan, the world system and our flesh) and this is down through the word. Look carefully **the blessings of victorious**

**Christian living come by invitation but the appropriation of those blessings comes by God's command and power.**