

JOSHUA: A GREAT EXAMPLE OF COMMITMENT

TEXT: Joshua 24:29-31

INTRODUCTION:

Illustration:

On April 21st, in the year 1519, the Spanish explorer Hernando Cortez sailed into the harbor of Vera Cruz, Mexico. He brought with him only about 600 men, and yet over the next two years his vastly outnumbered forces were able to defeat Montezuma and all the warriors of the Aztec empire, making Cortez the conqueror of all Mexico.

How was this incredible feat accomplished, when two prior expeditions had failed even to establish a colony on Mexican soil? Here's the secret. Cortez knew from the very beginning that he and his men faced incredible odds. He knew that the road before them would be dangerous and difficult. He knew that his men would be tempted to abandon their quest and return to Spain. And so, as soon as Cortez and his men had come ashore and unloaded their provisions, he ordered their entire fleet of eleven ships destroyed. His men stood on the shore and watched as their only possibility of retreat burned and sank. And from that point on, they knew beyond any doubt there was no return, no turning back. Nothing lay behind them but empty ocean. Their only option was to go forward, to conquer or die.

COMMITMENT:

- It is what makes a dream into a reality
- It is the action that speaks louder than words
- It means making a firm choice
- Commitment is a NEED, not an OPTION

We need commitment:

- In every relationship (family, marriage, friendship, etc.)
- In school
- In our jobs
- In the church
- As a Christian

Burning Bridges...Burning Boats:

1. COMMITMENT is making a firm choice!
2. It means not worrying about keeping your options open, or leaving yourself a way out.
3. It means pursuing something wholeheartedly, with no contingency plans to fall back on.
4. It means 100% sold out to a person, or a cause or a goal; not holding back anything or keeping anything in reserve.

Illustration:

According to Pavel Poloz (1987) an exile from Russia – “In Russia, Christians are tested by hardship, but in America you are tested by freedom...And testing by freedom is much harder.

Nobody pressures you about your religion. So you relax and are not so concentrated on serving Christ, on following His teaching, or on how He wants you to live.”

CONSIDER JOSHUA, A MAN OF COMMITMENT:

1. It is impressive to note the great influence that Joshua had with those of his generation.

Joshua 24:29-31---Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* one hundred and ten years old. ³⁰ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ³¹ Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD, which He had done for Israel.

- a. It was due to God being with him and doing many “great works”
- b. Examples are the parting of the Jordan River, the fall of Jericho, and the day the sun and moon stood still.

2. However, that support was based upon Joshua’s faithful obedience to the Word of God.

Joshua 1:1-9---After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, saying: ² “Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. ³ Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 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. ⁶ Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go.”

3. He stands before us as an example of what it takes to be a great leader.
 - a. Every generation needs good leadership, especially in times of struggle and doubt.

- b. For those who lead, or who might one day serve as leaders, Joshua serves as a role model.
4. All of us are leaders to some extent:
 - a. Fathers, mothers, Bible school teachers, etc. have opportunities of influence.
 - b. What other opportunities of influence can you think of?
 5. What were the qualities of Joshua that served to make him the great leader?

Discussion:

I. JOSHUA WAS A MAN OF HUMILITY.

A. Before he became a leader, he was willing to serve.

1. A child of God must go down before he can go up.
2. For forty years, he served under Moses in the Wilderness
3. He was known as “Moses’ assistant” and “his servant.”

Exodus 24:13---So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

Exodus 33:11---So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

B. Even after becoming a leader, he was willing to serve.

1. Though having been magnified by the Lord himself, he still saw himself as a servant:

Joshua 3:7---And the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

Joshua 4:14---On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.

2. He was still willing to serve One greater than himself.

Joshua 5:13-15---And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “*Are You for us or for our adversaries?*”¹⁴ So He said, “No, but *as* Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?”¹⁵ Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy.” And Joshua did so.

C. He did not allow praise to go to his head.

II. JOSHUA WAS A MAN OF FAITH WHO TRUSTED IN GOD.

A. This was demonstrated when he was sent to spy out the land and brought back a positive report:

1. Ten of the twelve spies demonstrated their lack of faith in God by their report – Numbers 13:25-28.
2. Despite the “peer pressure” he must have felt, Joshua (along with Caleb) demonstrated his faith in God by his report - Numbers 14:6-9.

B. This was demonstrated when the walls of Jericho fell:

1. The Lord gave him the instructions to take the city – Joshua 6:1-5.
2. Only a full trust and faith in the Lord could have led Joshua to follow such instructions!

Hebrews 11:30---By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

III. JOSHUA WAS A MAN OF GOD’S WORD.

A. Success was directly related to his adherence to the word of God.

1. He had to fulfill all the Law as given by Moses:

Joshua 1:8---This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

2. He meditated upon the Law day and night.

B. Time and again he was true to the word.

Joshua 1:12-15---And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, ¹³ “Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.’ ¹⁴ Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, ¹⁵ until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He *gave* you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD’s servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

1. He reminded the two and half tribes of their responsibility.
2. He renewed the covenant at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim:

Joshua 8:30-35---³²...And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written...³⁴ And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

3. A summary of Joshua’s devotion is recorded:

Joshua 11:15---As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

4. Even at the end of his life, he encouraged the nation to heed God’s Word:

Joshua 23:6, 14-16---Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left...¹⁴ “Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. ¹⁵ Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. ¹⁶ When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them,

then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you.”

- C. We really can't expect one to be a man of faith without being a man of God's Word.
- D. We need to heed the charge God gave Joshua (Josh. 1:8).
 - 1. Faith comes from hearing and doing the will of God - Rom. 10:17
 - 2. Doing the will of God demonstrates our faith - James 2.

IV. JOSHUA WAS A MAN OF PRAYER.

- A. We see him praying for his people's failures.
 - 1. He did this following the defeat at Ai.

Joshua 7:6---Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, “Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! 8 O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies?”

- 2. He and the elders pleaded with God on behalf of Israel.
- B. We see him praying in the midst of warfare.
 - 1. He did this as Israel routed the kings of the south – Josh. 10:9-14
 - 2. He did this when he looked to the Lord for help and strength.

V. JOSHUA WAS A MAN WHO PUT GOD FIRST.

- A. He put God before what might seem more important.
 - 1. He did this in the middle of a military campaign – Josh. 8:30-35; Deut. 27-28.
 - 2. He did this even though it gave their enemies time to join together in opposition - Josh. 9:1-2.
- B. He put God before others.

1. He cared not what others might do or think, he would serve the Lord! – Josh. 24:14-15
2. His strong stand influenced others for good – Josh. 24:1.

CONCLUSION:

1. It was qualities such as these that made Joshua a strong leader.
 - a. He was a man of humility.
 - b. He was a man of faith who trusted in God.
 - c. He was a man of God's word.
 - d. He was a man of prayer.
 - e. He was a man who put God first
2. Finally, consider some similarities between Joshua and Jesus.
 - a. Their names are the same (Joshua is Hebrew, Jesus is Greek), which means “savior” or “salvation.”
 - b. Joshua was the leader of the Israelites into the promised land of Canaan; Jesus is our leader into the promised land of heaven - John 14:1
 - c. As Joshua pointed the people to the Word of God, so did Jesus – Matt. 7:21.
 - d. As Joshua was an agent of both grace (cf. Rahab) and damnation (cf. nations of Canaan), so Jesus is both savior and judge of all men, who metes out death as well as life – Matt. 25:34, 41.