

GOD'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO JOSHUA

TEXT: Joshua 1:1-9

Introduction:

1. We need to be strong and courageous:
 - a. When our best efforts do not seem to be good enough.
 - b. When our past experiences give little encouragement.
 - c. When our present and future responsibilities seem too big.
 - d. When so much seems to be demanded, and we have so little to give.
2. Joshua needed encouragement and God gave it to him.
 - a. Joshua's past experiences were not very encouraging.
 - 1) He had been eager to go into the promised land, but was stopped by a fearful, murmuring people.
 - 2) He has seen how the people aggravated Moses, causing him to miss Canaan.
 - 3) He had seen all of his generation die in the wilderness.
 - b. His present situation was not very encouraging.
 - 1) He was not as young as he was when he had returned as a spy saying, "We are able to take the land."
 - 2) He no longer had Moses to lean on for strength and counsel.
 - 3) Nearly all of his present generation did not share his memory of the Egyptian bondage.
4. God's encouragement had a simple two-fold message for Joshua.

Discussion:

I. FIRST, GOD ENCOURAGES HIM TO GO FORWARD IN THE TASK BEFORE HIM.

- A. God said, "Moses My servant is dead." **Joshua 1:2**

1. Joshua and Israel knew that Moses was dead. They had mourned his death for 30 days.
2. God was compelling them to accept that Moses was dead.
3. They could not live in the past.
 - a. There is little profit in second-guessing the past. For example: What if Moses had not sinned? What if Israel had not sinned?
 - b. There is little profit in dwelling on what could have been - We can usually think of a thousand "What ifs?"
 - c. We need to be like Paul who said, "...Forgetting those things which are behind..."

Phil. 3:13---Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

B. Joshua and Israel must now attend to the task at hand: "Now therefore, arise..."

Joshua 1:2---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.

1. We, too, need to understand our duty toward God, and get on with it. John 9:4
2. **III.**---Stephen Grellet was a French-born Quaker who died in New Jersey in 1855. Grellet would be unknown to the world today except for a few cherished lines which he wrote. The words which have served as an inspiration to many are: "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again."
3. Indeed, let us do what good we can now while we have time and opportunity, for the time is coming when we will not be able.

II. GOD ENCOURAGES JOSHUA TO BE STRONG AND VERY COURAGEOUS.

A. Joshua needed to be strong enough to trust God's promise. Verse 6

1. They were to receive a great land which covered much territory. Verses 3-4
 - a. It was a land which was worth the wait, the work, and the fight.
 - b. At the time recorded in Joshua 1, they only possessed the land in promise.

2. We, too, possess a land in promise.

1 Peter 1:4---to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

Hebrews 11:9-10---By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

3. God's promises to us are both sure and steadfast.

Hebrews 6:17-19---Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, ¹⁸ that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*. ¹⁹ This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the *Presence* behind the veil,

- B. Joshua needed to be courageous enough to trust God's power and providence. Verse 5a

1. "No man shall be able to stand before you..." God was telling him the outcome before he began.
2. Likewise, God has told us in advance the details of the conquest.
 - a. We will not run into more than we can handle.

1 Corinthians 10:13---No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

- 1) The word "temptation" in 1 Cor. 10:13 means "a testing or trial of any sort." It includes a testing or trial toward an evil thing (temptation or lust), and a testing or trial which can lead to good (as in more "patience": see James 1:1-5).

James 1:2-4---My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- b. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Romans 8:37---Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

C. Joshua needed strength enough to trust God's presence. Verses 5b and 9

1. "Have I not commanded you?" The same as saying, "Do it and leave the results to me!"
 - a. Would the Lord command them to go into battle and leave them stranded?
 - 1) Would He lead them into war and leave them without support?
 - b. Would God command us to put the kingdom first and then us starve to death?

Matt. 6:33---But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- c. We, too, have the support of God.

Heb. 13:5-6---*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*⁶ So we may boldly say: "The LORD *is* my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

D. Joshua needed to be strong enough to faithfully do God's precepts. Verses 7-8

1. "Only be strong...that you may observe..." If Joshua would only do this, God would take care of the rest.
2. We need to be strong and courageous enough:
 - a. To do according to all the law of Christ. Verse 7b;

James 1:25---But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word, this one will be blessed in what he does.

- b. To not turn to the right or the left. Verse 7c;

2 John 9---Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

- c. To always speak as the oracles of God. Verse 8a;

1 Peter 4:11---If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

- d. To meditate on God's word day and night. Verse 8b;

2 Timothy 2:15---Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- e. To faithfully observe all that is written. Verse 8c;

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.-

- 3. When we do so, God will also make our way prosperous.

Conclusion:

1. It takes much courage and strength to serve God as Joshua did.
 - a. We must forego immediate gratification so that we can obtain the distant promise.
 - b. We must act on God's power, presence, and providence when the apparent reason may not be clear to us.
 - c. We must daily study God's word, and continue to teach it in spite of all the other things which demand our attention.
 - d. We must keep doing things in God's way, even when other ways seem faster and more effective.
2. Let us arise to the task at hand, letting God take care of the rest.
 - a. Trust God's promises. Look beyond!
 - b. Trust God's power. Let it have its working in us!
 - c. Trust God's presence. He said, "I will never leave you or forsake you."
 - d. Trust God's precepts. Keep doing God's will, because we know that our labor in the Lord is not in vain.