

Remnant Life Church
December 31, 2023
Standing Firm at a New Post
Joshua 1:1-9

If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post; calmness can lay great offenses to rest. (Eccl 10:4)

- These words were written by King Solomon in the later years of his life
- They are wise words that should still resonate within the life of every Christian
- He wraps his wisdom around a central statement...*do not leave your post*

READ - Joshua 1:1-9

- Imagine that you are the second in command of a very large business or organization
- You hear the following words, “The leader is gone – you are now in charge”
 - It happens in the business world all the time – Chairman’s, CEO’s and Presidents retire or die suddenly and someone new ascends to the top position
 - In the history of our nation, 8 sitting presidents have died in office
 - The first was William Henry Harrison in 1841
 - His inaugural address was 2 hours long and he gave it on a cold, rainy day on March 4th
 - Without a coat or hat
 - He caught a cold which developed into pneumonia, and he died one month later
 - Served the shortest of any US President, in office for only 30 days, making John Tyler president
 - The list also includes Zachery Taylor, Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, William McKinley, Warren Harding, FDR, and, of course, the last one in 1963, John F. Kennedy
 - Each of these deaths thrust someone else unexpectedly into the position of leadership – unprepared, unnerved, perhaps, at least for a time, overwhelmed with what lay ahead
- And so, imagine what Joshua must have felt and started thinking when God said these words to him, *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. (Josh 1:2)*
 - What thoughts must have been running through his mind?
 - This is Moses!
 - The man who God chose to lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt after 430 years of captivity (Ex 12:40)
 - The man chosen to lead a nation estimated to be between 2.4 to 2.5 million people
 - Who stood defiantly before Pharaoh, considered by the Egyptians to be a god on earth

- Who God used to call down the 10 plagues
- Who stretched out his hands over the Red Sea, and the water divided
- Who spoke directly with God and received the 10 commandments written by God's own Hand
- Joshua, I'm sure, is thinking, "I'm going to be replacing HIM?"

Joshua was not just a random person

- He already had a post within the leadership of the nation and was involved in and witnessed some of their most important and significant events
 - He was born in the Egyptian province of Goshen while the people were in captivity
 - It was Joshua, appointed by Moses, who led a hand-picked group of fighting men in their first military conflict after leaving Egypt, when they defeated the Amalekites ([Ex 17](#))
 - Joshua was with Moses when he went up Mt. Saini to receive the first set of stone tablets on which were written the 10 commandments ([Ex 20](#))
 - Joshua was among the 12 spies sent to first scout out the promised land and one of only 2 (Caleb being the other) who believed in God's promise ([Numb 13-14](#))
 - It was Joshua who God selected to succeed Moses with a promise of invincibility during his lifetime ([Josh 1:5](#))
 - And it was Joshua who led the people across the Jordan River (through parted waters) and defeated the great walled city of Jericho
- And yet, in those first moments of receiving the news of Moses' death, Joshua had several options with how he would respond to the post that God had just assigned him...
 - He could have said no and tried to run (how did that work out for Jonah?)
 - He could have tried to talk God out of it (but that didn't get Moses very far when he received his assignment kneeling in front of a burning bush)
 - He could have cried out in fear and hidden (of course God found Elijah in a cave without too much difficulty)
 - Or...like Mary, the mother of Jesus, he could simply obey in the way that she did when she said to Gabriel, "*I am the Lord's servant, may your word to me be fulfilled.*" ([Luke 1:38](#))
- But when you look back at the life of Joshua, God was already preparing him for this time
 - God always prepares those He calls it just might not be in a way you recognize
 - Each of those events involving Joshua was preparation for the task that lay ahead
 - God also prepared Moses – but in two very different ways
 - The first 40 years of Moses' life was spent in the most advanced culture of the day
 - As Egyptian royalty Moses had access to the most cutting-edge knowledge of the day including all of the sciences
 - The next 40 years were perhaps the most useful of all
 - He was herding livestock

- God always prepares us for where He is leading
 - How has God been preparing you this past year for what is to come in 2024?
 - Do not despise the times of seemingly meaningless activities
 - God never wastes a moment in our lives
 - Even those that are outside or against His will
 - The words of Joseph to his brothers in **Gen 50:20**
 - *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*
- This morning, before we take communion together, I would like for us to look at a way to approach this coming new year with renewed confidence as we consider the strategy that God gave to Joshua

1. We have the assurance of God's promises

- a. God immediately gave Joshua encouragement with a powerful promise
- b. (v 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.*
 - i. That word from God means nothing of the external can or will change that promise
 - ii. Even though appearances might challenge your faith and suggest something else
- c. For Joshua it was a puzzling defeat right after he had his first great victory as the leader of the people that tested his faith in God's promise
 - i. After he had led the army and defeated the great walled city of Jericho, Joshua's men got embarrassed by the little town of Ai
 - ii. That would be like today taking an army into China and overthrowing the city of Beijing, coming home, and then having the 2 policemen that make up the entire Lemoyne police department beat up your soldiers
- d. Yet, God's promises remained and we have those same assurances today
 - i. *I will never leave you nor forsake you. (Josh 1:5)*
 - ii. *Greater is the One in you than the one who is in the world (I John 4:4)*

2. God then tells Joshua to do 2 things, and He tells him 3 times

- a. God tells him to *Be strong and courageous (vv 6, 7, 9)*
- b. When God repeats Himself, you can be sure it is something very important
- c. He tells him first to be *strong*
 - i. You will only be as strong as you are prepared to be
 1. It takes a focused effort for us to prepare ourselves
 2. God is our source in all things, yet He does require some things of us
 - a. The first is obedience
 - b. The second is faith
 - c. And then He requires us to act on our faith
 - i. Noah acted on his faith by building the ark

- ii. Abraham acted on his faith by preparing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice
 - iii. And Moses acted on his faith by returning to face Pharaoh
 - ii. Strength does not come to you when you encounter a challenge or a problem
 - iii. It is built and developed over time by what you do in preparation
 - 1. Preparing your faith
 - 2. Preparing the condition of your heart, your mind, and your attitude through prayer and God's Word
 - iv. Always be in an attitude and action of preparation in your walk and relationship with the Lord
 - d. God told Joshua to be strong and *courageous*
 - i. In the original language, the word courageous means to be determined, always alert, persistent
 - ii. Also, to be bold, brave, fearless, stout, valiant, undaunted
 - 1. IOW, God was saying to Joshua, this is a new post I am assigning you. Time to step up your game!
 - 2. His post had changed dramatically, and God needed him to walk with a renewed sense of confidence in God and in himself
 - iii. And what does God supply to build our courage...
 - 1. He has given us spiritual armor – (Eph 6)
 - 2. The skills you have developed given to you by God
 - 3. Weapons – God's Word, your sword
 - 4. Your knowledge of the enemy
 - a. Learning from the times God allows you to walk through times of great struggle
 - 5. Your readiness and alertness (caught off guard?)
3. Third, God tells Joshua to obey His Word (vv 7–8)
 - a. Do not deviate from it
 - i. God said that many times to His leaders and the result was always the same
 - ii. When they obeyed they prospered, when they did not they had great struggles
 - b. If you obey God's Word, the result is that you will be prosperous and successful
 - i. But not always in the way you think
 - c. How would we define those two words today?
 - i. Likely having to do with wealth and the absence of any conflict, pain, or struggle
 - ii. But God does not promise us that will be the case
 - iii. As a matter of fact, it is just the opposite
 - 1. Both Matthew and Mark record Jesus's words of...
 - 2. *When trouble or persecution come...*(Matt 13:21, Mark 4:17)

- iv. That is why there is great danger in filling your heart and mind with the teaching of the gospel of prosperity
 - 1. The greatest prosperity we can ever have is the assurance of His presence in the midst of the storm
 - 2. Knowing the peace and joy that affords in spite of the circumstances we are dealing with
- v. Walking with God in the center of His will not always be easy but He will always be with you

4. Finally, God tells Joshua not to be afraid or discouraged (v 9)

- a. Why?
 - b. Because God will be with him wherever he goes
 - c. Fear and discouragement are two tools of satan that have grounded more Christians and caused more to leave their posts than any other
 - i. Remember there is the fear that God uses to protect us and to worship Him
 - ii. But there is also the spirit of fear
 - 1. That is not of God
 - 2. How many times in the Bible do you read the words, “Do not be afraid”
 - 3. Said to Mary when Gabriel came to her

- Do you want to have a strong year in 2024?
- Then follow the path that God laid out for Joshua
- This does not mean that you will never face difficulties, pain, or even setbacks but...
 - Know that God will always be with you
 - Be strong and courageous
 - Obey His Word
 - Do not be afraid or discouraged
- Why can we go through life unafraid?
 - Because He will always be with us
 - Will you allow that single promise to stand firm as the anchor in your heart and in your mind?
- Whatever assignment God has for you in 2024..., *do not leave your post; calmness can lay great offenses to rest.*