

Commissioned
December 11, 2016
Allen Power

Joshua 1:1-9

Have you ever had a season in life was so stressful and hard that you looked in the mirror and said, *"I'm not grown up enough to deal with this!"*

What are some examples of times in life when we might say that? In your own experience, how did you get through those kinds of times?

This morning we look at the first nine verses of Joshua. Nine verses packed with promises, instructions, and truth! These nine verses will give us some proven principles to have courage and strength for the battles of life. If you never need courage and strength you can just tune out.

Big idea: God has a job for every follower of Christ. He promises to help us, guide us, and never leave us. Our part is to trust and obey.

- The book of Joshua is a military masterpiece recounting the Israelites' battles to claim the Promised Land of Canaan. If you are a fan of war movies, you'll like the book of Joshua.
- The central player, Joshua, was a great general who would succeed Moses as the leader of Israel. Talk about big shoes to fill!
- In these verses God speaks to Joshua to instruct and encourage him.
- God bluntly states (V2), *"Moses is dead."* Translation: *"You're up to bat!"*
- God said, *"Arise, go, and take the people with you."*
- Then in verses three and four he defines the mission geographically and practically. *"Here's a map of the land I promised my people. Within these borders I'll give you every place you step on."*
- We can imagine what was going through Joshua's mind. Even though he was already a battle-hardened general, this was an intimidating task.

- So God gives Joshua both PROMISES and INSTRUCTIONS.
- Verse five contains three promises:

Joshua 1:5–9 (NLT)

⁵No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

- That first promise was specific to Joshua the general. You'll have to fight for this land but you will ultimately WIN. **How could you and I apply that promise to our lives today?**
- Also in verse five, God says, *"I will be with you as I was with Moses."* **Why do you think God said that instead of just saying, "I'll be with you?" How does that verse speak to YOU as a promise to claim?**
- Finally, in verse five God promises, *"I will never fail or abandon you."*
- In summary, God's promises for Joshua AND US:
 - o I will empower you to fulfill the job I've given you
 - o I will give you the same help I gave Moses (and all the rest)
 - o I'll never leave you nor abandon you
- In verses six through eight the Lord gives instructions to Joshua:

⁶"Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. ⁷Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. ⁸Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

- A truth: God doesn't promise success without struggle.
- God promised the Israelites the land of Canaan, but they had to fight to claim it.
- For us, salvation is a free gift we cannot earn, but living out that salvation and being who God has called us to be takes effort and action.

- First, God says, “Be strong and courageous.” This is so important he repeats it two more times in verses seven and nine.
- Joshua had heard this before in Moses’ last instructions before he died.

Deuteronomy 31:7–8 (NLT)

⁷ Then Moses called for Joshua, and as all Israel watched, he said to him, “Be strong and courageous! For you will lead these people into the land that the Lord swore to their ancestors he would give them.

You are the one who will divide it among them as their grants of land.

⁸ Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.”

- “Be strong and courageous.” Isn’t that easier said than done? The word “be” would indicate that this is possible for us to accomplish.
- In Deut. 31:8 (above) Moses said, “Don’t be afraid or discouraged.”
- **What would have allowed Joshua to “be strong and courageous” and “not be afraid or discouraged?” How can you and I do the same?**
- Back to Joshua 1:7, God said, “...be careful to obey the instructions Moses gave. Moses had written down God’s commandments and instructions. Joshua had heard them in person and had access to them.
- Verse eight says study God’s word continually and obey ALL of it.
- Truth: Partial obedience is not obedience at all!
- Verse eight goes further, don’t just read this book of the law once in a while, meditate on it. Your translation may say, “... *never let it depart from your lips.*” **What do you think that means?**
- I see two meanings. One is obvious, the other is my speculation.
- Back to Deuteronomy 31

⁹ So Moses wrote this entire body of instruction in a book and gave it to the priests, who carried the Ark of the Lord’s Covenant, and to the elders of Israel. ¹⁰ Then Moses gave them this command: “At the end

of every seventh year, the Year of Release, during the Festival of Shelters, ¹¹ you must read this Book of Instruction to all the people of Israel when they assemble before the Lord your God at the place he chooses. ¹² Call them all together—men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns—so they may hear this Book of Instruction and learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully obey all the terms of these instructions. ¹³ Do this so that your children who have not known these instructions will hear them and will learn to fear the Lord your God. Do this as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.”¹

- Moses instructed: Don't just study scripture for you; share it with others, especially the next generation!
- I think “*don't let it depart from your mouth*” also connects with “meditate.”
- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said: “*Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?*” Then he pointed to Psalm 42:11 where the psalmist is talking to himself: *11 Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again— my Savior and my God!*
- Lloyd-Jones is says we need to “preach” the truths of scripture to OURSELVES. Verse eight: “...only then will you succeed and prosper.”
- The words “succeed” and “prosper” are not your ticket to fame and riches.
- Those words mean God will enable to succeed the role He has given you.

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Let's make this personal. You might think these verses are just for generals and presidents who lead armies and countries.
- It's not only generals who need strength and courage.
- Let me tell you about a little lady named Vesta. (Personal story)
- My point is this, No matter what your line of work or role in life is, God has called you into battle to claim what he's promised for you.

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Dt 31:9–13). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

- To succeed in that you'll need to daily follow His instructions:
 - o Study His word
 - o Share it with others and preach it to yourself
 - o Look back at how faithful He has been in the past
 - o And at the point of your greatest doubts and fears, CLING TO Joshua 1:9:

⁹ This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”