

3-2-25 Courage Over Fear

Week 1

Text: Joshua 1:1–9

Topic(s): Transition, Change, Obedience, Leadership

Big Idea of the Message: Transition and change aren't always easy, but God is trying to prepare you and call you to fulfill a specific task.

Application Point: While God desires to do great work in our lives, we must be in the habit of obedience so we will be ready to answer God's call.

How many like change?

How many don't care about change?

Some people have a worldview that says, "Change is good, even if (or especially if) it means leaving our comfort zone." In fact, the current research shows that 38% of people like to leave their comfort zone.

By contrast, there's the other 62% of people who either don't like to leave their comfort zone or do so only occasionally. These folks are more likely to have histories and personalities that skew their interpretation of the change more negatively. Forbes (August 2016)

This series we are starting covers several chapters in the book of Joshua and examines a time of transition within the nation of Israel. It depicts our seasons of uncertainty, obedience, and victory, as well as the freedom we have in Christ. This series will instruct believers in how to react to life transitions and encourage us to have courage and not fear.

At the beginning of this book, the nation's beloved leader, Moses, has just passed on to eternal life (**Joshua 1:1**). What does God do? He appoints Joshua (hence, the name of the book) as their new leader. Joshua wasn't given this position because God ran out of choices. God deliberately chose Joshua for this task. This was a huge responsibility. God gets right to the point and moves on with the nation's new leader, giving him immediate instruction and encouragement (**Joshua 1:2–6**). The nation was expected to follow their new man. Can you imagine being Joshua? I would feel incredibly insecure; especially following a man like Moses.

A fascinating aspect of Joshua's newfound leadership is that it wasn't newly found. It appears as if he comes out of nowhere. We want to ask, "Where did God find this guy?" or "How did he get picked?" (**Numbers 27**)

But Joshua started his leadership training early on in his life. Joshua was born during Israel's Egyptian bondage (**Joshua 24:29**). It was during this time that he undoubtedly learned some very valuable lessons under the harsh taskmasters of Egypt. He probably learned submission, obedience, and hard work.

We're told in **Exodus 24:13** and **32:17** that Joshua was right by Moses's side as his minister, serving in the shadows but fulfilling his life's calling at that stage in his life. Joshua was always undergoing training, because God knew he would need Joshua for this moment in time.

The important lesson here is that Joshua did not become a great leader overnight. It took years of serving, obeying, honoring, and laboring in the tasks that were before him at those moments. It wasn't always glamorous, but it was his calling.

Before any of us can be a leader, **we must learn to be a follower**. We're not the only one with great ideas. We need to learn to work with others, obey, serve, and honor those who we are under. If we feel like we're always right and never wrong, we're not ready for leadership.

Read Joshua 1:1-6.

Side note: from the very first verse we see a title that God gives to Moses that is repeated often, **"Moses the servant of the Lord."** That is a title that all of us followers of God should seek out. It is a title that God encourages us to hold and live up to. I highlighted every time that title was repeated.

- When life's changes/transitions come along we must stay focused on our purpose and calling. We must be known as **"servants of the Lord."**
- Spoiler alert: **Joshua 24:29, "Now it came to pass that after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred and ten years old."**

Also notice that God is ministering and encouraging Joshua, God knows that Joshua is scared, concerned, and overwhelmed. How do we know this? God repeats **"Be strong and of good courage"** three times and in **verse 9** God says, **"do not be afraid nor be dismayed."**

God repeatedly says, **"I". "I am about to give you every place you set foot; I promised Moses; I was with Moses; I will be with you; I will never leave you."**

It's all about God, what He has promised and planned to do. God made no reference to the difficult task ahead, nothing about the strong enemies, or the huge cities. Obstacles are not problems to God. He can part the Red Sea, feed millions in the desert, get a nation across Jordan River, and bring down walls of Jericho.

Joshua's confidence must be anchored in God alone, not in anything else.

1. Our courage/confidence is found in God alone.

- God tells Joshua to be strong and courageous, to lead the people where they must go in order to inherit the land. **(v.6)**
- Leadership takes strength and courage. Leading isn't telling people what to do; it is walking before, alongside them and setting an example.
- The greatest form of leadership ever was in Christ going to Calvary. He did not tell us to take up our cross and do something that He didn't do. Rather, He charges us to take up our cross and follow Him **(Matthew 16:24)**.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. Matthew 16:24"

- Christ has gone before us as our example of a leader. Because of His sacrifice, God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **(Ephesians 1:3)**.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, Ephesians 1:3

- Courage is not the absence of fear but the absence of self. Fear is natural. It is a feeling that comes when you are facing a danger, a threat, and a difficult task. We cannot eradicate fear; we can only OVERCOME fear.
- You cannot pretend that it is not there. You just need to believe that SOMEONE greater is present.
- Courage is not the absence of fear but the absence of self. When self is not in the way. When we are not looking at our limitations and weaknesses.
- If it is the absence of self, then what is there? God. We have courage because God is present.
- This is what made David run into the battlefield against a 9-foot giant, with a sling and stones, while his older brothers, the king and his soldiers all hid in the camp.
- One conquers fear by faith, the others let fear overruns them. You cannot eradicate fear; you can only overcome it by faith in God.
- What scares you?
- The only thing we are in control of is how we respond to things, that is it. I tell myself all the time, Cecil, you are not in control, and have no control over these things, but you do know the ONE who is in control. Let God cook!
- God was with Israel every step of the way in their conquest of Canaan.
- Every step that Joshua took, every piece of land that he claimed, every battle that he won, was the direct result of God working FOR him, and AHEAD of him.
- God was fully involved, at every step, every move and every battle.
- God is involved in our lives the same way! Be strong and courageous. God will never leave you nor forsake you.
- You cannot take away the FEELING of fear and anxiety, when you are facing some difficulties. But you can ACT with confidence.
- You can CHOOSE to trust God. He is present and in control. It is an ACT of faith. It is a CHOICE we make. It is a DECISION we take.

2. For us to win, we must be rooted (established) in the Word of God.

- **Read Joshua 1:7-9.**
- The 2nd thing that is CERTAIN is God's Word, what He has said. We see the emphasis here.
- God says, **"be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the Law which Moses My servant commanded you;" "...shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall mediate in it day and night..."**
- God's Word gives us confidence, feeds our soul, quench out thirst, soothes our wounds, comforts our hearts, and inspires hope in hopeless situations.
- Joshua is told to not let the Word of God depart from his mouth, meditate on it all the time and observe, do it. Obey what it says to do.
- Meditating means thinking through, pondering it. The Lord says it is the key to being **"prosperous and good success"**
- The more we meditate and ponder on God's Word the better off we will be.

- We will be strong because we have the Word of God in us, when we appropriate the truths of God's Word.
- We cannot just know God's Word, having knowledge without application does not change us.
- The devil knows God too. He knows it enough to quote it when he was tempting Jesus in the wilderness. But that knowledge did not change the devil.
- It is our willingness to appropriate the Word in our lives that transforms us. When we believe it and trust it enough to do what it says, God changes us.
- Someone said it well. It is not about WE HAVE THE WORD but that the WORD HAVE US that matters. That is, we are being INFLUENCED by the Word.
- It is not that I HAVE CHRIST, but that CHRIST HAVE US. It's no longer that I live but He that lives in us. He reigns. We are surrendered to Him.
- But for the Word of God to take ROOT in us, we need to MEDITATE on it.
- Try this, pick up some good passages or verses, and think about it for a few days. Meditate on it for a week.
- Our victory in life is grounded on God's Word.
- In one of his farewell addresses to the nation just before he died, he urged the people to live in submission to the Scriptures (**Josh. 23:6**)

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,

Conclusion

I cannot promise you everything will be fine this year.

I can only promise you what is CERTAIN – God is with you, wherever you are; and His Word is our sure comfort and strength.

Jesus is with you, that's certain. His promise to you is true, that's certain.

It will be a blessed 2025.

The book of Joshua gives us four areas of life to be strong and courageous,

- to lead in the areas that God has called us to lead in.
- to learn to live out the word of God in the world around us.
- being doers and not just hearers.
- to persevere amid fear and dismay, allowing His presence to be our assurance of walking according to His plan.

Put your trust in Jesus Christ today, if you have not done so. He is our only Savior, the One who can forgive our sin, reconcile us with God and bring us home to heaven. Surrender your life to Jesus today.