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Joshua 1:5-9

Title: Strength, Courage, and Prosperity

Discussion questions:

1. Who or what do you think of when you think of strength? Who or what do you think of when you think of being courageous?

2. Why do people that do read God's word or not remember or focus on obeying God's word?

3. What do most people think when they hear about prosperity? How is what God says to Joshua different? Is it applicable to us?

4. How do you think Joshua felt hearing these verses from God? How would you?

5. What did you learn or were reminded of about God? What do you need to start doing or keep doing?

Enter: go deeper w/God-**Engage** participate w/God

Enjoy: receive the results of a richer life w/and for God.

The second part of Joshua's commissioning involves...

...one admonition and some directions.

Moses gave this admonition to Joshua before he died...

...God says it here three times in just a few verses.

"That which is often repeated is often important."

God's admonition is to **"be strong and courageous"**.

So...why such a focus on strength and courage?

- Strength is the power to prevail, accomplish, or get things done.
- Courage is the mindset to do it despite fear or anxiety.

**But God doesn't just say to HAVE strength and courage...
...He says to BE strong and courageous.**

These two things were in short supply the first time around...
...Their actual strength, power, and ability to enter the Promised Land and conquer the giants came from the Lord.

**They were strong, because the Lord was their strength...
...but without courage their fears overpowered their strength.**

**The strength Joshua needs is an identity not just an ability.
And being courageous is a mindset to protect that identity.**

Sports psychologists and coaches know...
Your identity and your mindset impacts your performance.

You can push your body farther than you think you can go...
...if your mind is strong enough.

Or you can limit your performance to far lower...
...if your mind is not strong enough.

*Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you are right.
Henry Ford*

Identity often comes from focus.

Last time, they looked at the giants and themselves...
...and they let their fear direct them.

They were called, they were trained, the Lord was with them...
...they had everything they needed to prosper.

But they did not **prosper** because they were not...
...strong or courageous **enough to follow and obey God.**

Title of the message: Strength, courage and prosperity.

Following and obeying God didn't mean there were no giants...
...Following and obeying God means those giants don't matter.

Courage sees the giants but focuses on the Lord.

Someone being strong and courageous in the Lord says...
... "I will" even though they are scared they can't...
...because of the Lord.

The victorious Christian life is not living on easy street.
It is not about things that miraculously appear or disappear.
The manna is gone, the fire at night and cloud in the day are gone

The victorious Christian life is a spiritual battlefield.
For Joshua, we are talking about blood, sweat, and tears.

Following God and stepping out in faith can be scary.
...If you are doing something that you know is not possible...
...unless God shows up, in the back of your mind you wonder...
...well, what if He doesn't show up?!?

1.We need to be strong and courageous.

We are not talking about yelling, jumping and getting hyped up.
This is about believing God and what He says about us.

That is why verse 5 comes before 6.

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.

Then God says...

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.

If God is saying, “Go, I have your back”, we move forward!

God is faithful, God can be trusted, God is able, God is with us!

Joshua needs strength and courage because God said go!

God has a purpose for Joshua, people are looking to him...

...and God is going to use him to fulfill His promises.

2. We need to be strong and courageous to fulfill our purpose.

It reminds me of becoming a parent...

It is scary, but you know you can't just leave or quit or walk away.

...That little life is depending on you.

Raising a child can be hard and scary and confusing...

...but that is God's purpose for parents.

But it is the same thing in ministry or relationships or work...

...Or anywhere God has a purpose for your life.

We need to be strong and courageous...

...no matter how tired or nervous or scared or frustrated we are.

God has a purpose, people need you, and His promises will be fulfilled through you!

- Lost people need to be found.
- Hurting people need to be helped.
- New Christians need to be disciplined.
- Older Christians need to be involved.
- Confused people need to be enlightened.
- Divided people need to be united.
- Guilty people need forgiveness.
- Bound people need to be set free.

And the work of God is done through us, His church.

Remember the early church? Jesus said, go!

There was a whole world to save, a global church to begin...

...but Jesus's first direction was to wait for power and...

... they didn't just rush off, they waited.

Jesus had promised He was with them...

...but they waited on His power and His guidance...

...because their strength and their courage was in Him.

...and that is the same for us as well!

So what does God tell Joshua is important in this conquest?

What is the next thing that will take strength and courage?

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.

3. We need to be strong and courageous to observe and obey.

The first practical step for this conquest was to observe and do.

The key part of knowing God's word is doing it....

...Observe, interpret, and apply.

The main reason we read the Bible isn't for...

...curiosity or pleasure; it is to know God and follow Him.

We can become immersed in Christian culture to a point that we think of the Bible as something I read to enjoy...

- I study Revelation because it is cool and exciting.
- I read the psalms because they are beautiful.
- I study end times because it is mysterious and sensational.
- I like bible facts and Bible jokes because they are so fun.

That is fine, but don't forget...

We read & observe God's word to know God and follow Him

...Without turning from the right or the left...no compromise.

God says go this way, we don't stop or alter the course.

And because obedience is so important...we meditate on it.

Don't let His Word depart from your mouth....Day and night.

Like we said before, living out our identity comes from focus.

When we focus on who God says He is and who God says we are

...We are strong in our identity and courageous in His presence.

Meditation means to chew on and keep chewing on.

Think about it. Ponder it. Don't forget it...and do it!

He says do not go to the right or to the left.

It is easy to take something God says and add a little turn.

Some people start making up their own truth...
...based on feelings or personal interpretations or culture.

Or they may add their own logical thoughts...

God says one thing, but we take a few logical steps further.

- If the Scripture doesn't say it, we shouldn't either.
- Don't try to use human logic to understand the divine mind.
- If God doesn't say it, we shouldn't assume it.

God's word doesn't change because of culture or...
...shift because of the times.

But it was written within a culture and a time period.

So we need to be aware of how we interpret and understand it.

During this culture and time period...

...family was huge and violence was common.

American culture is more about personal independence.
But this middle eastern culture was very dependent on family.

In modern times, battles and conquest is looked down on.
Whereas, in ancient times, battles were the way to solve things.

Now notice...

...twice in these 2 verses, God speaks of prosperity.

What kind of prosperity?

"If you obey God, you will be healthy, wealthy, and #blessed"? No.

The path of obedience is the path to prosperity...

But biblical prosperity is the fulfillment of God's purpose not ours.

If you want to see success in God's purpose, obey God.

Ya, but...it is scary, it is hard, it is tiring, yep...

...That's why He says, be strong and courageous.

4. We need to be strong and courageous to prosper in His purpose.

God's purpose is to enter the land...

...If you want to fulfill or succeed in that, obey Him.

What is His purpose for you?

Leading your family? Serving your business? Loving your spouse?

Being a faithful friend? Finishing college? Raising a child?

Obedience brings prosperity in God's purposes.

BUT...

You want to prosper in a business that is not from the Lord?

You want to prosper in a relationship that is not from God?

You want to prosper in a situation that is not His will?

You may ask, why isn't God blessing this, why isn't it prospering?

...Maybe it is not God's purpose...

Maybe increasing revenue is not His purpose...

...Maybe keeping you humble is?

Maybe having a bigger influence isn't His purpose...

...Maybe staying at home is?

Then God assures Joshua again...

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."

This is quite a battle plan...

- Know my word and obey it.
- Don't let fear or dismay or worry stop you.
- I am with you, I have your back and I go before you.
- So be strong and courageous.

Joshua has been told...you can't fail, if you stay with Me.

...And in a sense, that is what we have been told as well.

You can't fail in God's purpose, if you walk in God's will.

His purpose will be fulfilled...

...but His plan is not all pleasure, there will be pain.

- You may need to lose a battle to win the war.
- You may need to be wounded to learn to walk uprightly.
- You may need to struggle often to build real strength.
- You may need to be betrayed to understand true love.
- You may need to suffer a little more to fight a lot better.

We have to be strong and courageous to prosper

Life is a battlefield, there are challenges and enemies.

...But without stepping into the fight...

...we will never advance His kingdom or fulfill His purpose.

Many people are afraid to cross over...

They are afraid of failure, they are afraid of what people think...

...But we who will be strong and courageous will see...

...what the Lord will do.

5 Steps to Stay Strong and Courageous

1. Read the Bible regularly
2. Meditate on Scripture consistently
3. Gather to worship frequently
4. Pray together unceasingly
5. Turn from sin and obey the Lord normally