

## The Fear of Joshua

Welcome to **Week 2** of a “**Time for Action**”. Last week we introduced you to the Greek word **Kairos** which means, “*a time when conditions are right for the accomplishment of a crucial action: the opportune and decisive moment. A moment of indeterminate time in which events happen.*”

Our theme passage for this series is

**Luke 12:54-56 (NIV)** <sup>54</sup> He said to the crowd: “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘It’s going to rain,’ and it does. <sup>55</sup> And when the south wind blows, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is. <sup>56</sup> Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time?”

Here Jesus tells the people in his audience that they can read the time of day, or even the weather from looking at the sky...but they cannot interpret what God is doing and who Jesus is. They can read the “chronos” (hours and seconds of the day), but miss the “kairos” moment before them in the person of Jesus!

For the sake of this series we could say that the “**chronos**” is “**our time**” and that the “**kairos**” is “**God’s time.**” In fact, here are two important truths we need to remember as it relates to the “kairos” moments in our lives.

**#1 - Kairos moments are always initiated by God.**

**#2 - Kairos moments always challenge us to think more highly of God, and less highly of ourselves.**

**Are we wise enough, and careful enough to recognize the God given opportunities in our lives? Are we sensitive to God’s will and what He wants to accomplish?**

Over this series we are looking at several key characters in the Bible and their response to their kairos moments. What separates these heroes of the faith from the average person is their ability to recognize “**God’s time**” and then act accordingly. Each of them is presented with a call that challenges what they think of God, and of themselves. They must combat these lies with God’s eternal truth so that they can follow God wholeheartedly. In each case they were all willing to surrender their own plans, and because they responded when God spoke, they were able to be effective for God. Each of them display defining characteristics which help them hear, respond, and obey God.

***Our goal for this series is to help you recognize when God is speaking, and to act in faith so that you can be effective for God as well.***

There are times in all of our lives that require us to adjust our normal routine and pay special attention to what God is doing.

Be careful. Be wise. Pay attention. Recognize and respond to “kairos” moments and seasons in your life because the pace, pressure, and demands of the “chronos” can cause you to miss the “kairos”. Don't get so caught up in the mundane minutes of life that you miss the moments that have eternal implications. The Lord is calling, are we paying attention?

Today we are going to look at Joshua and his “kairos” moment that impacted the future of the nation of Israel. First, let's begin with what happens when we don't recognize the kairos moment.

To see this we need to start our story of Joshua with **Numbers 14**. In order to set the context for us [God has just brought Israel out of Egypt after 400 years of being enslaved to the Egyptians and He has faithfully brought them through the wilderness to the doorstep of the Promised Land.](#)

[Prior to entering, the Lord instructs Moses to send 12 men from each of the tribes to scope out the land to have an idea of what they are up against. The 12 return and 10 out of the 12 report that while the land is flowing with milk and honey, there are many inhabitants in the land and they appear to be strong and well fortified thus causing them to recommend that they should not proceed forward. As a result, a bad report begins to circulate throughout the people and they begin to become overwhelmed with despair plotting a return back to Egypt. But there are two men from among the 12 who believe that while the land is well fortified God is able to overcome these inhabitants and give them the land as He promised. Let's Pick up in \*\*Numbers 14:6\*\*](#)

**Numbers 14:6-11 (NIV) 6** Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes **7** and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. **8** If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. **9** Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.” **10** But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites.

This was clearly a kairos moment! God had given this promise to Abraham hundreds of years earlier and now was the moment for them to enter into the Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb were ready to act but the rest of the people were not because they allowed fear to paralyze them. Even to the point where they were actually considering appointing a leader to lead them back to Egypt. Despite God showing them on several occasions His mighty strength and provision while leading them out of Egypt, the people doubted whether or not God could bring them into the Promised Land safely. As a result, Israel would spend the next 40 years wandering in the desert until that generation who failed to act died off. I want you to notice that even though we find ourselves wandering in the wilderness from time to time God still provides for us. Even Israel's disobedience and doubt did not thwart God's faithfulness to His people.

**What is keeping you from acting on the kairos moments in your life?** We need to recognize that one of the ways Satan lives rent free in most of our lives is through FEAR. You see, Satan is not omnipresent like God. In other words, he can't be in all places all the time. But if he can get us to fear, he doesn't have to be because fear accomplishes for him what he desires and that is to keep us from following God in faith. **We need to understand that a failure to trust God in these moments will come with a great consequence.** For Israel (at least that generation that could have been the first to live in the Promised Land) would never get the chance to because they let fear erode their faith and instead would spend the next 40 years wandering in the desert. In fact, this same group is considering a return back to Egypt. To the very place God had delivered them from and where they were in bondage. **Will the way you respond to God bring greater bondage for your family? Or will it bring greater freedom?**

As time passes and the sun sets on Moses' leadership it is now time for the leadership torch to be passed to Joshua for another kairos moment.

**Deuteronomy 31:1-8 (NIV)** **1** Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: **2** "I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.' **3** The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the LORD said. **4** And the LORD will do to them what he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed along with their land. **5** The LORD will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you. **6 Be strong and courageous.** Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

**7** Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "**Be strong and courageous**, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. **8** The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Fast forward a little bit and now Moses has died as well as all who were part of the original decision not to enter the Promised Land the first time.

**Joshua 1:1-18 (NIV)** **1** After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: **2** "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. **3** I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. **4** Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. **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. **6 Be strong and courageous**, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

**7 “Be strong and very courageous.** Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. **8** Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. **9** Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged,** for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Some of us fail to respond in our kairos moment because we are looking for God to lay out all the details for us. We say to ourselves “**we have too much confusion to follow**”. God never gives us all the answers or details we are looking for. Look at what Joshua is given. God just assures him that He will be with Him and that by walking with God he will be successful. But at no point does he give him details. God did not tell him the towns they would conquer, the order in which they would be conquered or any detail of what was before them. He was just told to follow God's voice. Sometimes we depend too much on clarity and answers before we follow. Joshua did not get that. He just listened to God and did what He said. Be careful of trying to hide behind the excuse of, “I just need more clarity.”

**10** So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: **11** “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.’” After 40 years in the wilderness, this generation would not make the same mistake their parents did. **How long will you stay in the same bondage before you decide to trust God and walk out? Make no mistake,** it will require great strength and courage in order to step out from what we have grown used to in order to follow God and find the freedom He has for us.

Notice how many times we encounter the phrase “**be strong and courageous**”! If we count all of **Deuteronomy 31** along with all of **Joshua 1** we encounter the phrase “**be strong and courageous**” 7 times. This is obviously crucial to their ability to act in this kairos moment.

Here is an important point I want to stress regarding FEAR! Notice that FEAR never overtook Joshua but it was always on the precipice. That is why God says over and over again to be strong and of good courage. **You don't fight fear once it fully has you. You fight fear before it takes hold of you.** That is why we find Moses and God reminding Joshua over and over again to be strong and courageous!

The Hebrew word being used here is the word “**amets**” (pronounced “Aw-mats”) which means to be strong, bold, and alert.

The idea being we need to **pay attention** to what God is doing, be **strong in our faith** without wavering and have the **courage to place our confidence in HIM** no matter what. If we don't, we will waver when circumstances dictate otherwise. Which is exactly what happened with Israel when they first approached the Promised Land.

As we look at Joshua and his leadership this morning I want us to see THREE lies that will erode our COURAGE to act in our kairos moment and the THREE truths God has given us to counteract them.

**Lie #1: Since some have failed to deliver on their promises, then God will probably fail too.**

So many times we project onto God what we have experienced from others in our lives. One of the reasons we have such a hard time trusting God's promises is because we have experienced so many broken promises in our lifetime. Whether it was a trusted friend, a mentor, a pastor or a parent. One thing we know from life on earth is that no one can deliver on all their promises. By default we have a built in sense of skepticism when it comes to promises in general. Why would Israel not act in faith and enter the Promised Land the first time. Especially after God had been so faithful to them up to that point. The bottom line was, they doubted God would follow through on ALL that He promised. That's why when we come Israel's second opportunity to go into the Promised Land notice what God reiterates to Joshua prior to informing the people it is time for action once again.

**Joshua 1:3** I will give you EVERY place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. And this brings us the **Truth #1**.

**Truth #1: God will ALWAYS deliver on what He promises even though circumstances may tell us otherwise.**

**Hebrews 3:4-6 (NIV)** 4 For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. 5 "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. 6 But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

(Context for the above passage) **7** So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, **8** do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, **9** where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did. **10** That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' **11** So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' " **12** See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. **13** But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. **14** We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.

There will be moments that will test our faith. This you can be sure of. There will be situations in life that will challenge the promises God has made to us. The question is, "Will you believe the lie or will you believe the truth?" And the truth is that **God is faithful to do all He has promised us and He will always be.** Here is how we can know this for sure:

**2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV)** For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. You see, Jesus is the fulfillment of all God promises us! He was the fulfillment of all that God had promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua along with you and me! God will never fail on His promises and because of what Christ has already accomplished on the cross and through the resurrection we can know this for sure!!

**Lie #2: This situation is just too impossible to overcome, just look around you at what's going on.**

Another issue we struggle with is thinking about God in human terms. We see a problem and how overwhelming it is and we throw our hands up and go, “**This is impossible.**” We look around us and it seems like evil is winning. We feel defeated and weak. We think to ourselves, “**All is lost, what else can I do?**” Whether it be health related. Financially related. Injustice we see in the world. Or just the wickedness that seems to be winning over all that is good. We assume God is limited in His power just as we are. We forget that He sits outside of time and that He controls all the laws that govern the universe. Israel was the same way. They heard of the number of the people inhabiting the land and that they were well fortified and they saw the situation as impossible from their perspective. They forgot that their viewpoint was not the same as God's. In fact, here is what the people were saying.

**Numbers 14:1-4 (NIV)** That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. **2** All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! **3** Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” **4** And they said to each other, “We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

God isn't limited as we are. His power was not all used up and cashed in only to provide deliverance from Egypt or to only make provision and protect them while they were in the wilderness! He still has power to protect and He still has power to deliver on His original promises and it is never exhausted. So notice what God reminds Joshua of in the first part of Joshua 1:5.

**Joshua 1:5** NO ONE will be able to stand against you all the days of your life.... Why? Because God will fight for them and defend them against ALL adversaries and He is the all time undefeated champion whose strength and power is never exhausted!! After all, if God is for us who can be against us!!

**Truth #2: Our adversaries CANNOT DEFEAT US no matter how powerful they may appear because our God is greater.**

**1 John 5:1-5 (NIV)** **1** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. **2** This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. **3** In fact, this is love for God: to

keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Jesus gives us the ability to overcome anything that exalts itself against God. This goes for anything that exalts itself against God's will or His word. In Christ we are more than conquerors!!

**1 Corinthians 15:54-58 (NIV)** **54** When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."**55** "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **58** Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

You are not wasting your time or your life when you walk in His victory and act when He says act. He goes before you and He will protect and defend what is His when we choose to walk with Him.

### **Lie #3: If God is for us, where is He then?**

This is where faith comes in! For faith, as **Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)** tells us, is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Just because we cannot see God does not mean He is not there. Just because we don't understand all that He is doing or why He chooses to do it the way he does, does not mean he has abandoned us. We have to have confidence in God to follow through with what He promises and to be assured that His eyes are always on His children. Just because Israel didn't see God's physical presence doesn't mean He had left them. Just because His presence now dwelt in the tabernacle that they had just built didn't mean He wasn't going with them and before them into the Promised Land. And just because God had to discipline those who refused to go into the Promised land the first time doesn't mean that God was done with Israel. Notice the 2nd part of Joshua 1:5.

**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.

### **Truth #3: God will never abandon us no matter what our feelings of fear may be shouting at us.**

**Hebrews 13:5-6 (NIV)** **5** Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."**6** So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"

When we know that God is with us and that He will never leave us or abandon us, we are in position to follow through with action in our kairos moment. We just need to be strong and courageous in faith! Notice we are not to be strong and courageous in our abilities, but in God's ability to do what He has promised to do on our behalf. Notice how Joshua leads the people.

**Joshua 3:1-4 (NIV)** **1** Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. **2** After three days the officers went throughout the camp, **3** giving orders to the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. **4** Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits between you and the ark; do not go near it.”

The Ark represented the very presence of God with His people. **Are you fixing your eyes on the presence of the Lord and are you ready to follow Him?** Part of us being ready for our kairos moment is we need to practice being in the presence of the Lord. **Are you in His word? Are you seeking His face through prayer? Are you listening to His Spirit?** Notice what God instructed Joshua He must do to practice being in the presence of a holy God

**Joshua 1:7-9 (NIV)** **“Be strong and very courageous.** Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. **8** Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. **9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

We need God to go with us! We need God to live in us! We need the presence of God, therefore we must set ourselves apart to Him. **“Be holy for I am holy,”** says the Lord! Notice what Joshua instructs the people to do.

**Joshua 3:5 (NIV)** **5** Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.”

Just as Joshua called Israel to do, we must do. We must set ourselves apart and be expecting God to move and be ready without distraction or hesitation to move when He does.

**Joshua 3:6-17 (NIV)** **6** Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So they took it up and went ahead of them. **7** And the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. **8** Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’” **9** Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. **10** This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. **11** See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. **12** Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. **13** And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.”



**14** So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. **15** Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, **16** the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. **17** The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

**Do we want our kids to learn from our mistakes or from our victory?** The children of the earlier generation learned from their parents mistakes and they were not going to repeat them. The children of this generation would learn from their parent's victory and as a result experience living in the Promised Land.

#### **Invitation:**

As we walk in faith we need to continue to remember. Remember God's faithfulness! Remember His promises! Remember to walk with Him!

What are we missing out on because we are giving into our fear? Will you begin walking in FAITH? (Trust Jesus for salvation or trust Him for your next step)

What Lie do you have a tendency to believe? Will you combat it with the truth?

**Lie #1: No one has ever delivered on all their promises.**

**Truth #1: God will always deliver on what He promises even though circumstances may tell us otherwise.**

**Lie #2: This situation is just too impossible to overcome, just look around you at what's going on.**

**Truth #2: Our adversaries cannot defeat us no matter how powerful they may appear.**

**Lie #3: If God is for us, where is He then?**

**Truth #3: God will never abandon us no matter what our feelings of fear may be shouting at us.**