

NEW YEAR'S DAY MESSAGE

Beginning Joshua 1:1-11

2017 is now HERE! Can you believe that? We are now at the very beginning of a new year that holds new possibilities and new challenges. In one sense, this is just another day in a very long series of days. But in another sense, it is a time of NEW BEGINNINGS. Some of you will begin a new job this year. Others may begin a new relationship or cultivate a new habit. Sadly, some will simply stay STUCK where they are and will have no HOPE for what lies ahead. There is a reason for this.

One of the best passages of Scripture that I know of that gives us insight into what is required of us to move into the future that God has for us is Joshua chapter 1. I want to read it, and then I want to give you the BACKGROUND of this passage that reveals a much bigger, more PERSONAL understanding of all that was about to occur.

Joshua 1:1-11 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." 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.'

Part of this passage is so EXCITING. It offers huge PROMISES about the presence of God and the certainty of SUCCESS! God is giving Joshua and the Israelites the opportunity to SEIZE their future by HIS power. What could be more exciting to a people that have been wandering around in the desert for 40 years! How would you like to go on a 40-year camping trip? But there is so much more to this story. Let me help you understand why God had to keep on telling Joshua to be strong and courageous!

New beginnings with God require LETTING GO of some things.

New beginnings ALWAYS require the ENDING of something else. We must all remember that beginnings are a point of SEPARATION. The beginning of anything new means the end of something that has already been. A baby gives up life in the womb to begin life out in the big, scary world. A child gives up kindergarten to attend elementary school and junior high and high school. A son or daughter gives up life at mom and dad's home when he or she chooses a mate and strikes out on their own new adventure (well, mostly!). This means that you have to learn to LET GO of some things if you want to move forward into the future. This is easier said than done! Here are some of the things that we must let go of in a healthy manner.

***Past FAILURES.**

- The LAST TIME you were here is NOT *THIS TIME!*
- The DEEP PAINS of the past do NOT have to RULE your future!
 - *The best way to let them go is to LEARN from them!

***The FAMILIARITY of the PAST.**

-Past ROLES:

- You were comfortable there.
- God knows how to jerk that rug from beneath your feet!

-Past PATTERNS: Wilderness wanderings

- The guarantee of MANNA
- The comfort of God's VISIBLE presence
- The absence of ENEMIES!

***People we have LOST:**

Unhealthy Associations.

- *God often will help us with this!
 - The DISOBEDIENT children of Israel [Hundreds of funerals each day!]

Great Friends: "Moses – MY servant – is DEAD."

- *Moses served at GOD'S will and pleasure; not Joshua's.
 - Joshua had to ACCEPT this fact!
 - *Why did God WAIT until Moses was gone? [Last minute=Year 40!!!]
 - *Joshua's relationship with Moses: Hero, Mentor, Friend
 - You do NOT have to lose the life lessons you learned from them! (Vs. 7)

What do YOU need to let go of in order to move forward with God this year?

New beginnings with God require HOLDING ON to some things. [Vs. 6-9]

*"Be STRONG" = To FASTEN upon, seize

*"Be COURAGEOUS" = To be ALERT, Steadfastly minded

***Hold on to his PROMISES! (Vs. 3, 5)**

-In the face of our enemies

*The alternative: (Vs. 9) Afraid and Dismayed! = To DREAD and BREAK DOWN!

- In the face of our own SELF-DOUBTS
- In the midst of our GRIEF

***Hold on to his WORD! [Bible Reading Plan]**

“Be CAREFUL to DO” = To guard, to hedge about, protect, attend to

- For encouragement
- For direction
- For correction
- For inspiration

“This word shall be in your MOUTH.”

- The Word should become your SPEECH! [Talk about it to yourself & others]
- Don't just READ IT!

“Meditate” = to murmur, ponder, imagine, study

What do YOU need to hold on to this year in order to move forward with God?

New beginnings with God require simple - but difficult - DECISIONS.

“Have I not COMMANDED you? Therefore, . . . “

***Get up! (Vs. 2) - “Get ready” = “Arise!”**

-At some point, you have to STAND UP and GET MOVING!

*Some of you have been THINKING about a change for some time. Get Up!

***Lead those that God has placed under you.**

“Now therefore, arise . . . you and ALL this people!” (Vs. 2)

-Life beyond loss is NEVER just about YOU!

*All of us have influence on others

*Part of the ability of others to experience God's best depends upon you following God through the losses of life to the victories on the other side!

*Recovery is not just a solo event!

-Leaders GO FIRST!

***Begin to PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN! (Vs. 3)**

-God promises to go WITH you in some things rather than BEFORE you!

*It is easier when he removes obstacles and clears the path before you, but . .

*He sometimes calls you to step out in faith trusting that he will be with you!

-You cannot OWN places where you do not GO!

-God wants you to personally experience real-time victory.

-God gave Joshua the BOUNDARIES of where he could go! (Vs. 4)

*Be CAREFUL where you STEP! Stay within the boundaries he sets.

*You will never want or achieve more than God wants FOR you!

What decisions do you need to make right now?

What are you HOLDING on to that you need to LET GO of?

What do you need to HOLD on to that God has given to you?

Let's Pray.