

Joshua: Walking by Faith, Growing in Grace

The Meeting

Joshua 1:10-18

June 15, 2025

HDBC

Meetings have a bad reputation. Most of us avoid meetings if we can. We are not quick to add additional meetings to our calendars.

Here are a couple of cynical observations about meetings:

A meeting is a gathering of important people who can singly do nothing, but together can decide that nothing can be done.

A meeting is a cul-de-sac into which ideas are lured and quietly strangled.

Wow, those are from some people who have had bad experiences with meetings. I'm sure we've all experienced some. I'm sure I've led some. But meetings are important. They are necessary. Some are large. **This past week over 10,000 messengers gathered in Dallas for the annual *meeting* of the SBC.** Last Monday nine of us gathered in the conference room for a staff meeting. **Some meetings are planned months in advance and some happen spontaneously.** We have a lot of meetings at church. Committees, teams, and groups. The second half of the first chapter of Joshua describes a meeting.

Remember that the book of Joshua is all about the crossing of the Jordan River and the conquest of the land. The land of Canaan in the New Testament represents the rest that we find in Christ. Some suggest that it is a picture of the believer who is yielded to Christ and is willing to conquer the sinful flesh. I can't argue against that.

Chapters 1-5 are preparatory chapters. These chapters reveal the kinds of things that were done in preparation for entering the Promised Land. Last week we noted the call of Joshua by God. There was a key phrase which was used multiple times. ***Be strong and courageous.***

Now, in the second half of chapter one we find the newly appointed leader, meeting with the leaders of the people and giving them clear instructions about the immediate future. Three things are revealed in this text.

1. The Purpose: possess the land (10-11)

Joshua begins by addressing the leaders of the people. These were not military leaders, but administrative leaders whom Moses had appointed before his death. Numbers 11:16-17 and Deuteronomy 1:15-16 both refer to leaders being appointed by Moses.

Notice that Joshua is not handing down a military strategy to the people. He makes no mention of warfare or of conflict. He simply instructs them to get ready to enter the land. It is as if the possession of the land is a sure thing. AND IT WAS! God would see to it! They were simply to get ready.

What were they to get ready to do? POSSESS the land. That is the key word in this section. It describes the purpose for entering the land. They were to enter the land not for a visit, but to take possession. *It is one thing to walk into a house; it is quite another to actually possess it.*

The word POSSESS occurs four times in our text. It is the Hebrew word **yarash** and is an important term in this book. It means ***to gain control over a certain area by conquering and expelling its inhabitants.***

This Old Testament phenomenon of **possessing the land** points to a deeper New Testament truth. In the Old Testament, the land of Canaan was an inheritance which God gave to Israel. *In the New Testament our inheritance is our relationship with Jesus and all that it brings to us.*

In the Old Testament, the people's REST was tied to their possessing the land. *In the New Testament our (spiritual) rest is in our relationship with Christ.*

In the Old Testament the road to rest was conflict. In the New Testament it is the same. **The NT references our spiritual warfare.**

So, what principle does this point us to? As the Israelites were to drive out the current inhabitants of the land in order to fully enjoy their rest, **we must drive some things out of our lives** if we are to enjoy the full rest which we have in Christ.

If I want to enjoy the full **love** of Christ in my life, I must not allow **anger** to stay. If I want to experience the wonderful joy of **generous giving**, I must not allow **greed** to continue to live in my heart.

Paul wrote of this in Col. 3:8-10. *But now you also, put them all aside; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.*

2. The Plan: work together (12-15)

Notice the second principle from these verses. It is the principle of **teamwork**. One of the first things Joshua did after receiving his commission from God was to convene a meeting of the leaders of the people. **He did not assemble them to get their advice. There are times when that is exactly why leaders are convened. But there are other times when the man of God must call the leaders together to boldly declare the will of God and call the people to obedience.** Warren Wiersbe agreed when he wrote these words. ***There is a place in Christian service for godly counsel, but a committee report is no substitute for the clear commandment of God.***

It was a committee report that led the people to turn away from the promise of God forty years earlier. Joshua would not allow the people to make that same mistake. I love that Joshua's words to the leaders were words of faith and confidence. ***In three days you are to cross this Jordan.*** No doubt. No confusion. No ambiguity. He had made a similar

speech forty years early but the people would not listen. Now, those faithless leaders have died. **How sad that it took the funerals** of an entire generation for the people to be ready to move forward.

Here's something to think about. Never let it be your funeral that is needed for God's people to move forward. And by the way, keep this in mind. It would be the two oldest people in the camp who were leading them to step out and take a bold step of faith. Joshua and Caleb. **Your age should increase your faith and courage, not diminish it. The eldest among us should be the most enthusiastic about answering the call of God, regardless of what He calls us to do.** Okay, back to the text. 😊

In these verses Joshua gives specific instructions to those who were going to remain on the Eastern side of the Jordan river. Joshua's charge to these tribes was based on a concession made to them by Moses. He allowed them to settle there, as long as they were willing to send their warriors across the river to fight with their brothers. The background is found in Numbers 32.

When the people arrived in that area the tribes of Reuben and Gad, along with the half-tribe of Manasseh asked Moses for permission to occupy that area once the conquest was complete. They were herdsman and that particular land was conducive for it. Moses agreed, but asked them to make an important commitment. When the people crossed the Jordan to take possession of the land, they would need to send their soldiers to fight with their brothers. In other words, the conquest would be a team effort. All would go to war together.

Let me clarify something about the "tribes and half-tribes of Israel." There is some confusion. Jacob had twelve sons. Ten of the sons had tribes named after and they inherited parcels of land under those names. The tribe of Levi would be the priestly tribe and they would not receive land, only cities. Joseph's portion would be divided among his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Thus the number twelve remained in

terms of the division of the land. Essentially, Ephraim and Manasseh took the places of Joseph and Levi.

Back to Joshua. In verse 5 we find a few words and phrases which have military overtones.

Battle array. Related to the number 5 or 50. Could refer to “companies of fifties” and thus a picture of an organized army ready for battle.

Valiant Warriors. These warriors were excellent soldiers. Joshua sent 30,000 of them for the ambush at Ai and took them into battle at Gilgal. 400 and later 600 accompanied David when fleeing Saul. Elite fighting group. Navy Seals or Green Berets. So, they would leave their families behind while helping their brothers complete the conquest of the land.

The point? What they had to do, they had to do TOGETHER. They really did need one another. Each tribe, each person was important.

3. The Response: we will follow you. (16-18)

The people responded to Joshua with a bold promise. Some debate about whether these verses refer only to the two and a half tribes, or to all the people. I prefer to think of it as a response from all the leaders, representing all the people.

Their response was warm and enthusiastic, echoing elements of God’s charge to Joshua. Their response was an overwhelming statement of support and encouragement. You can count on us. Let’s go do this thing. We have your back. We are all in!

Not only did they promise to obey Joshua in everything, but they also pledged to deal swiftly and decisively with any who disobeyed. Their willingness to actually follow through would be tested after a stinging defeat at Ai. But there, they would pass the test.

Unfortunately, they were not always so willing to follow their words with actions. For example, it was abundantly clear that they were to completely destroy the inhabitants of the land. This, they failed to do, and it costs them again and again.

But for now, there is a positive air of excitement and commitment. Regardless of what they ultimately do, we commend them for making this kind of statement to their new leader. What leader would not like to hear those words?

Takeaways:

When preparing to answer the call of God to move forward . . .
New project, new initiative, new focus, new mission, new season.

1) The goal must be clear.

We are going to cross the river and enter the promised land! Nothing less than crossing over and taking the land would do. And keep in mind that this specific goal was part of God's overall plan for His people. In other words, it fit with what He had already declared to be His will. **God will never lead you to do anything that contradicts His will. He will not lead you into a sexual relationship outside of marriage. He will not lead you to cheat on your taxes. He will not lead you to deceive your boss. He will not lead you to compromise Biblical truth.**

2) The expectations must be understood.

They would work together until the task was completed. There are times when God calls us to walk solitary road, trusting His presence alone. But more times than not, God calls us to do His will in relationships with others. **Jesus had 12, and even within those had 3. Paul had traveling companions everywhere he went.** They would work together, have each other's backs, never abandon each other.

3) The commitment must be resolute.

By *resolute* I mean determined, unyielding, unwavering, staunch. They would never waver, never stop short, never give up.