

My name is Jeff Fritsche and I am the Lead Pastor of White Rock Fellowship – one of the church plants of Fellowship Dallas.

It is great to be with you guys this morning.

I know y'all have been in a series in the book of Joshua looking at Joshua's life and how he led the people of God from here to there!

Crossing the River, Conquering the enemies and claiming the inheritance!

Today, I want to talk about a theme that I see in Joshua's life that is beneath the surface through the stories

but something that Joshua was always aware of and

it was absolutely critical to this journey that he has been on.

And I believe it is a critical theme for us in our journey as well.

15 years ago now, when I was planning my engagement, I really wanted to surprise Mandy.

So I knew she was going to be in NY (her favorite place) with some friends and I decided to surprise her in NY.

SO I went and picked her up and dropped her off at the airport real early one morning and then I went straight home and got my bag and went and got on the next flight to NY.

So she had no idea I was in NY.

I had arranged it so she would walk in expecting to see some friends and then I would pop up, surprise and pop the question!

Because I was so nervous, I actually got there like 2 hour early.

There was an upstairs bar that I was hiding out in so she could walk in and not see me until she was seated.

And because it is New York - She was an hour or so late to the designated meeting spot,

So I just sat there for like 3 hours drinking water at the bar in a suit holding flowers.  
Looking pathetic, I'm sure.

People kept just walking by and patting me on the shoulder like – its gonna be ok man.

I was like pathetically like, no, I think she is coming!

I'm sure she is pal.

Thankfully she did show up and said yes!

Something I didn't think about was how stressful it would be to transport that  
engagement ring across the country.

I wasn't going to check it in my bag. I couldn't trust it in my carry-on.

So it was on my person the whole time!

I am not sure I ever took my hand off of it in my pocket walking through the airport.

They had to pry it out of my hand through security.

I can't lose the ring! I can't show up in NY and say – Surprise – I am in NY with nothing  
to show for it!

On the plane, I put it in the front part of my bag under my seat... Literally every 5  
seconds, I was reaching down to see if it was still there.

I was doing sit-ups.

Why?

I was carrying around something extremely important.

Every moment, I was particularly aware of the importance of it!

There is a promise that was given to Joshua

That shaped his calling and I believe he was tremendously aware of it at all times  
throughout the journey.

It was the promise that God gave him on day one!

Lets look back at it in Joshua 1.

Joshua 1:1-9

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful 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. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Cross the River

Defeat your enemies

Claim your inheritance

That is the calling on Joshua's life!

But look at the promise in 1:5

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. "Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you."

And again in vs 9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is WITH you wherever you go."

I believe the reason that Joshua could follow the calling of God was because he was profoundly aware of this promise.

The promise of the presence of God!

God had promised to be WITH Him wherever he went!

Just like I was tremendously aware every moment where that ring was as I travelled because it was so **essential** to the whole point of my trip!

No ring, no engagement!

Joshua believed that the presence of God was with him every moment.

And he believed it was essential to the journey!

How do we know?

When God says, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

These are critical words to Joshua!

I want to go back to Moses and see what that would have meant to Joshua.

Look back at Exodus 33:7-11

<sup>7</sup>Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. <sup>8</sup>Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. <sup>9</sup>When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. <sup>10</sup>And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Look at vs 11

Joshua – a young man – witnessed this over and over again.

He watched, he understood as a young man the importance of the Presence of God to Moses.

Joshua saw that...

### 1. The Presence of God Was a Gift to the People of God

Joshua knew that Moses treasured the Presence of God.

Moses would go to the tent to seek wisdom, guidance.

Then, the pillar of cloud (representing God's presence) comes and rests on it the tent!

and the Lord would speak and he would meet with God face to face.

The whole community of faith is standing in awe and worshiping!

Why?

Because there is a man who is meeting with God **face to face**.

They knew that this was a gift, a blessing for the people of God that God would directly speak to Moses – their leader!

1. They were keenly aware that they had needed God's deliverance from Egypt
2. And they were also keenly aware that as they wandered they desperately needed God's direction and presence too!

The presence of God is a gift to the people of God!

Joshua had a front row seat!

Then in that same chapter, God says something very profound to Moses.

He says, you can go into the promised land.

That was the goal of their wandering, the purpose!

But God said, I am not going to go with you.

You can have the land flowing with milk and honey, the inheritance, but My Presence will not go with you.

Here is what Moses' response is to this.

Exodus 33:15-16:

<sup>15</sup> And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. <sup>16</sup> For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"

So here Moses is. He can have the blessings of God apart from the presence of God.

It's a no-brainer – He says NO!

He doesn't want milk and honey if God isn't there.

Joshua witnessed that not only was the Presence of God a gift from God!

The second truth that Joshua witnessed in Moses was that

## 2. The Presence of God Sustained the People of God

Moses knows that the presence of God is that which sustains him.

He knows that they can't even take one step without God!

He says, how will people know that we have found favor or literally "grace?"

That is what makes them distinct! The people of God!

The Presence of God sustained the people of God so much that Moses would rather have the presence of God and miss out on the blessings of God!

How would we respond?

The blessings of God apart from the presence of God.

You can have success, you can have approval, money,

Even, you can have purpose in life...

But apart from the presence of God.

The question haunts us because it tells us what we really treasure.

We struggle with this because we think we desperately need the blessings of God.

We need success, approval, safety, comfort, security, purpose.

Joshua witnessed in Moses something that I think we need to see.

That the presence of God is better than all that.

In fact, I would say Moses knows without a shadow of a doubt that he NEEDS the presence of God.

It is not just an add-on or a nice thing to have.

It is not something to supplement our self-sufficiency.

A little God here and there can't hurt!

No, Over decades of experiencing the presence of God – all of Moses' self-sufficiency has been drowned out!

He is desperate for the presence of God!

Often, Self-sufficiency quenches the need for the presence of God.

If we think, sure, we will take the blessings of God without the presence of God – we haven't quite learned what really sustains us!

Joshua is watching all of this!

He is watching as Moses says,

“God, I cannot move one step forward without the fullness of Your presence.”

Joshua as a young man learned that the Presence of God was essential!

It was what would sustain him and his people!

When God says, He will be with Joshua like he was with Moses...!

Joshua knows the magnitude of that statement!

That the Presence of God is a gift to the people of God.

And the Presence of God will be what sustains the people of God!

He had watched the faithfulness of God in Moses' life.

And Joshua would cling to the promise that God would be with him like God was with Moses!

TRANS: I am so grateful to be here today at Fellowship Dallas because to us...

Because in many ways...

You are our Moses and we at White Rock Fellowship are your Joshua.

You know Fellowship turns 40 years old in September. So Do I – Lets have a party!

Over the last 40 years, God has been with Fellowship Dallas and we, as WR, have watched God's faithfulness through the challenging times and the victories.

As a daughter church to Fellowship Dallas.

We have been keenly aware of how God has been WITH Fellowship

And now we have experienced how God has been WITH White Rock Fellowship these

last few years.

Much like Joshua with Moses – he watched, learned and grew from what Moses did.

He took great attention when Moses would go out often to seek the Lord.

He took great attention when Moses chose the Presence of God over the blessings of God.

We, at White Rock, have done much of the same with you.

We are grateful to you for being our Moses!

We watched as you...

1. Took a huge step of faith to send out your young adults to plant White Rock Fellowship!

We watched as

2. There was a special financial gift that funded us and Mission Forney for our first few years of church planting so that we could become financially autonomous.
3. We watched as you guys have paid off your debt last year!
4. We have watched as you have continually re-tooled to accomplish the unique calling that you have as a church here!

What a blessing and a gift for us to watch!

God has been WITH Fellowship Dallas in a very tangible way.

And God has been WITH White Rock Fellowship as well.

We have been crossing our own river, conquering enemies like fear and normal church planting challenges and we are claiming our inheritance, our calling!

As many of you know, over the last few years we have become 100% autonomous and even God landed us in a location almost a year ago – off of Northwest Highway just east of Abrams!

**And Praise God, we are growing and now we are preparing to do the same thing you taught us to do!**

We are now in preparation to start our first church plant – our first daughter church!

You are going to be a grandparent! Congratulations! What do you want be called?



Growing up, my grandmothers were called Granny and Grandma.

No one is called that anymore. Our kids now have a Mimi and a Grammy. I know some called ShiShi, JuJu, Nanny, DeeDee.

You guys decide, we will call you whatever you want.

We are very excited as we press into what God has called us to do – our inheritance, our calling as a church!

Our vision is to plant local, neighborhood churches all around White Rock Lake.

We in the process of praying, raising funds and planting our first church!

Now, here we are trusting that God will be WITH us and do it again!

1. That we by faith, will send out people from our church to plant!
2. That He will provide again the money and the leaders to plant churches!
3. We are trusting God that He will provide money to pay off our debt for our building just like he did for yours!
4. That He will be WITH us as we press into the unique calling we have as a church to plant local neighborhood churches around White Rock Lake!

We believe He can do it again!

God has been and will be WITH Fellowship Dallas!

God has been and will be WITH White Rock Fellowship!

We are grateful to be a part of this family and watch as God sustains us in this journey!

Joshua has watched Moses and the priority of the Presence of God.

It was a gift to Joshua!

And it sustained him during the high times like Jericho and the frustrations like AI!

Joshua understood this promise!

The Presence of God is essential!

I wonder for us...

Do we believe that this promise is also our promise?

In the Old Testament, this is a very rare occurrence for God to be WITH humans in this way.

But for us today,

Because of Jesus' life, death, resurrection

We do not have to come out and watch some man or woman, some select leader, go in and meet with God.

You don't have to go build a tent and make sure you go in it

You don't have to find a temple to find the presence of God

You are the tent! You are the temple. He dwells with us!

Here is what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, **20** for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Just like the Presence of God was a gift for the people of God, now the presence of God is a gift to us!

3. The Presence of God is a gift to us

Jesus actually said it would be better for him to go so that the Father could send the Holy Spirit as a gift to us to dwell within us.

What a Gift!

We have God's Presence with us all the time to lead us to all truth, to teach us, guide us, to convict us, to remind us who we are in the gospel!

The Presence of God is a gift to everyone who believes!

And

Just as it sustained the people of God in the Old Testament.

4. The Presence of God Sustains Us

WE are told that the Holy Spirit is called the Helper.

That word has a range of meaning – advocate, comforter, ally, champion, counselor.

The Spirit of God comforts us in the frustrations of life.

The Spirit of God prays for us as an advocate!

The Spirit of God gives us counsel!

Remember Moses met with God like a friend face to face and God would speak to him!

It may not feel quite like that.

But I believe God is inside of us speaking, leading, giving counsel!

How does he do this?

In preaching class in seminary, we literally used to bring a VHS tape to class when you were preaching.

And the seminary prof would sit in the back in this glass chamber and he had a microphone.

He could talk into the microphone and that would come up on your tape.

It was so distracting. While you are preaching...you see the professor lean forward and say something into the tape and you wonder what he is saying!

But it was always surprising while you are watching the tape later!

I remember one time – My buddy was preaching and without knowing it, he was doing this with his hands.

Later when he played back the tape, he is hearing himself preaching and then he heard this voice from heaven on the tape say,

“Please refrain from the spider push-ups.”

God?

Most of us don't hear a little voice in the tape of our life that says – go this way or that way.

I have never really heard an audible voice, but I believe the Spirit is there leading, speaking and guiding.

If we are aware, listening, submitting, and willing to hear...

I believe the Holy Spirit is speaking and teaching and giving guidance.

The Spirit of God is a gift that sustains us in life!

What a privilege we have. A privilege that was reserved for only a select few in the Old Testament,

and you and I have the privilege of living in and walking in and experiencing this on a daily basis.

We were bought with a price – Jesus died for us to secure salvation for us.

As part of that, the promise is that we have the Holy Spirit within us!

We are carrying around something so sacred!

We are carrying around something ESSENTIAL!

The promise given to Moses,

The Promise given to Joshua

Has been given to us!

God is With us!

His presence is always WITH us.

Is it as central to us as it was to Moses?

Is it as crucial to us as it was to Joshua?

As we do normal life, pursue our purpose, as we go from here to there in our journey...

Are we aware of it?

Is the Presence of God ESSENTIAL to us?

For many of us this paradigm of living life with God.

With a radical understanding of His Presence is not our norm.

In fact for many of us we have maybe even rarely understood this paradigm because we tend to operate in another one.

Often times the way we were raised, or the church environment that we may have grown up in, or with no church background...

All of these influence the way we understand and approach God.

Often those shape us to not truly experience LIFE WITH GOD!

I want to talk about a few different ways that we tend to approach God.

Skye Jethani in a book called “with” simply summarized a few of them in a helpful way:

Life under God, Life from God, Life for God, Life over God.

Most of these have a kernel of truth in them, but they get played out in dysfunctional ways.

1. Life under God. We are under God. He is the authority.

But it is extremely common for this one to play out in dysfunction.

We only see ourselves as UNDER God and therefore...

WE see God like the Divine School Principle!

It becomes transactional.

We obey God and therefore He blesses us, we get what we want.

It is cause and effect. I did all the things right and then I get everything I want.

It is not really about God, but it is all about the transaction.

This is the vending machine god. I put in my quiet times, going to church, etc... Then God will put out blessings and a comfortable life.

And we get really bent out of shape when it doesn't work.

I did it right and still trials came to me.

Or we take this same idea and think the opposite is true.

That God is watching us closely and

eager to punish us for even minor infractions.

We do a lot of work with Hotchkiss Elementary and I love the Principal.

She is hilarious and a ton of fun!

But she has a Principal look when those kids out of line!

I was about to snap up to attention!

We think of God as an angry God looking to get us in trouble.

We think that God is balancing some eternal checkbook.

You did good, oh, nevermind you dropped back.

That is the dysfunction of approaching God like this.

Only with the life under God posture.

2. Life from God. Every good and perfect gift is from him. He is the source.

But the dysfunction in this perspective is simply a veiled form of consumerism.

What can I get from God? This view really wants God's blessing, but are not that concerned about God.

It is the like the prodigal son who is far more concerned with the inheritance than the relationship with his father.

In this view, we should say a prayer for our business or our kids because we want them to be successful.

We see this all over the place in the way Christian books or Christian programs are marketed.

The life from God posture isn't so concerned about God, but His supernatural help.

But the minute following God becomes costly, then it may not be worth it.

3. Life for God – this is great, right. I am going to do this or that for God.

This idea is absolutely biblical. To have our purposes in life be for God and His kingdom.

As you are talking about finding purpose – its great!

But the dysfunction here can be people give their life to be a member of God's army, to serve

but with little to no concern with maturing or nurturing their spiritual life.

Significance is only defined by doing something big and flashy in the service of God.

Doing “The Most” for God has not necessarily led to people who are not marked by peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, love and self-control.

4. Life over God – Most of us wouldn’t ever say this is our paradigm, but we sometimes act like it.

This one believes in God usually, but that bears little to no impact on their life.

In the Life over God perspective, value and validation is solely determined by your ability, your success, or whatever it is that you value.

In the life over God perspective, there isn’t much time for God.

We just need to get on with life with the proven formulas and organizational principles that rule our lives.

God is abandoned at least practically in order to get the outcomes you want.

SLIDE

Life under God – I do what God wants and I get blessing.

Life from God – I want to consume the blessings that God can give, but I don’t necessarily want a relationship with God.

Life for God – I am only significant when I am doing something newsworthy for God no matter what happens to my soul.

Life over God – God’s existence has no real bearing on my life because my life is really up to me.

Although there are some truths within all of those views except the last one, the dysfunctions can get us sideways without even knowing it.

A lot of time what we end up doing is try to move people or ourselves from one of these postures to another.

For example,

We meet someone who is generally irreligious (the life over God posture) and we try to convince them that their life will really work out for them if they follow the Bible’s principles.

And sometimes we successfully move them from the Life over God posture to the Life

Under God posture.

Or we feel stuck in our spiritual lives.

We feel like we have lived life under God and expect blessing and haven't really seen it.

So we shift ourselves to LIFE FOR GOD – maybe then God will bless us if we do something newsworthy for him.

Those can be easy to caricature, but...

I can look at these postures and see at different points in my life – how I have lived in all 4 or have tried really hard to shift my perspective from one to another.

And yet I think when we live like this, we have missed something...

That Moses and Joshua were very aware of.

We have been invited to live a paradigm of LIFE WITH GOD

Joshua learned it from Moses that Life WITH God is the only way to sustain, the only way to find true purpose, and be led by the Lord.

And now on this side of the Resurrection

We have the Presence of God with us all the time!

Do we live like it?

It may be helpful for us to start with identifying some of the other paradigms that we fall into.

And missing the invitation to LIFE WITH GOD.

Larry Crabb in a great book called "Finding God" says,

"With his generous heart overflowing, he refuses to withhold anything from us that will help us know Him better. In His own sovereign way, without consulting us, he patiently arranges things in our lives so that we experience him as the satisfaction of our souls, as our loving bridegroom, as a good God who never intends anything but our joy."

God is arranging life so that we see that

HE is the Inheritance!

The treasure is a life WITH God, not just the blessings that come from Him.



As God leads us from here to there.

As God leads us to a place of purpose,  
there is one thing that is of utmost importance!

His Presence!

That we are aware of it, we know it, we experience it –

And maybe not in the fireworks, but in the mundane in such a way that...

We like, Moses and Joshua, don't want it any other way.

We wouldn't trade the presence of God for anything else.

God has given us a gift!

A gift that is meant to sustain us!

The Presence of God.

Just like the people of God recognized their deep need for God's deliverance from Egypt  
and yet also walked outside to worship because they recognized their deep need for  
God's Presence for direction!

We do the same thing!

We recognize our need for deliverance and direction!

God sent His own Son Jesus Christ to this earth to live, die and be resurrected so that we  
could be delivered!

We could experience the forgiveness and the mercy and grace of God!

And part of the promise of the gospel is that God also has given us His presence to direct  
us, guide us and lead us!

He sent His Son

Jesus – Immanuel – God With Us

And He has given us His Spirit – to be WITH us.

That is the invitation to a life WITH God!