



Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

7350 Granbury Rd.

Fort Worth, TX 76123

Joshua, A Call to Courage

Lesson #1

Joshua 1:1-18

LEADERSHIP BASICS

A. FOLLOWING A FAMOUS LEADER

Deuteronomy 34: 9-12 into Joshua 1: 1-2, "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that

mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel.”

Joshua 1:1-2, “Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spoke unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.”

Leadership is first and foremost a God-given quality. Some people realize it, some do not. Some have a special awareness that the call to leadership is a call to serve God in a unique way. Some believe that they trained themselves to be leaders, and that God had nothing to do with it. God’s choice of leadership in the Bible is an interesting study because of the variety of types, methods and results.

One of the real challenges of any leader, but especially of Joshua, was to fill the shoes of a famous and highly successful master-sergeant-type of leader, the mighty Moses. He was a leader, pusher, judge, personal spokesman for God, one who insisted the people follow God’s plan and therefore, his. Joshua did not try to be Moses. He had his own style of leadership. What he was certain of, was that God had called him to lead the people into the land of Canaan, something Moses in his greatness had failed to do. God does not call duplicates, He calls leaders to do individual things. The succession in leadership does not mean a repeat of what was, but a challenge anew to what can be. One leader does not exhaust the possibilities and potential of being a leader. The next in line can always add to, modify, go on to branched-out achievements, be a real leader in his own strengths.

Joshua as a young man was one of the twelve spies sent to the Promised Land when the children of Israel had first come out of Egypt. He and Caleb were the only two of twelve who brought back a positive report that the land could be taken despite the giants which possessed it.

The people rebelled, and were sentenced to 38 more years of wandering in the wilderness. The doubting generation died off and the new generation would be challenged to take the land from the huge inhabitants. One of the clues to the greatness of Joshua as a leader was the fact that he was ready to do what God commanded. He did not flinch or complain that he was not worthy or capable to follow in Moses' footsteps. He rightly assumed that if God were calling, God was leading, and God was equipping.

B. FOLLOWING THE RULE BOOK

Joshua 1: 7-8, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou may observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou may prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

A good leader is a good follower. He is trained in leadership by obeying commands of his superiors and former leaders. He remains a leader by his dedication to and observance of the rules of his group that he leads. A maverick leader who considers only his own desires and does not know how to follow the rules and precepts set by others, will

always be a loner. A leader is expected to be innovative, but within the rules and goals set by other authorities.

Joshua did not have to be a “little Moses”, but he was expected to follow the laws that Moses had set forth. His area of leadership was beyond anything Moses had known, but his dedication to follow the guiding principles was the same.

The Bible is still the authority of the church today. That is written in our Discipline, expected of every preacher and leader in the church. When that authority is questioned, or disregarded or denied, then those in rebellion should be treated as rebels and disqualified to preach, teach, or administer in leadership roles. When the Bible is replaced by man’s authority or dislike or doubt, then he is not a church leader, but a rebel, a foe, an advocate for self-law or even worse, anarchy.

C. FOLLOWING A VISION

Joshua 1: 6, “Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.”

God’s program for Joshua was specific. He was a leader with a very rigid set of requirements. He was to secure the land from the Canaanites who possessed it and divide it among the tribes of Israel. He was to lead the people to what Moses had lead the people toward. He was to lead the people to possess what Moses had promised.

A vision is the road map, the guidance system necessary for the general direction of leadership. Without a clear vision, a leader may be in charge, the people faithfully following, but he may be leading in a circle, or a maze. With a clear vision of where he eventually wants to

go, a leader may have to make some detours, but he will know which path to get back on.

A clear vision of the future direction of this church or any place of leadership is necessary to know where we are going, where we have been, if we are making progress or marking time. This is the time of pastoral change if there is one, and of renewal of goal and challenge if the resident pastor is staying. The pastor should have a vision, the church members themselves have a clear idea of goals and possibilities as well as a list of past achievements. It may be time to take a really fresh look at our church to see its potential for leadership in the community, and in the work of the Lord in the connectional system of our beloved church.

II. GETTING THE SYSTEM MOVING.

A. STRENGTH COUPLED WITH COURAGE

Joshua 1: 6a, 7a, 9a, “Be strong and of a good courage...” “Only be thou strong and very courageous...” “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage...”

Once should be enough for God to speak and for us to get the message. Twice should be adequate for everyone. It is so rare that God has to speak something the third time that this passage is noteworthy.

God’s mandate to “be strong and of a good courage,” indicates how easy it is for leaders to be weak. How easy it is for their attention to be turned from leadership to hiding, crying, baby-sitting. That is not God’s plan. A leader is a tower, a tent-pole, the framework of a building. It is his strength that everyone else leans on and depends on.

It is his courage to make use of his strengths. He is not the whole show, but the inspiration, the spark that sets everything else moving and glowing. He is led by the clear call of God, responsive to The Book, and gets God's message to the people. For this he needs strength of potential magnified by the courage of action and decision-making. He cannot be a weakling, a recluse, a wash-out.

He must have strength and courage to face the enemy, to settle disputes within the camp, and the strength to propose new things, facilitate traditional concepts, and harmonize and blend both. He must have moral strength. He must have physical strength. He must have directional strengths. He must have the courage to act on each of these strengths.

God knew the trials that Joshua would face, the numerous times he would be tempted to quit, retreat or minimize his goals. So, God told him three times to be strong and courageous. Amazingly, when the people of Israel wholeheartedly responded to his challenge of leadership, they echoed God's words, (Joshua 1: 18c), "only be strong and of a good courage."

B. SACRIFICES

Joshua 1: 12-15, "And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spoke Joshua, saying, Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valor, and help them; Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also

have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sun rising.”

Two and one-half of the tribes had found land and settled on the west side of the Jordan river, Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh. Moses had seen to this on the condition that they would leave their established homes and go help the other tribes secure their land holdings on the east side of Jordan. The time had come to make good their promise. The leadership had changed, but the promise was secure. It is very important to both keep promises made to one leader, and for new leaders to keep up with agreements made under a previous administration.

This was not an easy commitment to keep. Their land was secure, the families settled, the crops needed tending, no telling what excuses they could have made. They would have to leave their families and march off into whatever warfare, unknown dangers, uncertain length of stay to help their brother tribes secure their lands.

The common good was more powerful and important than the good of a few. Understanding the need and strengths of commitments and sacrifice are good qualities of leadership as well as dedicated follow-ship. Joshua did not hesitate for a moment to call in this promise. He needed the full strength of the army to win the new country. The tribes willingly kept their promise and rushed to the aid of their brothers.

III. COMMITMENT TO A LEADER, HIS VISION

A. TIME TO START

Joshua 1: 10-11, “Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.”

It was time to begin what God had started. The promised land lay just across a single river. True, there were obstacles ahead, land area the size of California to be claimed and settled, entrenched people who had farmed and possessed the land for hundreds of years, fearsome display giants trotted out to make attackers think that all the people were like that, and idolatrous gods to lure the people from their true goal of establishing a kingdom for Jehovah God. Joshua had listened to God, set his goals, agreed to go. Now it was up to the people to respond.

Leadership with followship is harmony and peace and progress. Leadership with no one willing to follow is chaos, confusion, even rebellion. It is not pleasant. Moses had experienced this in every degree from murmuring to outright rebellion and worship of foreign gods. The people who had been delivered regretted their freedom and longed for the delights and gods of Egypt. They were more righteous as slaves than freed men.

Now it was Joshua’s turn to say, “Let’s Go!” and wait for their response.

B. WILLING FOLLOWERS

Joshua 1: 16-18, “And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou command us we will do, and whithersoever thou send us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou command him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.”

Timing, chemistry, leadership charisma, God’s will and plan, and maybe a dozen more factors played a role in the decision of the people to move forward. They were willing to follow Joshua, face the unknown, make the sacrifices, fight and win the battles. They were so united in their commitment, in fact, that they pronounced the death sentence on anyone who was a rebel. Their only requirement of Joshua was that God was with him as He was with Moses. Their response was a uniting of past achievements and future challenge.

There are times when people are not ready to follow. They may be out of step with their leader; they may think that their plan is better. They may be paralyzed by fear; cemented by tradition, imprisoned by finances or simply tired, lazy or indifferent. Moses faced this, and God could not move past these obstacles. He just put His plan on hold and waited for people who were ready to respond. It cost an entire generation the perils of the desert rather than the comforts of the Promised Land. God’s will certainly will be done, it is often a matter of timing, and always a matter of commitment.

God is calling us to new and greater challenges. We can respond with enthusiasm and see His will done, or with reluctance and have Him

wait for other followers to rise up. This is a call to courage in the face of entering the unknown (to us) but the sureness of God's will and provision for our church.

Application/Activity

We are going to work on applying some Bible study skills in preparation for the following three weeks' study on Joshua. I want you to spend time each day reading the first three chapters of Joshua. I want you to write down, in your journal, anything you find interesting as you read. See if you can find a main theme for each chapter. What do you think the overall theme on Joshua's life will be. I want you to look elsewhere in your Bible and see what you can find, outside of the book of Joshua, on his early life, before taking over command of the Israelites. Feel free to use other resources besides the Bible.

Feel free to text me with anything interesting you find on Joshua or anything that you find meaningful that you can apply to your life. I believe this is a fantastic way to have accountability among our group. I know it certainly helped me last week.

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From Rev. Monte Wike, Pastor, First United Methodist Church

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