

Be Strong and Courageous: Joshua 1's Divine Commission **Scriptures for Today: Joshua 1:1-9**

Joshua 1:1-9 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 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. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 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. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest 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 mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest 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. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Introduction to Joshua 1: God's Commission to Joshua

We're starting the Book of Joshua (sixth book) This is a book of conquest (conquering of a land directed by God) and promises being fulfilled. It opens at a turning point: Moses, the servant of the Lord, has died, and now leadership passes to Joshua.

Genesis shows God creating the world, calling Abraham, and making promises that his seed would inherit the land of Canaan.

Exodus shows God redeeming His people from Egypt with a mighty hand, giving the law, and commanding the building of the Tabernacle so He could dwell among them.

Leviticus shows how a holy God makes fellowship with sinful man possible through blood sacrifices — pointing to Christ.

On Thursday night, we looked at Deuteronomy chapter 1. Deuteronomy is Moses' final words to Israel before they entered the promise land. He reminds the Israelites of their history, What God brought them through, goes over the laws and commandments, warns against disobedience, and commissions Joshua as the successor to lead Israel.

That brings us to the Book of Joshua...

This transition reminds us that God's work is bigger than one man. Moses passed away, but the mission will continue.

Joshua is tasked with leading Israel into the Promised Land — a land long promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But with the promise comes responsibility, and with responsibility comes fear. A lot of times when a big change comes in your life. Starting a new job, moving to a new area, deciding to do things God's way. There might be a lot of uncertainty which causes nervousness or fear.

Understand that Joshua was presented with a huge responsibility. He was at the start of a new season in his life.

That's why God repeats one command three times in this chapter: **“Be strong and courageous.”**

Joshua 1 is a pattern for every believer who desires to walk in God's promises. Just as Joshua needed strength and courage to lead Israel, we need strength and courage to live faithfully in Christ today.

Outline of Deuteronomy 34, Joshua 1, Joshua 2

Deuteronomy 34:

1–8. Moses views the land from Mount Nebo and dies.

9–12. Joshua receives the spirit of wisdom.

13–12. Israel mourns Moses.

Joshua 1 Overview:

1–2. God commissions Joshua after Moses' death.

3–5. God reaffirms the land promise.

6–9. God calls Joshua to courage and obedience.

10–18. Joshua commands the people to prepare for conquest.

Joshua 2 Preview:

1–24. Rahab hides the spies; God shows His grace even in Jericho.

Focus on Joshua 1:1–9

As we focus on these first nine verses, we see God giving Joshua the foundation for his leadership: the promise of His presence, the command to be courageous, and the necessity of obedience to God's Word.

God doesn't give us tasks in this life without giving us instructions on how to accomplish those tasks.

If you start a new job and the employer gives you a uniform and says, "you're on your own, get the job done." Without any explanation or training for the job. That would be unreasonable and make it very difficult to accomplish the expected tasks.

God sets expectations for us and gives clear details and instructions on how to be successful in life.

Everything Joshua needed to succeed, God laid out right here. And the same truths apply to us as followers of Jesus Christ.

Exposition of Joshua 1:1–9

Verses 1-2: “Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise”

Joshua 1:1-2 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 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.

God makes it clear: Moses' work is finished. Joshua must rise and continue the mission. Joshua had big shoes to fill. Moses was an amazing leader that God used greatly to deliver Israel out of Egypt. He led them through the Red Sea, guided them to Mount Sinai where they received the law. He had spoken with God “face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (Exodus 33:11). God spoke directly to Moses plainly and apparently with no mediator. That's why Moses is a picture of Jesus Christ.

Now that leader is gone. Imagine the weight Joshua must have felt. He is no longer just “Moses' minister” — the assistant standing in the background — but now the commander of a nation of probably well over two million people, responsible to lead them across the Jordan River and into a land filled with fortified cities and hostile enemies.

Yet God's words remind Joshua (and us) of an important truth: God's work is never tied to one man. Moses was God's servant, but God's mission outlived him. Leaders may die, but the promises of God do not die. His Word and His will continue from generation to generation.

That's why God immediately tells Joshua: "*Now therefore arise.*" Don't stay in mourning. Don't live in the past. It's time to move forward in faith.

Remember that in your own life. There are always going to be seasons of mourning and grief. But there comes a time when we must arise and keep marching on. Just how God was calling Joshua to arise and continue.

Verses 3-4: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you"

Joshua 1:3-4 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

God reaffirms His covenant promise: the land is theirs, but they must step into it. Notice the wording — "*I have given unto you.*" In God's eyes, the victory was already accomplished. The Promised Land was not a "maybe," it was already theirs by divine decree.

But here's the key: Israel still had to walk it out. Every place their foot stepped would become theirs, but if they refused to step, they would not possess. He gave the land, but they had to claim it in faith.

The Israelites had already wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because of their unbelief and refusal to enter the promised land the first time. There were great consequences because of their lack of faith.

In our own lives we also face those consequences when we refuse to obey the Lord's commands. God was literally blessing Israel with an incredible possession.

The boundaries listed (v4) — from the wilderness in the south, Lebanon in the north, the Euphrates in the east, and the Mediterranean Sea in the west — show how vast the inheritance was.

A land that was filled with milk and honey and abundance. But because of fear, selfishness and hardness of heart, they refused to possess the land the first time and an entire generation missed out on the blessing of God.

Let that be an example to us all to choose obedience to the Lord.

Verse 5: “As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee”

Joshua 1:5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Joshua may have wondered if he could ever lead like Moses. But God makes it clear: the same presence and power that sustained Moses would now rest upon Joshua.

Notice the personal assurance — “*I will be with thee.*” Not just Israel as a whole, but Joshua himself. Oftentimes as a leader (in your home, at work), fear can creep in when the weight of responsibility feels overwhelming. But God promises His personal, unfailing presence.

Two guarantees are given here:

1. “*There shall not any man be able to stand before thee.*” No enemy could ultimately defeat Joshua, because they weren’t fighting against him — they were fighting against God.
That’s the reason why we have no fear of man. We are not afraid to be in this area, because the Lord is on our side.
2. “*I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*” God’s presence is not temporary or conditional. He never abandons His servants. This promise is repeated throughout all of scripture. Jesus Himself said “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”

For Joshua, this meant he did not have to rely on his own strength or ability. For us, it means the same thing. The presence of God is the real source of courage. Leaders may change, circumstances may shift, enemies may rise — but God’s promise remains.

Verses 6-9: “Be strong and of a good courage”

Joshua 1:6-9 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. **7** Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest 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 mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest 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. **9** Have not I

commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Three times in these verses God commands Joshua: *“Be strong and courageous.”* The repetition shows how essential this was. When God repeats things multiple times, you know it's very important.

Joshua faced giants, walled cities, and a nation looking to him for leadership. Without courage, there was no way he would be able to fulfill this task that was before him.

But notice that courage here is not rooted in Joshua's personality, talent, or military training. Too many times, people put their trust in those earthly carnal things. Those things will always fail. His courage was rooted in three spiritual foundations:

1. Courage to Lead God's People (v. 6).

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.

Joshua's calling was to divide the land for an inheritance, fulfilling the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was not just a military campaign but a spiritual stewardship. Courage was required because the weight of leading God's people into their inheritance was a huge undertaking.

2. Courage to Obey God's Word (v. 7–8).

Joshua 1:7-8 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest 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 mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest 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.

The heart of Joshua's success was not based on earthly strategies but divine Scripture. God told him to meditate on the law day and night, to keep it in his mouth and in his actions.

True courage is not just swinging a sword but standing firm on God's Word when the world pressures you to turn “to the right hand or to the left.”

Notice the last part of verse 8: “that thou mayest 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.”

Prosperity and success in God's eyes are tied directly to obedience to His Word. Don't expect good outcomes if you are disobeying God in your life. How do you know if you are disobeying God? You have to read His Word.

3. Courage to Trust God's Presence (v. 9).

Joshua 1:9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God **is with thee whithersoever** thou goest.

Finally, Joshua is reminded again: *"The LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."* Courage is commanded because God's presence is guaranteed. Fear and dismay will try to overtake you in life, but faith clings to the promise of God's nearness. You will have so much peace in your life when you put 100% of your trust in the Lord. Not just for salvation, which is the most important thing, but also for every aspect of your life. Your finances, your health, your family, your relationships, your job.

Doctrinal Truths in Joshua 1:1–9

1. Doctrine of God's Abiding Presence (Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20).

God promised Joshua, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." This is the same truth echoed throughout Scripture. Moses reminded Israel that God "will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deuteronomy 31:6). Jesus told His disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The abiding presence of God has always been the source of confidence for His people.

Imagine a world where leaders are never in the presence of the people they are leading.

There are many churches that try to operate like that today with satellite churches. The pastor is never present. The word pastor means shepherd. How can a shepherd take care of sheep when they are not there to protect them?

Jeremiah 23:2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

Praise the Lord we have a God that always abides with us. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have the Spirit of God living inside of you. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

2. Doctrine of the Power of God's Word (Joshua 1:7–8; Psalm 1:2–3; 2 Timothy 3:16).

God instructed Joshua to meditate on the Book of the Law day and night, linking obedience to His Word with true prosperity and success. This theme runs from Psalm 1, where the blessed

man delights in the law of the Lord and prospers, to Paul's teaching that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" and equips us for every good work. God's Word is always the standard for life, blessing, and spiritual growth.

3. Doctrine of Strength Through Faith (Joshua 1:6, 9; Ephesians 6:10; Hebrews 11:33-34).

The repeated command, "Be strong and of a good courage," reminds us that true strength is not human grit but faith in God's power. Paul exhorts believers, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph 6:10) Hebrews 11 shows men and women who "out of weakness were made strong" by trusting God. Strength and courage are not found in ourselves but in believing God's promises and then acting on them.

Practical Applications for Joshua 1:1-9

1. Face Transitions with Faith.

When life changes — jobs, health, leadership — remember: God's plan doesn't stop. Rise up and keep going.

Maybe you lose a loved one, maybe you lose your job, maybe you're having trouble in your marriage. You have to rise up and keep going. Don't let anything stop you from serving God in your life.

Joshua could have said, I'm not going to take on this huge responsibility. If Joshua didn't do it, then God would have raised up someone else and Joshua would have missed out on an abundance of blessings just like the previous generation missed out big time. Do not stop serving God because things are going well for you. Do not stop serving God because of fear.

2. Step Into God's Promises.

Just like Israel had to walk into the land. You must walk by faith into what God has called you to do. God gave men special commands in His Word, God gave women special commands in His Word, God gave Children special commands in His Word. When you choose to obey those commands, God promises you blessings in this life and rewards in heaven. You can choose to walk in faith and obey his commands and receive blessings or go your own way. Step into His promises.

James 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

3. Meditate on God's Word Daily.

Your strength is tied to your Scripture intake. Let His Word fill your mouth, mind, and heart.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest 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.

Remember your faith will not grow if you do not read God's Word.

Romans 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

You will not be courageous in this life if you do not understand God's power. The only way you will understand it, is if you read about it. Read it daily. Join us in our Bible Reading as a church.

Warnings and Encouragements from Joshua 1:1–9

Warnings:

- Don't live in the past. Moses passed away — you cannot move forward when you're looking backward.
- Don't neglect God's Word. Without it, you will fail spiritually.

Encouragements:

- God's presence is permanent: "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."
- God's Word is sufficient: meditate day and night and you will prosper.
- God's command is clear: be strong and courageous — He will never abandon you.

The Gospel Connection in Joshua 1:1–9

The name Joshua means "The LORD is salvation." Joshua's name points us directly to Jesus Christ (the Greek form of the same name). Just as Joshua led Israel into the earthly promised land, Jesus Christ leads believers into the eternal promised rest that is found through faith in Him.

Remember everything in the Bible is pointing to Jesus Christ. All these events took place as a picture and preparation for Jesus to ultimately fulfill.

In Hebrews 4 we see the connection between Joshua's conquest into the promised land with us resting in Jesus.

Hebrews 4:6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

Hebrews 4:8-10 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. **9** There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. **10** For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

Hebrews 4:3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Conclusion: Be Strong and Courageous

Joshua 1:1-9 reminds us that success in God's eyes is not about worldly power but about faithful obedience, strength in the Spirit, and courage through His presence.

One-Sentence Takeaway: If God is with you, you can be strong and courageous — because His Word directs you, His presence strengthens you, and His promises never fail.

Let's pray.