

Be Strong And Courageous

Joshua 1:1-9

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Joshua 1, and we're going to take a look at the first nine verses here in a moment. I've titled the message, "Be Strong And Courageous." I think it's important that when you take a look at any passage of Scripture, especially if it's in the situation where you are not teaching through an entire book of the Bible, that you really understand the context in which it is found—why is this being said? Why are these things happening at this given point in time? We need to consider the historical context in which the book of Joshua itself is sitting, and this passage in particular.

The book of Joshua actually is, to a great extent, the fulfillment of a promise that God had given to Abraham five hundred years prior to what we're going to be reading here in just a moment. It was after God had called Abraham to go to a new land that he did not know. Abraham went to that land. It was the land of Canaan, which would later become the land of Israel. At the time, though, it was called Canaan. When Abraham was there in the middle of that land, God at one point spoke to him and said, ". . . to you and your descendants"—I will give this land. At the time that the Lord spoke those words to Abraham, Abraham didn't own anything. He didn't own any of that land whatsoever, yet God was making him this promise.

A couple chapters later, God speaks to Abraham again. It was at night time, and He told him to look up at the stars. God challenged him, "Count them, if you think that you can," and then made him this promise, "So shall your descendants be." Again, a very bold promise that God is giving to Abraham, especially at a time that Abraham had no children whatsoever, and he and his wife were old and beyond the age of being able to bear children; yet God is telling him not only are his descendants going to inhabit this land, but they are going to be numerous. If you know God, as He is described in the Bible, He is a keeper of His promises. He does what He says He is going to do, and that's exactly what we find happen is that Abraham did have a son named Isaac. Isaac would grow up and have a son named Jacob. Jacob would grow up and have twelve sons, and those twelve sons would become the twelve tribes of Israel.

Then things got really dark because in the land of Egypt, those descendants of Abraham would become enslaved by Pharaoh, and for four hundred years, generation after generation after generation of Abraham's descendants, they would be in hard bondage working as slaves for Pharaoh and the Egyptians until God would raise up a deliverer by the name of Moses. He told Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell Pharaoh to let God's people go, and he did. Pharaoh didn't want to let God's people go, but God can be pretty persuasive. He worked His wonders and Moses was able to lead all of Abraham's descendants out of the land of Egypt, out of the slavery that they had experienced, into the wilderness for a period of time. For forty years they would wander in the wilderness on their way to a land that God had promised to them, and then Moses would die before they got into the land. It was something that God had told Moses would happen. Because of some of the sins in Moses' life, the Lord said, "I will not allow you to enter into that land that you'd been leading these people to." Moses perished at the end of the book of

Deuteronomy, which is just before the book of Joshua.

Joshua had for a long time been the sidekick of Moses, his right-hand man; but now he is going to be the man. Here is this land that God had promised to His people five hundred years previous, and now finally the promise of God is going to begin to unfold, and the book of Joshua in its totality is God's people entering into this land that He had promised to Abraham and his descendants. That's where we're going to pick it up in verse 1.

"After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 2 'Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and 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; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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 of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.'"

I love how relevant the Bible is. What we are reading is a historical time period that is about three thousand years in the past, and it is going to be talking about things that are still relevant in our lives today. That's one of the amazing things really about the Bible is times may change, but people really don't change. The things that God spoke to Joshua should be ringing in our ears as we unfold this passage because there's so much that we can relate to.

There's a verse in the book of Romans 15:4, which really gives us some perspective on all of the things that are written in the Old Testament. It says, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." There's a reason why so many of the stories of old times are written and recorded for us in the Bible. I believe this is one of those key passages that really will speak to our hearts. I mean, consider what has been happening not just in what we just read but also the background that I just shared with you a few moments ago. Abraham's descendants had been in hard bondage and then spent a period of time in the wilderness before they were able to go into the Land of Promise.

Does that sound similar to anything that you know? I mean, honestly, that could be your own testimony, that there was a time in your life that you were just bound up in your own sin, and you're wandering through life like it was a wilderness until Jesus grabbed ahold of your heart.

He opened your eyes to what He had accomplished for you on the cross. You turned your life around, you turned your life over to Him, and you will never be the same. The old life has passed, all things have become new.

There have been many that have taken a look at the story about the Promised Land and have thought that it was a symbol of heaven, that it's kind of a picture—an Old Testament picture—of what heaven will probably be like. I have a hard time believing that in the least because it was going to be a time of battle. They were going to be fighting tooth and nail with the nations that already occupied that land, and that doesn't sound very heavenly. I think it more parallels a picture of the Christian life because yes we have been pulled out of bondage, we're no longer having to wander in the wilderness. We have entered into a new life by crossing the Jordan River into the land that God wants us to now walk in. Jesus came and said, “. . . I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” It is an abundant life that Christ has given us, but that does not mean that we don't face a lot of battles this side of heaven.

Some of you are in battles right now. You're having struggles that maybe other people don't know about or understand, yet daily you're having to face those types of things. Jesus wants you to experience abundant life, but we will still battle this side of heaven.

I will tell you that Joshua is about to go into the land and not have an easy time with it at all. There are going to be a lot of struggles. There are going to be a lot of opportunities where he can either try and trust in himself or he can trust in God who has made him these promises. He was going to have many decisions to make. There were going to be battles. There were going to be challenges, setbacks, obstacles, enemies, many of which he had no idea the depth of what he was going to have to take this nation into.

In chapter 1, though, before the battles begin, God gives him the recipe for success, and I believe it's our recipe as well. If we want to really experience the abundant life that Christ wants us to live here on earth until the day that He does take us to our eternal rest, we need a recipe for success. How do we live successfully for the Lord in a way that we are blessed, that God is glorified? These nine verses are going to have a lot to say to us, and it begins by Joshua being commissioned by the Lord. That is the first five verses, which I just read, but I want to reread them to you as we see how God commissions him, what He is calling him to do. He says, “After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: ‘Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and 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; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.’”

I want you to notice first what God says that He is going to do. There's four things that God

specifically addresses here in these five verses. In verse 2 He says, “. . . I am giving them”—the land. In verse 3 He says, “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you.” In verse 5 He says, “No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life”—and at the end of verse 5 He says—“I will not leave you nor forsake you.” Those are all God’s promises to Joshua, “Joshua, this is what I am going to do for you,” but what God also includes is what Joshua must do, and that is the rest of the passage. From verses 6-9 we are going to see what God is now calling Joshua to do, “I’m making you promises, but I have some expectations.”

Here’s the interesting thing about that is that the land itself was a promise of God. This was a gift that God had promised to Abraham five hundred years previously that now Joshua has the privilege of actually experiencing. He’s going to have the experience of seeing that promise begin to be fulfilled entering into this Promised Land. That is what God was doing, it was His gift to Abraham’s descendants. But they had to go in and lay hold of that gift. They weren’t just going to waltz in to a land that was not occupied and then just pick a good spot that they could build a house, there were already people that were living there, and they were going to be given the job of driving those people out. I’ll explain a little bit why that was the case here in a moment.

But God was not going to do everything for them. God did all the hard stuff. He made the promises, promises that He guaranteed were going to be met. But they were not going to just walk into the land without having some responsibility. Have you found that true about the Christian life? That God has done everything for us that we could never do for ourselves, but there are many things that we have to do in order to experience them. If Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and that . . . more abundantly,” that means it is accessible to us. But what I have found is that there are many Christians that aren’t really experiencing that abundant life, and maybe some of the reasons that they’re not experiencing that abundant life we’re going to find here in this passage. There may be some things that they need to do in order to experience all that Jesus has made available to them.

So, we get into Joshua’s part, verses 6-9. In these four verses, there is a phrase that is repeated three times over. In verse 6 it says, “Be strong and of good courage;” in verse 7, “Only be strong and very courageous;” then in verse 9 it repeats, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage;” and if that was not enough, there is a fourth beyond the passage that we’re actually going to look at tonight, but the very last verse of this first chapter, in the very last sentence, God says it a fourth time just in case he has forgotten, “Only be strong and of good courage.” These words aren’t the first time that Joshua was actually hearing them. Before Moses died, Moses began preparing Joshua to take over because Moses knew that his death was near. In Deuteronomy 31 (you can read it later, we won’t turn there at this particular time), three times as Moses is conveying to Joshua that he is the guy that is going to take over when Moses’ life is over, three times Moses himself speaks to Joshua and uses these same words, “Be strong and of good courage.”

Those words that we have in our English Bible come from the Hebrew words *châzaq* + *Ö* *G0*. These words are the same ones that are repeated those four times here in Joshua 1. I think

these are words that bear exploration. We're going to do that a little bit right now in order for us to fully understand what is being communicated here. The first being that phrase, "be strong," comes from the word *châzaq*. It was a word that did mean to make strong or to prevail, but it also had another concept that I think has a lot of relevance to what is taking place here in this passage. This is a word that actually we find throughout the Old Testament on many occasions, and in some occasions it is not translated strength or prevail, it is translated to grab hold of or to seize, or at least those concepts are what comes across. I want to share with you a few of those occasions that it is translated in that way that may give us some greater understanding of what God is actually calling Joshua to when He makes these statements, "Be strong."

The first I want to draw your attention to is actually in the book of Exodus when Moses is before the burning bush and God is commissioning him to go to Pharaoh to say, "Let My people go." Moses was having a difficult time with this calling upon his life, and at one point he says to God, "Well, what if I go before Pharaoh and he doesn't want to let the people go? What do I do then?" God spoke to him and said, "What is it that you're holding in your hand?" Moses had his shepherd's staff in his hand. Moses responded, "This is my staff." God told him to throw it down on the ground. Do you remember what happened to that staff? What did it turn into? It turned into a danger noodle. It turned into a nope rope. It turned into a snake, right? Some of us are deathly afraid of snakes, and I think Moses was one of them. But do you know what's interesting? After that staff turned into that serpent, God spoke to Moses and said, "I want you to bend down and take it by the tail." "You want me to do what?" That word "take it" is this word *châzaq*. The same word that is translated "be strong" in Joshua 1, in Exodus 4 is translated "take it by the tail."

There's another occasion in the book of Nehemiah. If you're familiar with the book of Nehemiah you know that he received a call from God to go back to the city of Jerusalem, which was lying in ruins, and rebuild the city walls. In chapter 4, they are facing off with all of their enemies that do not want the walls of Jerusalem to be rebuilt. There were many people that wanted Jerusalem to remain destroyed, but Nehemiah was determined that he, under the commission of God, was going to complete the task that they were going to build up those walls. In chapter 4, with their enemies surrounding them, threatening them, it says, ". . . with one hand they worked . . . and with the other held a weapon." That word "held" is again this word *châzaq*. They showed their strength in that they were not going to give up the work, but they were going to be prepared for battle, if it was necessary. There was a period of time in order to keep their enemies at bay that they were going to work with one hand and be ready for battle with the other.

The third occasion I want to mention to you is actually in the book of Job. We know the story of Job very well, too. The first two chapters we find that Job loses about everything that was of any value to him. He lost all of his wealth, all of his children, but he got to keep his wife, and what a blessing that was because in chapter 2 as she sees how miserable he is and all of the illness that has come upon his body, she says some words to him. Do you remember what she said? "Curse God and die!" But there's something that she said just before those words. She said, "How long are you going to hold on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" That word "hold on,"

is the word châzaq.

If you consider the uses of this same word in those other contexts, it really draws a picture of what the Lord is calling Joshua to because there were going to be times he was going to have to take the snake by the tail. There were going to be times that he was going to have to work with one hand and battle with the other. There were going to be times that he was going to have to hold onto his integrity in order to accomplish what God had sent him to do, so “Be strong, Joshua. Be strong.” But then the Lord says, “. . . and very courageous.” That is the Hebrew word **châzaq**. It’s a word that means obviously courage or courageous but also brave and bold. Incidentally, our words that we often understand that someone who is brave, someone who is bold, is someone who does not have any fear—if you are fearful, then you’re not courageous; if you are courageous, that you are not fearful. But that is just simply not the truth at all. To have courage does not mean the absence of fear.

One of the most bold proclaimers of the gospel in the history of the church was the Apostle Paul himself. I mean, we read the stories of his boldness in the places that he went to and the enemies that he had there and the proclamation of the gospel that he would give. I think about in Acts 13 on the first missionary journey, one of the cities that he went to, that he was sent by God to go to, was with city of Lystra. While he was there doing his ministry, the people began to reject him to the point where they stoned him and left him for dead, literally dragging his body out of the city thinking that he was a dead man. Well, he revived. Either he didn’t fully die or God restored him, but what do we find him doing? High-tailing it out of there? No, he went right back into the city, it says. Well, who does that? A person who has courage, who is brave, who is bold. But this same Paul would also say to the Corinthians, “I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.” We don’t often see that side of Paul because that’s not the side that he chose to express on the outside, but that’s what he was feeling on the inside.

My point is that this word “courage” is not speaking of a person who has no fear, that fear’s just not a part of their life, it’s someone who is willing to act in spite of their fear. They’re willing to step out and do what God wants them to do even as they are trembling. That’s exactly a situation that Joshua was likely to find himself in is having to muster the courage when his knees were knocking because in the book of Joshua he would find himself in situations where he knew what God’s promises were but the odds sure seemed stacked against him. These words, “Be strong and of good courage,” have a lot of depth to them.

But there’s more to it that I think that we ought to dive into as well because it said three times over from verses 6-9. In each of these instances what we find is that God is giving him a command and also giving him a promise. God is calling him to be strong and of good courage and he would need that courage and strength to do what God was commanding him to do, but it also came with a cushion of God’s promise. I want us to see in each of these instances because they have meaning for us today as well.

The first one is in verse 6 where it says, “Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.” I want to

begin with the promise, and the promise I don't know is necessarily obvious to us. The promise is, "... to this people you shall divide ... the land ..." What that means is God was assuring him of victory because Joshua knew full well that the land was already occupied and to even have the possibility of dividing the land among the descendants of Abraham, those people that were occupying the land had to be driven out, so by making this statement God is reassuring him of absolute victory because those who were occupying would no longer occupy as Israel would move in. Here was the command. The command was to divide the land which means that he had to conquer the land. The call is to conquer the land. He was going to have to push the Hittites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the yoga tights, and the termites and parasites all the other "ites" out of the land. A lot of people have asked, "Well, that sounds really harsh. Why would God do that? I mean I understand that He loves Israel, but why would He do that to all of those people that already lived there?"

You need to understand what kind of people lived there. These were wicked people, many of them very violent and definitely immoral. They worshiped false gods. They didn't worship God their Creator, they made up their own gods made out of wood or of stone or of metal, and they would bow down to them. They were nations that were known to sacrifice their children on the burning hot arms of their god Molech, and so it was not just that God was gifting this land to His people, it was that He was judging the people in that land for their evil, so Joshua was being called in to expel them. These were strong nations, and this is why this was a command that God had to buffer with, "Be strong and of good courage," because the nations there were, many of them, stronger than Israel was.

You might remember that back in the book of Numbers, Moses had sent in twelve spies to spy out the land to check it out to see if it really is the great land that God says that it is. They came back with a report of, "The land is amazing, but the people there are giants." They literally said, "We were like grasshoppers in their sight." That was their impression, their description, of the people that lived in this land, and now Joshua is going to lead the armies into. They weren't any smaller now forty years later, they were still substantial, and Joshua was going to have to go to war with them. They were mighty, seasoned warriors. They had strong walls around their cities much like Jericho as we know.

Let me ask you, what battles are you facing right now? What are the things that you are having to struggle against in your life right now? Let me tell you, you already have the victory, if you are in Christ. Even as God was giving him the promise that you are going to be able to distribute this land to My people, which was a promise of assuring victory, we need to understand that no matter what you are facing, what battles you are fighting right now, if you are in Christ, you already have the victory. Sometimes it's just a matter of going in and claiming that victory that Jesus has already won. We're told in the book of Romans, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" That's a promise that we need to hold on to.

So, the promise is, "I'm giving you all the land;" the command, though, is "you have to go in and fight for it." We don't always like the fight part. We would rather it be easy. But the Christian life is not an easy life. We're assured victory, but sometimes we have to go in and lay hold of it. We

have to grab it by the tail.

In verses 7-8, we get the second occasion of, “Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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.” The command here is that he needed to read, he needed to meditate, he needed to do the Word of God. The Word of God needed to direct his life. To tell you the truth, we probably could’ve spent our entire time tonight on just those two verses because it is paramount, it is foundational. I believe it’s really the center of everything that God is telling him right now is that the Word of God was what he needed to be the foundation of his life, and not only for his, but for the whole nation.

There are three things that God is commanding Joshua to do here in regards to the Word of God. The first is that he needed to know the Word of God. We see that because in verse 8 is he told to “ . . . meditate in it day and night” To meditate on the Word of God, that is more than just reading it because we can read the Scripture in just a casual way, just a cursory way where we are just kind of skimming over the surface, getting through the chapter so that we can get on with our daily tasks—whatever we have to do, our to-do list or what have you—without ever really thinking through what it is actually telling us. Maybe it’s a promise that we need to believe in or a command we need to follow. Maybe it’s a sin that we need to repent from. But it needs to be more than just a cursory reading of it, it needs to be meditated upon. In fact, one of the understandings of that Hebrew word translated “meditate” here is to mutter.

What does it mean to mutter? Mutter is basically like to talk under your breath. You know, you kind of mumble some words. There’s a few reasons that we might mutter, not all good reasons. Sometimes we are muttering words that are actually directed to somebody else, but we don’t really want them to hear those words, right? As you’re walking away you’re muttering to yourself...okay, that’s a bad connotation, but the flip side is when you’re muttering to yourself. I don’t know if you’re like me, but I do tend to mutter to myself. I talk to myself that way. My lips are moving, there is a little bit of verbiage coming out of my mouth, but it’s only meant for myself. I believe that’s kind of the idea of what is being said here when God is calling Joshua to meditate on the Word of God day and night. It is muttering it to himself. You know how it is when you have the Word of God in your heart that throughout the day in different circumstances you have the Word of God coming back to your mind in a key moment that you really need that word. It may be a promise at a time that you need to trust in the Lord. It may be a command when you know that you’re in the moment walking in disobedience. We need to be able to know the Word of God well enough by mulling it over in our heart, muttering it to ourselves.

We need to know the Word of God, but we also need to speak the Word of God. Notice in verse 8 God also tells Joshua, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth,” that, I believe, is his call that he is to speak the Word of God because the Word was not just for himself. He was the leader, everybody was going to be looking to him to lead, but the Word of God was for

the people, so if he was going to be leading the people in the right way, he needed to be speaking the Word of God back to the people because much of what God had shared with Joshua was going to be reassuring to the people. If he would share with the people what God had already shared with him, the promises, then the people would be assured that God is still with us. He needed not only to know the Word of God, he needed to speak the Word of God, and then he also needed to obey the Word of God.

In verse 8 it says, “. . . that you may observe to do according to all;” and in verse 7, “. . . do not turn from it” In fact, the word “observe” is used twice in just these two verses; and to observe meant to put it into practice. It was something that they were to live out—Joshua himself first, and the nation as they followed their new leader. They were to know the Word of God, they were to speak the Word of God, they were to obey the Word of God, and God also gave them the promise, “. . . that you may prosper,” verse 7, “. . . and then you will have good success,” verse 8. Prosperity and success, but what exactly did God mean by that? I mean, did He mean big houses, fancy cars, stylish clothes, exotic vacations? No.

The “prosperity” that God was offering His people was love, joy, peace, wisdom when they didn’t know how to handle their situation, faith to know and to trust God’s promises at the time that they didn’t understand how they were going to get out of their situation, confidence to know that God was going to work all things together for good. That’s prosperity. Prosperity is not big houses, it’s not big bank accounts. Prosperity is peace in your hearts. Prosperity is love in your life. Prosperity is experiencing joy in spite of your circumstances. It’s having the wisdom of the Word of God saturating your soul so you know how to handle the situations that you find yourself in. That is true prosperity, and I believe that that’s the prosperity that God was offering them. How important was this because they were going to be walking into situations that looked bleak, dangerous situations that they did not know how they would get victory. But as they relied upon the Word of God, as they knew it, as they meditated upon it, as they spoke it to themselves and to each other, and as they lived it out, they were going to prosper. That was God’s promise.

The last one we see in verse 9, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” The command here, “. . . do not be afraid, nor be dismayed” We’ve already talked about fear a little bit, so I want to highlight the word “dismayed” here for a second. It’s a word in the Hebrew that meant to be shattered or broken or beat down. Those were going to be experiences that all of them would face as they went into the Promised Land. Not everything was going to be easy, not everything was going to be a smooth victory the first time over. There were going to be setbacks. Things were not going to turn out always the way that they thought it was going to turn out. In the end God had promised them victory, but in the in-between times, they were going to be broken, they were going to be beat down, they would feel dismayed. In fact, I want to give you a couple examples of that because this is not the last place in the book of Joshua this word “dismayed” is even found.

We find it in chapter 7. After they had conquered Jericho, that was a resounding victory. They

were feeling pretty good about themselves. They thought they could handle anything, if we could take down Jericho. Well, the next town that they were going into was a small town, a lot smaller than Jericho was. It was the town of Ai, and they thought to themselves, We don't even have to send in the whole army against these guys. There's not much, we'll be able to handle this one really quick. Not only were they beat, they came running back with their tails between their legs and thirty-six men of their army were killed in the process, and Joshua has to cry out to God saying, "Why did this happen?"

The reason that it happened is because even in the midst of their victory sin had entered into the camp because their victory in Jericho was not done as God had prescribed. In part it was. They obeyed partially, but sin entered the camp, and because of that God was not going to allow them to have victory at Ai. So, here is Joshua feeling like now that we've lost, the other nations are going to see that we lost, they're going to be emboldened to come after us, and we're going to be driven out of this land. God comes to His servant Joshua in chapter 8, verse 1, and speaks these words, "Do not be . . . dismayed . . ." Why did God have to say that? Because he was dismayed. Things did not turn out the way that he thought it would. He was beaten down. He was broken, and the Lord had to remind him of what He had promised him in chapter 1, "You don't need to be dismayed." God gave him a new battle plan, and they went in and had the victory once they dealt with the sin, after they dealt with the sin.

In Joshua 10:25, Joshua speaks to his own people and restates the words that God had spoken to Joshua's heart in this chapter we're looking at, chapter 1. He says, "Be strong and of good courage; do not be . . . dismayed . . ." They didn't need to be dismayed. Why? Because of the promise in verse 9, " . . . do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Do you know what's amazing about our God is that He " . . . is the same yesterday, today, and forever." As He was then, He is now. In this chapter, we are hearing God counsel His soldier knowing full well what Joshua was going to have to do once they crossed that Jordan River into the Promised Land. It was not going to be easy-peasy, it was going to be very difficult. There were going to be days that he was going to have to grab the serpent by the tail. There were going to be days he was going to have to work in one hand and battle in another. There were going to be days he was going to have to hold on to his integrity. There were going to be days that the only thing that was going to support him was the very Word of God, and he was going to have to rely upon God's promises and God's assurances of victory in order to accomplish the task.

Let me tell you, our lives are full of battles. You want a recipe for success? Take some time to read Joshua 1:1-9 because I think that this is the secret of our success. If we're going to be successful in overcoming every obstacle that we face in this life, if we are going to be able to live by faith and not by sight, if we are going to have prosperity in the way that God intends prosperity to be with the love, the joy, the peace, the wisdom, and the comfort of knowing that God is going to win in the end, that is what's going to give us the strength and the courage that we need. Amen?