

# Mount Olive Baptist

Faith to be Strong • Joshua 1:1-9 • 01/26/2020

## MAIN POINT

God's promises, purposes and presence give us faith, strength and courage.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**When have you felt the most overwhelmed or fearful?**

**How did feeling this way affect your ability to focus and perform?**

**How did (or should have) your faith in God spoken to the situation and your feeling overwhelmed?**

The Bible is God's Word to His people; its stories are our stories. And as such, we can relate to the past experiences of God's people to find comfort, strength, and hope. This holds especially true of Joshua and his unenviable task of filling the shoes of Moses, the Lord's servant, in leading the Israelites. After Moses died and Joshua was charged with the task of leading the people in the land of Canaan, the God of Israel, Yahweh, not only commissions Joshua but also comforts and reassures him. In order to find faith, strength, and courage, Joshua is told to consider the same three things that we are to consider: God's promises to us (Joshua 1:2-5), His purposes for us (1:6-8), and His presence with us (1:5,9).

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read Joshua 1:1-9.

The first sentence of the Book of Joshua connects what is about to happen with what happened in the Pentateuch (the Books of Moses). Moses was not allowed to lead the Israelites into the promised land after struggling with them in the wilderness for 40 years. He died and now the responsibility of leading the conquest of Canaan falls on his protégé Joshua.

**Why would Joshua's succession of Moses require humility on his part as well as courage? What is the relationship between humility and courage? Can we have one without the other?**

| Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 1:1-5.

**What specific promises in verses 2-5 does God make to Joshua that should give him courage to lead the people and take the land? Why should Joshua have confidence in Yahweh to come through on these promises?**

**How do you personally use God's promises to cultivate courage in yourself?**

| Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 1:6-8.

**In verse 6, God transitions from speaking to Joshua about promises for the future to His present purposes for him. Why is important for us to never separate what God promises to do in the future from what He is calling us to do right now?**

**According to verses 7-8, where was Joshua to turn to find God's purposes for us? Why is it important that we discern God's purposes for our lives from what He has revealed and commanded in Scripture (i.e., the Book of the Law)? How does this require faith?**

**What type of success and prosperity is verse 8 talking about? How does meditating on and obeying God's Word achieve a different kind of success than how the world defines success?**

| Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 1:9.

**According to verse 9, why should Joshua not be fearful? Why is God's presence our only true hope and security?**

**Where else in Scripture do we see similar promises concerning God's presence? To Moses (see Ex. 3:12)? To His people going into exile (see Isa. 43:1-7)? In Jesus' words to the church (see Matt. 28:18-20)?**

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How do you see the story of Joshua fulfilling God's purposes in the world, particularly with respect to His promises to Abraham (see Gen. 12:1-3)? How does the commission to Israel to take the land point to the church's commission to take the gospel to the nations?**

**How do you see your life fitting into God's mission for His people? Could someone observing your daily life be able to tell that God's mission in the world matters to you? What fears hold you back from becoming more committed to God's mission with your time and resources?**

**The conquest of Canaan would dominate the next major season of Joshua's life. What major tasks or goals do you see God setting up for you to conquer with His help during the next season of life? How will they require faith, strength, and courage?**

**How can the members of this group help one another find the conviction and courage to better prioritize God's mission and purposes for their lives?**

## PRAYER

Close in prayer asking God to increase the group's faith in His ability to fulfill His promises and to use them in doing so. Pray that God's presence would become more real to them than their greatest fears.

## COMMENTARY

| Joshua 1:1-9

1:1. The death of Moses created a leadership vacuum. Joshua son of Nun, who had served Moses, identifies Joshua as the one who had been with Moses since Exodus 17. That he "served Moses" (cp. Ex 24:13) uses a different term than "Lord's servant."

1:2. God commanded Joshua to prepare the people to cross over the Jordan. The fact that all the people were involved emphasizes the importance of unity among the people of God. God emphasized that the land was something He was giving the Israelites; it was God's grace, not the efforts of the Israelites, that provided the land.

1:3. Repeating the emphasis on the land as God's gift, it now included every place where the sole of your foot treads. Although the "promised land" is normally understood as something that God promised Abram, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12:1-3), here God attached the promise to Moses.

1:5. The reference to as long as you live looks to the end of Joshua's life, concluding this "Table of Contents" in verses 2-5. The promise I will not leave you anticipates the plea of Gibeon in 10:6, "Don't abandon your servants," using the same expression. Likewise the verb forsake occurs again in Joshua, in Israel's promise of loyalty to God ("abandon" in 24:16,20). This verse forms a hinge, concluding the previous sections of promises and introducing the next section of responsibilities. God's promise of His presence occurs again in 1:9 and thus provides an "envelope" to 1:6-9. All the responsibilities of these verses depend on God's presence that guarantees the mission's success, just as Christ's presence enables His disciples to achieve their mission (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,20; Acts 1:8).

1:6. God's command, Be strong and courageous, already spoken by Moses to Israel, appears three times here. The expression is used before great undertakings, like David's charge to Solomon to build the temple, King Hezekiah's encouragement to his subjects to withstand the enemy's siege (2 Chron. 32:7), and Joshua's own charge to Israel to fight (Josh. 10:25).

1:7. The word success (Hb sakal; cp. "succeed" in v. 8) is found frequently in the Wisdom literature to describe one's mastery of the world and insight into its challenges ("wise" in Prov. 1:3). The whole instruction (Hb torah) describes God's revelation in the form of the previous books of the law of Moses.

1:8-9. Two more references to the instruction affirm the key importance of God's revelation. Study and learning of it are to form so much a part of one's life that the words are fully obeyed as in Deuteronomy 6:6-9. The "frame" of God's promised presence in Joshua 1:5,9 indicates that Joshua's success will come because God is with him, enabling him to read and observe God's word (Eph. 2:8-10).