

# "Courage in 2009"

December 28, 2008

Sermon Study Guide

Pastor Bill Fitzhugh

## **Key Scripture: Joshua 1:1-9 NIV**

**1** After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: **2** "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. **3** I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. **4** Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea <sup>[a]</sup> on the west. **5** No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. **6** "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. **7** Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. **8** Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. **9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Have you ever been through a hard time? If you have, you know that you have to have courage to persevere and overcome that circumstance. Have you ever lacked courage in a time when courage was a necessity?

### **Definition of Courage:**

*"What makes someone capable of facing extreme danger and difficulty without retreating---to face adversity head on? It implies not only bravery, but a dauntless spirit---the ability to endure in times of adversity."*

To encourage someone means to give them courage. Encouragement builds the level of courage in the life of the person receiving it.

**Question 1:** *When was the last time you encouraged someone? What can you do to give someone courage to keep going in their ministry, family, life, etc?*

God has not called us to live a life of discouragement but encouragement. The worst thing you can do when facing a tough time is to turn inward. The best thing you can do is to stop, count your blessings and receive encouragement from other believers (i.e. Life Groups, Church life).

**Question 2:** Do you think Joshua needed courage during his situation? After all, Moses – the only leader they had known – had died and now Joshua was in charge.

## FOUR REQUIREMENTS OF COURAGE

### 1. You've Got To Think Progress

Joshua 1:1-2a NIV

**After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then..."**

**Question 1:** Do you think Joshua needed courage during his situation? After all, Moses – the only leader they had known – had died and now Joshua was in charge.

**Question 2:** Joshua faced a difficult situation in becoming the leader of millions of people. He had big shoes to fill. He faced a "now then" situation. What do you do when you face a "now then" situation? (i.e. marriage problems, sickness, economic stress)

God encouraged Joshua by giving him everything he needed to accomplish the task before him – even in adversity.

There is new territory for everyone facing adversity. God has the steps for your take if you can only avoid thinking negatively and place faith in Him. He will give you courage to proceed.

Psalm 71:7; Psalm 92:14

### 2. You've Got To Have A Constant, Invisible Presence In Your Life

Joshua 1:5-6 NIV

**No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them."**

No devil, person or thing will be able to stop you forever as long as you allow His constant, invisible presence to overtake your life.

Now, the presence of darkness doesn't mean the absence of God. God told Joshua that He would be with him just like He was with Moses. God promised the Israelites land and an inheritance. Moses succeeded as the leader of the Israelites (Red Sea, Ten Commandments, etc.). The same presence that was with Moses will be with Joshua. While we cannot see the big picture or plan that God has for our lives, He does. We have to trust Him when a "bump in the road" comes along.

**Question 1:** What do you do when disappointment comes? How do you react?

**Question 2:** While going through a difficult time, what do you say when someone asks, "How are you doing?" Do you unload on them or reflect a constant, invisible presence moving in your life?

### 3. You've Got To Think Straight

Joshua 1:7-8 NIV

***Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.***

**Question 1:** *What do you want to be prosperous and successful about?*

You think straight in tough times by reading the Word. God told Joshua to obey word – not to turn from it. Then, he would be successful. There is an anti-Christ spirit today that wonders if the Word is the answer. Lots of celebrities would say that God and His Word are not the answer.

**Question 2:** *Do you rely solely on the Word or other methods (Horoscopes, New Age Doctrine, Positive Thinking, Talk-Show Celebrities, etc.) It is sometimes "easier" to turn to Dr. Phil in tough times instead of turning to the Word. Do you turn to the Word in tough times? How does it give you courage?*

### 4. You've Got to Think Like a Champion

Joshua 1:9 NIV

***Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.***"

If you think like everyone around you, don't be surprised to have the same results in your life as they. As a believer, we are not to settle for a normal, mundane way of living. We are overcomers and champions.

Normal is a setting on a dryer, not a mindset of a Christian. Champions don't think like average people. Average people don't think like Champions.

**Question 1:** *How are you becoming a Champion of Christ?*

### Courage Builder

Try this. Stand in front of the mirror and learn how to encourage yourself in the Lord. Repeat things like: "I'm anointed to me be. I'm not a loser, but an overcomer. I will come out on other end because the Holy Spirit is with me. I will find solutions in God's Word. I will trust in the Lord with all my heart and I will not lean on my own way of doing things. I will acknowledge Him in every part of my life. I will not be discouraged and terrified because God is with me wherever I go. Through the fire of testing and trials, I will be refined, fit for the Master's use."