

Joshua: Faith's Courage To Stand

2012 Theme: The Challenges That Faith Brings To Our Lives



Lesson

Although Joshua had long been Moses' assistant, it would still be a challenging experience to be the next leader of Israel (Joshua 1:2). But challenging experiences were not new to Joshua. It was Joshua and Caleb who stood against the defeatist report brought back by 10 of the spies about conquering Canaan (Numbers 14:6ff.). It was Joshua whom Moses invited to ascend Mount Sinai with him (Exodus 24:13ff.). It was Joshua who led Israel in fighting Amalek (Exodus 17:9ff.). Yes, he was challenged in numerous ways and on every occasion rose to the challenge. How? Faith! Convictions! Courage!

In saying this about Joshua we are not saying he was without fault, never had down days or felt discouragement. Those times come to all of us. Perhaps this is why God admonishes Joshua to *"be strong and of good courage"* (Joshua 1:6) – and repeated it (1:7) – and repeated it (1:9) – and repeated it (1:18). But obviously, he didn't let the downtimes in his life be the measure of his life. He chose (an important word to think about) to rise above those occasions. How? Faith! Convictions! Courage!

Courage begins with faith, motivated by convictions, producing courageous behavior. Faith is that mental process of our minds that is fully convinced or persuaded of certain things (Romans 4:17-22; 2 Timothy 1:12). That persuasion is the result of what Scripture says; that is, what God says (John 2:22; Acts 17:1-4; Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Scripture forms in our minds certain convictions, beliefs, ideas (not whims or opinions), that we will not deny under any circumstances. That is courage. Or, to put it another way, it's spiritual strength. It's standing for godly principles though the whole world stands for the opposite.

Courage is a virtue greatly needed in today's church. Actually, it has always been needed by God's people living in Satan's sinful world. Times are always such that many will demonstrate weakness, compromising their convictions. Strong doctrinal stances involving scriptural beliefs and behavior are not appreciated by most, and those who hold to such are often accused of being unloving, narrow-minded and bigoted.

First Corinthians 16:13-14 is an important encourager in this. It says, *"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love."* Let your eyes and mind focus on those words and ask yourself, what is God trying to get us to understand. There is good and evil; right and wrong. Stands must be taken; lines drawn. That's what God's faithful people have always done and it is no different for us in today's world. It is Satan speaking to us when we hear the words that we must be more loving and do not hear the words, speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15). In fact, it is failing to show love when we do not speak the words of truth to people who need so desperately to hear the truth that will save their souls. Listen! *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord..."* (2 Timothy 1:7-8).

Questions/Notes

1. In what ways could Moses' death challenge Joshua?
2. What should we learn by God's repetition of *"be strong and of good courage"*?
3. How is Hebrews 13:5 linked to Joshua? What is God telling us?
4. Why shouldn't downtimes be the measure our lives?
5. Why is "chose" an important word?
6. How can we have courageous faith?
7. What does the world want us to do with our Bible-based beliefs and behavior? Why?
8. What does God want us to do with them? Why?
9. According to Ephesians 4:15, what two things about *"the truth"* are necessary to remember?