

The World Keeps Turning

(Joshua 1)

2/15/17; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

My father had a good friend who had worked at the same job for over 40 years...

He was a maintenance supervisor at a textile mill ever since he turned 18...

At the age of 60 as he prepared to retire, he committed an obvious safety violation and the company was forced to fire him..

He told my daddy about the humiliation of having to be walked out of the facility for the final time...

Yet, the strangest thing happened as he crossed the parking lot headed to his car...

He said he listened closely but the textile mill kept right on humming..

And it was at that moment that he realized that the company could operate with him..

He said he drove by the plant the next week, and people still went to work and the doors still opened

and shut even though he was no longer employed there...

And he eventually came to the realization that the show goes on and one little ol' employee doesn't shut down a business...

The same can be said for the plans of God...

God's plan for the world rolls on regardless of who tries to stop it or even who dies along the way...

There have been giants of the faith...

Athanasius, Polycarp, Calvin, Luther, Edwards, Whitfield, Spurgeon...

Men who stood in pulpits and defended the truth and who stood before councils and faced death...

Yet all these men died, and though they were important in the plan of God, his truth kept marching forth without them...

Other than Christ, there was none greater than Moses in carrying out the plan of God in the world...

Abraham gave birth to Israel, but Moses brought nation to life and kept God from destroying it..

Moses was the main character of the Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy....

Moses was God's man, called for God purpose of caring for Israel as it grew and developed into a nation...

Because without Israel, there would be no Christ...

Yet, Moses died at the end of the book of Deuteronomy...

Let's turn there for a second and read about Moses' death...

Deuteronomy 34:1...

34 Now Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, 2 and all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far as the [a]western sea, 3 and the [b]Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4 Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your [c]descendants'; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." 5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the [d]word of the

Lord. 6 And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day. 7 Although Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated. 8 So the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses came to an end. 9 Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. 10 Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, 11 for all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, 12 and for all the mighty [e]power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

Moses had led Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land, but he was not allowed to enter into it because he had disobeyed God..

So, he died in the land of Moab..

Let's take a look at what we are talking about on a map of the region...

At the age of 120, God took Moses to the top of Mount Pisgah, which was outside the land of Israel and he let him see the land that he was giving to Israel.

And then Moses died though he was still a very vigorous man...

And now what will God do?

Will his plan come to halt now that Moses is gone?

Will Israel die as a nation without a leader?

Will God have to adjust what he was planning to do?

And the answer is the same one that the man who was fired from the textile mill got...

The world keeps on spinning and things keep on moving just as God has purposed...

And all of that leads to the opening chapter of the book of Joshua tonight...

As we meet the next in line to carry out God's mission in the world and his name is Joshua...

Now, let's set the stage for the book...

The year is 1405 BC...

Israel is a nation that had been founded in 2000 BC in the call of Abraham in Genesis 12...

The nation had humble beginnings with only 70 people by the end of the book of Genesis...

Yet when those 70 went down to Egypt and were enslaved for 400 + year, they grew into millions...

And Moses was the only real leader they knew, and he led them out in 1445 BC to head to the Promised Land...

Yet, they spent 40 years wandering in the desert because they were complainers...

And now its 1405 BC, and their only leader is dead, so the nation is anxious...

And that leads us to Joshua 1...

So, let's read the first 3 verses of the chapter to get us started...

I entitled this little section...

I. Leaders are Built on the Word of God (1-9)

*1 Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' [a]servant, saying,
 2 "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. 3 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.*

One thing we notice here is the plans of God are not changed by the people of God...

God had planned to give the nation of Israel a land, and even though the promise went to Moses...

God wasn't going to void the promise now that Moses was dead..

Look at the very end of verse 3...

I am giving you charge to lead the people in the same way that I gave it to Moses...

God is not dependent upon certain people to carry out his promises...

He used Moses and he will use Joshua...

But second please notice..

Though God doesn't need us to accomplish His will, he uses us and he expects us to respond...

God calls Joshua to get up and get busy crossing the Jordan River...

Today, we aren't called to lead people over the Jordan, but we are called to take the gospel to the world..

In case you didn't know, the disciples are dead...

Yet, the plan of God is still the same..

Take the gospel to the ends of the earth...

And if not for faithful gospel preachers throughout the centuries, we may have never heard the gospel ourselves...

We are called to go and make disciples of the nations...

This is our command....

And it is not optional, just like it wasn't optional for Joshua...

Arise, and take the good news to the world...

So, first we must realize that we are next in line like Joshua, and then must get up and get busy doing what God has called us to do....

Now, let's take a little break in verse 4 to see a very important truth in the OT...

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory.

In case you were wondering, Israel has never possessed this much land...

Later in the book of Joshua, we will see that Joshua stopped short of what God called him to conquer..

Here's a map of this area that God gave to Israel...

And here's an important truth...

Israel has never been that large...

Now remember, when God promises to do something, He does it exactly as He promised...

Israel has never gotten their share of the land that God promised to Abraham, so what is our expectation?

They will get it one day...

And why is that important?

Because some people think that God is done with Israel...

But the truth is that He still has to keep his promises to them, and one of his most important promises to them is that they will get and that stretched to the Euphrates in the north...

And that promise will happen in the future....

You can bet your last dollar on it...

Now, let's move on to verse 5 as God continues his charge to Joshua...

5 No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous;

God reaffirms that Joshua is going to be his man to do this job..

And though he promises him that no one will be able to stand against him, God still calls Joshua to be strong and courageous...

Clearly, Israel is not going to be able to just waltz into the land and clear the neighborhood of the people who live there...

There will be battles and there will be enemies, and though Joshua is assured of victory, he must be strong to lead the people...

Now, where is this strength to come from?

Is it something that he must muster up inside himself?

I will ask you...

When you need strength and courage, how do you get it?

Do you go into this trance of complete concentration and focus?

Some people would tell you to do that...

Well, we know that our strength comes from the Lord, but how do we tap into that strength?

It is simple...

Verse 7...

Only be strong and very courageous; [b]be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may [c]have success wherever you go. 8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may [d]be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will [e]have success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Strength and courage don't come from extra concentration...

They come from obedience to the word of God...

Joshua didn't have much a Bible at the time...

He only had the first five books of the Bible, yet in those 5 books, he found plenty of God's law to keep...

And in his obedience to the word of God, he would find strength and courage to accomplish his mission before the Lord...

I could literally walk into Christian book store and throw out most of the books in them...

How to be a good leader...

How to endure grief...

How to be a better woman or man...

How to be brave and courageous...

Do you know what the answer to all the questions is...

Read and obey the word of God....

God has not given us a library of things to read and study and understand...

He has given us one book to be the answer for all of life's questions and challenges...

The Bible could be entitled "Life for Dummies."

Because the answer for all of life's challenges is found in our reading and obedience to the word of God...

Want to be a better husband or wife?

Want to overcome your fears?

Want to be a great leader?

Let me simplify your life...

You don't need a book for each of those desires...

You need one and you need to read it and obey it...

The key to Joshua's strength and courage was not special secret or a special focus...

It was the word of God...

If he wouldn't turn to the left or right in his disobedience to the word, God guaranteed success everywhere he went...

Today, motivational speakers will charge \$250 for a couple hours to tell you how to be successful in life...

Do you want to know how to be successful in life?

Read, study and obey the word of God...

See, I gave you the secret in 10 minutes...

You can leave the \$250 on the chair up front as you walk out...

So, let's move from leaders are built on the word of God to....

II. Leaders Point Others to the Word of God (10-15)

Verse 10...

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you, to possess it.'"

A couple things to take note of here...

First is this...

Joshua got right to work..

He didn't sit around and wait on conditions to improve..

He didn't take time to consider God's command and weigh his options..

He went to work and in the process, he put others to work..

Good leaders push others to get busy as well..

Joshua went to the leaders under him and told them to prepare the people to get ready to get up and get busy...

The kingdom of the Lord doesn't sit still..

It moves forward and you either get on board or you get left behind..

Second, you see Joshua's humility here...

He isn't seeking any credit for himself....

Though he is leading the people, it is God who is giving them the land to possess...

There is no room for sharing in God's glory..

Joshua has an important role in the plan of God, but he is not out for his own glory....

Good leaders don't hog the spotlight for themselves, they point the spotlight on the Lord...

And a final we see here is this...

Joshua is reminding the people of the promise of God to give them a land...

Look, a role of mine as shepherd of the flock is to remind you of God's promises...

To point your head and heart to the character of God to keep you saved, to provide for your needs, and to work out all things in your life for your good and God's glory...

But we all need to point people to the promises of God as we encourage them to press on...

It was time for Israel to cross the Jordan, and why should they do that?

Because God had given them His word that the land was theirs...

Verse 12...

12 To the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua [f]said, 13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, 'The Lord your God gives you rest and will give you this land.' 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them, 15 until the Lord gives your brothers rest, as He gives you, and they also possess the

***land which the Lord your God is giving them.
Then you shall return to [g]your own land, and
possess [h]that which Moses the servant of the
Lord gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sun-
rise.”***

You need a little background to see what is going on here...

But as Israel marched to the Promised Land, 3 tribes (well really 2 and 1 half tribes) Gad, Reuben, and half of the Mannaseh tribes, asked to get some of the land on the east side of the Jordan...

Well, that didn't sit well with Moses, but God was going to grant their request...

However, to prevent the nation from splitting apart, Joshua asked these tribes to help fight with the rest of Israel to take the land west of the Jordan as well..

Sure, you can leave your wives and kids and live-stock can stay on this side, but you men are going to suit up and help us get the west...

And when that is done, you can come back over here and start your new life....

So, what is the point of Joshua insisting on these 2 1/2 tribes helping?

Simple, to preserve the unity of the nation..

There's a lesson here for all of us in the church age, and that is the value of unity in the body of Christ..

Yea aren't all called to go the same distance or fill the same mission, but that doesn't mean we can be less committed...

You bother may be called to head to Africa to establish a church there and lead people to Christ...

But that doesn't make mean you can just sit back and rest since you are not called to even leave your neighborhood...

No, you go and work so you can give to support your brother and sister who are going farther...

You pray for them like you are on the front lines...

There is no room for jealousy or laziness in the church..

We all have a role to keep, a land to work and we must stay together as we do it...

That doesn't mean we all have to have warm fuzzies for each other or look identical to one another...

But it does mean we don't let ourselves divide over silly issues...

We maintain unity because we are all in this together as we seek to take the gospel to the nations..

One final note to make here...

How did Joshua promote unity to these 2 1/2 tribes?

He reminded them of the word of God...

Verse 13...

“Remember the word which Moses commanded you...”

We can have unity as a church because we are unified by the Word of God...

In fact, the foundation of unity is the word of God...

We rally around the Scriptures...

Sadly, many people split over the Word of God...

They split because they can't agree on a portion of it...

I would remind you that God didn't give us his word to cause division..

That is a sad reality of fallen men....

That is why I spend so much time studying the Word of God to get to the right interpretation of a verse...

It is that important to me..

Not because I want to be right, but because I want to unify the church and not divide it...

Joshua pointed to the word of God to create unity.

WE would be wise to do the same...

A final lesson in Joshua 1 is found in verses 16-18...

III. The People of God Submit to the Word of God (16-18)

Verse 16...

16 They answered Joshua, saying, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the Lord your God be with you as He was with Moses. 18 Anyone who rebels against your [i]command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous."

What we see here is the response of just these 2 1/2 tribes but from all the people of Israel...

And their response is to obey the word of God that came through Joshua...

Just like they listened and obeyed the word of God that came through Moses, they will obey the word of God that comes through Joshua...

And you also see the stiff penalty for disobedience..

The disobedient would be put to death...

I find this really interesting considering the health of the church in 2017...

So many church today suffer because people within the membership of those churches live in disobedience to the word of God ...

And why do so many people live in disobedience in churches?

Because there is no penalty for disobedience in most churches...

Now, that is because the Bible doesn't call for one...

In fact, Jesus Himself calls for the disobedient people in a church to go through church discipline...

In other words, if a person in the church cannot obey the word of God after being confronted by 1, 2 or 3 witnesses and then the whole church...

He or she is to be put out of the church and treated like an unbeliever...

Yet, I could on one hand, the church that actually practice church discipline...

And the reason for that...

“Well, it’s just so unloving to kick people out.”

“We are to keep people here, not tell them to go away.”

In light of Joshua 1:18, I will tell you this....

We got it easy...

If you didn't shape up and leave your sin behind and start obeying the word of God, you died...

End of story...

In fact, there wasn't even a 3 step process...

You either repented and obeyed or you ended up in a grave...

That is how serious obedience is in the people of God...

Yet, so many churches never hold anyone to any level of obedience, and the church has suffered for it..

God blesses church who take obedience to his word seriously....

Israel took obedience to the word of God seriously, and so should we....

Conclusion

Let's end chapter 1 with a few final thoughts...

#1 - Are you taking your mission seriously?

I will say it again...

The church is not Israel..

WE are not called to go and cross the Jordan and take more land for ourselves...

But we are called to take the gospel into the world and make disciples of the nations.

Imagine if Joshua would have responded to God in this way...

“I hear you Lord about taking the people over the Jordan, but I got a really nice in the wilderness, and a really good job.”

Would you really call me to give us those nice things I worked for and lead people into a land of people who don't like me?

I think Ill pass...

Life is good for me now...

I am comfortable..

My kids are little...

How about finding someone else?

Yet, guess million of believers tell God that every day...

Our mission is clear but it is not optional...

Get up and get busy taking the gospel to the world...

#2 - How well are you promoting unity among God's people?

Are you tempted to jealously at church?

Are you tempted to let other people do the work in the church?

Are you tempted to separate over issues that aren't that important?

Look, we are all in this world together as believers in the Lord Jesus...

WE all need each other and depend upon one another...

Division is the work of the enemy...

Repent of attitudes that separate you from other believers...

Stop saying, "I just don't like the way he is or the way she looks or they things they say..."

And work to grow until in the church...

Everybody plays a role in the mission that God has given us, and we none are more important than the other...

The world takes notice of our unity and love for one another, but it is turned off when we divide...

A house divided against itself cannot stand...

And the same is true of the church..

Let us pray...