



Be Strong And Very Courageous **Joshua 1:1-11**

Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. (Joshua 1:6-7—ESV).

Before the Hebrews entered the Promised Land, the Lord told Joshua, “be strong and courageous.” One of those three times, He emphasized “*very* courageous.” With these words, the LORD expressed to Joshua that entering and possessing the Promised Land would be dangerous and difficult. Joshua would face challenges just as difficult and heart-breaking as those Moses faced for most of his life.

When our Heavenly Father sent Jesus into the world, they knew Jesus would die on a cross, as they had planned. We know that in life and death, when facing demons and disease, Jesus lived strong and *very* courageous and He conquered them all. He even overcame His own death, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of His Father and ours.

Following Jesus' resurrection, His disciples spread this Good News about Jesus wherever they went. When they suffered persecution and punishment in prison, they demonstrated their strong and very courageous faith in Jesus. They kept preaching and even sang songs of praise behind bars, not knowing what the next day would bring.

When we decide to follow Jesus, we must consider the cost of discipleship, for we too will face sufferings and sorrows that will require a strong and very courageous faith in Jesus Christ. In Matthew 16:24, Jesus tells His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Knowing we need to be strong and courageous if we plan to follow Jesus, we can learn from Joshua how he did so and how he accomplished all that the LORD required of him.

First, remember, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham when He gave the Hebrew people the "Promised Land." Similarly, those who follow Jesus will receive the inheritance He has prepared for us here and hereafter. We receive part of that inheritance in this life as a down payment. Consider these words of Paul in Ephesians 1:13, 14, "In Him [Christ] you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." After this life, your life with Jesus will be far better than you can imagine now. God has planned a future for Jesus' followers far better than this life can give, and God will help us live strong and courageous during every challenge.

Second, Joshua needed to lead God's people into their new land and defeat those who would fiercely defend their pagan ways of living. To succeed, God told Joshua to stay on the right path at all times, and not allow himself to be diverted from doing what the Lord had commanded him. As followers of Jesus, we will face enemies of various kinds who will try to influence us, even in subtle ways, to turn us from what Jesus wants us to do. In Matthew 7:15, Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." Joshua faced some of those types too. We will need to be strong and courageous to keep following and obeying Jesus when tempted and facing what seem insurmountable odds.

Third, we know we need to be "strong and courageous." But how can we be "strong and courageous" and succeed (or even prosper) in the dismaying and seemingly impossible challenges we face daily from the world, the flesh, and the devil? We can prepare ourselves by doing what the LORD told Joshua to do. We can remember how the Lord God and His Son have provided the secret of living a strong and courageous life. We can become stronger and more courageous as we study and anchor our lives in the life and teachings of Jesus and the Apostles in the Bible. Joshua had good success and remained strong and courageous because he meditated on the Law of God both day and night, and he remembered the promises of God to His people. As we learned in Joshua 1:1-11, he remembered and relied on the promise that God would be with him wherever he went.

Remember, as followers of Jesus, we have promises from God that go far beyond the promise of an earthly land in which to live. In John 1:17, we read, “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” Joshua had the Law given by Moses. Today, we have the grace and truth of Jesus Christ given to us, His followers. Jesus reveals God graciously and faithfully to us every day, even as the LORD did to Joshua. If we believe in Jesus and truly receive Him into our lives, He lives within us.

Meditate on these words of the Apostle Paul in Colossians 1:24-27 and what they mean or can mean to you:

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, **the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.** To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, ***which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

We personally know the love of God in Jesus Christ. Because God loves us and we love God, we seek to obey all Jesus has commanded. We have greater help from the Bible, Jesus Christ, and the indwelling Holy Spirit than Joshua ever did. By receiving and trusting in Jesus, the living Word of God, and the Bible, Word of God written, we can live strong and courageous, even *very* courageous every day.