

Transformation Life Church

SERMON: Standing Out with Courage: The Life of Joshua.

August 11, 2024

To live the life that God calls us to requires not only faith and integrity, but also courage. Courage is not the absence of fear, but the capacity to do what is necessary no matter what. Today, we'll explore Joshua's life at a time when he has just been appointed as leader of the nation of Israel and given the responsibility to "possess" the land God has promised to the descendants of Abraham. Joshua's courage parallels and points to the courage exhibited by our Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, we aim to understand how courage is not just an admirable trait, but a necessary virtue for living a life that honors God. Through the lens of Joshua's journey and Jesus' ultimate sacrifice, we will explore actionable steps to boldly stand out for Jesus in our daily lives.

The Passage: Joshua 1:6-9 *"Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous; 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 have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. 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."*

Key Thought: Biblical courage is the unwavering response to challenges through the strength and steadfastness given by God.

TEACHINGS:

- I. **Joshua's Call to Courage (Mighty and Robust/Rooted/Steadfastness)** Joshua, the successor of Moses, was tasked with leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. God repeatedly commanded him to be strong and courageous. This was not a suggestion but a command. Courage for Joshua meant:
 1. **Obedying God's Commands (Joshua 1:7):** Joshua was instructed to adhere strictly to the law given by Moses. Courage involves unwavering obedience to God's Word, even when challenging or counter-cultural.
 2. **Meditating on the Word (Joshua 1:8):** Continual meditation on Scripture was essential for Joshua's success. Courage is rooted in a deep and constant engagement with God's Word.
 3. **Trusting God's Presence (Joshua 1:9):** God assured Joshua of His presence. True courage is founded on the confidence that God is with us.

Quote: “We don’t pursue God-size dreams because we live in the reality of our weakness and fear that God will abandon us.” (JMA)

II. Jesus – The Embodiment of Courage

Jesus Christ epitomizes ultimate courage. His entire ministry was marked by boldness in the face of opposition, unwavering commitment to God’s will, and sacrificial love.

1. **Obedience to the Father (John 14:31):** Jesus’ courage was demonstrated through His perfect obedience, even unto death. He said, “But so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.”
2. **Proclamation of Truth (John 18:37):** Jesus stood before Pilate and declared, “For this reason, I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth.” Despite knowing the consequences, Jesus courageously proclaimed the truth.
3. **Sacrificial Love (John 15:13):** “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” Jesus’ ultimate act of courage was laying down His life for humanity.

III. Life Applications: Living Courageously for Jesus

1. Embrace and Obey God’s Word:

- a. Make daily Scripture reading and meditation a priority. Let God’s Word be the foundation of your actions and decisions.
- b. Reflect on James 1:22, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” Obedience to God’s Word requires courage in a world that often rejects biblical truths.

2. Trust in God’s Presence:

- a. In moments of fear or uncertainty, remember Hebrews 13:5, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”
- b. Develop a habit of prayer, seeking God’s guidance and assurance in every situation.

3. Proclaim the Truth Boldly:

- a. Be a witness for Christ in your community, workplace, and social circles. As Paul exhorts in 2 Timothy 1:7-8, “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord.”
- b. Share the Gospel with love and confidence, trusting that God will use your testimony to touch hearts.

4. Practice Sacrificial Love:

- a. Follow Jesus’ example of sacrificial love in your relationships. Look for ways to serve others selflessly, as described in Philippians 2:3-4, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

- b. Engage in acts of kindness and service, reflecting Christ's love to those around you.

REFLECTIONS:

1. Does your Christian Walk resemble the courage of Joshua and Jesus? Would you characterize it as robust, well-established, and active?
2. Why is obedience to God's word essential to being courageous?
3. How necessary is it for you to be assured that God is with you? How does knowing He will never leave or forsake you empower you to be courageous?
4. If we are going to fulfill our God-given mission to go to all the world and preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations, we are going to have to be strong and courageous. What sacrifices are you willing to make to reflect God's love in a manner that brings them to Jesus?