



STRONG + COURAGEOUS

Shane Philip

September 6, 2020

The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are beginning a study in the Book of Joshua called **Strong + Courageous**. It is about facing our fears and trusting that God will walk through them with us and protect us from the giants. Over the next five weeks we're going to unpack some key knowledge from the way that Joshua led his people into unknown territory teaching us how to navigate the season we are facing right now.

QUESTION: What are you fearing today?

SCRIPTURE¹

Joshua 1:1-2, 6 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, 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. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them."

Exodus 14:11-12 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

Joshua 7-9 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. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; 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. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

OBSERVATION

The Israelites, enslaved in Egypt for 400 years, were finally free to receive God's promise of their own homeland, but that promise was delayed for 40 years because they were too afraid to move forward. An entire generation would die before they would reach its border and only Joshua and Caleb of the original group that left Egypt, lived to cross over into this new land.

QUESTION: What have you missed out on in your life because you were too afraid to go forward?

Moses had died and God had chosen Joshua to be his successor as the Israelites prepared to cross the Jordan River. He had reason to be fearful of what lay ahead because many dangers awaited them. On the other side were armies that were more powerful than they had ever seen before! Plus, they had virtually no battle experience. They seemed to forget that God had parted the Red Sea so that their parents could cross over and here was the little Jordan River standing in front of them. They thought that moment was too big for God or Joshua to manage for them so they began to moan and whine and complain and criticize. The last time

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

they did that, they wandered in a desert for forty years instead of moving into the new land after a trip of about two weeks! So, God said to Joshua, “Be strong and courageous”.

QUESTION: Why did God not allow Moses to enter the promised land before he died?²

APPLICATION

The season we’re experiencing is causing many of us fear and anxiety. We fear the loss of finances due to unemployment or illness; fear that our kids’ education is being short-circuited; fear of relationships being affected negatively -- and the list goes on. In these moments we are tempted to take shortcuts and go in our own direction. We consider complaining and blaming as antidotes, but that only makes things worse. We all have moments that seem to be too daunting to face. Maybe it is a presentation, or a recital or a speech, or our wedding day, or a championship game or just the unknown. This pressure almost paralyzes our ability to take a step forward.

QUESTION: When have you had a season where you turned from God or just became apathetic about your journey with Him? How did you justify that? What caused you to return to Him?

Often our fear doesn’t express itself as fear. Many times it manifests itself in other ways like disobedience, negativity, irritation, anger, complaining, blaming, doubt and a lack of faith. This is what happened to the children of Israel. Their fear led to disobedience which led to 40 years of wandering because they didn’t believe that God would take care of them.

QUESTION: What is the one area of your life where God is calling you to have courage today?

When God leads us into new territory, there are two responses available to us: “No, I’m not going to do it,” and “Yes.” The road to no is marked by fear and the road to yes is marked by courage. We think that courage means not feeling fear so that lets us out, right? But it is actually the opposite: The only people who can exercise courage are those who are afraid. That’s why we call brave people heroes because they have faced their giants, been afraid, and gone forward anyway.

QUESTION: Who in your life experience do you consider to be a hero? What did they do to be recognized in that way?

God sees whom He can trust before He blesses. When we obey God and His Word, it leads to blessing. God says when we do that we will be prosperous and successful. This means that, as long as we live, God will keep putting us into places of risk so we can trust Him and exercise courage. There God whispers to us, “Be strong and courageous!” He will lead us into new places of uncertainty and we will experience more fear so we can learn to trust Him more and we will grow. God says we are to read His Word, meditate on it and obey it. This is where we find clarity of purpose. Courage is taking the next step of faith in spite of our fear. When we do that, we become candidates for God’s blessing, so keep His Word and do what it says. God doesn’t take the fear away because courage leads to obedience which opens the door to blessing.

QUESTION: Tell us about a time when God has blessed your obedience.

QUESTION: How much time do you spend in meditation on God’s Word?

QUESTION: How long has it been since you prayed for an hour? If you are struggling with fear this Routed rhythm will help your faith and courage.

Thirteen hundred years after Joshua is told to be strong and courageous, Jesus tells us, “Fear not. For I am with you. I will never leave you or forsake you.” We are loved enough by God that He sent His Son to die for us. So, when we know that unless God shows up we are going to fail, that is where He does His best work.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we all experience fear even when we are journeying with You into our futures here on earth. But we are encouraged knowing that, no matter how difficult things seem to be, You are leading us through the valleys and into the future fully equipped to face our giants. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

² Numbers 20:10-11



QUESTIONS

QUESTION: What are you fearing today?

QUESTION: What have you missed out on in your life because you were too afraid to go forward?

QUESTION: Why did God not allow Moses to enter the promised land before he died?

QUESTION: When have you had a season where you turned from God or just became apathetic about your journey with Him? How did you justify that?

QUESTION: What is the one area of your life where God is calling you to have courage today?

QUESTION: What is the one area of your life where God is calling you to have courage today?

QUESTION: Who in your life experience do you consider to be a hero? What did they do to be recognized in that way?

QUESTION: What is the difference between what you just read and a "Prosperity teaching?"

QUESTION: Tell us about a time when God has blessed your obedience.

QUESTION: How much time do you spend in meditation on God's Word?

QUESTION: How long has it been since you prayed for an hour? If you are struggling with fear this Rooted rhythm will help your faith and courage.