

A Man's Heartbeat

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Throughout history great men have emerged in the face of adversity. There are many Biblical examples of this. When times could have been very defeating, there were men and women of God living who believed the greatness of God's Word and whose lives gave thrust to those around them in spite of trying circumstances. During one of those dark times, there arose a man by the name of Moses who led the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt and to the boundaries of the promised land. For forty years he taught them by both his walk with God and his walk among men.

There is a record in Psalms 103:7 that says God "made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel." While the children of Israel saw only the results or the acts of God, not the reasons behind them, God told Moses the whys and the wherefores. During the forty years in which Moses led the children of Israel, God's blessings remained upon them because Moses stood in their behalf. While Moses interceded for Israel, God continued to bless the children of Israel. When Moses interceded to God for the children of Israel, great and wonderful things happened. He covered for their mistakes and shortcomings time and time again. And yet one day he died.

Joshua 1:2a:

Moses my servant is dead. . . .

The man who had led the children of Israel for forty long years was dead. Now Israel needed a new leader. So one day God called Joshua, who had been an assistant to Moses, an understudy of Moses. He had worked side by side with Moses, carrying out responsibilities that Moses knew had to be carried out for the children of Israel. Now God spoke to Joshua, Moses' minister, and said, "Moses my servant is dead."

I have often thought of Joshua and God's call to him. Would you have wanted to be Joshua that day? No, thanks. Moses had had his hands full leading those stiff-necked Israelites. One day they would sing God's praises and the next day they would build a golden calf to worship. One day they would say, "Oh, Lord, we'll *always* do your will." The next day they would

be conspiring against Moses' leadership. Knowing the Israelite's pattern of behavior, how would you have liked to have been Joshua when God made His call?

You've got to get the picture of this in your heart. Put yourself in the context of this situation. When the Lord spoke to Joshua shortly after Moses' death, the children of Israel were in mourning, tears were flowing, their hearts were soft. But people don't stay downcast forever. That is why God spoke to Joshua that day, saying, "Moses my servant is dead." God was trying to get things going again by pointing out that Joshua and the rest of Israel could no longer rely on Moses; Moses was gone. He wasn't going to guide and supervise Israel ever again. There was nothing that Moses could do any longer because he was dead. God as much as said to Joshua, "Yes, Moses is dead; but others' lives go on. So quit mourning, quit crying because Moses is dead, but start moving again toward the goal of entering and living in the promised land."

Joshua 1:2:

Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

The essence of what God told Joshua that day was "Move! Now! Don't wait for two weeks, but go over Jordan now." Joshua could have cowered and backed off, saying, "Oh, no, the river's at flood stage. And right on the other side is the enemy, and the enemy is the best-equipped army in the whole world. They've got massive weaponry, even nuclear power."

But God didn't have a discussion with Joshua. He simply gave the command, "Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan." The children of Israel were to get up, pack up, and go immediately.

Time and again people tell me how thankful they are for the greatness of the Word I've taught them, how it's set them free, how it's changed their lives, how it's given them answers. But somehow or other I don't see them moving for God. If God saved you and God delivered you and God gave you

answers to life, why aren't you out sharing the greatness of that deliverance? "Talk the walk and walk the talk." Get going, people. Arise. Nobody gets totally delivered, is made *whole*, if he or she just remains silent without sharing the great truth of God's Word. We don't have to defend the gospel, we just speak of it and walk it.

No matter how great the enemy, no matter if there are giants, no matter what the obstacle, God has given the command MOVE. And as long as you and I live the greatness of God's Word, all the enemies of the world can't stop us because it is God's Word, and God's Word is powerful and effective and it lasts forever!

God said to Joshua, "You just get moving and walk into the land that I am giving you." Well, if God gives something, who do you think is going to take it away? If God said to march into the promised land, then those who obey are going to be landholders. Who do you think is going to stop them? I tell you even the best-aimed artillery couldn't hit one of the believers.

Joshua 1:3:

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I [past tense] given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

God put in the past tense what was yet to come about in the future. The children of Israel only needed to arise and go. God said, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." No one would want to have been a real estate man in Palestine that day. God said, "I've given it." And, ladies and gentlemen, He's the God who created the heavens and the earth and I guarantee you that there is not going to be a little thing like the Jordan River to stop Him. Nor will the enemies on the other side of that river stop Him. It says, "Arise and go." Most people might hesitate after this clipped command and say, "Lord, it's a wonderful Word of God, but I've got to think this through. Maybe I'll go tomorrow, or maybe the next day. I don't know if I'm up to it." People, you will die if you hesitate to act on God's Word. But if you dare to rise now with the greatness of God's Word and hold forth that greatness, God will again conquer the

enemy and we will again victoriously cross rivers—even at flood stage.

Joshua 1:5a:

There shall not any man [women too, because it's an inclusive noun] be able to stand before ["before" is "against" as to obstruct] thee all the days of thy life. . . .

What a comfort that revelation must have been to Joshua who had to step into the position of the monumental Moses. To have God say to him, "There shall not any man be able to stand against thee all the days of thy life" has to be encouragement of the strongest kind.

Verse 5b:

. . . as I was with Moses, so I [God] will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Oh, what courage, what dynamic believing this reassurance from God made possible. God said, "Joshua, I'll be with you just as I was with Moses. I will not fail you and I'll never forsake you. Only now arise, go over the Jordan."

Verse 6a:

Be strong and of a good courage. . . .

"Be strong." Strong in whom? The Lord. We can't be strong in our own strength. Our meager strength, what little there is, lasts only a few earthly years. You and I have to be strong in the strength of the Lord. When we are strong in the Lord, we will have good courage. Why should we fear since God in Christ has conquered fear for us? Why should we be discouraged when He has conquered discouragement? Why should we be downcast when He has conquered all those reasons for being downcast?

Verse 6:

Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.

Long before, God had promised the land to the fathers of the people who were presently living. God had brought the children of Israel back to this land to inherit it.

Verse 7a:

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law. . . .

Today in the Age of Grace that command would mean to be obedient to the greatness of the revelation of the Mystery, the revelation addressed to us in the Church Epistles.

Verse 7b:

. . . [the law] which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left. . . .

That means, "Do not turn to the right or to the left, but stay unswervingly on God's Word." When this is applied to the administration in which you and I live, it means to live and declare the greatness of the Mystery of God in Christ in you. Don't turn to the right or to the left. If you stay faithful to your assignment, look what God says will result.

Verse 7c:

. . . that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

Now, if I can read and understand at all what the Word says, it says that when we believe God's Word and then remain true to it, we are going to prosper. God wants His children to prosper; He told us more than once.

III John 2:

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper. . . .

Then you tell me, how do we as believers become prosperous? By putting God's Word at the center of our lives as our rule of faith and practice. That Word of God that gives to us the rules whereby God's spiritual ball game is played is to be adhered to. We turn not to the right nor to the left. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper." Prosperity mentally and physically, in all ways, is dependent upon our believing God's Word and continuing in it.

Joshua 1:8a:

This book of the law [the Word of God] shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night. . . .

You don't need to run around all day gossiping or telling dirty stories. If you're going to use your mouth, you should talk God's Word. That's what God says as recorded here in Joshua 1:8: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth." When you talk, you talk God's truth. That doesn't mean you carry your Bible every place and say, "Hey, let's see, Matthew 4:1, 'Then was Jesus. . . .'" No, no, don't be ridiculous. Speaking God's Word is a way of life, it's a walk. You are to implant that Word within your life so deeply that you are an epitomization of the Word. You have so put the Word of God in your life that whenever you speak, it is the Word being spoken, it is truth being spoken. That is what it means, "the law shall not depart out of thy mouth." You are going to meditate therein day and night. "To meditate" means you keep your mind on, you keep thinking about God's Word. Align your thinking and living with it.

Verse 8b:

. . . that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

The key to prosperity and success is to remain faithful to God's Word. After these great promises and encouragement, God advises Joshua a third time to be strong and courageous.

Verse 9a:

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. . . .

God told Joshua in verse 6, verse 7, and now again in verse 9 to be strong and courageous. The first thing the enemy always endeavors to do is introduce fear into one's life. He tries to make us afraid before we ever get out of the starting blocks. Well, ladies and gentlemen, with God in Christ in us, the hope of glory, with eternal life, why should we ever be afraid? "Be not afraid." Be not afraid and you will not be dismayed. Why?

Verse 9b:

. . . for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Wherever we go, we can be energized and can overflow with the greatness of the power of God. Our God is with us wherever we go. God protects us, He keeps us, He inspires us, He guides us. People, we can be where we are without being fearful, without being dismayed, without being discouraged. Outside of God, man has nothing to turn to. It takes strength and courage to rise up and go with God because He defies circumstances which your eyes have beheld, circumstances you've lived with. Confidence in God's Word overcomes fear of threatening circumstances. Joshua is certainly a testimony to this.

Verse 9b:

. . . Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Human beings come and go—are born, live and die. But the Word of God, it lives and abides forever. So put your complete trust in that Word and live it to its full potential, people. Move out with it because "whithersoever thou goest" God is with you, God is by your side, God lives within you. Move out with the greatness of His Word. Now is the time. Arise, go, move onward to hold forth God's Word "for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." God has promised it. You believe it, and you shall see it. 