

## Veteran's Day: Be Strong and Courageous 11.13.11

Scripture: Joshua 1:5-9 ESV

Video: "I Know Promo" [2:33]

**Intro:** "I Know" sermon series starts next week. Study of Romans 8, "greatest chapter." The one we go to most often in times of trouble. When we need assurance of God's goodness and love. Our focus will be on the difference between knowing and feeling. We often live our Christian lives off of our feelings. Problem is that our emotions betray us. There are things we need to KNOW when we don't FEEL it.

One of those things we need to be reminded of we find in Joshua 1. "Be Strong and Courageous because God is with us." Background - Joshua greatest army general of the Bible. Led people into promised land when Moses died.

### This advice is especially important to me WHEN...

- I'm going through times of TRANSITION. Joshua was facing a transition in leadership. Moses had been the greatest leader ever known. Led Israel out of Egypt. How do you follow a guy like that?
- I'm attempting something NEW TO ME. Political and religious leadership was new to Joshua. One thing to be the 2nd in command - another entirely to BE THE leader!
- The odds are OVERWHELMING against me. Joshua was facing tough odds. Crossing into a land described 40 years earlier as containing "giants!"
- I'm feeling INADEQUATE to the task. Leading the people of Israel tough for Moses. How could Joshua do it? Surely he was feeling inadequate.
- I believe I'm OBEYING GOD. Doing what God requires is never as easy as we might think. At best inconvenient. At worst dangerous. To obey God requires God's help!

### The time to BE strong & courageous is when I FEEL...

WEAK and FEARFUL !!!

*"Therefore my spirit faints within me, my heart within me is appalled."  
Psalm 143:4 ESV*

*"I am losing all hope; I am paralyzed with fear."  
Psalm 143:4 NLT*

It's not when we are FEELING strong and courageous we need to be s&c. It's when we are most vulnerable. When things go wrong. When I feel inadequate. **Personal Story of this week.**

Transition: KEY QUESTION TODAY!

*How can I BE strong and courageous when I FEEL the opposite?*

### 3 Ways to BE Strong and Courageous

**#1 - TRUST GOD will be there when I'm weak and fearful.**

There's a reason why we call this "faith." Believing this truth, that God will be there for me, when I'm most weak and frightened - takes faith - believing the truth of what I cannot see or feel. **Joshua:**

"Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous." Joshua 1:5b-6a ESV

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9b ESV

Notice that in both places where Joshua is told to be strong and courageous, he is also told that God will be with him. God never leaves us or forsakes us! Our strength and courage do not come from our own resources, but from His. The problem is that it is at the very times when I am MOST weak and MOST fearful that I need to KNOW that God is with me. **If I wait for those moments to remind myself, it'll be too late. That's why #2 is so important...**

**#2 - FILL UP my faith regularly. Just like filling up gas tank...**

Here's a truth that we don't talk about enough in church. *Faith leaks!* Just because I had courage yesterday doesn't mean I'll have it today. I have to be reminded often that God will be with me. **Here's how:**

- A. **READ MY BIBLE** every day. Think about it. Meditate on it.  
"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night." Joshua 1:8a ESV

We've been emphasizing the YouVersion.com mobile apps. Good to be in a reading plan where you're engaging with God's Word for yourselves. We see something more here. "not depart from your mouth" means they talk about it. "meditate on it day and night" means they thought a lot about it. This Book of the Law, remember, was started by the Lord God giving Ten Commandments to Moses on the mountain. And much of what was written by Moses since then was through his conversations with God. After Moses, we hear from 40 others who also had similar experiences with God over 1500 years. We ignore it to our own peril. God's Word should still be the anchor of our lives.

- B. **HANG OUT WITH PEOPLE** who are doing A above. When I forget that God will be there when I need Him, I need reminding.  
"When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours." Romans 1:12 NLT

It would be tough to not let it depart from our mouths unless we had other people to talk to! Who are the people in your life you can share what God is teaching you in His Word? Is your family a safe place? Do you have a small group of people who you purposely get together with to talk about God's Word. Sometimes God reminds us best that He will never leave us or forsake us by bringing other people in our lives to remind us.

We should be intentional about this. Form a small group of people and get together with them at least every other week to talk about Bible and to pray. **Example - Women's Bible Study.**

C. ATTEND CHURCH each week with others who are doing both A & B above. *When I least feel like going is when I most need to go!*

*“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.” Hebrews 10:25a NIV84*

Three things about this passage that's important for us tonight.

#1) *Don't give up meeting together.* That is always the option for us and our enemy pounds this pretty hard. Haven't some of you noticed that there always seems to be something else pulling on you Sunday evenings to keep you from coming? That's not accidental. That's the spiritual battle going on for you. When you come to church you have the best opportunity to “fill up your faith” through prayer, singing, communion, and teaching.

#2) *It's a habit* - habits are the result of repeatedly doing something over and over again so that it becomes a part of your life. So that, for you, it's NOT optional! And finally

#3) *we encourage one another at church.* Encourage literally means putting courage in. Even if, theoretically, you didn't need to come to church because you're already “filled up,” you have no idea how much you might encourage someone else. If you don't come, they miss out on YOUR encouragement!

#3 - DO WHAT MY FAITH REQUIRES despite my fear.

Here we come to one of the most important actionable items of how we can be strong and courageous in the face of our fear and weakness. We DO something about it, despite my fear! **Joshua:**

*“Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you.” Joshua 1:7a ESV*

*“...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 good success.” Joshua 1:8b ESV*

The first two items on list are preparatory, what we do in advance of our times of distress - BEFORE we find ourselves weak and fearful. Still, no matter how much trust God and “fill up” our faith, there will be times in our lives when our faith is put to the ultimate test. These are the times when our fear and weakness would otherwise paralyze us. We freeze where we are - afraid to take the next step. We can't go backwards, but that next step doesn't seem possible. It's like we are standing on the edge of a precipice - paralyzed with fear. *Nothing drains our faith more than this being frozen with fear.* Remember we talked about filling up our faith? This being paralyzed, afraid to take the next step is like draining our gas tank in our cars. If we stay paralyzed in fear our faith will completely disappear. **It's like Indiana:**

**Play Video: “Indiana's Leap of Faith” [1:53]**

**Conclusion:** How's your faith? If we had an instrument that could measure your faith by measuring your strength and courage, how would you measure up? Fooled you. Not only is there no such instrument, there never could be. We don't measure faith by how strong or courageous we feel. We are most courageous when we are also most fearful. The better faith question follows this outline: #1 - Are you trusting God? #2 - Are you filling up every day? #3 - Are you taking those steps of faith despite your fear and weakness? **Let's pray!**