

Message: All The Days of Your Life

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Shift Sermon Series

Joshua 1:1-9

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Pentecost Sunday

Moses may have been the best leader in the Old Testament, but there came a time for a shift in leadership. God's mission is always greater than one person. Joshua was given the challenge of taking up the mantle and leading a new generation of Israelites. He would face some difficult times. The Lord told Joshua to "*be strong and courageous.*" That's great advice, but how can people be strong and courageous? As the text states, God promised to be with Joshua. He was told to maintain his relationship with God through His Word. Josh had to focus on the Lord and not lose his nerve. We believe God speaks to us through Scripture, tradition (the church), reason and experience. All of these are vitally important, but we always begin our understanding of implementing God's will with Scripture. A follower of Jesus will be devoted to understanding and applying God's word to daily life.

My first attempts to read the Bible after becoming a Christian was as a young teenager. At that time, the Bible seemed irrelevant. Thankfully, someone led me. I learned the parable of the Sower (Matthew 13) explains how our hearts are like one of four soils God's word falls on, each yield a different result. Someone else explained the book of James. That little book of only five chapters applied to me. I slowly learned the Gospel stories like the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. Another friend challenged me to memorize scripture. I began to read, understand and apply the Bible. The pursuit that started as a young teen has lasted *all the days of my life* too. The Bible has been my guide, light, instructor, counselor and source of revelation to the identity of Jesus Christ. It is difficult to follow Jesus if we don't know the Bible.

APPLICATION: I believe the goal of life is about 2 things: wisdom & relationships. If we have neither, we are a mess. What good is wisdom without relationships? If we have relationships without wisdom, watch out! The best way to have wisdom and meaningful relationships is to know the Lord. The best way to know Him is to follow the instructions He gave to Joshua.

The most productive people embody two things: they are emotionally healthy, and they desire to grow. Faith in Jesus helps us do both. So does Christian community. How is your emotional health? What are you doing to grow in your faith? How are you doing with your prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness?

The **Mission** (“What were they supposed to do?) **INHERIT THE LAND**. “Why?” God promised the land to Abraham and this was to be God’s way to reach the world with His grace. God wanted to use a people to proclaim His word to the world. They needed a home.

The **Attitude**: “**BE strong & Courageous**” 3x What’s the opposite of being strong/courageous?

Weak, faint, feeble, fragile, limp, cowardly, soft, spineless, faint-hearted, toothless, vacillating, inadequate. Joshua must have had all of these feelings of inadequacies. Moses did.

How would you:

a.) like to be the leader to follow Moses? b.) like to lead the Israelites?

The **BEHAVIOR**: “**DO the Law of Moses**” Meditate upon it

The **RESULT**: **Prosperous & good success**

Joshua 1:1-9

*After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, ² "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. ³ Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. ⁵ No man shall be able to stand before you **all the days of your life**. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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 good success. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be*

frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

An Asburian, Jeff Wilkie, recommended a book in 2004, Managing Transitions Making the Most of Change about 6 months after we moved from our previous location. Bridges uses our story of Moses leading the people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. Numbers 13-14 showed their opportunity to enter the Promised Land.

ENDING/LOSING/LETTING GO –

NEUTRAL ZONE – Oppression in Egypt was over for the Israelites but they didn't go directly into the Promised Land. Change is not binary – "A" and "B" – there's nearly always a "C." Managing Transitions calls it, "The Neutral Zone." Stuck in neutral or park. The NZ is inevitable with change. It takes a while to figure it out. When you start in school, graduate, take a job, get married, come home from the hospital with a baby, move, take a new job, transfer, retire – you're in the NZ. When someone gets out of prison – they really must peddle to not return. The odds are stacked against them. If we embrace the change psychologically you "transition" into the Promised Land. But it is possible to get stuck in the NZ and spend the rest of your life murmuring, griping, complaining about the glory of Egypt. The "Wilderness" is where the Israelites went. Numbers 13-14 showed their opportunity to enter the Promised Land. They left in April and could have gone into the Promised Land about 18 months later. Sometimes oppressed people just can't get over it. They had a victim mentality. They were dispirited. Their identity was crushed. They believe the negative. In a time to go forward, the Israelites shoved it into reverse to return to Egypt.

It's not the change that stops us, it's the transition. Change is situational (they exited out of Egypt into the wilderness) but they were supposed to enter the PL. They weren't able to do make that transition (psychologically/spiritually). They couldn't adjust to a new reality. They got stuck in "the good ole days." How would you like to be the leader to follow Moses? How would you like to lead the Israelites?

Life is more than the two options: Egypt and the Promised Land.

NEW BEGINNING – Promised Land. A land flowing with "milk and honey."

2 points:

1.) **NZ's = inevitable/risky.** There's no guarantees it will work out. COVID 19 has put us in The Neutral Zone right now. We don't know what will happen. The

wilderness is a weird place. Most don't like it or want to live there permanently (though some actually DO). We have anger, anxiety and fear about leaving. We can't go back. Egypt isn't open. When we re-open it's going to feel weird. People will be wearing masks. Social distancing. No childcare. No communion. No shaking hands. Like D-Day, which was 76 years ago this coming Saturday (Bill Mason turned 17 the day before and enlisted in the Army when he was 18), D-Day is not the end, but it is the beginning of the end.

Have a **purpose** (mission – why you're doing it), "**Company policy**" means there is **no understandable reason for this action.**"

Have a **picture** (vision – what it looks like),

Have a step-by-step **plan** (details - how you'll get there)

Give everyone a **part** to play ("here's your responsibility")

We want to help you understand the PURPOSE ("Why?") we're doing this. We

want to help you have a PICTURE of what it will look like ("What to Expect").

We've communicating our PLAN (June 14th will be the first step in this). You have a PART to play in helping us get out of the NZ.

2.) Today = Pentecost Sunday = the day the church remembers the outpouring of The HS. In OT, the Spirit was given only to select people, like Moses/Joshua at a certain time for a certain purpose. God would be with those individuals and everyone was to follow them. Now the HS is given to all people who desire Him. The exhortation is the same for us today: Be strong & courageous. Do not be frightened. Do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go – and this by the power of HS. God has done His part; it's up to us to receive His Spirit. We need to have the attitude and the behavior. God will prosper us and give us success, not to make us financially wealthy, but to accomplish His mission = Helping Others Follow Jesus. Are you full of anxiety & fear. Are you stuck in the NZ? So were the disciples after the crucifixion. The resurrection changed their worldview but they didn't have the power they needed to live as Jesus desired. That changed when they received the HS. So can we.

Addendum (my "darling" – not in sermon)

Prosperity = 27x; Prosperous = 7x; Prospers = 4x Prosper = 26x (but only once in NT)

1 Cor 16:1-4 Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you

accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

Success = 11x Successful = 2x (Joseph & David were both successful wherever they went)

76/77 "Prosperity, Prosperous, Prosper, Success & Successful" are found in OT. The only time "prosper" is found it's not about getting but about giving. "The Prosperity Gospel" never appears in the gospel – and only once in the NT. There is another place it is found in the KJV: 3 John 2 *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.* It's translated "be well" in the ESV

The Prosperity Gospel teaching = OT. OT worldview isn't about heaven. It's about enjoying life here and now and trying to live to the best of your ability. The "wisdom literature" reflects this heavily. That's where you find prosperity. But in the NT, you find the emphasis on "The Kingdom of Heaven." Jesus wasn't earthbound. He said, *"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."* Matt. 8:20-21. Jesus didn't say, "Follow me and I will make you prosper or successful." He said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." He told people if they followed Him, they'd have trouble because the world would give them trouble. Asbury's Mission statement is "Helping Others Follow Jesus." If you follow Jesus, I'm absolutely convinced your life on this earth will be much better. I think you will prosper and will have success. But make the focus following Jesus and not "prospering and being successful." The message of Jesus can easily be co-opted or corrupted.