

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide  
SB 11.12.2023

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT– JOSHUA 1:1-9

## Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel states, “Four different times, God tells Joshua to ‘be strong and courageous.’ Those aren’t suggestions, they’re commands. Leaders need to be strong. I don’t mean strong in the physical sense. Some of the ‘strongest’ leaders I know are small in stature. I’m talking about spiritual strength. Leaders need to be strong in faith, and in their convictions, and in their character. They also need to be courageous. Courage isn’t the absence of fear. It’s the willingness to forge ahead in spite of those fears. It takes courage to lead, and to go against the grain, and to do the unpopular thing, and to step out in faith. That’s why God tells Joshua repeatedly to ‘be strong and courageous.’ After giving four exhortations to ‘be strong and courageous,’ God concludes His speech by telling Joshua ‘not to be afraid or discouraged.’ If you think about it, fear and discouragement are the inverse of strength and courage.” Let’s get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from the Pastor Daniel’s sermon?
2. Has the Lord ever asked you to do something that brought fear and trembling? Were you able to find peace in this difficult task? How so? Please explain?

## Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOSHUA 1:1-5

The Book of Joshua picks up where Deuteronomy left off as a continuing story of the people of God. Joshua demonstrated how God would fulfill His covenant promise to the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) to give the land of Canaan to their descendants (Gen 12:2; 15:16; Deut. 30:20). Verse 1 sets the narrative for the Book of Joshua: “After the death of Moses the Lord’s servant, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, who had served Moses” (v. 1; Deut. 34:5). Over a period of 40 years, Moses had led the people of Israel out of bondage in Egypt to the edge of the promised land. However, due to his sin at Meribah (Num 20:12-13), Moses was not permitted to enter the promised land. God selected Joshua to lead the people into the promised land without Moses.

1. In Joshua 1:1-2, what happened that could cause great fear for Joshua?
2. What did God do to give Joshua confidence to move forward?
3. How did God reassure Joshua? Was this reassurance based upon the character of Joshua or upon the character of God?
4. Have someone read Joshua 3:10-17. Why do you think that God allowed Joshua to see the waters open and walk through on dry ground? Explain?

At this pivotal point in Israel’s history, God spoke to Joshua, reminding Joshua of His specific promises to His people. With specific detail (vv. 4-5), God laid out for Joshua what He would do through Joshua’s life and leadership. The rest of the Book of Joshua demonstrates God’s faithfulness to fulfill this promise to Joshua.

## ***“PROMISES” in 2023***

**We can identify if Joshua was fearful of the task he had been given. In verses 1-5, God reassured Joshua with a reminder of His covenant promises to His people. Where do we turn when faced with a difficult task? In our own strength, a difficult task can seem hopeless. Yet, God provides hope in His promises to be with us through hardship and use us for His purposes. We can trust that God will be faithful to His people.**

**Pastor Daniel noted** *“In verse 4 the Lord outlines the borders of the land He is about to give them. If you look closely at what He says, He essentially tells him, ‘From the River (Euphrates) to the sea (Mediterranean), I’m giving the land to thee.’ I find that interesting considering what we see happening at all of the pro-Palestinian rallies that are popping up everywhere. The chant that has taken root at these rallies and become a rallying cry for the Palestinian movement is, ‘From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.’ They are referencing the area between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea and saying that it all belongs to the Palestinian people. It is a call for the extermination of the Jewish state. God says the land belongs to the Jews from the river to the sea. That’s why a two-state solution will never work.”*

1. Who owns the land mentioned in this passage?
2. Who did God give the Land of Israel to?
3. How would you answer someone who says the Jewish people should not be allowed to live in the land of Israel?

### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOSHUA 1:6-9**

**Joshua learned to value the presence of God from his mentor Moses, who cherished the presence above everything else. In fact, God’s presence meant so much to Moses that he once told the Lord, ‘I don’t want the Promised Land without your presence.’ Think about what Moses is saying there. If I could have all of God’s blessings, and a great life of ease and comfort, but the Lord isn’t part of it, I don’t want it. Could you say the same thing? If you could have heaven, with all its joys – no more sickness or death etc. – but Jesus wasn’t there, could you be happy? Moses and Joshua would say no. To them, the presence was everything.**

1. God directed Joshua to move forward based on His promises to Israel. How does this address Joshua’s possible fear of this challenge?
2. God said Joshua would prosper by meditating on the Word of God. How does this apply to our lives today?
3. How does God’s promise of presence change our perspective on a difficult circumstance?

**In all of life, Christians should recognize that our identity and mission is fundamentally based on what God has done, is doing, and promises to do. This is at the core of the gospel: we are forgiven of our sin, and we belong to Him because of His work in Jesus. We respond to God in obedience because of His faithfulness to us. Joshua’s obedience to God was based on the character and promises of God. Likewise, as Jesus’ followers, we seek to fulfill the mission of God in the Great Commission based on the finished work of Jesus. Just as God promised His presence with Joshua, we have been given the presence of God through the person of the Holy Spirit. Like Joshua, we can rest assured and be strong and courageous, knowing that God will be with us every step of the way.**

1. What specific challenges do you feel God has called you to face? How does the story of Joshua encourage you in these situations?
2. As a child of God, what resources do you have available to you as you seek to fulfill God’s calling on your life?
3. Why is it so important that we spend time reading Gods word and knowing it?

## *“PROMISES” in 2023*

### Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

How does the Lord use His word to encourage us? In lots of ways. When I read this book, I encounter stories about other people who went through circumstances that are like the ones I’m going through now and I can draw encouragement by seeing God’s faithfulness to them. If God saw them through their trials, then I know He will see me through mine. Something else that happens to me when I read the Bible is I get to know the heart and nature and character of God. The Bible isn’t a how-to guide for life. It’s not just a book of tips and tricks on how to maximize your joy. It is the revelation of who God is and His plan for the world. The more you get to know Him, the more you will be inclined to trust Him. You will learn that He’s trustworthy, and faithful, and merciful, and just, and good, and gracious.

1. What circumstances are causing you fear currently?
2. How do the big picture realities of the Christian life (God’s promises, our responsive responsibility) help you navigate the specific circumstances or difficulties you may be facing?
3. How does the fact that God is with you and for you and is fighting for you change your attitude toward trials?

**PRAYER:** Give thanks to God for His faithfulness to keep His promises to us. Pray that God will empower each group member to feel His constant presence and give them courage to boldly follow Him, **NO MATTER WHAT!**

*“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.” {Isaiah 43:2}*