

How Do We Get Courage?.. Joshua 1:9

“Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and courageous?” Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

There are a lot of people who feel defeated by the past, they feel discouraged about today, and they’re kind of just drifting into tomorrow.

I’ve said this many times.... God doesn’t want us to drift through life. He doesn’t want us to waste our life.

Please get this because it’s important.

Most people misunderstand the term “destiny.” They think it means fate. They think that they can’t change it. That they can’t control it. That we don’t have anything to do with it.

That God determines our destiny and it’s going to happen no matter what we do.

Nothing could be further from the truth. That’s what Islam teaches. That’s what Buddhism (boo-dis-um) teaches. That’s not what Christianity teaches.

In fact the Bible teaches two very important truths about our destiny. **The first one is, God's destiny for our life is good.**

We may have had a terrible past. But the truth is... the story isn’t over. We haven’t come to the end of the movie yet.

We may feel hopeless because of things that have happened. But God says we have a hope and a future.

Get this: **We get to choose our destiny.** God gives us a choice. In fact, we can miss the destiny God has planned for us. It’s not automatic.

God’s Word shows us....here are two illustrations.

Let me give you a little bit of background. Moses leads the Israelities out of slavery in Egypt. It should have taken eleven days to walk from Egypt to Israel.

But because they didn’t have the faith and were afraid to take the risk, they spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness.

Now, let's fast forward to Joshua. He's going to replace Moses and he's going to lead Israel across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Right before that happens, God says your destiny is your choice.

Look at **Deuteronomy 30:15** **"I set before you today life and prosperity, or death and destruction...** [That's the destiny you get to choose. Life and prosperity or death and destruction.] **If you love the Lord your God and you walk in his ways, and you keep his commands, then you'll live and you'll increase, and the Lord your God will bless you.**

Notice two things about this very powerful verse. First, God had a destiny for the children of Israel. But you get to choose....He said, I've already chosen this land for you. I'm going to give you this land.

But, he says, you're going to have to possess it. I'm not just going to hand it to you on a platter.

He says, the choices we make – notice! – affect our children too. The last phrase: Deuteronomy 30:19 **"Choose life so that you and your children may live."**

In the next ten years, it's going to be the most critical ten years in your life so far. Some of you are going to get married in the next ten years. Some of you are going to retire in the next ten years. If you have a second grader, she will be graduating in ten years. A lot of things are going to happen. We have to realize the choices we are making affect our children.

God tells Joshua some things to do in order to possess his destiny.

1. Prepare a plan.

We're never going to possess our future if we're stuck in the past. The first thing God said to Joshua, Joshua 1:2 "Moses my servant is dead."

Why would that be the first thing God would say to Joshua...

What God was probably saying to Joshua is..... There will never be another Moses and there will never be another era like it... but I'm still God and it's time to move on.

So here is the question....What do we need to bury in our life? What do we need to let go of? Moses is dead. It's over. You know the most difficult thing to do is to keep a corpse from stinking.

We cannot get on with our destiny if we're always thinking about the past. The 60/70/80/90 are over... all the decades we've been through in our life are over.

Church was so good in the 60/70 when all we sang were the hymns... that may be true but the 60/70 are over....

Life was so good when Amy Grant and Michael w. Smith/ Russ Taft sang contemporary songs. Yes that may all be true....but the 80's are over....but just because those decades are over... that doesn't mean our destiny is over.

Moses is dead, but God has a plan for Joshua....Then God says, *"Get ready to cross the Jordan River."* In other words you've got to prepare.

Question: Where do we want to be in ten years? Do we want to be walking in our destiny or just drifting?

I read the story where one guy told a very successful author, "You're just lucky your book was a bestseller." The author replied...."Maybe, but I find that the more I prepare the luckier I get. Twelve hours a day writing and rewriting and rewriting was more than just luck. I got up at four thirty in the morning. From five a.m. to five p.m. I wrote on that book for seven months without fail. It was a very disciplined thing. The more I prepared, the luckier I got.

Look at verse 10....**go through the camp and tell everyone, 'Prepare your provisions! In three days you'll cross the Jordan and you're going to go in and take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving for you to own!'**

Many times christians think preparation is a lack of faith...It's a good thing Joseph stored up food for the famine or they all would have died....Every good rancher who owns cows get hay in the summer because winter is coming.

Getting hay for the winter is not a lack of faith.... I understand a different season is coming and I need to be prepared for it.

Have we made any plans for where we want to be in ten years? With our family, with our finances, with our life, with our career, with our relationship to Christ, with our church, with our ministry.

Look at Psalm 20:4 It's a prayer. **"May he [God] give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed."**

God says I want to give you the desire of your heart. I want to make your plans succeed. Here's the problem: God can't make our plans succeed if we've never made any.

Go through the book of Proverbs. It says, look at the ants. The ants are smarter than most people. They plan. They store up for the winter in the summer.

Most people are going to get to retirement and have nothing to live on because they're not making any plans. They're not saving. They're spending everything they've got. This is why we offer the Dave Ramsey course....

Jesus said it like this: "No king goes to battle without first making a plan." Luke 14. He says, "No builder builds a tower without first making a plan."

Most people have spent more time planning their vacation than they have planning their lives. I'm certain most women have spent more time planning their wedding than they've planned their life.

As your pastor I am committed to your success. In fact I pray for your success. But If we want to possess our destiny first we have to make a plan.

2. We must build our life *completely* on God's Word.

Notice **Joshua 1:7-8. "But [God says to Joshua] 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.**

I discovered that a person who has a Bible that's falling apart usually isn't falling apart.

Psalm 34:10 NLT "Those who seek the Lord will lack no good thing." He's saying don't seek fame. Don't seek wealth. Don't seek success. Don't seek prosperity. Don't seek peace. Don't seek comfort. He says, you seek the Lord. **Matthew 6:33 "Seek first his kingdom and all these other things will be added unto you."**

If we want to be successful... God First, Others Second, Self third.....

This is very important but this is the hardest of all.

3. To possess our destiny we must courageously step out in faith.

The people are going to cross the Jordan River. Three times God says this phrase: *“Be strong and courageous...”* God says it to him in verse 6 and in verse 7 and in verse 9.

Why did God have to repeat this three times for Joshua as he’s getting ready to possess his future? There are a couple reasons.

Joshua was intimidated by his predecessor. How would you like to succeed Moses? You’re the next CEO of Israel, after Moses. I don’t think so. He’s got big shoes to fill. So he’s a little scared.

So God says, Moses is dead but I’m not. I’m the same God who did the miracles through Moses and I can do them through you if you will courageously step out in faith.

The other reason he tells him to do this is because you’re always going to have to fight for your destiny. It’s not a cake walk. In fact, the life that God has planned for us includes two things: battles and blessings. And we’re going to have them both.

We’re always going to have to fight for our destiny. Our brain prefers comfort and predictability. For most of us, settling in on the couch watching Netflix while sipping some warm tea sounds like an ideal plan.

After all, not much can go wrong sitting on the couch. But God wants us to unwrap the bubble wrap surrounding our life. So how do we get courage...**Courage comes when we are more concerned about God’s reputation than self-preservation.**

Self-preservation causes us to withdraw, stay on the couch, or retreat... when we look at the little we have compared to what others have, we cower down, but when it’s about magnifying God’s reputation we take what little we have and God gets the Glory. This is true with Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, Elijah and the disciples.

Courage comes when we have a cause bigger than ourselves.... We are always trying to get comfortable and God is always trying to give us a cause.

Let me give you a little background here. Joshua knows that in the land that Israel is going to take, are seven nations.

Every single one of them is larger than Israel. Every single one of them is stronger than Israel. And every single one of them has a trained army. So he’s a little frightened.

Joshua knows that the moment he crosses the Jordan River into Canaan it's going to be considered an act of war by all seven of those nations. He's going to spend his life in battles. And he did.

We're going to have battles and blessings in our life. And here are the reasons why we need to be bold. **First, God is with us.**

We don't know what we're going to go through but we know God's going to be with us.

- **Two, God keeps his promises.**

That gives me boldness. That gives me confidence. Verse 6, *"Be determined and confident, for you will lead these people to possess the land I promised.* God keeps His promises.

- **Third, God has told us to do it.**

God has told us to go after our destiny. God is saying if I tell you to do it, I'm going to be with you and I keep my promises.

So be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Look at the words "afraid," and "discouraged," because we need to be aware that those are the two enemies that are going to keep us from fulfilling our destiny.

Why? **Because fear keeps us from starting and discouragement keeps us from finishing.**

That's true in our life. Fear keeps us from starting on the path God has for us. And discouragement keeps us from finishing and possessing the land.

The first step is always the scariest. Stepping into the Jordan.....we don't have any assurance that there's going to be a miracle. It's just God has said I'm going to be with you. I'm going to help you. I'm going to do it.

Your level of fear can reveal your closeness to God, the more you are afraid, the farther you are from God.

Let me ask you a personal question. What's your Jordan? What's the big thing you've got to cross in order to reach your destiny?

What is it that's going to require you to take a step of faith?

What's keeping you in the desert?

I want to remind us that when God gave this word to Joshua he was 80 years old. Eighty years old! And at 80 years of age God called him to do his greatest work.

Let's stop excusing ourselves from God's calling on our life by whining about our inadequacy....

But I am too old, But I am too young, A well known author Lysa Terkeurst.... Said.... God is bigger than your but. (one t.)

Of course, we are not smart enough, of course we are not strong enough, of course we are not good enough. Of course we are inadequate....

But God has chosen the foolish and weak and the lowly and He is with us....

This church is crossing the Jordan.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for what you've done in our church. Thank you for all the miracles. We want to step out in faith in courage. Maybe that step of faith is to start tithing. Maybe that step of faith is to lead or host a life group.

Lord, I'm telling you: We may be scared to death, but we are willing. I want you to take over my life, Jesus so that I might fulfill the destiny that I was created for. In your name, I pray. Amen.