

Joshua 1:1-9

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[0 : 01] If you want to turn, Joshua is where we're going to be this morning, the book of Joshua. It is December 30th, 2012.

There's roughly 37 hours left in the year. Now's the time to make those resolutions, right? To make those changes. To start the year off, turn the leaf over, however you want to say it.

It's that time where we start thinking, what are some areas that I can change? What are some areas that I'm really disappointed in and I want to do better in? Some big changes even, sometimes.

Examples like losing weight or decreasing debt or increasing retirement or saving for kids' college.

Not all our changes are physical or financial.

Some are even spiritual. I want to be in the Word more. I want to pray more. I want to trust God more. In all these resolutions that we make, and maybe not everybody in this room makes resolutions, but I know some of us do.

[1 : 14] In all these resolutions, what is it, what's your drive? What's your reason for making those resolutions? Because if the drive is right, if your reason is right for making these resolutions, then your succeeding increases substantially.

The chance of succeeding. The chance of succeeding. But let's be honest. Most resolutions don't usually last, do they? In fact, 80%, according to the New York Times, 80% fail or give up by Valentine's Day.

February 14th. February 14th. February 14th. That's six weeks maybe? Wow. It's 80%. Well, the question, of course, to that statement is why.

Why do these resolutions fail? Why do we fail in not keeping our goals and our resolutions? Well, I believe it has to do with that drive. That reason why we do it.

Our will, we're going to act on what our heart loves. So, and what our heart desires.

[2 : 23] So what we love, what we desire, we're going to do. So, if we love vanity, and that vanity is what's driving us to lose weight or eat healthier, then chances are it's going to fail.

Well, and if we love financial security, then our drive will be to save more or invest more. And the counter to that is to not be generous as God wants us to be.

And the chances of that resolution succeeding will also be low. The problem with all of us is our heart. The things we love, the things we hold dear, the things we treasure, we act on.

Now, there's an assumption in making resolutions. And that assumption is that I am strong enough. That I can work harder and get, and see this to the end.

Well, the assumption is founded on your and my ability to do what is not in line with our hearts most of the time. Because we're going to do what we love.

[3 : 32] So, when we read in Matthew 22, verses 37-40, it says, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On those two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. So, when we read those verses, and we hear those verses, it should rattle a little bit of emotion in us.

Rattle a little bit of conviction. Because what we love, we will act on. And Matthew 22 says, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and love your neighbors.

So, if we go back to the drive analogy, if we go back to the reason why we make resolutions. If we love vanity, if we love vanity, then it is that vanity that is driving us to lose weight, to eat better, to exercise more.

And if we love vanity in this way, then we are finding our identity in our appearance. We're finding our identity in how people see us, and not in Jesus.

[4 : 44] And if we are not loving God, loving Jesus with all our heart, soul, and mind, as in Matthew 22 says, then in turn we are not loving our neighbors as ourselves.

And if we love security, then that will drive us to set goals and resolutions that will give us security, or so we think. And if we find our security in our future finances, and not in Jesus, then we are not loving God as we should, and not loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Now, in all this, I'm not saying that exercise is bad, or investments are bad. The heart, though, is the issue here that I'm trying to pick at.

So, what if we made a resolution on the 30th of December, 2012, that lined up our drive, our reason, and our heart with God's heart?

What if they came together? Well, let's see if we can accomplish that. Let's see if we can all together, looking at the book of Joshua, accomplish that.

[5 : 51] Joshua chapter 1 is where we will be. That was just the introduction, guys. We're going to read verses 1 through 9.

The Word of God says, After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, 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. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.

From the wilderness in 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.

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. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

[6 : 58] 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.

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.

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. Let's pray together.

Father, I ask for your mercy this morning and your grace that your word would be preached, would be preached clear, that nothing that is said would be in false teaching or not line up with your word. That God, if there is something wrong that comes out of my mouth, that it would fall from our ears and not be remembered. Lord, we ask God that you would move this morning in our hearts, move us to action as your children.

[8 : 04] God, that we would love you, that we would treasure you, and that we would act on that love. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So, just a little bit of background here, and these verses kind of give us most of it, but the people of Israel have been in the wilderness for 40 years.

Moses had led them from Egypt. They've wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. They're sitting on the bank of the Jordan River, and Moses passes away, and God tells Joshua, you're next in line. You're my guy. Lead these people to the promised land as I had promised. Now, they were wandering in the wilderness because of their disbelief and their idol worship and their sin, and God promised that Moses would not see the promised land, and so now, Joshua is the guy to lead them into the promised land.

So, that kind of sets us up a little bit where we started reading. I want all of us here to be courageous Christians, courageous men and women who love Jesus and love our neighbors and one another.

It will take courage, and it takes courage, to be men and women of God. Even here in the United States, where we're pretty comfortable, it takes a little bit of courage, a little bit of drive, a little bit of oomph to truly walk out the Word.

[9 : 30] If our resolution this morning is to be courageous, courageous men and women for the Lord, then I believe by God's power and His provision that we will succeed far past Valentine's Day.

Far past February 14, 2013. Because to be courageous, as here in Joshua, it's going to take a heart change.

To be what God commands Joshua to be and to do, it's going to take our hearts being changed by God to do and to will what He has commanded us to do.

So, starting off, I want you to be courageous, I want all of us to be courageous in believing the promises of God and not believing in our own promises.

So, the first question I want to pose to you this morning is, do you believe the promises of God? Do you truly believe those promises? Do you believe that He is provider?

[10:34] Do you believe that He is faithful? Do you believe that He will never forsake you or leave you? Do you believe that He works everything by His mercy and grace for our good children of God, Christians?

Do you believe that He loves you and that He cares for you? Because if you do, you'll act on those beliefs. Because what we love, what we believe, we will act on.

So, if you believe the promises of God, then you will live according to those promises. Always mindful of those promises. Now, look in Joshua 1.

We see a few promises. Verse 3 says, That every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.

Verse 6, Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore, that I promised to your fathers to give them. And in verse 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.

[11:47] I point these out to you just to say, God is going to do what He says He's going to do. If God promises something, He's going to accomplish it. And so, we can truly, with everything in us, believe the promises of God because they're going to happen or they have already happened.

So, here's the rubber meets the road. In order to believe something, and not just as a gullible mark, not just as somebody who just believes everything, and, you know, you hear it on the internet that it's true, like that State Farm commercial.

I don't know if you've seen that. It's really funny. In order to believe something, though, you truly, you have to know it. If you want to believe with every fiber of your being, you have to know it.

And here, it's the promises of God. So, do you know the promises of God? Do you take your energy and time to be strong and courageous in learning the promises of God?

Are you able to, in your life right now, December 30th, are you able to courageously trust and believe the promises of God based on what you know right now?

[13:05] Are you able to do that? What about, for example, what about when things don't go your way? The way things are. The way that you've planned them out to happen, to occur.

Do you trust? Do you believe? Do you know God's promises? Joshua. Was Moses' assistant for 40 years. Now, we don't have a lot of background to Joshua and his relationship with Moses, but 40 years seems like a really long time to be number two in charge.

It took him 40 years. God's timing was perfect and Moses passed away and Joshua was elevated to be the leader and to lead them into the promised land.

Those 40 years were caused by sin. God punished them by making them wander in the wilderness because of their idol worship and their disbelief and their sin.

So the timing there was even long for Joshua. And then a lot of Jewish scholars say that Joshua chapter 1 here was actually written 30 days after Moses' death because, in tradition, there was a 30 days of mourning mourning for death of patriarchs and leaders and that kind of stuff.

[14:22] So, we don't have evidence of that, but let's just say that's the case. So there's another 30 days of Joshua having to wait. So things weren't really, maybe things weren't happening as he had planned, as he had hoped for.

But God's timing, God's call was there on Joshua. It was by God's hand that he was put in the position that he was in.

So for you and I, can we look at the book of Joshua? Can we look at Joshua's story and can we say, I believe the promises of God. I trust God is working. I believe that He does not forsake us. He will not leave us. He is faithful. Can we do that? Even when things aren't going our way. So, 2013 can be a year of courage for you and for me in believing God and His promises and trusting not our own knowledge of what we think we know or what's the most wisest thing to do, but the trust in God and His leadership and His guiding and understanding.

So not only be courageous in believing the promises of God, but be courageous in acting on the promises of God and not ignoring the promises until you need something like a Santa Claus or a grocery list that you hand to God.

[15:47] God gives Joshua four main commands in this text. In verse 2, He tells him to arise and go, lead the people out. Or in 6 and 7, He tells them to be strong and courageous.

In 7 and 8, He says, do all according to the law. And in verse 9, He tells them, do not be frightened and dismayed. Now, the reason I give those to you is not just to point them out so that you can kind of see the commands of God, but I want you to see that God also gives Him four promises in these nine verses.

In verses 3 and 6, God says, I have given you the land just as I promised Moses. In verses 5 and 9, God says, I will be with you.

In verse 5, He says, I will not leave you or forsake you. And in verse 7 and 8, He says, if you do not turn from the law, if you keep the law, you will have good success and be prosperous.

Now see, the reason I point these two out to you is that here, God is gracious and merciful to Joshua. He gives him the directions and He also gives him promises that I've already accomplished.

[17:01] He puts them together and says, now go. Makes it easy for Joshua. It's like, it's like, it's like God gave the directions and the map.

You've got to lay them out step for step and then gave them the map too and said, this is what you're going to encounter and just go. Made it simple. He could trust, not in his own accomplishments and not in his own training, but he can trust in God and God's promises.

I don't know if you guys know, but the new, I'm sure you do, a lot of you in here, if you have iPhones, you know this, that the iPhone map app is like horrible. I haven't experienced really bad things with it, but some people put in an address and it takes them 15 miles in the wrong place.

And Apple has apologized and they've, if I gave you direction somewhere and I gave you 15 minutes off the way, that doesn't help you and it doesn't, makes me look like an idiot.

And God gives us his promises, he gives us the direction and they're always right. They're always to where he wants us to be.

[18:12] There's no mistake, there's no questioning. I'm sure Joshua, after hearing this from the Lord, these nine verses, and then God speaks with him more and more like he did with Moses.

Joshua didn't say, man, I don't know, what do you guys think? Should we go? It says, it says that Joshua, in fact, look at Joshua chapter 3, verse 5.

Flip over one page. Joshua chapter 3, verse 5. They're getting ready to go. He hasn't hemmed and hawed, he hasn't doubted, he believed the promises of God because God gave him directions and he gave him promises.

He made it clear to him. He says, then Joshua said to the people, consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you. That's good stuff.

He tells the people, God is going to do wonders among you. In other words, we're going into the promised land and God is going to work because God is faithful and we believe his promises.

[19:21] So, what's the rest of the story for Joshua? Well, he leads them into the promised land. They defeat several armies and several people. They lose a battle, one battle because of sin, of one man, one guy.

And Joshua is forced to discipline him by killing him and his entire family. And during his 110 years on earth, he never forgets and constantly reminds his people what God has done and is doing for them.

Constantly bringing people back to the promises of God because he is faithful and God is going to do what he says he's going to do. So, it isn't just good enough, that was horrible, it isn't good enough to just believe.

We can believe, but we must act on what we believe. See, knowledge is nothing without action. James says that faith without works is dead. There's got to be action to our lives.

And your neighbors and your friends and your family, they're not going to care how much you know or how many verses you memorized in 2012. Just be honest. They're not.

[20:32] What they're going to care about is how you treat them, how you love them. So, do you love your neighbors, your friends, your family because and out of the love that God has shown you, and because and out of the love that you have for His Word.

Be courageous in acting on the promises of God. Now, for some of you, this may be like the whetstones going to Afghanistan to minister.

It may be leaving everything and everyone you know and moving your family to a new city. It may be being more generous in supporting and providing for others within this congregation.

And you can fill it in. It may be a whole plethora of things that God is calling you to be courageous and acting on the promises of God.

Because God doesn't change. So, for Joshua in this verse, God gave him promises along with commands. So, he said, go and do this and here's what I've already promised.

[21 : 38] Here's what I've done, I'm accomplishing, I have accomplished, now go and do it. So, what happens in our life when God doesn't give the promises?

When he just gives us a command? Do we shrink? Does our faith shrink and shrivel and disappear and we just lose all gumption? we have been given his word.

The word of God, the Bible that you hold in your lap, that you read on your phone. We've been given his word not only to guide us but to educate us and the world around us who God is and to remind us and to know his promises to us, his children.

So, our faith acting on what we believe should be strengthened in the unknown because his word says he will do what he says he's going to do.

He's going to provide. He's known. His name is God's provider. He's working out by his grace and mercy for our good even in the circumstances where it doesn't seem like that.

[22 : 59] He will never leave his children nor forsake them. He's the everlasting Father. He is who he says he is. He is the Savior. And in him we find our identity.

Not in our circumstances. Not in what we've accomplished. We find our identity in him alone. And in our identity in Christ we can trust and act on his promises.

And that's because he is God and he does what he says he's going to do. In his word for us to read today in Joshua's time where he gave him action told him what to do and gave him promises to go alongside those.

We can read these and we can know the promises of God and we can act on them. But not only we need to be courageous in believing the promises of God and in acting on the promises of God but also be courageous in treasuring God's word and not just absorbing it as knowledge.

Look at verse 7 and 8 in Joshua chapter 1. Only be strong and very courageous being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you.

[24 : 21] Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left that you may have good success wherever you go. 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. Now this is a dumb statement I know very elementary but there is a difference between knowing and treasuring. I know that my fridge is white and the inside of it is cold. I know that because it's a fridge and the outside looks white. I treasure my wife.

Now things would get really awkward and really tough if I mixed those two up. Just honest. It would be horrible. My life would be horrible. Treasuring means that you value it.

You protect it. You care for it. You revisit it time and time again. Now there are times in the evening when I get home from work that I just follow Jamie around in the building.

[25 : 32] She's doing laundry down the hall I just follow her. She's folding clothes I just follow her. She's punishing a child while I join in but I follow her just because I treasure her and I want to be with her and I want to spend time with her.

It is the same with God's word. Do you look forward to times reading it? Or do you avoid or ignore such things in such times?

Do you just read it to gain knowledge or do you truly believe it is the word of God from God to you? Knowledge is good but when it hinders or disrupts the proper relationship it ceases to be good.

It's great for me to know that my fridge is white. Matches other appliances. It's great for me to know that the inside is cold that I can put milk and eggs in there and it will be okay. But the moment I treasure it that knowledge becomes my downfall and breaks the relationship.

See there's power in a healthy marriage. There's power in the fact that it can display the gospel to the world. Husband and wife. The way the husband loves the wife.

[26 : 46] Christ and the church. It can show people what love really looks like. But the same is true with God's word. Like there's power in God's word.

There's direction in it and it too can display the gospel as we treasure it and it becomes part of our everyday life. People around us will see differences when God's word has infiltrated our life.

Now verse 7 in Joshua chapter 1 says 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.

In other words when it is treasured it will not leave you and you will not leave it. It will always be on your mind. Verse 8 says 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.

In your comings and goings it shall be on your lips treasuring it. Now that does not mean that you are constantly reciting scripture or singing through songs or scripture to songs although it could but that doesn't necessarily mean that.

[28 : 02] It means that that like ingredients that simmer on the stove for stew carrots beef onions potatoes you put it all in there you mix it up and you just let it simmer on the stove.

Many ingredients they mold together and they become one great flavor. The word of God simmers in you. It changes your heart and your desires to match his desires.

The many ingredients of you of your life your struggles your world view your culture the culture around you and the word of God all simmer. And it is the word of God instead of like the stew all the ingredients become one it is the word of God that rises out that prevails over the other flavors that takes over the other ingredients in our life.

When we treasure the word of God we allow the word of God to change us by believing it by living it and by loving it. So 2013 36 and a half hours from now can be the year that you treasure God's word more than you have in the previous years.

If you treasure God's word your life will be different. You will act different you will live different you will talk different you will love different. When we treasure it we don't try to hoard it.

[29 : 28] We don't try to keep it for ourselves and store it away. That's what we do with knowledge. Some knowledge we share but when we treasure something we share it. We give it out.

We let people know. We will want to share with anyone and everyone when we treasure something. So be courageous in believing the promises of God.

Be courageous in acting on the promises of God. Be courageous in treasuring God's word. And be courageous in living out the word of God. Very similar to the last one or the second one acting on the promises of God but a little different.

in our text Joshua 1 1-9 God tells Joshua twice to be courageous and strong. Two separate times reminds him be courageous and strong.

Now he does so because he's telling him to do something right? He's telling him something that that is new something that is dangerous something that is that is life changing.

[30 : 35] Now when we believe the gospel when we treasure God's word we will do things that are new to those around us. We will do things that are different maybe awkward maybe they can't understand why and I believe as Christians there will come a moment or moments that God will ask you to do something to the world that may not make any sense.

Are you willing to do so? Are you willing to do something that just seems a little awkward seems a little different and they just don't get it? For example Jamie and I went to see Les Miserables on the day after Christmas and we were super happy to do so believe it or not I was happy to go see it.

The whole thing is a musical by the way if you haven't seen it even in normal conversations are sung so prepare yourself if you're going to see that. There's probably ten words that aren't sung in the whole thing but in the story in the story of Les Mis there's two main characters there's three or four but two main characters guys Jean Valjean is the one main character and he is the criminal he is the bad guy and then there's Javert who is the inspector who has been over seeing Jean Valjean from in prison and then trying to catch him because he missed parole throughout the years of the story at the beginning of the story Jean Valjean gains his freedom and he tries to find work and of course he's a criminal and nobody's going to give him work and he finds this church and he falls asleep on the front porch and in this church is a bishop and the bishop comes and he wakes him up in the middle of the night and of course

Jean Valjean thinks this guy's going to run me off you know I'm done and the bishop says come in and he invites him into the into the house and he feeds him lets him sit by the fire warms himself

gives him a bed to sleep in and in the middle of the night Jean Valjean decides that this isn't for me I'm going to steal what I can I'm going to grab what I can of the bishops the silver and whatever else I can grab and I'm going to run well he gets caught he gets caught not by the main inspector but by some other police or whatever and they bring him back and they confront they put him before the bishop and says this man has stolen your stuff and we want you to just claim your stuff so that we can put him back in prison forever because he's a criminal and he's nothing and the bishop says well I was trying to get him but I wanted to get him because he had forgot two of the greatest treasures I have which are these candle stands big huge pieces of silver and he said I wanted him to have these too so he gives him his greatest treasure forgives him and shows him mercy well this story carries throughout the whole rest of the story this is the beginning of the movie and Jean Valjean decides to because this bishop had shown him mercy that he was going to live differently that he was going to show mercy when he could that he was going to show grace to people when he could that he was going to give to the poor and he was no matter how successful in business he was going to be he was going to provide for people in need and show them mercy comes to the end towards the end of the movie and he has an opportunity Jean Valjean has an opportunity to kill the man who has been chasing him the man who had put him in prison the man who tormented him and he doesn't kill him he shows him mercy even in that moment drives Javert crazy to the point of suicide the point is I gave you that whole thing for this point the grace and the mercy that you have been shown in Christ Jesus that grace and that mercy that Jean Valjean had been shown pales in comparison to the mercy and the grace that you have been shown in Christ and that grace and that mercy should dictate how we live and how we love one another and how we love others and how we share our lives and how generous we are we can forgive when everything around us says to repay hate place judgment on we can be courageous in how we live because of the grace and the mercy that we have been shown there will also be moments in our lives as Christians that there will be danger involved some level of danger it may not be physical but it will be dangerous are you willing to submit to God's leading and do something dangerous for him are you willing to in those moments decide now that you're going to follow no matter what wherever that takes you wherever that leads

[35 : 53] Joshua in our text a couple chapters later he leads chapter 3 he leads the people in the promised land it says in can't find it now it says that he had caused he'll cause his people to walk and gain the promised land he was Jesus like in the old testament there were battles there were judgments there was danger there was sin and there was victory Jesus Christ died so that he could lead his people into the eternal promised land like Joshua did here Jesus lived a sinless life died with the sin of the world on his shoulders he died in order that we could live and he leads us to the promised land if we follow him until that until that time when we reach the promised land there will be battles we will fight here on earth there will be struggles there will be sadness and sorrow there will be judgments there will be danger there will be victory are you willing to trust him are you willing to believe his promises and to repent of your sins and follow

Jesus it will be the most courageous thing that you can do and the most dangerous and the most rewarding did you know that that 70% of patients who had coronary bypass surgery major life threatening surgeries they may die if they don't have the surgery 70% return to their old habits within two years 70% now I'm probably one of those I haven't had coronary surgery or anything but I would probably be one of those it's because we are corrupt it's because we are not as strong as we think we are we need pun intended a heart change we need a life change and Jesus is strong enough he is!

victorious over sin and death and the very problems we face he has beaten so let's trust him today let's trust him December 30th 2012 we can be courageous in believing the promises of God we can be courageous in acting on the promises of God we can be courageous in treasuring God's word and we can be courageous in living out the word of God now I started by talking about resolutions and how the reason behind resolutions is why they fail God can change a heart God can take a heart of stone and make it a heart of flesh he can change your desires and your love he has in me he has in several in here the problem isn't if God can because he can the problem is will you let him will you invite him to change your!

will you ask God for that new heart so that your resolution can see it to the end that you can be a man or woman of courage not for your name not for your glory but for his name and his glory let's pray together!