

God Honoring Attitude 10-20-02

Joshua 1:1-12, Hebrews 4:1-11

The servant of God, Moses, had led the Children of Israel out of captivity and through the wilderness. Everyday was a miracle as clothes did not wear out and food fell from heaven. Moses had pled for their lives and his intercession had saved them from impending judgement. He had been a selfless leader with only one blemish on his record as their deliverer, but that sin kept him from entering the Promised Land. He climbed a mountain and looked over into it but would not guide the people in. That task was to fall on his general, Joshua.

Last week we mentioned how we are at this point of the Jordan, ready to cross into a new land. We face many similar difficulties and need many of the same promises and encouragement. First Joshua needed to know that the old way was over. Josh. 1:1-2 (NIV) *1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them--to the Israelites.*

"Moses my servant is dead." Sometimes we need to hear the old order is over. Moses had climbed mount Nebo to look on the Promised Land. There is a mysterious passage (Jude 9) about a spiritual battle over his body. Joshua didn't know what had become of him so God had to tell him, *"Moses is dead"*. We often cling to an old order or way, because it was familiar and comfortable, it was safe, and we were blessed through it. But God is the Creator and He is always bringing change to man's order so that we do not worship what is not sacred. Moses represented God, but he was not God. Now Joshua represents God. Joshua hears the voice of God, and even he had to hear God say, "Hey, time to move on, Moses is dead. Flesh and blood passes away. It's your turn to lead."

Once you realize it is time to move on into new things, you need to hear God's direction. This is a dangerous time for man. He stands at the end of his road, like a T intersection. He has to turn to the left or the right. The left is his own good ideas and best efforts and personal preference. The right is the voice of God. Joshua was listening. "You and the people need to get ready to cross," God told him. The leader is one of the people. They all needed to prepare themselves to enter into what God had for them next.

Then God speaks some wonderful promises to Joshua. Josh. 1:3-5 (NIV) *3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. 4 Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates--all the Hittite country--to the Great Sea on the west. 5 No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

Here is what God promised: Possession of everywhere he went, victory over every foe, and the presence of God. I believe that in Jesus we have all these same promises. We can claim the land we walk upon for Jesus (1 Cor. 3:21,22). The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. We are

Commented [Q1]: 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Jude 1:9 (NIV)

Commented [Q2]: 21 So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, 1 Cor. 3:21-22 (NIV)

promised the victory in battle. Romans 8 tells us we are more than conquerors even when it looks like we are in defeat (Romans 8:31,37). And greatest of all, we are promised He will always be with us. He has told us He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He promised to be with us to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20).

Nothing empowers more than His presence and His promises! Joshua needed assurance that God was going to remain the same faithful God that He was with Moses. I think all of us look at others' lives and think we could never have the relationship with God that they have, but you can. We wonder if God could work as mightily through our lives as He does through theirs. Yes, He can! As He was with (you fill in the name of the person you see as anointed by God), so He will be with you. The gifts and calling may not be the same but the presence and power is the same if you will let Him have His perfect will and way in your life. Here was a general who had led in many a battle and seen God defeat the enemy before him, and he wondered if God would be with him. We all need to hear the assuring voice of God confirm to us that He is with us. The Apostle Paul wrote that the Spirit of God bears witness with our Spirit that we are sons of God. That means that we are given this inner abiding assurance that God has done the unimaginable, made us His own children. Just to know He is with us and watching over all our circumstances should give us confidence and peace.

If we give in to the way of thinking that says there is no hope, I can't be used of God, evil is more powerful than good, the church is in retreat, then we have an attitude that is not honoring God. It is not an attitude of faith and confidence in the mighty God we serve. That kind of an attitude is the opposite of that of Christ. Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world!" John 16:33b He didn't say the world is full of troubles so hang your head and worry about it. He knew He would overcome. All power and authority is His. Does our attitude show that we believe it?

Josh. 1:6-7 (NIV) *6 "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. 7 Be strong and very courageous. 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.* If I believe the Word of God, the declaration that 'God is with me', what should my attitude be? I imagine Joshua was discouraged and fearful after Moses' death. They were just about to make the final push that they had been waiting for, for over forty years, and their leader died. What a time for God to take him! Now what? This is where they failed before. Yes, but this is not the same group of people. When we look back and focus on defeat, it drains us of our present faith. Instead we need to keep our eyes on the fact that God is with us. If God is with us what should our attitude be? Strong and courageous! Yes, but remember last time ... that was then and this is now. I learned from my failure, repented of it and now I need to apply what I learned. The Children of Israel learned that we better listen to God. When they went to the Jordan before, their fathers listened to doubt and fear instead of God. Then, when they realized what a mistake they had made, they ignored God again and tried to do what God wanted without God. That was total disaster. We better listen to God! We better move with God at God's direction.

Commented [Q3]: 31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?
Romans 8:31 (NIV)
37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
Romans 8:37 (NIV)

Commented [Q4]: 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."
Heb 13:5 (NIV)

Commented [Q5]: 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matt 28:20 (NIV)

If we trust that God is with us and know we are being obedient to His instruction, then we can be strong and courageous. God tells us to. He repeats it to Joshua three times. You'd think a battle worn veteran like Joshua wouldn't need the admonition. Joshua had seen how much the outcome depended on God. He knew that without God things were hopeless. With God, however, there is everything to be hopeful about. In fact, proceeding in strength and courage is a God honoring attitude. Focussing on the forgiven past and doubting what God will do today is attributing past failures to God instead of where they belong, on man.

God repeats the admonition but adds extra emphasis to the courage the second time, "be very courageous." As we move forward at Wayside, or in our individual lives, when we know God is leading, we need to be strong and very courageous. We can't look at the past and be fearful today. God never failed Wayside. God never failed you. Man failed to hear and obey God when there were failures. You say, well how do we know today if it is man's leading or if it is God? If we are careful to see that we are operating according to God's Word, we will be successful. Do you see that promise in the last verse we read? If together we will wait until we are clear that God is leading, we will be able to proceed with courage. God can make it clear to us through His Word and the assurance of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Then God reiterates what He is saying in verse 8, *"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."* If you keep the Word of God, His directions and instructions, always before you, you will be prosperous and successful. Take time to be in the Word. It is your spiritual food. If you know you have been faithful to dine on the Word you know you will be prosperous and successful; you will be strong and courageous. If on the other hand, you have been refusing the nudging of the Holy Spirit to open and read your Bible, the knowledge of your compromise is going to weaken your attitude and courage. The American Church has had an unprecedented opportunity to know the Word of God. We have Bibles and study materials galore. There are computer programs that put volumes of commentaries and dictionaries and word studies and the touch of a finger and yet this generation is more ignorant of the Word of God than the preceding generations have been. They were more faithful to learn and memorize God's word by candlelight than we have been by computer screen. That is to our loss, and we are spiritually weak because of it. No better time to begin turning that around than today. Meditating on the Word will make you prosperous and successful. It is God's promise.

I've heard this twisted into an emphasis of physical prosperity. God is talking about warfare. They are going into hostile territory to take the land for God. So are we, in a spiritual sense, in our own lives first, and then the community. The enemy has robbed us of joy and peace. Be strong and courageous and take it back. The enemy says Sedona is his. Let's be strong and very courageous and claim it for God. Has your family strayed from God? Be strong and courageous and take it back. Has the fire in your heart been almost put out with apathy? Be strong and very courageous and ask for a renewing in the Holy Spirit and then look out. God loves that kind of prayer. But first, be in the Word, God's revelation of Himself to man. Then you can rest assured of prosperity and success.

Josh. 1:9 (NIV) *9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*"

This is the third time God is telling Joshua to have a God honoring attitude. In Hebrew to tell something twice is to emphasize it. To tell it three times is to recognize it to be of utmost importance. Be strong and courageous. Don't be – two things – don't be terrified and don't be discouraged. Why? God is with us wherever we go. If He is for us who can be against us? The comfort and strength of His presence should keep us from fear and discouragement. Those are tactics of the enemy to make you ineffective spiritually. Don't yield to them for a moment. To yield to discouragement and fear is to have a God dishonoring attitude. It says you don't believe that God is great and keeps His word.

Josh. 1:10-13 (NIV) *10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 11 "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your supplies ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.'" 12 But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, 13 "Remember the command that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.'*

You have to prepare yourself to go on with God. You have to set your determination, your thought life, your desires and dreams. Get yourself ready to go on with God. What do we have to do to really prepare ourselves to cross over? We forsook sin, nailing it to the cross. We have examined our hearts to see where we need to get right with God. Now if we know there are no vain or selfish issues then help your brothers take their land. Rueben, Gad, and half of Manasseh had property on that side of Jordan, but they promised to help their brothers take their territory. Their battles were already won so they went on to help their brothers find the prosperity they had found. Have you prepared yourself? We've never been this way before so we must follow the Ark of the Covenant – God's presence with us.

The Lord your God is giving you rest. We have some Divine insight into the meaning of this passage from Hebrews chapter 3 and 4. The author tells us that God swore they would never enter into His rest. He was referring to the first time they came to the Jordan. They did not enter in because they did not have a God honoring attitude. Their attitude was unbelief. "Can God give us victory over the giants in the land?" As we stand on the bank of the river, is our attitude like the first or second group of Hebrews? The promise of rest is a promise that we will cease from our own efforts and let God live through us, touch the world through us, defeat the enemy through us. It is not by our might or power but His that works mightily in us. Congregation, do we have a God honoring attitude of belief in Him that He will be with us like a Mighty Warrior? (Isa. 42:13) Are we being strong and courageous?

What happened to the first group of Hebrews that they would not enter God's rest? They heard the Word of God and saw the miracles. What more did they need? Heb. 4:1-2 (NIV) *1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. 2 For we also have had*

the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

They did not combine what they heard with faith. Faith is believing the unseen. It is counting on God to be all that the Word declares Him to be. They did not have a God honoring attitude of faith in the character and ability of God. They just saw man. The author of Hebrews is saying, "Look at them and learn. Let's not be like them. Let's mix the Word with faith and believe in God for great victories. Let's believe He can give us everywhere our feet tread. Let's believe God is able to defeat His enemies through us. Let's believe that He is with us, in us, through us to the praise of His glorious grace. Let's believe that if we have the faith of grain of mustard seed nothing shall be impossible to us (Matthew 17:20).

Without faith in God we will strive in our own efforts and accomplish nothing. Through faith in God and reliance upon Him, we will enter the Promised Land of rest. We'll see God work through us individually and corporately and we'll give Him all the honor and glory because we'll know it is God, not just us.

Heb. 4:9-11 (NIV) *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. 11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.*

Jesus did your six days of labor for you. Now He invites you to join Him for the Sabbath rest. The Sabbath was a time to meditate upon God and His Word. It was a time to cease from labor so that all focus could be upon God. We are invited to enter the rest of God and cease from our own works. Let us be warned through the example of those who stood at the shore and clung to an attitude that was not God honoring. Have faith in God! Combine your knowledge and experience with faith in the character of our all-sufficient God. Let us be strong and very courageous, knowing God is with us! Let us have a God honoring attitude and speak with faith about what God is going to do here and throughout Sedona. Speak with faith about what God is doing in your own life, because that is where it all begins. If you believe God can give you a hunger for His Word so that you meditate on it day and night, then He can make you successful in the personal battles you face and make you a man or woman of God. He promised to complete the work in you that He started. Be strong and very courageous and cooperate with the transforming work He is doing in you. God is making me into the image of His Son. (Romans 8:29) Put your hand on your chest and say that with me. "God is making me into the image of His Son." "It's a miracle, but I believe it!" "May the Lord help me have a God honoring attitude. Amen!"

Commented [Q6]: 20 And He said* to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. Matt 17:20 (NASB)