John 11:1-44

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Preacher: David Helm

[0:00] All right, the scripture we're reading is coming to Joshua 1, 1-9 and compound page 1-4 of your Bibles.

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 have promised to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Ephraim, all the land of the Hittites, to the great sea, for 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.
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.
[1:20] 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. This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Good morning. Good morning, Holy Trinity West. Good morning.
It's good to be with you on this morning. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Arthur Jackson. I'm part of the six-member pastoral team, and my primary place of ministry is on the south side.
I've been working with Dave Helm there for the last three years. First year part-time, last two years full-time. We're glad to be here, Carl. That's what God is doing at Holy Trinity Church.
[2:22] We're glad to be here with the fountain of youth of our church. It helps to keep Shirley to be young and invigorated. It's probably some of the busiest days of our lives, but it's good to, again, it helps to keep us sharper than we normally.

I was using the illustration a few days ago in the life zone, like those, like this, you're gaining in strength, and then you keep out. And then, so this is the plus side, but then you get on this side, that's the minus side.
And Shirley and I are somewhat on the minus side now. But being with young people like you, people who are invigorated, helps to sort of muffle some of the minuses.
Pray with me. Lord, we love you. Thank you for the opportunity. That's before us. Speak through your word is our prayer. In Christ's name. Amen. Amen. On the west side here, on the south, we're into the book of Joshua, chapters 1 through 8, for this particular season.
Old Testament book, and of course, historically and sequentially, it follows the book of Deuteronomy. Joshua chronicles the activity of God's people as they are moving into their new inheritance, new territory.
[3:52] In fact, it's not unlike many of us, is it? Because though some of us have more knowledge, there are still new seasons and new territory that you and I enter into.

Some of you are starting a new term for school. Some of you fresh from some of the, can I call them lesser cities of our nation.
You have frequented and populated, helped to populate the great city of Chicago. Some of you are in new relationships.

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Some of you, perhaps, are newly married. Shirley and I have been married for four plus decades. So, I mean, if you've been married 10 years, 20 years, you're still, relatively speaking, rather on new territory.
You're still learning one another. You're going to be doing that for the rest of your life. But in this early, these early chapters, chapters 1 through 5, particularly in Joshua, we see that their preparation to enter into the land.
[5:09] And we also notice the challenges that the people of God face as they enter into the land that had been promised them.

One of the things that we'll note in Joshua is that moving forward in the life of faith involves warfare. It involves battles.
That the new life demands from you and me obedient faith. That is a key biblical kind of term.
We never get beyond obedient faith. And thus, you and I need to know what has been deeded to us by God through the work of his son.
And we have been given many great and precious promises. Our inheritance from God through his son includes the forgiveness of sins, for sure.
[6:14] But our spiritual riches, our spiritual heritage includes every blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And certainly, if you are a believer, you know both the joy and the delight of being forgiven of your sins.

Forgiveness of sins is like taking a spiritual bath. Sometimes, you know, when you're in the yard and just come in from doing some good hard manual labor, or I should say some, I know we have some sports and things this year, a good workout.
When you get in the shower, you get some of that dirt and grind off, grind off. Spiritually speaking, that's what forgiveness is. It is internal kinds of cleansing from God.
Those things that want to cling to us through the grace of God and his son. You and I have the forgiveness of sins through the riches of his grace.
That's the entry into our territory. But it doesn't end there for you and me. Great riches from God through his son. Look in Joshua chapter 1.
[7:34] And there you will know that two persons and one group actually speak in the chapter.

In verses 1 through 9, which is our text today, you will see that the Lord is speaking to his servant Joshua.
In verse 10, we see that Joshua speaks, and Joshua commanded the officers of the people.
You see that there? But then finally, the people respond in verses 16 through 18, and they answer Joshua there.
But particularly in our verses today, verses 1 through 9, the Lord commissions his leader, Joshua.
In verses, and I would like to divide these verses in the following way.
[8:37] Verses 1 through 5, we have the Lord's reminders for Joshua. The Lord's reminders for Joshua.

But in verses 6 through 10, we see the Lord's requirements for Joshua. The Lord's requirements for him.
He commands him in those verses what to do. Look at the text with me. It begins on an interesting note, doesn't it?
After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' assistant.
The book of Joshua opens in narrative fashion, doesn't it? The historical point of reference, we see that in verse 1. The time is after the death of God's servant Moses.
[9:38] Moses. You don't even have to be a church lord to know something about Moses. Long time, faithful, one of a kind leader.

And he had passed on. Deuteronomy chapter 34. Turn back over a page or two in your Bible. It records a biblical obituary.
It's brief. And a brief eulogy for Moses. You know, those of you who already know your Bibles, Exodus chapter 2, Moses was born into slavery in Egypt.
Deuteronomy 34 records his death and burial in Moab, 120 years later. Listen, look at verses 10 through 12 of Deuteronomy chapter 34.
And there was not arisen a prophet since in Israel, like Moses whom the Lord knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, and

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to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.
[10:59] But what? Grief, eulogy, and obituary there for 40 years. This choice servant Moses had been used of God.

It stood at the head of the nation. And now, Moses was there. And thus the book of Joshua opens. It's a new chapter in the life of the nation.
There's a new leader, and there is a new assignment. Joshua is the new leader. Moses' successor was no stranger in Israel.
Earlier in the history of Israel, we get an introduction to him. We won't turn to him, but just to give you a couple of references where we see this champion of faith. In Exodus chapter 17, we see him taking orders from Moses and serving as an officer in the military there.
In Exodus chapter 24, he is referred to as Moses serving his minister. In Numbers chapter 11, verse 28, it says that Joshua served as a minister, as an attendant to Moses from his youth.
[12:07] So he had been around this servant of God. You might say he was a mentee of Moses. In Exodus chapter 13 and 14, we see him as one of the spies sent to the land of Canaan.

Perhaps you remember the story. You know, 12 go out, 10 come back. Majority reports, we can't take the land. But he did not stand on that side of the aisle. He stood with one other, Caleb.
And they came back and said, hey, we can do it. We can take it. They're big, they're bad, but they fall. I mean, they can't have that guy. The bigger they are, the harder they fall. We can do it.
That's all God's witness. And then Numbers chapter 27 describes him as a man in whom, listen to this. Spirit of God.
What's that person? A person who's in the name of God. Spirit dwells and controls you or foes in God. Spirit of God.
[13:05] In that same chapter, you see him, their mission, you might say, in a sense, they're on the bottom, as Moses says. Moses. My servant Moses is dead.

Chapter 1, verse 2. Now therefore go over this Jordan, you and all the people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.
Here's the deal. My brothers and sisters. Moses is dead. God bless him. God bless him. God bless him. God bless him. Moses had gone all the way of the earth in debt.
But God's promise to give his land to his feet, though unfulfilled, at this point, was very much alive. It was still active.
It was a very alive promise. It was spoken centuries before, but it was a promise that it was alive.
And right up front, here in this text, there's a lesson for us today.
[14:06] The death of God's servants must never be mistaken for the death of God's promises or his plans. The death of God's servants must never be mistaken for the death of God's promises or his plans.

Human transitions don't terminate God's promises or plans. Moses was dead. God wasn't.
Quite often, human transitions facilitate the very plans of God. God's plans based on God's promises continue even when God's servants don't.
God's plans. The death of a believer. The failure of a believer. The transition of a believer. It doesn't stop God's plan.
Several years ago, I felt that my time at JVC, Judson Baptist Church, had come and gone. It was time for me to move on.
[15:13] I felt they needed a younger leader. I felt they needed somebody who, because they had a lot of child-bearing couples there, they needed someone who was in that stage of life with them.

And God so worked and so honored that transition. I think it was ultimately good for me. It was good for the church.
It was good for the leader that replaced me. I think the church is better. Because I'm not there. And someone else is.
A transition of death of a leader doesn't stop God's plan or his promises. Moses was dead. Egypt and the rubens were not behind them, but the land, the territory.
Listen to this. That had been promised to Abraham's seed was before them. It lay before them. Moses' voice was still, but the Lord's wasn't.
[16:16] And so there were several reminders in view of all of this that really served to provide both a comfort for Joshua, but also a challenge to Joshua.

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As he now stood at the head of the nation. And was leading them. Look at the reminder of God's promise in verses 2, the last part of verse 2 through 4.
Look there with me. Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all these people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.
The appointment of the new leader was in preparation to give them a new home. Look at verse 3. Here's the deal.
Though they had not yet occupied the land, it was as good as theirs. It had centuries before, it had been deeded to them by God.
[17:43] And after all, the Lord does have that right, doesn't he? The earth is the Lord's, the fullness thereof, the world, and those who dwell in it.

He has that right, doesn't he? Psalm 24 helps us to see that. God has spoken centuries before Abraham and Isaac and Jacob that the land, the land would be theirs.
Passages like Genesis chapter 12, verse 1, verses 6 and 7. Chapter 13, verses 14 and 15. Chapter 15, verses 18 through 20.
Regard God's word concerning what was known then as the land that came in. And because this is the first message in Joshua, I really want you to see, and you just have to turn one time.
Look at Genesis chapter 12 and 13. You'll find it on page 8 in the Bibles that are provided for you there. But I want to read so you can hear this promise that was given centuries before.
[18:43] And here there are centuries later on the threshold of entry into this land. Look at Genesis chapter 1. Excuse me, chapter 12, verse 1.

Now the Lord said to Abram, go from your country and from your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. Look at verses 5 through 7. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, to your offspring, I will give you this land.
So he built there an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him. And Abram took Sarah, his wife, and Ammon, his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.
When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the Okomorah.
At that time, the Canaanites were in the land. Now I had that printed out, but I didn't have the name in verse. I wrote it in verse 7. Then the Canaanites were in the land.
[19:53] The Lord said, the Lord appeared to Abram and said, to your offspring, I will give this land. Look over at chapter 13, verses 12 through 17. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley, and moved his tents for Sodom.

Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord. The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, here it is. Lift your eyes and see and look for the place, there it is, where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward.
For all the land that you see, I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring can also be counted.
Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you. This promise of land had been held in sacred trust by God for them for years.
And it was about to be realized by them. According to scripture, centuries before, the land had been deeded to Abraham's descendants through Isaac.
[21:11] The deed had God's signature on it. It was good. It was valid. Now it was time for them to take possession of that land.

That is what Joshua is about. It was like having a signed lease. Anybody ever sign a lease?
Or a deed. For a police property. It had been properly notarized. It was good. Everything was in an order. It was legal. Think about it.
You're coming from out. What if you came from out of town and signed the lease and you found that somebody was in the property? Had your family and your stuff in tow and you were getting ready to move in and you found out that the locks were not the right locks?
People were there. You could see lights in there, all kinds of activity. You got the deed. You got the lease. But somebody else is in the property. But not only did Abraham see you had the deed, the land had been foreclosed by God and the people in there had received an invention notice from God.

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[22:23] It was being served. God was pushing them out. The problem that the inhabitants were going without a battle. I mean, sometimes, you know, sometimes you have to go to the law and get people out of your property.

People in the land of Canaan were not going to go without a fight. So when God's words are clear, up front the Lord set the record straight.
The land is yours. It's been promised. I hold the deed. These verses here are a reminder of God's promise here. Every place.
The soul of your field was right. I've given to you just as I promised for Moses. A reminder of God's promise. But look at verses 5 and 9. There's also a reminder of God's presence.
In verse 5, there's another reminder. The presence of God meant victory for us. In verse 5. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life.
[23:27] Look, here it is right here. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

The promise of God's presence. See, because the Lord was on their side with them, their enemies would not be able to stand before them.
As it had been the case with Moses, Joshua's predecessor. So it would be. What reassuring words, huh? Look at verse 9.
It also speaks about that. And I command that you be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened and do not be dismayed. For the Lord your God is, there it is, with you.
Wherever you go. The value of God's presence is inestimable. Several weeks ago, Shirley and I were in a garage downtown.
[24:27] And I was doing the manly thing after the event that we had attended. And I wanted to see exactly where the car was. So I went off.

I embarked to see the car and sort of clear the way again. Like, what? Though I was doing what I thought was the right thing to find the vehicle, my momentary absence in this underground garage for Shirley was not a good thing.
She was feeling alone and a little anxious because I was born. She was alone. And that's, that's certainly speaking.
That's a human level. How dreadful it is to be abandoned by God. David had it right, didn't he? Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will what? Fear, no evil. Why? Because God is with me.
[25:30] Thou art with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. We sang about it even this morning, didn't we? Pardon for sin.

And a peace that endureth thine own what? To your presence. To cheer. And to God.
Strength for today. Bright hope for tomorrow. Blessings all mine. With ten thousand besides.
Because you are with me. And Joshua, the Lord, tells his servant, I will not abandon.
Have you ever been abandoned? Whether it was intentional or unintentional, like I lived with my wife a few weeks ago. Ever feel alone?
Oh, and then. Particularly as you're beginning something new. There can be this feeling of aloneness. No one's around. No one understands. I'm putting new footprints in this path.
[26:34] God says, I'm with you. Here's a couple reminders for us. A reminder about God's promises.

They're good, true. You and I must embrace them. Act upon them. And you and I honor God with our faith.
Faith in God says that he is reliable. He can be trusted. And you and I must not allow demon or man to cheat us out of anything that God has given to us in and through his son.
A reminder about God's presence. You and I must be mindful. The promise of his presence emerges in this. And again, going into this unproven, untried territory.
They had the promise of his presence. It's reassuring for new seasons of life. Or even for those who are stuck in the same old, same old. It's reassuring for those new to the city or to long-time city dwellers.
[27:45] And you may be living in what might be considered a less than friendly kind of neighborhood. There are lots of several of those in Chicagoland. And oftentimes, even in the so-called safe neighborhoods, there's this myth of safety.

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This myth of safety. It's good to know that those who thought, those who thought but would be there abandoning you, that the Lord will not.
These are things especially good for leaders. Those who are leading other people. We need the reminders of God's promises and the reminders of his presence. But not so.
The Lord's reminders for Joshua. But also there's the requirements in verses 6 through 9. Joshua's commission included two reminders to reassure Joshua.
But the commission also included several things that the Lord required. The conquest of the land. And that was the issue. That was the initiative that was before him.
[28:50] The conquest of the land was not going to be easy. Ever been faced with a bigger-than-you challenge? Bigger-than-you.

There's this story about this guy that was on Charlie Riggs, I believe it was. He used to work with Billy Graham. And he was in over his head.
But when he was in over his head, God gave him the strength to arise to the day. You never felt in over your head?
Oh, I know that pastoralness sometimes I happen to feel in over my head. I know my wife, she's had to spend some changes on her job and she feels in over your head. You know when you break your sudden brain work home, it's sort of in over your head.
You never feel that way? Joshua had big shoes to fill. The life of Moses had cast a long shadow.
[29:50] But his mentor was gone. The person who had been with him much of his life was gone. Looked it up to him, respected him. He was gone. Mother and father not around.

Big city. Filling alone. Challenges of leaving people who had grown accustomed to a nomadic life. And now you're going to move and you're going to get settled.
These are the challenges there. Joshua had. The task ahead was to expel these people who had inhabited the land. And they were not going to go without resistance.
All of these things could have been barriers to God's service. So thus you have the word in verse 6. Look at it. Be strong and courageous for you will cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.
You see that repeated in verse 7. Only be strong and very courageous. Being careful to do according to all the law that Moses must have commanded you. Commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left.
[30:57] That you may have good success wherever you go. You see it repeated in verse 9. The strong and courageous courage and bravery.

Three times these things are missing. And actually the two words are some what's an amas. And they express one idea. The commission included a charge to Joshua to act like a man.
To be courageous. That's not to say that women are not great. But in the Septuagint. That's the word that says act like a man.
You see that in 1 Corinthians chapter 13. I believe it's verse 14 to verse 15. Where Paul encourages the Corinthians. Act like a man. Be strong. Be strong. Be courageous.
Be bold. In the face of the odds. There are things that humanly speaking can dwarf you and me in life. There are winds that can be blowing that can cause us to turn back.
[31:59] In the face of those. Like Joshua we are to be bold and strong. He is not a leaf. He is a leaf in the wind. He was a physician himself.

So as to face the winds. In the face. That were before him. The demanding moral firmness. And moral courage. That was going to be a determined result.
Oh and I know. Just living in this world. Living as a 20 something. In this city. Boy there are so many winds that are blowing.
And don't allow yourself to be blown as a leaf. In the wind in the city. It was not to be stopped by obstacles that lay before him.
They would be there. But in the face of such odds. He was to stand strong. He had stood strong 40 years before. And going into spy off the land.
[32:58] Came back with this minority. But the right report. He stood strong there. So here. Courage and bravery. But then look at verses 7 and 8 particularly.

Careful conformity to God's word. God's word was to be central. The life of faith was to be ordered. By God's words as recorded in the book of the law. And the words are probably of reference to. The books that Moses had written. And other things that were put in there.

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You see certain references in the book of Deuteronomy. As far as the different things. That were included in the book. The words were to guide his life. And to guide his leadership.
His preoccupation was to be with the word of God. Meditation. Speaking God's words. And allowing God's words to speak to you. Facilitates your obedience in mind.
[34:00] Not forgetting them. Not forsaking them. That's the call here for Joshua. It's a call for you and me. Several positive reminders.

But take note of the negatives that are also in the text. You see that do not. In verse 7. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left.
You see it there. Look at verse 9. Do not be frightened. And do not be dismayed. Don't fear all course from God's written words. The wholesome, prosperous, successful living required that Joshua and God's people not turn from God's truth.
Turning from God's truth is like living without a compass. Living without direction. And it's dangerous. We're subject to be tossed. When we live without a compass.
Don't be fearful. Verse 9. Fear stifles. It cripples. It paralyzes. Don't be discouraged. Faith. Verse 9. Fear is one thing.
[35:05] But something that is just as deadly is discouragement. Both can stifle. Both can hold one back. Such is the Lord's commission.

To his leader. The leader is people on the threshold of entry into the promised land. But when I think of this commission, it really calls to mind a commission that was given by Joshua's namesake. The greater Joshua. Even the Lord Jesus Christ in the new. Remember that commission? As a matter of fact, can I get you to turn to that in Matthew chapter? Matthew chapter 28.
Matthew chapter 28. Jesus is our leader in conquest.
And he really, he fulfilled what the Lord commanded Joshua. Jesus fulfilled it to the T as far as his mission.
[36:14] But even so, we see a commission here. And look at verse 18. Oftentimes when we think of the commission, we don't think of verse 18 as going along with it.

But it really is. And you see the pattern of the commission in Joshua 1 is the same as the pattern of commission that we see in Matthew 28.
And this regard. Listen to it. And Jesus came and said to them. Here it is. Here's the reminder. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Isn't that a great reminder? It is a reminder of God's power through his son. And here you have the requirement. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.
Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And here is the other encouragement.
[37:17] It's a reminder of his presence. And behold, I am with you always even to the end of the age. So you've got these assurances. And in between the assurances, both in Joshua 1 and Matthew 28, you've got this command that is given based on these assurances.

The reminders that comfort are twofold. The reminder of Jesus' power, all authority. And the reminder of Jesus' presence. I will be with you always.
But in between there, the requirement to make disciples of all. God's words to God's servants nudge us forward. You and I need that kind of nudge.
We need that kind of challenges. As we face life in various forms in this world and in this city. And as you and I hear God's word today, may it, as we sung, may it inspire faith in our hearts to face whatever the challenge that is before us.
May we not be allowed fear, discouragement to overshadow us and consume us. But may we rise based on all that God is for us and to us through Jesus and all the promises that we have in him.
[38:43] Jesus is our captain for conquest. And he has led us in and he wants us to embrace all that that he is to us and for us.

There's a new assignment. There's a new day. We're going to be in this book for a while. And may we, in the grace of us here, may we be very strong and courageous. Face your opportunity, your challenge.
The Lord, our God, let me pray. Dear Lord, we love you. And we thank you for this opportunity to get this series kicked off. I pray that you will reach strength in each one here today.
Lord, even as we embark upon new challenges that we face, Lord, you know where each person is. I pray that your strength will be their portion.

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In Christ's name, amen. Ž Ž Thank you.

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