

Choose This Day: Joshua's 7 Bold Lessons for Walking by Faith, Not Fear | Conquer Your Giants

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[0:00] Another Bible character study tonight, the man Joshua. You look at Joshua's life, a life of courage, a life of faith.

And Joshua is one of the Bible's remarkable leaders. His name means the Lord is salvation. He lived it out for all to see. Joshua, from Moses' assistant to a mighty commander of Israel's army, a man who led two million people across the Jordan.

Though it was flooded, in faith he crossed it on dry land into a land flowing with milk and honey, a land guarded, though, by God's enemies, giants, walled cities to overcome, and armies trained for war, Joshua.

Picture this, you're a young man and you're in the harsh wilderness. You've seen Moses split the sea, summon the plagues, and stand on Mount Sinai as it shook with God's fire.

You've fought beside him. You've scouted enemy strongholds, sat alone in the tent where God speaks face to face with man. Then Moses dies. God says, your turn. Suddenly, you're leading a nation through terror, doubt, and impossible odds. Scary.

[1:35] That's Joshua. That's Joshua. From helper to hero. And we'll look at some of the instances of his life, some little moments through chapters of his life.

As rivers part at his feet, as walls crumble at a shout, the sun stands still in the sky at his prayer. And at the end, he challenges a nation. Choose this day whom you will serve.

Joshua's journey, it speaks about trusting in the Lord, of facing giants, of finding courage when life tests your faith.

There's much we can learn and we can make application. He wasn't superhuman or fearless. He was yet filled with God's power. That made all the difference. And just so can you be. So filled with God's power.

And with God, you can have courage, just like Joshua had, to face your giants. Whatever is facing you. Who knows what giants next week? Might have already had enough this last week gone, but there's more to come.

[2:45] Giants. And as Paul said, we walk by faith, not by sight. That's 2 Corinthians 5.7. So we're going to look at seven main themes of Joshua's life.

Seven instances or lessons we can learn. Pages we can take out of Joshua's book. Some learnings we can make.

Firstly, of Joshua, he was faithful in small things. And his faithfulness in small things prepared him to face giants.

Before Joshua ever fought any battles, he learnt to serve. And Moses told him, for example, in Exodus 17, from verse 8, Choose out men and go out, fight with Amalek, this hostile enemy, the Amalekites.

And what did Joshua do? He obeyed immediately. He chose the men. He led the charge. And by God's grace, he won the battle. But the real victory wasn't about Joshua's strength or his sword.

[3:54] The victory was because, as Moses was out there holding up his hands in prayer, lifting up his hands in prayer, as Aaron and Hur lifted up Moses' hands, as he interceded, as he prayed for the nation.

The victory wasn't through Joshua's sword, but through the prayer of Moses. And Joshua learnt early that victory depends not on strength, but on prayer and dependence upon God.

Later on in Exodus 33, 11, it tells that Joshua stayed at the tabernacle. Others left, but Joshua stayed. It reads there, Exodus 33, 11, The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh

unto his friend.

And he turned again into the camp. But his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. Here's Joshua, a young man.

God's just met face to face in this very intimate presence of God that Moses had this time with God. And now Joshua wants to linger there.

[4:57] He wanted to linger in the tabernacle. Others left, but Joshua wanted to linger some more, some longer in God's presence. What a picture of the man Joshua, the young man, that he faithfully was such a man.

He was faithful in the little things, as we'll see further. For 40 years, Joshua served faithfully. He served quietly. He carried messages. He stood guard.

He organised the camp, fought the battles. He was always there. No spotlight. No fanfare. No applause. Just faithfulness. Just faithfulness. He served diligently where he was.

And we can learn from Joshua's example. How can we serve faithfully right here, right now, where we are? God was shaping him for something massive, but it was that faithfulness of that young man that set him up for a lifetime ahead, for God to use him.

It's not about position. It's about the heart. And Joshua had the heart. He wanted to commune with God. He wanted to stay longer. He wanted to linger longer in the presence of God.

[6:06] And Luke 16.10 reminds us that he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. Maybe you feel like you're a Joshua sometimes, just helping, just helping in the background.

Oh, the assistant to Moses, just Joshua helping out with this and that. And Joshua started there just helping out behind the scenes, serving without fanfare.

He was unnoticed. Really, you didn't have any prominence much in those early days. And when you think of it for yourself, if you want God to use you, start by being faithful where you are.

God was preparing Joshua for leadership, but Joshua didn't see the full plan. He just obeyed faithfully, day by day, doing the small things. And like that too, brother, sister, be faithful where you are.

God sees your quiet service, even in the small things. And also, as Joshua did, find a Moses, if you like, to learn from. And let God prepare you for greater things.

[7:13] See if you can find a Moses that you can learn from. And God is preparing you now for what he has for you next. Like Joshua, be faithful in the little things.

Secondly, we see that Joshua stood strong when others were fearful. We know the case where Joshua was one of the 12 spies.

Their mission was to go and spy out the land. Moses sent 12 spies to explore Canaan, the promised land. One land, two reports came back. All saw the same giants.

All carried the same massive grapes. So huge that two men needed a pole to carry this cluster of grapes. And they all agreed, surely this land, it floweth with milk and honey.

And this is the fruit of it. Imagine a picture of that, this heavy cluster of grapes that two men had to carry it on a pole. And surely this land, it floweth with milk and honey.

[8:18] They all agreed that, but then there was a division in their accounts. Ten spread terror. Ten of the spies, they said, the land eats up the inhabitants thereof.

And all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come off the giants. And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers.

So here's the ten spies. They reckon, hey, this is a land that eats up the inhabitants. There's giants there. And we're, in comparison, we're just like grasshoppers.

And so there was this report of fear, of a lack of faith. And their fear spread like a plague. The people then were weeping.

They plotted rebellion. They even wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb. They wanted to return to the slavery of Egypt. The misery of all of that, rather than face some unknown future that God had promised them.

[9:24] Joshua and Caleb tore their garments in this show of really grieving. In Numbers 14 from verse 6, And their report was different from the ten.

The ten spies, Joshua and Caleb, they brought a good report. They said, The land, this promised land. They said, This land is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey.

Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their defences departed from them, and the Lord is with us.

Fear them not. Caleb and Joshua, they said, If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land. The Lord is with us. Fear them not.

The same giants were seen by the twelve. The ten saw the same giants as the two. But the two had a different vision. Caleb and Joshua saw things by faith.

[10:30] The ten saw problems. Joshua and Caleb saw the promises of God. They looked not at the size of the giants, but the size of their God. Their God is able. And because the people believed the fear report, though, it ended up they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.

40 wasted years. And you think, really, of unbelief, it's very costly. It leads to loss. But faith honours God. Rather stand with Caleb and Joshua.

The spies that walked by sight, they just magnified the problems. They magnified the giants. It seemed like everything was hopeless. The people are going to devour us, they said.

But Joshua, he walked by faith. Caleb and Joshua, they saw that the enemies were bread for us. They are bread for us. And their defences departed from them. And the Lord is with us.

Fear them not. They saw that God would use even the enemies to strengthen Israel. That God would bring nourishment, even from the enemies that they would defeat.

[11:35] And you can think of it for yourself, brother, sister, in this context of entering into this land where the giants are. You're going to face giants too in your own life, as a Christian, as a believer, that you're going to face some times of doubt.

It could be of difficulty, of addiction, maybe setbacks or despair. Times of feeling low. They're giants, aren't they? We all have our different giants.

But don't stare at the problem. Don't stare at the giants. Trust God's promises. Fear them not. Fear them not. Faith doesn't ignore the giants, but it remembers who's bigger than the giants, when you think about it.

We could amplify the giants and exaggerate the giants, but rather let's magnify our Lord. Let's make Him big. Let's exalt Him.

Stand with God and Caleb and Joshua, not with the crowd of the grasshoppers, those that think, hey, we're not able, because our God is able and we can trust Him.

[12:40] And He rewards those who believe. It tells us that He rewards those who believe. Another lesson from Joshua is, it tells us be strong and courageous.

We get to a point where Joshua takes over from Moses. Moses is gone and they're facing the Jordan. The Jordan River, it rages.

The people mourn. Joshua trembles. This is scary stuff. And God says to Joshua, Joshua 1 verse 1 through 9, in part, Be strong and of a good courage.

Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest. Wherever you go, He says, the Lord thy God is with thee.

Personal. And God commands Joshua three times here, Be strong and of a good courage. It's in verse 6, 7 and 9 there, of Joshua 1.

[13:43] It's like Joshua had to hear it. One time, two times, three times. He needed to hear that. And God had to emphasise that, the courage that we can have.

Courage doesn't come from our own power, but it comes from His presence. Be strong and courageous. Why? God is with thee. It's like David facing Goliath, like Moses leading millions despite his stutter.

God calls the unqualified, and He equips them. And God enabled Joshua. He says, Be strong and of good courage. Be not afraid. And God's secret for success was simple really for Joshua.

The Lord told him, This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mind, mouth. He says, Meditate therein, day and night. Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous.

God directs Joshua to the book, the Word of God. And we can feel, at times, when God puts something on our heart to do, that we feel utterly unqualified, incapable.

[14:56] Like Joshua, here he is, at the banks of this Jordan River, which is raging, which is raging, this Jordan. And God's direction was to cross it, to go over.

And we can feel, not able. And that is a good thing, because we need to have a dependence on our Lord, don't we?

When we face those challenges of life, that God's presence is going to beat our ability every time. And we can grab God's Word like a shield, scriptures like Hebrews 13, 5, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

We can grab verses like that, and hold on to God's promises. God enables, and you're not alone. Even though you might feel like Joshua, at the bank of the Jordan. You've got God's presence, and you've got God's promises.

And don't wait to feel brave, just obey, and God will give you the courage. Next we see, that victory comes, by faith.

[15:56] As Joshua trusts and obeys. Israel's first challenge here, was to cross this flooded river. In Joshua 3, 15, it says that it overfloweth all his banks.

It was this time, when the river was really flooded. It was at flood. And there was no bridges, there was no boats. Just God's command, cross over.

It took raw faith, but they had to step in. Step in. The moment the priest's feet, touched the water, the Jordan dried up. And it tells us there, Joshua 3, 15, as they took this venture, across the Jordan. And as they that bear the ark, would come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests, that bear the ark, were dipped in the brim of the water, the people passed over. We see that God brought dry land, in the midst of this river.

And God gave this nation, a crossing, alike to the crossing of the Red Sea. And you can see how faith building that would be. They crossed the Jordan.

[17:00] Then Jericho. Jericho was the next challenge. This fortress city. It had double walls, 20 feet thick, and such that they could even ride chariots on top of it.

And it was shut tight. It's just an impenetrable fortress. And God's plan, what was it? Walk around it, silently, for six days.

No talking for six days. That'd be hard for some of us, wouldn't it? Just silent marches, walking around the city, six times, six days, one time each of the six days.

Armed men just circling around, once daily, and the priests walking ahead of them, blowing these ram's horns, and the ark in front. And then, day seven, seven laps.

A long blast, a great, and the result was, the walls fell down flat. It says, the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout, the wall fell down flat.

[18:09] And it says they could take the city. There was no arrow fired, there was no ladders to climb, there was no battering ram. They simply obeyed the word of God.

It was just pure obedience that unlocked the miracle. How ridiculous it would have seemed. How ridiculous, can you imagine it? That it would have sounded.

To march and to shout. That's no military strategy. But what it was, was a test of their obedience. Obey God, and do it God's way.

And God's way is always right. Would Joshua and the people trust God's odd plan? Or trust their own wisdom? And we can be like that, can't we?

When we face life's dilemmas, and challenges come, and we try to use human logic. But God's ways aren't our ways. It tells us there in Isaiah 55, verse 8 through 9, God says, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

[19:14] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways. And my thoughts than your thoughts. Sometimes what he asks of us may not make sense to us in the immediate.

And it might seem strange, but his plans always work when we follow them fully. Faith is about obeying God, even when we don't understand the why.

And Joshua could have argued, Lord, where are the battering rams? But he learnt that obedience was going to unlock those miracles. And victory at Jericho wasn't some strategy or strength of men, but it was faithful steps, proving to the world that the battle is the Lord's.

1 Samuel 17, 47, as David found. The battle is the Lord's. He's got it in hand. And all they had to do was just to walk and worship. Walk and worship.

See that walk of the faith that they walked by faith, they worship, they believed God, and God brought the walls down. As we trust in God's wisdom, can we just get that concept of let's trust God's wisdom rather than rely on our own wisdom.

[20:30] And God will part the rivers when we step through towards Him first. He says, If you love me, keep my commandments. John 14, 15. And you could think in life for ourselves at times how at times God's instructions often clash with culture.

For example, we read Matthew 5, 44, Love your enemies. That's counter-cultural, isn't it? We might feel that revenge feels right. We should revenge, we should hate our enemies, and we should make them suffer, the people that hurt us.

But no, the Lord Jesus says, Love your enemies. He says, Do good to them. Pray for them. God's instructions often clash with man's logic or man's ways, with human kind of thinking, human culture. And likewise, give thanks in everything, it tells us. What? Even in my pain? Even when I'm not feeling well? Even when I don't feel like thanking God?

He says, Give thanks in everything. Simply obey. Just do what He asks you to do, to give thanks. And what about tomorrow?

[21:45] When I'm worried about this or that? He says, Fret not thyself, trust in the Lord. You know, humanly speaking, we think of things coming up, bills to pay, of things to get, to do, of job applications, of needs that we have, and we can fret.

He says, Fret not thyself. Don't fret. Just trust. Trust. Trust in the Lord. And so we could think how, what the world could call foolish, but it's obedience to God, that's what we ought to do.

Do what God wants of you. And the walls will come down. It could be those habits, addictions, those things that we just can't get on top of, that we can't seem to win.

If we just simply trust him, trust him, and hand it over to him. If we can step into your Jordan, you can watch God move.

And follow God's plan, not your own plan. Trust and obey. Wait on the Lord. And breakthrough will come. Another lesson from Joshua is, when you fail, rise from the setbacks.

[22:57] And in Joshua 7, it talks about the occasion, where there was sin in the camp. They got the victory of Jericho, and then pride crept in.

And Joshua thought, well, the next city is going to be easy. That's just a small place. Ai. He thought that was going to be easy, but he was wrong. Sin was in the camp.

Achan had stolen forbidden treasure. And what happened? Israel was defeated. And what happened with Joshua, where he was crushed. It says that he fell down, in the dust, upon his face.

And then God says to him, get thee up. Wherefore liest thou thus, upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant. Get thee up.

Sanctify the people. God says, don't lie there, in this despair. Get up, and deal with it. And God's response was firm, but forward.

[23:56] He says, get thee up. Wherefore liest thou thus, upon thy face? Sin had answered. Achan had coveted, and concealed these forbidden garments, this silver and gold, from Jericho.

These were items, that were devoted to God, alone. But Achan, sneakily hit them, in his tent. He covered them over, and he hit them.

He thought, no one's going to find, these things that I've taken. But, it was sin. He was trying to hide his sin, really. And God says, clean house, and get on with it.

That's what he said to Joshua here, really, is to resolve it. And so, they dealt with Achan's sin, and they purified the camp, and then God gave a great victory again.

And we see that there, that God says to them, fear not, neither be thou dismayed. I have given into thy hand, the king of Ai, and his people, and his city. They dealt with the sin, and then there was victory.

[24:58] We see of Achan, and of Joshua, of the people at that time, it's a picture for us, that even strong believers, can mess up. But failure isn't final.

Don't stay down. He says, get up, to Joshua. We need to get up, get back, in the fight. Get up, get back, after failure.

Joshua 7, 11, shows that one sin, Achan's sin, the sin in the camp, one lapse, affected many. And that's a big truth too, isn't it? We don't want to, drop the ball, as Achan did.

But Joshua didn't quit. He got back in the fight. He dealt with the problem, he learnt from it, and he got back up. And we could think, for ourselves, brother, sister, here tonight, where, you might have occasion, where you feel like, you've messed up, you've, failed the test, you've, lost your cool, you've, blown it, and you've fallen, for temptation.

Don't stay there, like God says to Joshua, get up, you know, get back in the fight, and, get back, in the race.

[26:17] Don't wallow in guilt, but rather, get it resolved, by faith. We see, as it tells us, that with our sin, when we foul up, confess it immediately, go to God.

As we read in 1 John 1, 9, that familiar one, says, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us, from all unrighteousness.

We can examine our life, if we got some kind of, Achan like bitterness, something that we're hiding, misplaced priorities, idols even, as Achan had idols, that he was hiding, it could represent pride, could represent all kinds of things, between you and the Lord, those things that might be, things that you're hiding, and you think you can get away, with something, rather surrender it in prayer, and Lord consecrate me, remove that which hinders, and God can turn, your trouble spots, into blessings.

The word AI, I believe it means trouble, so there's a picture there, of trouble coming into, our life, mess ups can happen, but God can use them, to make us, have a deeper trust, a deeper dependence, upon him.

So like the words, to Joshua, God's words to Joshua, get up, he's not finished with you, get back in the race, and so we can have that, rising up, after a setback, and the next lesson, we can learn from Joshua, is a lesson of prayer, Joshua prayed big, and he fought hard, in Joshua 10, the occasion there, it says that five kings, attacked, Gibeon, and Joshua marched, all night, but the sun was setting, and Joshua prayed, sun, stand still, thou, upon, Gibeon, and thou moon, in the valley of, Agilon, and the sun stopped, it was a really, audacious kind of prayer, but Joshua knew, God fights for his people, and bold faith, gets bold answers, see Joshua's prayer, was a very bold kind of prayer, to actually stop the sun, in its tracks, and yet God answered that prayer, because it was a prayer, for God's glory, and when you pray for something, that's for the glory of God, nothing is too big, that God cannot intervene, in your situation, he's the same God, who stopped time, and he can work in your life, he's for you, when you face your battles, when you face spiritual strongholds, that God wants us to, have that bold kind of faith, to pray big, and he can move heaven, if needed, if we pray for his glory, and it tells us that, the Lord fought for Israel, you see that there,

[29:10] Joshua 10, 14, that the Lord fought for Israel, the last lesson, we can learn from Joshua, number seven, is, that Joshua finished strong, we see that there, in, Joshua 24, he's 110 years old, and Joshua gathered Israel, and he issued, this final challenge, he says, choose you this day, whom you will serve, but as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord, and the people vowed, they said there, Joshua 24, 24, the Lord our God, will we serve, and his voice, will we obey, Joshua, he set the example there, he says, choose to serve the Lord, he says, as for me and my house, that's the choice, we're going to make, and you think, really, leadership starts at home, doesn't it, think of ourselves, mums, of dads, of our leadership, of the family, Joshua says, as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord, he made that stand, he made that, commitment, that he would, lead his family, and not just his nation, and he didn't just talk about,

God's faithfulness, he lived it to the end, Joshua said, he's going to lead his home, as well as the nation, and it's the same for us, doesn't it, get things right, on the home front, and then we see, the

challenge of his life, if you put it all, in a bit of a summary here, of Joshua's life, the Joshua challenge, that we can live out, Joshua's life, it teaches us, simple, life-changing truths, teaches us, that God has a plan for us, it shows us, Joshua's life shows us, serve faithfully, in the small things, be like Joshua, he was just serving, just serving, and that's all we can do, isn't it, that's a training ground, for the future, we can face our giants, with faith, whatever those giants can be, we can have courage, and trust our Lord, we can obey, even when it makes no sense, because God's plan, is best, and we can repent, we can get up, when we fall, we can get things, straightened down, and we can get back on track, and we can pray bold prayers, like Joshua did, and we can choose every day, every single day, to serve our God, we see his unreserved surrender, he lifted out, in all of those ways, and the call comes to us too, as it came to Joshua, have not I commanded thee, be strong, and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God, is with thee, whithersoever, thou goest, you could think of Joshua, you could think, maybe of your own circumstance, perhaps we could think, we've got some Jordans, we've got some Jordans, just over yonder, we've got some Jerichos, over there, we've got some giants, but we've got, the God of Joshua, haven't we, haven't we, the God of Joshua, as we enter the promised land, we've got the promises of God, the promises of God, they're yey, and amen, in his word, there's exceeding great, and precious promises, promises, we've got a book, full of promises, as well as the, sense of the promised land, we could, reflect on that, of the ultimate promised land, it's glory, isn't it, to be with our saviour, and so friends, here tonight, let's take, a leaf out of, Joshua's book, think about, God's got a plan for, you, serve faithfully, face the giants in faith, be courageous, have that faith, that trust in, no matter what, to pray through, to believe, even to pray, big prayers, to really believe, that God can work, a miracle, in your circumstance, for his glory, let us pray, Lord we thank you, that you are, the God of Joshua, and by faith, you're our God, Lord we thank you, that we can put our faith, in you, as saviour, and Lord, as really, the ultimate Joshua, our Lord Jesus, we see, that you are the one, who is the ultimate, saviour, and master, Lord help us, to follow you, Lord as Joshua, showed in his own life, his trust, his faith, at work, Lord we can, learn from him, to choose, this day, that we're going, to serve you, by your grace, we're going to trust you, and know you're saving, and Lord help us, to walk in that, day by day, help us Lord, to have, the faith that Joshua had, to cross, the Jordan, to face the giants, Lord, to go into, the territory, with so many, struggles, and obstacles, ahead, think of our own lives, as we walk, the Christian walk, and we walk by faith, Lord we know, at times, we can feel, maybe those setbacks, like Joshua had too, where we fall, on our face, in the dust, and you say get up, you tell us, to get back on track, Lord if we've, fallen we can have, that restoration, by your power, Lord help us to pray, to learn, to follow you, as Joshua did, to follow you fully, all for your glory, and honour we pray, in Jesus name, Amen.