

From Faith to Fulfillment

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Preacher: Joe Dugger

[0 : 00] Thank you guys. That was great. And thank you all the men who were in the choir up there. Thank you for that as well. So this morning we are turning our attention to the book of Joshua. And like I said, I know that I didn't lead up to this much.

And we did just go through the book of Joshua in the Gospel Project Sunday School material. But I want to walk us through this book. And there's a few reasons why. One, I think that Joshua is just an amazing book about the faithfulness of God.

And two, I want us as a church to see what it looks like when people are obedient to what God has called them to.

And the fulfillment that is found and the blessing that is found in walking in obedience. This people, the Israelites, the nation, they had been through a lot.

They had been through quite a bit. 400 years in captivity in Egypt and then wandering through the wilderness for 40 years because of their own sin. They had not yet found rest.

[1 : 13] But they had been promised rest. And so in some sense, the searching and the yearning of the people of Israel for that rest in the promised land mirrors the searching and yearning that human beings have in rest in their spirit, in their soul, inside.

And, of course, the only way that we'll find fulfillment, the only way that we'll find success, that feeling of peace and rest, is if we fall on our face before the Lord and beg him for forgiveness and for salvation.

So this book, Joshua, while it's in the Old Testament, I think there's a lot in the book that points ahead to the person of Christ and points ahead to the work of God in the rest of history that would take place both through the nation of Israel and eventually in the line of Christ.

In fact, Joshua, his name is the same name that Jesus would have had. All right? We say Jesus because that's what it says in the English Bible. But his name in the Greek was Yesues, which is the Greek version of the Hebrew Yeshua.

His name was Joshua. And the reason for that is because the name Joshua means the Lord is my salvation, the Lord is my deliverance. In fact, Joshua previously had the name Hosea, which just meant deliverance or salvation.

[2 : 40] But Moses actually changed Joshua's name, one of the first people who had their name, I think maybe the first person who had his name changed to incorporate the divine name Yahweh, the holy name of the Lord, the secret name of the Lord, so to speak, incorporated into his name.

Because Moses, in doing that, was showing Joshua where the salvation and where the deliverance truly comes from. It comes from the Lord. So Joshua, he bears the same name as Christ, and he led his people into the promised land in the same way that Christ, in his death and burial and resurrection, leads us into eternal rest in him by faith.

So I want us to look through this book, and I want us to consider how this Old Testament book from third level. I like Hebrew way better than I like Greek. I don't know if this is going to make sense to anybody, but like when I studied Greek in seminary, it was like math.

And when I studied Hebrew in seminary, it was like history. And so like I can do words, you know what I mean? Like I can study history. Numbers, though, I can't. And so Greek I just had a hard time with.

But Hebrew is a lot more fun. So I'm personally really excited about studying the book of Joshua as well. There's a few things that I want us to look at before we really get into the text today. And I realize that we're limited on time because of my ramblings about the Southern Baptist Convention.

[4 : 02] But I want us to look at a few things. Let me set the scene. And however far we make it today, by the way, is fine. Because you know who picks what we preach next week? I do. So if we

need to come back to Joshua 1, that's totally cool.

That's not a problem. So however far we make it is okay. But I want to go to, I don't have control of the slides. So if you can go to the slide that's the background and context.

This is where the nation of Israel is at this point. Remember, they were in Egypt for 400 years in slavery. And then you had the Exodus, that great deliverance. Moses was called by God at the burning bush in the book of Exodus, chapter 3.

And he goes and he tells Pharaoh to let the people go. And eventually, after the plagues and different demonstrations of God's power, Pharaoh finally relented.

And he let the people go. And so they left. And then some amazing things took place. They were in the wilderness. They made their way up to the promised land. They were almost there to go in. And if you remember, Moses sent in 12 spies.

[5 : 02] 12 spies into the land to scout it out. To make sure that they would be okay to take it over. And two of those spies were named Caleb. One of them was Caleb.

One of them was Joshua. It's the same Joshua that we're reading about today. But the ten other spies came back from the land. And they said, we can't do it. There's these giants there.

There are people who will kill us. We stand no chance. There's no way that we can go in and take that land. And Joshua and Caleb were faithful. And they believed in the Lord. And they said, yeah, we absolutely can.

Because God is with us. God fights for us. Well, of course we can. As long as God is pleased with us, then we'll have victory wherever we go. Unfortunately, the majority won.

And so, as punishment, they had to wander in the wilderness then for 40 years. 40 years. An entire generation had to die off. At this point, Moses was still leading the people.

[5 : 57] But eventually, because of Moses' sin, he wasn't allowed to enter the promised land either. And so now, they're at the precipice. They're at the brink of, they're at the bank, so to speak, of the Jordan River, ready to enter the promised land that God has given them.

And someone has to take them in. Someone has to lead the charge. And that is where Joshua would take over. So, I want us to look also real quick, just to get an idea of who Joshua is. Joshua was Moses' assistant.

Okay? There are tons of references to Joshua in the first five books of the Old Testament. Primarily in Numbers and Deuteronomy. But Joshua was Moses' assistant.

He was the son of none. Growing up, there was always a fun joke. Who was the only person in the Bible who didn't have a father? And everybody goes, Jesus. Joshua. He was the son of none. I'm glad.

All right. He was from the tribe of Ephraim, or Ephraim, which is one of Joseph's sons. Remember Joseph, the one that his brother sold him off into slavery.

[7 : 01] Then he had, you know, rose through the ranks, second in command in all of Egypt. And he brought his family into Egypt. And he had two sons, Ephraim, Ephraim, and Manasseh. And those two sons were taken in as sons by Jacob himself.

And so they actually received the inheritance. So Joseph had a split inheritance between his two sons. So Joshua was from that tribe. And he was extremely devoted to the Lord.

Extremely devoted to the Lord. There's a few examples that I want to draw your attention to from the Old Testament. I guess the Pentateuch. The first five books of the Old Testament. That really display how devoted Joshua was to the Lord.

Because understanding Joshua's devotion to the Lord is really key to understanding this book as a whole. And I don't want to go in too deep and, you know, make my sermons about Joshua.

Because Joshua was just a human being.

He was just a man. Right? But he is nonetheless a good example for us to see of someone who was devoted and faithful to the Lord. Even when, and I'd say even especially when, things didn't look great.

[8 : 06] All right? So this is Joshua. In Exodus chapter 17 verses 8 through 16. There's this amazing scene where the people of Israel are attacked by Amalek, by the Amalekites.

So Moses said to Joshua, select some men for us and go fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the hilltop with God's staff in my hand. You remember the scene? When Moses had his hands up, there was victory.

The Israelites took battle, took over the battle. And then when his hands went down, they started to lose. There was defeat. And so there was these two people, Aaron, Moses' brother, and Hur, who held his arms up.

So that as he held his arms up, the Lord gave victory and Israel won. So there's this really amazing example of faith there though. And it's not just in Moses holding up the staff and keeping his arms up.

Or Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' arms so that it stays up. But when you think about it, Joshua had to go fight the battle, right? Joshua had to lead these men who were severely undermanned into battle and trust that God was going to actually give them victory.

[9 : 13] And sure enough, he did. Joshua did just as Moses had told him. And they fought against Amalek. And eventually they win that fight. There's another example that I want to talk to you about, which is in Exodus chapter 24.

Exodus 24. And this is where Moses goes up to the mountain to hear from the Lord. Moses goes up on top of the mountain, Mount Sinai, to hear from the Lord.

And it says that he went up to the mountain with Joshua. And he told the elders, wait here for us until we return to you. Aaron and Hur are here with you. Whoever has a dispute should go to them. So when Moses went up the mountain, the cloud covered it. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. And the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day, he called Moses from the cloud. The appearance of the Lord's glory to the Israelites was like a consuming fire on the mountaintop. Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain. And he remained on it for 40 days and 40 nights.

[10 : 14] Remember when Moses receives the law and this beautiful, amazing, all-consuming fire that was taking place on top of the mountain. And Moses was there with him. That was the glory of the Lord that shone around for all of the people to see.

Joshua was up there. He was close enough to hear the Lord call out to Moses from the cloud.

Joshua was devoted to the Lord. And there's this other thing where Moses had set aside this tent. It was called the tent of meeting. And anyone who went into the tent could go in there to commune with the Lord, to talk with the Lord. Moses would go in, and the cloud would come and cover the tent. And he would be in there talking with the Lord.

Joshua would go in with him. And I love this. The Lord would speak with Moses face to face just as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp. His assistant, the young man Joshua, the son of Nun, would not leave inside the tent.

He was enamored with the things of the Lord. He was amazed that God would speak to Moses right there. And so he stayed. He stayed. He communed with God.

[11 : 13] So Joshua was someone who loved the Lord. And then also, he was chosen and commissioned to take over leadership after Moses. Remember, at this point, the people of Israel didn't have a king.

There wasn't, they weren't a nation, a monarchical nation at that point in time. There was no monarchy. So he was, though, supposed to step into the leadership role, the point person, so to speak, the voice of the Lord for the people to follow into the fulfillment that God had already set aside for them.

In Numbers chapter 27, the Lord replied to Moses, Take Joshua, the son of Nun, a man who has the spirit in him, and lay your hands on him. Have him stand before the priest, Eliezer, and the whole company, and commission him in their sight.

Confer some of your authority on him so that the entire Israelite community will obey him. He will stand before the priest, Eliezer, who will consult the Lord for him with the decision of the Urim. He and all the Israelites with him, even the entire community, will go out and come back at his command. Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua, had him stand before the priest, Eliezer, and the entire community, laid his hands on him, and commissioned him as the Lord had spoken through Moses.

[12 : 26] And then in Deuteronomy, this happens again. At the end of Deuteronomy, this commissioning of Joshua. Then Moses continued to speak these words to all Israel, saying, I am now 120 years old.

I can no longer act as your leader. The Lord has told me you will not cross the Jordan. The Lord your God is the one who will cross ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you

will drive them out.

Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, as the Lord has said. The Lord will deal with them as he did with Sion and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and their land when he destroyed them.

The Lord will deliver them over to you, and you must do to them exactly as I have commanded you. And then this sounds very much like Joshua, doesn't it? Joshua chapter 1. Be strong and courageous.

Don't be terrified or afraid of them, for the Lord your God is the one who will go with you. He will not leave you or abandon you. Moses then summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and courageous, for you will go with this people into the land the Lord swore to give their ancestors.

[13:32] You will enable them to take possession of it. The Lord is the one who will go before you. He will be with you. He will not leave you or abandon you. Do not be afraid or discouraged.

So now we have this scene where Moses has handed over leadership publicly. He's commissioned Joshua publicly. The Lord has commissioned him privately. And now in front of everyone, Joshua is known to be the man.

He's the next one up. The one who has to take this mantle of leadership. And that's all well and good, right? That's fine. It's one thing to know that you're supposed to do something that is of some importance.

It's another thing entirely when it finally comes time for that to take place, right? So in Joshua chapter 1, after the death of Moses, the Lord's servant, the Lord spoke to Joshua, son of Nun, Moses' assistant.

Moses, my servant, is dead. Those words right there would have sent a shock through the Israelite community, right? Moses was the lawgiver. Moses was the one who led them out of Egypt.

[14:39] Moses was the one who spoke to Pharaoh. Moses was the one who communed with God. Moses was the one who was on the mountain in the all-consuming fire. And now he's dead. Now he's dead. And Joshua, if I'm just guessing here, that's pretty strong suspicion, Joshua was terrified when Moses died.

He was scared. And I'll be honest with you, I would have been scared too. I would have been really, really scared. Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I am giving the Israelites.

So God wasted no time, right? God wasted no time whatsoever. He immediately told Joshua, you know what's coming. Moses wasn't going to enter the land.

You know you were going to be the one to lead them in. And now the time has come. Prepare to lead them across the Jordan. Prepare to take them into the land that I'm giving you. You know, the death of Moses, by the way, and this is a side note, the death of Moses and the replacement with Joshua is a really good example for us.

I should say a really good reminder for us that God doesn't need any of us. God doesn't need any of us. The nation of Israel didn't depend on Moses being a great leader.

[15:54] The nation of Israel didn't depend on Joshua being a great successor. The nation of Israel depended solely and entirely on the Lord God himself who would go before them and give them victory.

In the same way, the church doesn't depend on any one person. A church, if, look, you guys had a pastor here for 30 years, and no offense, but we're still meeting, right? Like, we're still here.

But one day, maybe, one day I'll leave, right? Whether I die here, hey, let's hope so, right? That'd be awesome. Or, I mean, well, like later, though. Like, you know what I'm saying? Like way down the road. You know what I mean?

Like nothing imminent. You know what I'm saying? But, or, you know, God calls us somewhere else or whatever takes place. Look, the church doesn't depend on me. The church doesn't depend on any of us.

It depends on the Lord and the Lord God alone, right? That's a really good reminder here. And it's also a reminder, too, whenever you look at the example of Moses and Joshua, to take time to invest in future leaders, right?

[16:51] Men pour into young men. Women pour into young women. Fathers pour into your sons. Take time to invest in young leaders. Moses took time to invest in Joshua, and the Lord used that to prepare Joshua to take the mantle of leadership.

And when that time came, even though I think Joshua was probably concerned because following Moses and knowing the complaints he received and all those things was in front of him, he was able to take charge because God had prepared him for what he was calling him to do.

So it's a good reminder for us in a couple of ways. But there's one thing that I want us to really understand today. And that is whenever you look at this text, Joshua chapter 1, God's faithfulness renders fear powerless.

Because even though Joshua might have been afraid, I want you to see how God strengthened Joshua for the task that he was called to. God is faithful to prepare us and strengthen us for the things that he calls us to.

So there's four examples, okay? Four examples of strengthening that I think we can see here in this passage. And strength and courage, by the way, are important and even essential qualities for us to possess as we seek to live lives obedient to God and his word.

[18:04] Joshua's a great example of that. We have an advantage that Joshua didn't have, which is we have the Holy Spirit of God living within us, right? To keep us and sustain us and encourage us. Still, as human beings, we need this reminder that Joshua needed as well.

These reminders about where true strength comes from. So there's a few things, four things that I want us to see, and I'll be quick, okay? Number one, strength comes from God.

Number one, strength comes from God. Joshua 1, 3 through 5 says, Strength comes from God.

I want you to notice in this passage the way that God talks about the land that's going to come. I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads. It's a future tense, right? I have given this, or I guess a past tense.

I have given this to you, even though he's talking about a future reality. There's a really cool picture here of this thing we call already and not yet. God gives us strength from his vast strength because he has already accomplished the victory.

[19:29] He's already won what he has called us to. Whether it's salvation from our sin, if he calls us to salvation, we can trust that our salvation is secure in him because he's won the victory already.

Right? It's as good as done. It's as good as done. It's already there, already given, but it's not yet possessed. So to possess this promise, to possess the land, Joshua would have to actually lead the people into battle.

In some cases, he would actually have to take them in to take the land that God had already given to them. God had prepared it, but it still took obedience. And here's the cool thing is when we struggle with obedience, I think it's because oftentimes what we do is we struggle to really comprehend how great and vast and powerful God really is.

How much he has already done and how much he is going to do. Right? If Joshua doubted God's faithfulness, then he wouldn't have been very confident leading the people into or across the Jordan River.

But he didn't. He was confident in the Lord. And so strength comes from God. Number two, strength is found in his promise or in his promises. Look at Joshua 1.6.

[20:41] Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their ancestors to give them as an inheritance. I've got a list of verses in my office that I wrote down from the book of Genesis where God promised this land to his people.

It's like 15, 20 verses where God promised this land. He swore this land to them. And now, 400 years later, that fulfillment, the time for fulfillment has come.

God has promised this land, and he is good on his promise. And if you remember from Deuteronomy chapter 31, God had already told Joshua that he was going to distribute the land. Right? So Joshua is now supposed to be strong and courageous, and that strength and courage comes from remembering that God is good to accomplish his word.

He is faithful. So remember God's promises and trust his faithfulness. Number three, strength is found in his word. And this is really the power punch of this entire passage.

[21:40] All right? It's in Joshua chapter 1, verses 7 and 8. Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you.

Do not turn from it to the right or the left so that you will have success wherever you go. This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth. You are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it.

For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. All right? The message here to Joshua was courageously live by God's word.

Right? At this point in time, the first five books of the Old Testament were already recorded and in some way kept and able to be read and referred to by Joshua.

He knew the law. Right? He had the law. Moses had already read it again in front of the people. He had God's law. And God now calls on him to courageously live according to it.

[22 : 40] To obey the commands given in it. To listen faithfully to what God said in it. Here's the thing. You and I are called to live the same courageous life of faithful adherence to God's word.

Absolutely we're called to the same commitment to God's word. I talked about the Southern Baptist Convention. One of the things that I love about the Southern Baptist Convention, one of the things I love about being a Southern Baptist, is the commitment to God's word.

Commitment to biblical fidelity. There is no question among Southern Baptists about how we view scripture. This is God's inerrant, without error, inspired from him, God-breathed word.

And it is good for life and practice. And according here to the book of Joshua, it's good for success also. So follow God faithfully and sincerely.

And he says, in this verse 8, he says, Then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.

Here's the thing. We have a problem where we look at these words, prosper and succeed, and we think about prospering and success in very worldly terms.

[23 : 57] As very worldly terms. As things, you know, success means I'll have a lot of money.

Prosperity means I'll never have a bad day at the doctor. Right? I'll always succeed in whatever I do.

You know, if I want to win something, by God's strength, I can win it. You know, if I want to do something, by God's strength, I can do it. And, like, those things are a little bit, I guess, you know, top layer, level.

Right? That's not taking that, you know, the study of God's word to its deepest point. These words, success and prosper, they don't mean what we typically think of whenever we read these words.

I want to read a quote to you from one of the commentaries that I read this week. It's a decently long quote, so bear with me. He's talking about success and prosperity. And it says, This is referred to succeeding in life's proper endeavors.

Okay? Not success financially. Not success, you know, in dating or whatever. Right? Success in life's proper endeavors. This happens when people's lives are focused entirely on God and obedience to Him.

[25 : 07] The focus of people's endeavors is not to be prosperity and success, but rather holiness and obedience. A believer's consuming obsession should be holiness, for God Himself is holy, to love God with one's entire being, to keep His word with the same fervor, and to fear God and keep His commandments.

When this happens, then God does bless, usually. Although not always in exactly the ways we might like Him to. In this, the Old Testament has the same message that Jesus spoke when He said, Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things, food, drink, and clothing, will be given to you or added to you as well.

I like this last line. Our priority is to seek God. This is from David Howard Jr., okay, in the NAC commentary on Joshua. Joshua, our call is the same as Joshua's, which is to seek the Lord through His word first and foremost, and with sincerity, pursuing God, not pursuing what God can give us. Right? That's a disingenuous relationship. If I was only friends with Stephen because he happens to have chickens and can give me some eggs, that's a disingenuous friendship, right? But if I'm friends with Stephen and he happens to give me eggs, that's pretty cool.

That's a blessing, right? That's a blessing. And the same way, as we seek the Lord, we don't seek the Lord for what He can give us or what He can do for us. We seek the Lord because of who He is, because He's beautiful, because He's holy, because He's perfect, and because He calls for us to be like Him.

[26 : 48] How else will we be like God unless we study His word and seek His ways? And so, like Joshua, we should have a commitment to God's word. Listen to how seriously God wants him to take it.

This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth. You are to meditate on it. Recite it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it.

Don't turn away from it to the right or the left. Listen, we have to be committed to God's word, and it's Father's Day, so let me mention this. If you're a father who struggles with being a godly father figure, if you're a husband who struggles with being a godly husband, if you're, and I'll go further, a wife who struggles with being a godly mother or a godly wife, can I just tell you the key to success in that specific area of life, those areas of life, without a doubt, unquestionably, is studying God's word.

Be committed to God's word. And it's not just within the family. This extends to all aspects of life. Do you want to be a good employee? Seek the Lord and live your life after him.

Do you want to be a good friend? Look at the life of Jesus. Imitate him. This is how we're called to live. We're called to seek God through his word daily.

[28 : 04] Because strength is found in his word. And the last thing that I want you to see is that strength is found in his presence. So Joshua 1.9, Haven't I commanded you? Be strong and courageous.

Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. So the first time he tells him to be strong and courageous, it was to take the land. Be strong and courageous. Because you're going to take the land and distribute the inheritance.

And then he says, be strong and courageous. Because not only are you going to take the land, but also you have a really hard task in front of you. And it's to stay close to me through my word. Be strong and courageous.

It takes strength and courage to desire and to long for God's word like God has called us to. And then now he says, be strong and courageous.

Not discouraged. Because I'm with you. Because I'm with you. The Lord your God is with you wherever you go. So, God gives victory.

[29 : 04] He's faithful. He's revealed himself to us. And he is present. And what more of an encouraging message than the reminder of the presence of God himself.

Right? For Joshua, who's now taking over this mantle of leadership. Who's going to lead the people into battle. Risk his life. What more strengthening encouragement could there be than the fact that the Lord God is with him.

Present. Going before him. And in the same way, those of us who are in Christ, God is with us.

God is for us. God lives within us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He has taken up residence and indwells us so that we can faithfully follow him.

The same way that Joshua was called to. I love the way that Paul talks about this. Okay? Very similar message here. The victory in the presence of God. Romans chapter 8.

[30 : 07] Says, What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He did not even spare his own son, but gave him up for us all.

How will he not also with him grant us everything? Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns?

Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised. He also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us. Who can separate us from the love of Christ?

Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or danger or sword? As it is written, because of you we are being put to death all day long. We are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

Verse 37. No, in all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[31 : 12] The overwhelming, all-consuming presence of God dwells within those who believe in Jesus Christ. Joshua was called to lead the soldiers into battle and was promised victory.

If you believe in Christ, you are called to go into battle, which is to live your life faithfully. The call to endurance, knowing that the victory is yours, Christ has won, and in him there is life and rest.

And that was the promise of the land. It was the promised land, not just because it was a piece of grass, but because it was this promise of rest. That God would provide them.

And in Christ, that is completely fulfilled. I'm going to pray for us and we'll sing a final song this morning. Let's pray together. Oh God, thank you for who you are. Thank you for your word.

Thank you for your love. Lord Jesus, I pray that you would give us the strength and the courage that you gave Joshua to walk faithfully, to love you with integrity, to seek you daily through your word.

[32 : 22] God, I pray that you would give us all a passion to know you even more. And Lord, as we see in the book of Romans and in the New Testament, this promise of your presence with us and the victory that we have in Christ, God, give us encouragement from that reminder.

We love you, Jesus, and praise you for who you are. It's in your name that we pray. Amen. Amen.