

Live By the Word of God

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[0 : 00] So this became the Garrett Pena look show today. And it's such a privilege to be invited here to have the opportunity to speak with you all today.

And Matt's already introduced me. I'm Lynn. And our father was a pastor and many of you here in the church know that dad passed away on July the 24th of this year.

At 97 years old. And a few nights before he passed he was still preaching. He was preaching in the middle of the night. He was preaching to no one in the room but my mom.

But he preached an on fire sermon about the word of God and how important it is. And today I'm going to be speaking to you about living by biblical standards.

Living by Bible standards and how we can live today. And we're going to be looking at Joshua. And we're going to be looking at the first chapter of Joshua. But I want to tell you a little bit about Joshua before we move into this chapter.

[1 : 12] Because I want to give you a brief history about Joshua and who Joshua was. And I'll let you know that when I was coming along as a youngster and my dad was preaching.

He would, if we got to talking too much and cutting up. Now I'm speaking to all you Garrett's over here. Y'all get to talking and cutting up over there. You're going to get that.

And that's what my daddy used to do to Matt and Meredith and Gary and I all the time. He'd get that. So I'll do, and that goes for you all too. If you fall asleep, start cutting up.

Praise God. Thank you Jesus. Let me just tell you a little bit about Joshua. A little bit of biblical history. And this comes from the book of Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy. I do know those by heart by the way.

I still had to read them. And anyway, his name was Hosea. Or Hashiach. And that's what he was born with, his Hebrew name.

[2 : 14] And that meant to save. That name meant to save. But Moses changed his name to Joshua or Yeshua. And that means that Yahweh is salvation.

So Moses changed his name to the name we remember in the Bible and the book that's written about him as Joshua. He was born in Egypt. And he was present with all of the people that came out of Egypt.

That meant he got to experience all of the miracles and knew about all the plagues that were going on in Egypt. But you realize where the Israelites lived, those plagues that Lord shielded where the Israelites were living.

And the plagues only fell upon the Egyptian people until Pharaoh was guided by the hand of the Lord to release the Israelites to leave and go on to the promised land.

And Joshua was first introduced as a leader in the battle of the Amalekites. And that is the story, if you're familiar with it, where Aaron and Hur stood on both sides of Moses on the mountaintop.

[3 : 23] And they lifted his arms up. The Lord had said, Moses, as long as you keep your staff lifted, the Israelites will continue to win. And Joshua led the army down in the valley until they defeated the Amalekites.

And Joshua was a servant. That's something that's really important that you need to know.

Because, see, God is always calling servant leaders. Come on, John. John and I had the privilege in South America to do a teaching on leadership.

And we talked a lot about servant leadership. Leaders that are led to also be servants. And that's something that you don't usually see in the world today.

Leaders are those that are involved in leading people. But we often don't find leaders that are servants. And so, in the church, leadership is supposed to be servant-led leadership.

Joshua modeled that servant leadership. Joshua was present with Moses on the mountain when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments.

[4 : 31] And he was also two of the twelve spies that were sent into the Promised Land. And only two came back with a good report, Joshua and Caleb.

And I never really thought about this too much, but do you know that the Israelites wanted to stone Joshua for giving a good report when they came back from the Promised Land?

They wanted to stone him, but God protected he and Caleb. And all through the 40 years of wilderness living, God was preparing Joshua to become the leader that would take Moses' place when he died.

And that death occurred. And overnight, with the death of Moses, Joshua graduated to become the leader of the people. And that's where we pick up the first chapter of Joshua that we're going to look at today.

I'm going to read verses 1 through 9. If you have your Bibles, read along with me. After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, son of Nun, Moses' aid, Moses, my servant, is dead.

[5 : 45] Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land that I'm about to give them, to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates, all the Hittite country, to the Mediterranean Sea and to the west.

No one will be able to stand 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.

Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. In verse 7, the Lord repeats this.

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.

[6 : 51] Keep this book of the law always on your lips. 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.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. The third time the Lord tells Joshua that. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged.

For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Lord, we thank you for your word today. We thank you for your presence in Joshua's life, and that you have passed this word down through the ages for us today.

And we ask that you'd speak to us and guide us and challenge us from this word that we have looked at today. And it's in the name of Jesus that we pray. And Lord, I just ask that all of our hearts would be open to speak to us, Holy Spirit, and that we have ears to listen.

[7 : 54] And Lord, as you challenge us from your word, help us to be obedient to follow through with what we are challenged with. And God, we give you praise in Jesus' name.

Amen. Praise the Lord. Hallelujah. Thank you, Jesus. Now, what we've read today are some standards that God gave to Joshua in how to live.

And we see that these standards that God gave to Joshua, what he willingly committed to and lived his life by these standards. And because of it, he became very successful.

And I wanted to share with you three standards that are given to us today in the Scripture. And before I share with you these three standards that we've read, I wanted to ask you, you know, a standard is a rule of measurement.

It's something that is an establishing point or it's a mark of excellence that you would strive to maintain, to get to. It is a symbol that gives meaning and value to your life.

[9 : 05] That's what a standard is. And it's what we live by. It also can be a flag. We've got the American flag. That's a standard that the nation has chosen to live by. And the Christian flag, it is a standard that we have chosen to live by, the principles of the Bible.

And so I want to ask you today, what kind of standards do you live by? What is the core values in your own life?

What do you exhibit? When people look at you and see you and how you act and how you present yourself around other people, what kind of standards do you live by?

What qualities do you portray? You see, to be successful in life, to reach God's full potential that he's called you to be involved with, we must adopt standards and values that promote the very active presence of God in our lives.

Not everything that we choose to do honors the Lord. So we need to make decisions that would promote the very presence of God to be available in our lives.

[10:18] Because he said here, he would never leave you. He'll go with you everywhere. He said, as I was with Moses, I will be with you. The same way he was with Moses, God says he'll be with us if we adopt standards that we can live by that promote his presence, that invite his presence, to be aware that he's with us and never leaves us.

See, God doesn't want us to just exist in this life. Jesus said he came to give life, but not just life, but life to its abundance. Life more filling. Life to the very fullest is Jesus' words.

So, we can look at Joshua today and I want to share with you that there are three points from this scripture that he lived by. One was he recognized his calling and we'll look at that in a second. And two, the Lord taught him to be strong and courageous three times. Every time something is repeated three times in a scripture, that means you need to listen to it. It's three times for importance.

And then the last thing God told Moses to live by, the third point is to live by the word of God. And so, in verse 6, if you look at that with me again, it said, Be strong and courageous because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

[11:40] So, the thing that you understand is Joshua was called to be a leader. Now, one of the mistakes that we often make as Christians is we sit in a pew and we think that there are only certain people that are called to leadership in the church.

But that is really a deceptive point or we're deceived if we believe that because you see, every Christian, everyone who calls on the name of Jesus to be saved is called into a leadership position. It's not just the pastor. It's not just the pastor. It's not just the worship leader. It's not just those who are teaching Sunday school or on some team that helps promote what's going on in the church. But every single person in the church is called to leadership because you've been called into the service of Christ the King. Now, we need to also realize that you're a leader in your home.

You need to realize that you're a leader on the job. Even if you have a supervisor and you're the lowest person in that totem pole of working on a job, you're still called by God to be a leader in that position.

[12:59] You're a leader in all kinds of things in community service. You see, someone is always watching you.

Someone is always at the supermarket, at the gas station, everywhere you go, you've been called into leadership to represent and present the very Lord Jesus in your life.

You are a leader. And one of the things that you've got to recognize to live by the principles of God is you've been called, you're chosen, you're set apart to serve the living Lord Jesus.

You're called into leadership. Maybe not as big as Joshua was called, being a leader over a million plus people, but you're still called to be a leader in your circle of people that you're aware of and that you're familiar with and that you associate with.

You're called to leadership. What kind of leadership are you exemplifying in your life is the question.

You know, I just don't know how long, well, Matt said I have until about five o'clock to speak tonight.

[14:13] Oh, did I hear him? You know, we're hearing aids and sometimes they go in and out so maybe Matt didn't say five o'clock. But, I just want to share this little story with you real quick. When I first became a pastor and I was like, I have arrived, called into leadership here at this church and there was a young, well, I was called in as associate pastor and one Wednesday night the pastor's wife came to me and she said, Lynn, there's someone in our church, well, they're not members of our church, but somebody that we know and they've got to be out of their apartment in the morning and we need you to gather some people tonight to get them out.

This was at eight o'clock on Wednesday night. We need you to gather some people right now to get these folks out of, do you remember this night, Donna? I'm sorry, I didn't even introduce my wife, Donna.

That's that lovely woman sitting there beside my mom. And we've been married almost 45 years this December. But that Wednesday night when she came to me and she said, Lynn, we need you to gather a group of people together to go move this family out.

They've got to be out tonight. Well, I rolled my eyes. Has anybody ever gone, rolled your eyes like, you know, because I didn't want to do it. I'm the associate pastor.

I didn't want to do it. Have you ever been asked to do something you didn't want to do? Yes.

[15:47] So, anyway, I rolled my eyes, but I went ahead, got on the phone, got some people, we got together, we went over and we moved this lady. I think we were there until like 12 o'clock at night.

I had to go to work the next morning. We got her out. We moved her stuff, moved her to a place and I didn't have the best attitude. Well, about maybe three weeks later, there was a young couple in our church that was part of that move.

They called me and said, Pastor Lynn, we'd like to, we'd like to have an appointment with you if we could. And I said, oh, they need marriage counseling. Oh, they need to have somebody just share with them the word of God and help them with their children.

And I was so excited. I said, oh yes, I would love to be able to meet with you to counsel. And I could put some of my school divinity stuff that I had been learning in college to practice, you know.

So they come in to the church this one night when I had agreed to meet with them and they come in and they sit down and here in my pious leadership ways, I said, what is it that you all are dealing with and struggling with that you need help with?

[16:59] How can I help you? And they said, well, Pastor Lynn, our problem is with you. So I just got T-boned like running through a red light.

And I went, your problem is with me. Like I'm the best pastor in the world. What do you mean? I'm the best leader in the world. And they said, well, you remember that night when they asked us to move people?

And I said, yeah. And they said, well, we watched you roll your eyes. And I said, you watched me roll my eyes. I didn't even know I'd done it. But I will tell you, since that day 20 years ago, I have been aware when I have rolled my eyes every time since then.

So I share this with you. Now, I had to ask for their forgiveness. And I explained to them pretty much the same way. I said, look, you know, there's times when the Lord calls on us to do things that we don't want to do.

But we're called into leadership. And as leaders, we still do them. And so, just share that with you to let you know, yeah, be aware that people are always watching you and they're watching your body language.

[18:08] And they watch you when you lose your temper. And I looked at Stephen then, by the way. And you mentioned it, I didn't. So, so, so, just be aware that we're called into leadership and God has presented us and laid that anointing on us for leadership as Christians.

The second thing is that the Lord had said for Joshua was to be strong and courageous in the word. So, that's in verse 7.

Be strong and very courageous. And he says, be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you. Do not turn from it to the right or to the left.

And then there's, there's a, a benefit from living this way. He said, so that you may be successful wherever you go.

Now, how many of us are aware that by living by the word of God and not turning from it from the left or the right, it is a condition if you meet that, that comes with a promise that you will be successful everywhere you go.

[19:20] Joshua understood that. He adopted that into his life. Now, I want to say to you that the ancient, ancient Hebrew wisdom is taught by rabbis.

I believe that this scripture verse here when it says to be strong and courageous to obey God's word, that, that has to do two parts. Number one, to be strong and courageous.

Number one, is the ability to know what to do. And number two, the courage to do that which you know. So the word of God is given to us.

We have this full book of word, of God's word and promises promises and just wonderful notes and things given to us to add to our lives and we can take this word but what good does it know to bring all this word and put it into your head and have all this head knowledge if you're not having the courage to do what the word of God says.

You see, he said, don't turn away from it from the left or the right. But many times as Christians, we're afraid to share the word of God that we know.

[20:34] We're afraid. This happens to all of us if we're chosen and living by the word of God. You'll be somewhere where somebody will say something and immediately a word from the Lord will come to you and you're knowing that you're supposed to share that at that very moment

because God is working in that person's heart and they need to hear what you've got to say. But out of fear, you'll not say it. Oh, they might reject what I've got to say. You know, take into account that God's already working in that person's life that this is a divine appointment that He has set up for you as a leader that someone that's been called, someone that's supposed to not turn left or right from the word of God that you're there to obey it, to live by it. God's called you at that moment, that divine appointment to share what He's laid on your heart because it isn't about you. It's about what God is doing in that person's life and God is already working by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to work in that individual's life and that individual is just waiting to hear the word that's been planted in you to give to that person. Take you a little example real quick, back to Genesis and how the earth was, how the world, how the universe was created. The scripture says that there was chaos and I'm using my own translation here.

There was darkness in the world. The universe was null and void. It was chaotic and there was darkness upon the world and the scripture there in Genesis chapter 1 says the Holy Spirit was hovering over that chaotic nothingness, that darkness, waiting for the word of God to be spoken. [22 : 22] And the scripture says and God said let there be light and there was light. The Holy Spirit moved at the moment that the word of God was spoken. So when you're in a situation and there's a divine appointment and the word of God is in you ready to be given to the individual that you're being prompted to, the Holy Spirit is hovering over that individual waiting for you to share the word of God so that the word of God can be released and combined with the Holy Spirit to do the work that God wants done in that individual's life because you've been called, you're anointed to leadership to lead those around you to Christ Jesus.

Somebody should be saying amen to that. Thank you Lord. Let's say so the first thing that we're talking about from Joshua is to recognize that you're called. The second thing is to know to be strong and courageous to obey the word of God. And then the last one is verse 8 and that is to live by the word of God. Verse 8, keep this book of the law always on your lips. Meditate on it day and night for the purpose so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. And again, a condition with a promise.

Then you will be prosperous and successful. Live by the word of God. Well, see, I think that we can all agree that all of God's words are worthy of serious study and deep reflection. [24 : 02] We're told here, don't let it depart from your mouth. Now, I want you to say, just to say something about the word of God and I've already lifted this up once, you know, someone told me a long time ago that B-I-B-L-E, Bible, stands for Best Instructions, or no, no, no, no, I'm sorry, Bible Instructions Before Leaving Earth.

So, this scripture that you're told not to let it depart from your mouth, these words that are given to us, they're here for our direction, for us to live by. And, the other thing about this book is that, you know, it's the number one sold book in the entire world. And, most people have at least one in their home. Some have several in their home. This book is sold in more bookstores and online and anywhere in the world. It's given out as a free gift more than any other book. But, the sad thing is there are many Christians that say they live by the word of God. But, the majority of Christians seldom ever open this book to read it. The percentage of how many people take this at value and meditate on it day and night.

[25 : 29] So, that you'll be careful to do everything that's written in it. Every time I ever read that scripture, I have to apologize to the Lord for not taking it at face value and living by it.

Because I find myself not living by meditating on it day and night. You know, the scripture, Jesus, you know, we're the sheep. You know, His sheep am I. Jesus is the great shepherd. And, something about sheep is sheep will eat and grass or whatever they're eating and they'll go off and they'll lay under a tree and they'll, well, this is kind of gross, but they vomit the food back up into their mouth and it's called cud and they chew their cud. And, then they re-digest it or re-swallow it and it works in their stomach a little bit and then they vomit it back up again and they chew the cud. Am I allowed to talk like this in church?

I mean, we are going to eat afterwards. So, what I am giving you that as an example is that as Christians, as sheep of the Lord Jesus, we devour the Word of God, we eat of it, meditate on it day and night.

[26 : 56] And, meditation is really vomiting back up the Word that you have read that morning and then thinking about it by chewing the cud and going over it in your mind and then swallowing it again so that it begins to affect who you are in your body.

And then, you might have to regurgitate that Word up again to meditate on it. So, don't just read the Word of God and walk away from it and lay it on. It's good to get up in the morning and read, but then to think about it again for the rest of the day not, yes, you need to regurgitate that Word that you're reading over and over and over so that it accomplishes that which the Holy Spirit designs to send it.

You know, the Word of God, it goes out, it does not return void. So, that's from Isaiah 55. So, don't let the Word of God depart from your mouth.

And, often we associate the Word of God for our ears and for our eyes. and that is that we hear the Word spoken and read, we read, we see it with our eyes, but we often fail to realize that the Word of God is supposed to be in our mouths.

And, you know, Jesus said that what's in your heart comes out of your mouth. And so, if you're eating the Word as a true sheep and you're digesting it and you're bringing it in, it's in your heart and what's in your heart will come out of your mouth and you'll begin to speak the Word of God.

[28 : 22] And I want to take you back again. That's how God works. Even back to Genesis when the Word was spoken, the Holy Spirit moved and the Word was created.

Every time God spoke, the Holy Spirit moved and things occurred and things happened. And so, it might be in your life that God is just waiting for you to speak His Word so that the Holy Spirit can attach Himself to the Word and go forth and do what God wants it to and it will not return void when you speak the Word of God.

See, God expects us to use His Word, to speak His Word over our families, to speak His Word over our associates, to speak His Word over every situation in our lives and then expect God to move, to speak things as Romans says that are not as though they were, to speak things into existence.

And, and I'll just give you another real quick example. I'm sorry, Matt, I'm going on and on and on and on. Long before I ever became a preacher, Donna's brother-in-law, Michael Winesett is his name, I met him when I was like 19 and he started calling me Reverend.

And I would say, why do you call me Reverend? He said, because you're always talking about the Word of God. And he would call me Reverend. Call me Reverend. And then, and never call me Lynn. He would say, hey Reverend, what you going to do with this?

[29 : 59] Hey Reverend, what you going to do with that? And, one day, being led of the Holy Spirit and realizing that I was called to be a preacher and I went late in life in my, I was in my late 30s when I decided, yes Lord, I'll promise, I'll do it.

You can be calling me all my life into ministry and my brother Michael comes to me at my ordination service and he says, Lynn, I've spoken into existence.

I've been calling you Reverend ever since I met you. And so, you got to realize that there's power in our words. And at the same time, think about the negative words that you use and the things that you say to your children.

Let the Word of God not depart from your mouth. Don't turn from the left or the right of it. And, remember James chapter 1, 22 tells us that we're supposed to be doers of the Word and not just hearers only.

So, that scripture, everybody knows, be, well, most people know, be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only. But we often fail to say the very next part.

[31 : 08] This says, because you're deceiving yourselves if you're not doing the Word of God. So, if you're only hearing the Word of God but not investing in it because it's being invested in you and you're not doing the Word of God, you're being deceived.

And one of my favorite verses is Isaiah 59, 21. And I speak this over my family. It says, My spirit that is upon you and my words, I'm speaking this over you today.

My spirit that is upon you and my words that I have put in your mouth shall not depart out of your mouth or out of the mouth of your offspring or out of the mouth of your children's offspring, says the Lord, from this time forth and forevermore.

So, what should be in our mouths? The Word of God. Don't let it depart. Meditate on it day and night. See, Joshua learned to live by these three standards.

The calling upon his life to be strong and courage to obey the Word of God and to keep God's Word in it.

[32 : 20] To live by the Word of God. And you know, he was able to lead the nation to serve God all the days of his life. Remember, there's a condition and a promise.

If you meet the condition, the promise is you'll be successful. The God will always be with you. So, let's live and meet the condition like Joshua did so that when we come to the end of our lives, see, at the end of the book of Joshua, it says that we're told that God gave the Israelites rest from all their enemies.

And that's where Joshua led them. And Joshua died at the age of 110 and he's remembered to have been a great leader and he's one of the few people in the entire Bible that has a clean slate. We don't ever read anything negative of mistakes that Joshua made. See, I think the key to his success was that he chose to live by the biblical standards that the Lord gave him.

and if we would choose to live by biblical standards, even just these three, then God will prosper you, you'll be successful, and might not be prosperous and successful in a world and earthly way, but it will definitely be, don't be rolling your eyes.

[33 : 51] See, I see that. if you choose to live by God's biblical standards, your success and your prosperity will definitely be a divine appointment in your lives.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you and we give you praise and we exalt you in your holy name. And Lord, like sheep, we find ourselves often so dumb.

And Lord, we need to live by your word. Help us, oh God, to recognize that we're called. Help us, oh God, to be strong and courageous to obey your word.

And Lord, help us to meditate on it day and night. And we thank you that you'll never leave us the way you were with Moses and with Joshua. You'll be with us. And Jesus, you said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Thank you, oh God. Now Lord, let your word, as it's been released today, allow the Holy Spirit to join with your word and blanket us with your presence so that we learn to absorb and be who you've called us to be.

[35 : 04] And it's in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.