

"Promise and Presence" Joshua 1:1–9

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[0:00] 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 promised to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the great sea, toward 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. 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.

[1:29] For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. For have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.

Do not be frightened. Do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. We are starting a new sermon series this morning. It's on the book of Joshua.

But just a bit of information that will help situate us as we get into the text. So Joshua comes at the very, it comes immediately after the five books of Moses.

If you're unfamiliar with the Bible, the Bible opens up with five books, but they're really like a chunk. They're like a big story in and of themselves. It's the history of God's interaction with his creation, and then with the nation of Israel.

We see in it the nation of Israel becoming slaves in Egypt. And then the huge chunk of the rest of these five books really detail God's salvation.

[2:34] But then this wandering season of Israel through the desert as they're making their way to this promised land flowing with milk and honey that was promised to them by God to Abraham, their father.

So in many ways, Joshua is, it's like a sequel to like a trilogy, but in this case, whatever trilogy with five, I don't know.

But it's, it comes immediately after. But it's really a continuing story of what the Bible opened with.

So it's really important for us to know as we get into it, who is this Joshua figure?

Three important details, and I am skimming, like skimming of skimming here when I'm outlining these for us. So three important details about Joshua. He's a military commander.

He was one of Israel's mighty men who fought against, specifically this one great battle against this people called the Amalekites. As Israel was leaving Egypt, they were weak, they were vulnerable, and this very cruel tribe came to attack them, to take advantage of them.

[3:42] And the Lord used Joshua as a military commander to win the day. The second big detail about Joshua is that he was an assistant to Moses.

Now, it says that right in verse one, but it'll say that throughout the Mosaic books as well. He is Moses' assistant, like his right-hand man.

So he was there, not beside Moses, but very close to Moses, when Moses received the law from God. When Moses would commune with God and mediate between God and the nation of Israel.

And then the third and final point that I want to draw your attention to when we're considering Joshua, is that after Israel left Egypt, they made their way to the Promised Land.

And they were on the verge of crossing it. And Moses sent a representative from each of the 12 tribes into the land to scout it out. They were like a recon party.

[4:42] And they came back, and the information that they had about this place was that it was full of very scary, scary people.

They were strong. They were technologically advanced. In fact, nobody could stand up against them. Ten of the 12 said that. But Joshua and another character, which we won't touch on too much in this series, Caleb, they said, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Yeah, the reports are completely right. But we should go in there because God has promised us victory. And he will be the one who fights for us. So we see in Joshua this remarkable character who really was like the right-hand man of God's right-hand man.

So we find ourselves now 40 years later after what I just described with those 12 spies, those 12 representatives who went in for a recon mission.

40 years had passed because 10 of them were naysayers. Two of them were like, we're going to seize this place with God's help. But the rest of the nation of Israel, they fell into fear.

[5:52] And God saw their unbelief and said, not now. They went back into the desert. And 40 years would go by until Joshua 1 takes place.

40 years later. So Joshua, we find, he is not a young man. He is a seasoned military general. He is a remarkable man in the hierarchy of Israel. He is a man of faith. And here we are. This book was written some 1,200 years ago, maybe even 1,200 years ago, 3,200 years ago, maybe even 3,500 years ago.

And yet, in these 20-odd chapters, we see a remarkable story that's worthy of our study this morning. But I'll say this before we get into it.

One last point, and then we'll get into the text. This book isn't without controversy. This book will, at first glance, seem to endorse divinely mandated genocide, slavery, collective punishment, racial supremacy, among other things.

[7:03] Again, I said on first glance, on our first reading. And these are things that are reprehensible. There's no way around it.

We're going to encounter some really difficult passages that we're going to wrestle through. But that's the thing. We're going to wrestle through it. So our commitment as a church, my commitment as a pastor, as I open up God's Word, is always to walk towards the difficulties that we find in Scripture and ask the tough questions and wrestle with the text.

So that's what we'll be doing in the weeks to come. We're not going to be doing it so much today. For today, we're going to look just at these first nine verses that David read for us that really will set the stage for the entire book.

And in them, we'll find something deeply reassuring. These verses are deeply reassuring. For they're going to communicate the Lord's infinite love for his people.

And these people that he's going to communicate his infinite love for, they are a broken people. They're a fearful people. They're a confused people. A people constantly given over to temptation.

[8:10] To not trust the God who time and again has rescued them. But to trust in other gods or the strength of men. There are people stricken with deep doubt that the Lord is not actually truly for them.

There are people that are scared and cowardly. And I'll humbly put forward to you this morning, there are people a lot like us. So this book is actually very relevant for us.

Again, it could be potentially 3,500 years old. And yet it somehow, in a brilliant way, captures the human condition for us. That still exists in 2026 in Ottawa.

So this morning, we will see how the Lord, he sees that brokenness. He sees that fear. He sees that lack of courage. And he reassures his people and strengthens them.

And assures them of his goodness. And he does it in two ways. Or at least that's the way I'm going to break up this text. He does that through his kept promises, one. And then second, through his loving presence.

[9:16] So his kept promises and loving presence. Why don't we jump right into our text. I'll read verse 1 and you can follow along. We're on page 6 on the scripture journals.

After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, The Lord said to Joshua, the son of Nun, or Nun, Moses' assistant. I'll read verse 2. Moses, my servant, is dead.

Moses, my servant, is dead. The book takes place right after a funeral. And a very significant funeral. Moses was the servant of the Lord.

It's interesting. This is like, keep in the back of your mind and make like a little note here. Moses is the servant of the Lord, but Joshua's called Moses' assistant.

The servant of the Lord is like a very lofty title. It's not just thrown around. God just doesn't give it to anybody. He's given it to Moses. Moses is something of like a superstar.

[10:15] He is Israel's, I mean, God is the one who rescued Israel. But Moses is the one, humanly speaking, he is the one who led them through the Red Sea. He is the one who led them through the wilderness.

He is the one who stood up to the most powerful regional king in that day. He is the one of faith who received the law from God on Mount Sinai.

If you've seen The Ten Commandments with Charlton Heston, fantastic movie. He has the two tablets, the two big giant stone tablets that he brings down from the mountain. He's the one who disciplines and chastises the people.

Well, he is, okay, again, apart from God, Moses is everything to Israel. And now they're on the verge of going into the promised land. The time when they'll need Moses the most, okay?

And he's dead. I wonder if there was great dread that fell on the people in this moment.

[11:18] Their savior, their champion, he had died. Who would mediate between the Lord and his people? Who would lead them into the promised land?

Moses is gone. Who would step up? And then we see Joshua here. Okay? Again, Joshua has done wonderful things.

He has not been given this title of servant of the Lord. He is the assistant to the servant of the Lord. And does he have what it takes to lead Israel, to be a new Moses?

You see, Joshua finds himself back on the borderland, like I mentioned, not as a young man when he originally was on the border.

He has wandered for 40 years, okay, in the desert. 40 years of wandering is God's promises.

[12:19] Are they going to come true? 40 years. 40 years. All right? If you have children, you can promise them, listen, if you do your chores, you know, you study hard in school, you have a good week, I promise you ice cream on the weekend.

Or you promise them a treat. How long is that week for a child, okay? It's exhausting for them. They ask a million times. You're exhausted for weathering this onslaught of question after question.

If you wait a week and you don't give them what you promised them, they might keep asking, but after a while they will think that you are somebody who doesn't keep promises.

What happens if a couple weeks, a couple months, a couple months, a couple months, turns into four decades? Is God's promise still true?

Does God still, is he still worthy of our trust? It's a remarkable question. Again, 40 years long. And now he is at the verge.

[13:29] The nation is at the verge of entering this promised land and their savior has died. Their hero has died. What will happen? Well, let's read verses two to five and see God's reaction.

Verse two. Moses, my servant, is dead. Now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan and 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 promised to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the great sea, that's the Mediterranean Sea, toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory.

Verse five. 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.

What wonderful words to an anxious man. I'm assuming he's anxious. The text doesn't say so. But we'll see in the next part, especially, the Lord has to say three times, be strong and courageous to him.

[14:42] So maybe he was anxious. What incredible words, though, to bolster his heart. You see, Moses is dead. He is. And he is a champion. And there will never be another Moses.

Joshua won't be another Moses. But here's the wonderful thing about this. Even though Moses is dead, the Lord God is not. And if God isn't dead, then his promises, they will have to endure.

They must. In fact, nothing can derail the promises of God, not even the death of his servant. But the promises referenced here, just really briefly, it is for the entire land of Canaan, what was described there, from the east down to the south, to the sea, up to the north. It covers a lot of the modern-day Levant, much greater than the, I mean, it's parts of Syria, parts of Lebanon, all of Israel, parts of Egypt.

Like, it's a huge, it's a huge area of land. And God swore to Abraham, centuries and centuries and centuries earlier, that he would give him and his descendants this land.

[15:51] And it's a big deal, not only because it was promised by God centuries earlier, but also because they have been wandering for decades as nomads, as people that are strangers.

And even before that, they were slaves in a foreign land. The people of Israel have been without a place. They've been without a place. And this is a remarkable thing, because maybe we don't take this in like we should, but having a place is a very important thing for us.

Having a place that we can come back to, a place where we can lay our head, a place that is ours. Whether or not we rent or own, it is, this is my home.

You know, what's remarkable is that even people that are homeless find ways to make makeshift shelters a home. It's theirs. Place is such an important thing for the human condition, for the human being.

But God, here he is, he hasn't forgotten his promises. And nor does he need the prowess or strength of a certain man or a certain group of people to ensure that his promises will be fulfilled.

[17:12] God is always faithful to fulfill his promises. The Lord always fulfills his promises because he makes these things called the covenant. So, if you're unfamiliar, I mean, we've talked about this throughout the summer and I've talked about it in the past.

God makes these covenants with people. Covenants aren't unique to the Bible. They were kind of a thing you do in the ancient world. I mean, we still talk in terms of covenantal language when we're making agreements.

But essentially, it is an agreement between two parties. There are parameters set up. If you do this, you will get that. If you don't do this, you will suffer certain consequences.

And God makes these covenantal promises with his people, but always in such a way that puts the onus on him.

Because the people that he makes these covenants with, they constantly break covenant. They constantly fail to achieve and to fulfill their side of the bargain. But God never fails.

[18:12] So, God is always fulfilling his covenantal promises, this being one of them. And he does it through a mediator. He always speaks to Israel, to his people, through a representative.

Okay? There's always somebody who stands in the gap between God and his people. If you're a bit of a Bible nerd, this is a priestly role.

A mediator. A priestly role. God always has a type of priestly mediator between him and his people. So, when the mediator dies, in this case Moses, what we see here is God not panicking.

Okay? God isn't like, well, I knew this would happen one day. Time to enact my contingency plan. It's not like God in the heavenlies has a giant red button with a glass case that says break in case of emergency.

And then all of a sudden the issue is solved. Not at all. God's promises continue and someone else is raised up and empowered. Why? Because the Lord cannot be denied in keeping his promises.

[19:17] To this point, the French reformer John Calvin says this in his commentary on this very passage. He says this, quote, This suggests the very useful reflection that while men are cut off by death and fall in the middle of their career, the faithfulness of God never fails.

On the death of Moses, a sad change seemed impending. The people were left like a body with its head lopped off. While thus in danger of dispersion, not only did the truth of God prove itself to be immortal, but it was shown in the person of Joshua as in a bright mirror that when God takes away those whom he has adorned with special gifts, he has others in readiness to supply their place.

And that though he is pleased for a time to give excellent gifts to some, his mighty power is not tied down to them. I think it's just a wonderful truth to remember.

The Lord delights in caring for his people and nothing will get in his way. No one in this congregation, at least not to my knowledge, and if you are, talk with us.

We'll get you help. But nobody, I think, is homeless or on the verge of homelessness. But the sense of unease in life is real. The sense that your place in life is in jeopardy.

[20:43] Do you not feel the anxiety about missing opportunities to advance your career? That you've missed out on chances to spend time with those around you because you are busy chasing whatever goals you might be chasing.

That your priorities are in the wrong spot. The dread about relationships that continue to go unreconciled. Okay? All of these things, they shake us to our core.

Makes us feel like our place isn't very secure. That our foundations are starting to crumble. Our common experience as human beings is not necessarily one of consistent confidence, although we are pretty good at putting on a face.

And I don't think sometimes you've got to kind of grin and bear it and get on with life in certain respects. But I would think that the common experience is actually one of anxiety.

We make decisions oftentimes not out of a great confidence in the future, but in fear of failure. We hedge our bets.

[21:59] We lay awake with racing minds. We have anxious hearts. But consider that God's promises to his people, they are always towards provision and blessing.

They're always towards provision and blessing. His promises are there where he says to Joshua here, that he will not leave or forsake him.

Those promises are extended to us. I don't have the chapter and verse, but read Hebrews 13. The author of Hebrews, he picks up this refrain.

I will not leave you or forsake you in Hebrews 13. What does Jesus say when he commissions the disciples in the Great Commission in Matthew 28? What does he say?

He says, Lo, I will be with you to the end of the age. This is God's promises to his people, always.

They're always promises towards provision and blessing, to not forsake us or leave us, but to bless us.

[23:01] Which means that he has made a dear covenant with us that won't be broken. He is bound to see to our welfare and not just in a begrudging way, but because he is bound to it, but because he delights in doing so.

Let me just read a couple of verses from Matthew chapter 6, from the Sermon on the Mount. It's the famous sermon of Jesus's. And this is what he says, chapter 6, starting in the 25th verse.

Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or drink or about your body. What you will put on is not life more than food and the body more than clothing.

Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more valuable than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his life?

And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

[24:08] But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

He delights in providing for you. Who looks after our welfare with such commitment and love? We live in a society that has really remarkable infrastructure to take care of people.

But they don't do it perfectly, not by a long shot. And they don't do it out of a desire to love the citizens. We have some public service workers here.

We thank you for your service. How often do you go to work and think, I love the people of Canada. I am here for them. I am going to lay down my life for their welfare.

I mean, you have different convictions. Some days you go in, you're just there for the paycheck.

Other days you're finding joy in work. But do you extend, if this is your position, do you extend the same type of love and care towards the people you are serving that God extends to you?

[25:26] Who loves us? Who is about our welfare like the Lord God? He is a covenant-keeping God. He makes promises and he keeps them. So the Lord, here we have him assuring Joshua that he would keep his promise to give the land as a gift.

He knew that both Joshua and especially the people would waver. And we'll see this in the weeks to come. Their confidence would give way to fear. And they would face the same issues that caused them to be wanderers for 40 years in the desert.

So therefore God would remind them that along with keeping his promises, he would also be with them. And this is the second point. His presence would be with his people. And why is this so significant?

Look with me at verses 5 and then we'll read to the end of the chapter. Starting in verse 5 here. 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.

Here it is. I will not leave you or forsake you. Verse 6. Be strong and courageous for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

[26 : 40] 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.

So this book of the law or the Torah or God's ways 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. Verse 9. 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. Such a reality is often lost on God's people that he is with them.

For God is spirit. He is not seen. He is not like you or I that we can interact with face to face like this.

[27 : 44] Therefore his presence, again, can be easily doubted. What if God isn't actually there?

What if we are believing in a myth? What if this is just a great religious hoax that happened, say, 2,000 years ago, 3,500 years ago, 4,000 years ago, and somehow it just got perpetuated, and now there's some powerful people that just kind of make us feel guilty so that they would give us money and we could control them.

What if God has abandoned us? How can we be sure that he is truly with his people? Four verses the Lord tells Joshua, and by extension the people, to be strong and courageous three times.

Four, or three times in four verses. Verse six, be strong and courageous. Verse seven, only be strong and courageous. Verse nine, have I not commanded you, be strong and courageous.

And then continues, do not be frightened, do not be dismayed. The Lord is telling Joshua that they are to be, him and the people, they are not to give in to fear.

They need to be strong. They need to have courage. And what's incredible about those three commands, and this is key.

[29 : 10] If you're ever reading the Bible and you notice something like this, read it again. Have your ears perk up to it. See it with fresh eyes. Because God, he says, be strong, be courageous.

Be strong, be courageous. Be strong, be courageous. But he sandwiches those three commands in between what? What does he say in verse five? I will be with you and I will not leave you or forsake you.

And then verse nine, he says, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. You see, God, he knows that courage. He knows that strength. They are hard to come by. So this whole section is sandwiched in God's promise to give his people his presence.

That he would be with them all their days. So just consider this for a moment. God is not commanding strength and courage because of military might. Not because, you know, okay, Moses was, he was a great leader but now we have Joshua.

He's the man for the job because he's a general. He's a proven warrior. He doesn't say, listen, be strong and courageous. Think positively.

[30 : 23] This is the key to getting the land. Okay? Think, pessimism, put it to the side, be optimists. That's how you're gonna win the day.

He doesn't say any of that. Instead, he says to them, be strong and courageous because I'm amongst you. I have your back. I am before you.

I am behind you. So how will we know this unseen God is truly near? Because it's very important for our courage and our strength. How do we know he is gonna be near?

How can the Israelites, how can they draw strength and courage from this reality? Or put another way, how can they and us, how can we feed our faith that God is real and close especially when faced with impossible circumstances?

It's a really important question. The Lord is gonna reveal it to Joshua and this is what he says, verse 7 and 8 one more time. Only be strong and very courageous. Here it is. Being careful to do according to all the law that Moses, my servant, commanded you.

[31 : 29] Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left that you may have good success wherever you go. 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. Strength and courage, it comes from knowing and keeping, knowing that God is amongst us and we know that because he has given us his very word.

He has given us his law. Like I mentioned when I read it the first time, it says the book of the law, it would be better translated in God's book of instructions or God communicating his ways.

The law that he gave to Moses, it certainly does have laws within it but it also spells out so much of what it means to be human and how to interact with the one true God and describing God's holiness and his perfection and his beauty.

God is saying, I have revealed myself to you. I have given you my word. Think about it.

[32:41] Meditate on it. Interesting, this is primarily an oral culture so when it's meditate on it, I mean, for us, I think it's still really important to read our Bibles by ourselves but this here in our text has a vision of gathering with God's people and talking about it.

Meditating on it is like discussing it, wrestling with it. Literally, it talks about, it translates this word, meditate, like a murmur. Like, talk about it all the time.

Like, you know, whisper it, declare it, talk about it. When you're by yourself, kind of hum it, memorize it. It's this vision of God's word being all-encompassing, knowing it as much as you can by as much strength as you can and living by its rule.

And I'll just say this and I think we, I think it's worth for us to consider. Why wouldn't God just say, listen, I'm going to be with you and this is how you're going to know that I'm with you.

It's not so much my word, I'm going to give you ecstatic experiences. You're going to have religious experiences where you feel the goosebumps on your arms.

[33:59] You feel like this electricity flowing up and down you. You just know when you're in the presence of somebody that has presence, there's something changes in the air.

That's what I'm going to give you all the time. That's when you'll know when I'm around. Like a spiritual spidey sense of sorts. I want to say that it's for our benefit that God didn't do that.

Although spiritual experiences are real and I think they're wonderful and I wouldn't want to discount them, God is making it very clear that if we were to rely upon our experiences alone, we would be in a terrible state.

I'll give an example. Christine and I, I think we were, well, it would have been our first year of marriage because we didn't have any children. We went down to Clayton, New York, this beautiful little opera house to see Alan Doyle play a concert.

Alan Doyle was the, the lead singer, is, well, was because they're broken up now of Great Big Sea. It's wonderful. Like there's like 300 people there. It was super intimate.

[35:03] It was really fun. We don't go to a lot of concerts. But he played this one song called Lay Me Down to Parish and it was this, I won't get into the story, it was a beautiful story and he played it and I got really choked up.

Like it was like I was emotionally moved. And I can honestly say I've never had that experience with music or art since. I mean, not to that degree.

I don't know what it was, if it was just because it was live or it was just such an incredible song. I don't know. But, you know, I kind of rode that wave a bit afterwards.

but then it was almost like a bit of a hangover. It's like I wanted that experience but I couldn't get it. You know, here's the interesting thing about our emotions. They are wonderful, wonderful, wonderful servants but they are horrendous masters.

If you are led by your experience, if you are led by your emotions, you will be blown around like the tide. You will not be a consistent reliable person.

[36:10] Your life will not be sustainable. Your emotions and desires will take a hold of you. If God was to give us his presence in an experience, we would treat God as though he was merely a fantastic concert or a piece of beautiful art or just an immaculate sunset and then we would find something else that would take his place.

But God here, he gives us his word that is unchanging and we are to understand it as proof of his presence with us. It's a means of grace. It means that we can commit to him as he is committing to us and whether or not we feel religiously motivated, we can be sure that because he has revealed himself to us in his word that he truly is in our midst.

that is why the Lord, he ties his blessing to keeping his word. What does he say here?

For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success. And just to be clear, this prosperity isn't just a financial one. It's the blessing and prosperity of knowing and being known by the one true God.

Knowing that he will never leave you or forsake you. Is this not the ultimate source of courage and strength? This is the means to remember that the Lord is the unchanging one and that he is for you all your days.

[37:45] So how can we be sure that God will keep his promise to care for our welfare? How can we be sure that he will be with us? Yes, he has given us his word. Yes, he has made very clear that he will fulfill his promises, but we see it especially in the person of Christ.

But first, we need to return to the land because this is significant and ties into the cross wonderfully. Why is the land itself so significant? What makes this place so wonderful? Why is it that even today and all over the world during Passover, Jewish people will say next year we'll celebrate in Jerusalem?

Why is the land so significant? And I think it's for this reason. God has always, from the opening chapters of the Bible in the Garden of Eden to the temple in Jerusalem to the new Jerusalem that is promised in Revelation chapter 21, God is always looking for a place to dwell amongst his people. God always wants to be amongst his people because he loves us. This is why God, the Son of God, came down to us taking into himself human flesh yet remaining fully God so that in Jesus, the Messiah God, what does he do?

He dwells amongst his people in the most intimate and real way by becoming one of us. Like Moses, he dies, but unlike Moses, he rises from the dead.

[39:18] There wasn't even time for his friends to have a funeral for him. And after he rises from the dead, the scriptures say he ascends into heaven and then he gives his people his very Holy Spirit to dwell in their hearts.

God makes a home amongst us, but also he makes a home within us. He dwells in our hearts as individuals, but also as his church.

Friends, consider this. God who needs nothing from us. He is fully complete. He is fully whole. He chooses and delights in making a home within you and within me.

You see, Jesus won't forsake us because he himself was forsaken. He was utterly alone, but for a moment, okay, just for a moment, so that we would never have a moment when the Lord God would not be near to us.

God would be united to God. If you are united to Christ by faith, in his gift of divine and loving grace, we, it says, we are forever in his presence.

[40:30] His promises bear witness to this. His word bears witness to this. His son bears witness to this. He will never leave you or forsake you.

friends, bolster your strength. Bolster your courage. Not in the things you can accumulate in this earth, on this earth.

Not in the strength of your physical body or the incredible ability of your mind. Not in a military, not in a government.

Bolster your strength in God's promises. promises. He will never leave you or forsake you. Thank you.