

A staggering change

Joshua 1:1-9 NLT

After the death of Moses the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you— from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.' No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. "Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

1. Moses is dead.

Joshua had been second in command for 40 years. Only his friend, Caleb, and Joshua survived the wilderness wandering. They were spared because they stood with Moses and Aaron encouraging God's people to trust his promises. Moses is dead. Now Joshua receives the responsibility to act out the confidence in the Lord he professed 40 years ago.

2. We understand those feelings.

We've all received bad news that completely changed our lives.

- Your mom has cancer.
- There's been an accident.
- He's not coming back.
- We've had to make some cuts. Please pack up your belongings.
- Your kidneys aren't functioning.
- Dad's had a stroke.

These changes are painful and irreversible. We say, "I just want things to go back to normal." But that normal we long for no longer exists. We must adjust to a "new normal."

3. Can we learn something from Joshua?

- a) THE POWERFUL PROMISE – "I promise you what I promised Moses... I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you."
- b) THE COMPELLING COMMAND – "Be strong and courageous... Be strong and very courageous... This is my command – be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged."
- c) THE PROMISE REPEATED – "The LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

d) THE LONE LIMIT – (sandwiched in between the repeated promises and commands) “Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.”

Sermon in a Sentence:

Every change you experience can open a window of opportunity for God to work in and through you.

4. You can do better

a) Like Joshua, you can face the change honestly. Change can be painful. One person compared it to chemotherapy for cancer – sometimes it feels like the cure is worse than the disease. However, the pain of denying change is greater than allowing Jesus to use it as a process for growth. Many times God’s greatest potential for growth comes on the heels of things we see as “problems.”

b) Like Joshua, you can walk with God through the changes. Draw your strength from God. Pray! Set your will to obey only God...no options but His! Saturate your life with the Word of God. Rest secure knowing God is IN you, WITH you, walks AHEAD of you and He will work THROUGH you!

A New Perspective on Change

[Some] people love change, but for most [of us], it is very hard on some level. We want consistency, we want to know what we know is sure, reliable, stable. We like routine and patterns. We plan and put things in place to keep things that way and then all of a sudden something changes and we are lost in the confusion of why it happened. It just “rattles us”. There are some changes we can plan for and others that are just part of the unpredictability of life. However, learning to be flexible in life will allow God to work in and through you.

Questions to Ponder

What changes are you facing in your life right now?

How will you use the principles God gave to Joshua as you face change?

In this year of transformation, as we begin to walk through a change in our church, are you willing to make the most of this change?

Will you let God show you how you can be an encouragement to others and a help to our church?