Session 1 Courageous Living (Josh. 1; Ps. 1)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The title of this series, Courageous Living, comes from Joshua 1 where God speaks directly to Joshua ***"Be strong and courageous."*** These words are interwoven into Joshua's life time job assignment – a mission that is way beyond Joshua's natural power and abilities to perform it successfully.

"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." Joshua 1:9 NIV

B. Joshua He is about 70 to 80 years old when God commissions him to go in and possess the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 31:23 NIV The LORD gave this command to Joshua son of Nun: "Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them on oath, and I myself will be with you."

Joshua 1:2 (God speaks to Joshua) ***… Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, the children of Israel.***

C. Personal Application: As you stand on the brink of entering into your Promised Land, God is speaking these same words right now to each and every one of you, just as He did to Joshua: ***"Be strong and courageous***".

II. GOD'S COMMANDS – "BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS

A. God is so adamant that you, just like Joshua, would understand this admonition to ***"Be strong and courageous,"*** that He repeated these same instructions three times. And on the third time, God prefaces these instructions with these words: ***"Have I not commanded you?"***

B. Picture three things regarding God's command to ***"Be strong and courageous."***

1. First, see this command to ***"Be strong and courageous"*** as coming directly from God's heart of overwhelming love for you and all that concerns you. God desires you to experience the fulness of His love (His blessings, His promises, His glory both in this age and in the age to come.
2. Second, see God's grace – God's own strength and courage - flowing from God's throne of grace into your heart the moment you say "yes" to obeying this command.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Joshua 14:11 As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.

Psalm 18:32 It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. 37 For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.

Isaiah 40:29-31 He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength… But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.

3. Third, walk with a conscious awareness that ***"…God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9*** Under the New Covenant of God's grace, God Almighty is not only with you, but God Almighty is in you. (Col. 2:9-10).

   Colossians 1:15 He (Jesus) ***is the image of the invisible God.***

   1 John 4:17 … as He (Jesus) ***is, so are we in this world.***

   a. Paul encourages us to walk in our new identity in Jesus Christ by putting on the full armor of God as described in Ephesians 6. As we do this we fulfill the command to "be strong".

      Ephesians 6:10-11 Finally, my brethren, <u>be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might</u>. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

   b. As you put on the full armor of God, pray that you would have the courage, the boldness, to speak as you ought to speak and to do what God calls you to do.

      Ephesians 6:19-20 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may <u>open my mouth boldly</u> to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I <u>may speak boldly, as I ought to speak</u>.

C. With these 3 things - God's love, God's grace, and God's presence (Jesus) - in mind declare Joshua 1:9 over yourself often.

   Joshua 1:9 NIV "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."

D. In addition to God directly telling Joshua 3 times in Joshua 1 to "***Be strong and courageous***", Moses who was the leader above Joshua and later the leaders who were under Joshua encouraged Joshua with the identical Words God spoke to him to "***Be strong and courageous***."

   1. God had told Moses, Israelites prior leader, twice to strengthen and encourage Joshua. ***Deuteronomy 1:38 God said to Moses Encourage him (Joshua), for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.***

      Deuteronomy 3:28 But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.'

   2. Moses obeyed God's instructions

      Deuteronomy 31:7 Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land…"

Deuteronomy 31:23 And the Lord commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, "Be strong and courageous….

3. The leaders underneath Joshua encourage him.

   Joshua 1:17-18 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you….Only be strong and courageous."

4. Personal Application: God's Words contain God's power. And when you speak God's Word out of your mouth, you release the power that is inherent in that Word to produce what it is created for. Tell those around you to "Be strong and courageous".

   I Thessalonians 5:11 ESV Therefore encourage one another and build one another up…

III. GOD'S COMMANDS – DO NOT BE AFRAID; DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED

A. God knows that Joshua's natural propensity, just like ours, is quite the opposite of this command to ***"Be strong and courageous"*** especially:

1. When we have seen the size of these giants with our own eyes.
2. When we have heard the voice of these giants with our own ears or heard their voice within our own hearts telling us that we have no chance of winning, no chance of overcoming, no chance of entering into the Promised Land – the Promises of God's Word.
3. When we have heard the hopeless reports from our family, friends, and other media telling us that we will be unable to defeat these giants in our Promised Land.
4. When we have just heard the "bad report" from those who are our leaders or experts in their field from whom we are seeking advice.

B. Fear and Discouragement – Two Primary Tools of satan's

1. Therefore, the third time God told Joshua to be strong and courageous, God gave two additional commands **"*Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged*".** (Joshua 1:9)

Why? Because fear and discouragement are two of satan's greatest tools that he uses to prevent God's people from believing and obeying God's Word.

2. These two satanic tools, fear and discouragement, is what caused a whole generation of Israelites (approximately 2 ½ million people) not to enter into God's Promised Land.

3. Ten of the Israelite leaders, who spied out the Promised Land, subjected themselves to this spirit of fear and discouragement. They united their voices and declared to all the Israelites:

   No. 13:28 "… Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are <u>strong</u>; the cities are <u>fortified</u> **(very strong)** ***and very large…"***

No. 13:31-32 "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are <u>stronger</u> than we. 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out…

Deuteronomy 1:28 NIV "Where can we go? Our brothers have made <u>our hearts melt in fear</u>. They say, 'The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky...'"

C. The Results of Fear-Filled Discouraging Words

1. Because the Israelites could not get these fear-filled discouraging words out of their minds or their mouths, several million Israelites failed to enter the Promised Land. (No. 13-14)

2. The "bad report" sparked a picturesque video within the imagination of their own minds, where they saw themselves as grasshoppers.

   Numbers 13:33 There we saw the giants… and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.

3. Soon, the scenes in the video of their imagination worsened. The giants took their swords from their sheaths and just started slaughtering the men, women, and the children by the thousands.

   Numbers 14:3 … Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims?

4. As these videos played in their imaginations, they became outraged at their leaders - Moses and Aaron.

   Numbers 14:2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!"

5. They began to spread rumors among themselves saying that surely it would be better if they could just return to Egypt. They discussed this so often to themselves and among themselves, along with the other darkened imaginations from their heart, that they actually believed what they were saying.

   Numbers 14:3b-4 Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

D. Hell's Fire Spreads Rapidly Through These Fear-filled Discouraging Reports

1. God likens our tongues in James 3 to the kindling for hell's fire to spread.

   James 3:5b-6 See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

2. Everyday hell's fire is destroying lives all around us as people tell ungodly stories that do not factor in who God is - God's loving-kindness and goodness; His mercy and grace; and His power fully available to us by faith in Jesus Christ.

3. And unfortunately, many people's hearts are dry brittle ground from lack of being watered by God's Word.

4. Personal Application: Begin to water your own heart with God's Word, meditating on it day and night, planting yourself by the rivers of living water. Heed God's instructions:

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.

Joshua 1:8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night…

IV. WHOSE REPORT DID THE ISRAELITES BELIEVE?

A. The Good Report

1. Joshua and Caleb courageously stood up in the midst of this outrageous assembly of crying, weeping, and complaining and they gave the Report of the Lord - the good report about the Promised Land.

Numbers 13:30 "Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.'"

Numbers 14:7-9 and they (Caleb and Joshua) ***spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land… 9 Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them."***

2. Joshua and Caleb were not denying the reality of the giants or obstacles in the Promised Land but rather they were keeping their eyes fixed on God, who was greater than any giant, and keeping their heart and mouth fixed on the Words that God had spoken to them about the Promised Land.

B. The Choice of the Israelites - How did the Israelites' respond to Joshua and Caleb's plea?

No. 14:10 And all the congregation said to stone them (Joshua and Caleb) ***with stones.***

V. CHOICES DETERMINE DESTINY

A. What does Proverbs 18:21 mean?

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

B. What happened to the men who brought this evil report?

Numbers 14:37 …those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord.

C. What happened to the all those of Joshua and Caleb's generation who believed the bad report?

Joshua 5:6 The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the Lord.

D. What happened to Joshua and Caleb? They were able to enter the Promised Land 40 years later.

Numbers 14:38 But Joshua…and Caleb...remained alive…

Deut. 1:36 …except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the Lord.

Deut. 1:38 Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there.
(See section D below for more information about what happened to Joshua.)

E. Personal Application: Whose report will you believe? Will you believe the report that comes into agreement with what Jesus Christ has provided for you through His shed blood on the cross and through the power of His resurrection? Or, will you believe the ungodly report – the ungodly counsel (Psalm 1:1) being given to you?

Isaiah 53:1 "Who has believed our report?"

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly…

VI. STRENGTH AND COURAGE FROM GOD'S PRESENCE

A. Joshua and Caleb exemplify Courageous Living. They did not go with the flow of the majority, but rather they held unto God's Word in the midst of fierce opposition and in doing so, they fulfilled all that God called them to do.

B. So, how was Joshua able to fulfill God's command to ***"Be strong and courageous"?***

1. Joshua valued God's presence.
Exodus 33:10-11 All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door... So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. 11 And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, <u>did not depart from the tabernacle.</u>
2. Joshua obeyed God's word to him.

Joshua 1:7-9 Only be strong and very courageous... 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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.

3. Joshua believed God's words spoken to him that "…***the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9***

C. What was the outcome of Joshua faithful meditation and obedience to God's commands?

1. Joshua became "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, " as described in Psalm 1:3.

   Psalm 1:3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
   That brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither;
   And whatever he does shall prosper.

2. Joshua was blessed and bore an abundance of fruit.

   a. God chose Joshua to lead the Israelite nation into the Promised Land.

   b. All the promises, blessings, that God spoke to Joshua were fulfilled.

      Joshua 1:3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you…
      Joshua 1:5a No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life.
      Joshua 1:5b As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.
      Joshua 1:5c I will not leave you nor forsake you.

   c. Not one word which the Lord had spoken to Joshua concerning Israel's possession of the Promised Land failed, because Joshua chose to believe and obey God's Word despite the overwhelming giants and obstacles.

      Joshua 21:43-45 So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. <u>Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.</u>

D. Personal Application: Live courageously! As you stand at the brink of your Promised Land, believe the Report of the Lord, the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Arise and cross over from living in the wilderness of unbelief into living in the Promises of God.

Daily read Psalms 1 out loud over yourself this week. Meditate on today's lesson as you listen to God's voice being spoken through Psalm 1.