

God's Word is useful for Training in Righteousness (2 Timothy 3:14-17 and Joshua 1:1-18)

28-Jan-2024

2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Joshua 1:1-18

Joshua Installed as Leader

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵ 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. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land, I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷ "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. ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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."

¹⁰ So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: ¹¹ "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.'"

¹² But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, ¹³ "Remember the command that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you after he said, 'The LORD your God will give you rest by giving you this land.' ¹⁴ Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, ready for battle, must cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites. You are to help them ¹⁵ until the LORD gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land the LORD your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

¹⁶ Then they answered Joshua, "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. ¹⁷ Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. ¹⁸ Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!"

Sermon: God's Word is useful for "Training in Righteousness"

Please have your Bibles opened at **2 Timothy 3 – starting at verse 16 – then we'll look at Joshua chapter 1**

There's an **outline** – if you'd like to take some notes.

Let me **pray** first...

Intro (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

This morning we are continuing with a **4-part series** throughout January on the usefulness of God's Word.

We're basing this series on our NT reading from 2 Timothy 3 where in **v16** it says:

[Slide 1-v16]

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

So, for the 4 Sundays in January - we're looking at how **God's Word** is useful for:

1. Teaching
2. Rebuking
3. Correcting
4. Training in righteousness

In week 1 – we saw that **God's Word** is useful for teaching [Israelites taught their children]

In week 2 – we saw that **God's Word** is useful for rebuking [Saul/Paul]

Last week – we saw that **God's Word** is useful for correcting [Jesus corrected the apostle Peter who was thinking like Satan]

This week – we're looking at **God's Word** is useful for training in righteousness

[Slide 2-Righteousness]

“Righteousness” means “*A state of being right with God and approved by God*”

This involves our character, conscience, actions and words. They all should be pleasing to God and acceptable to God.

To be fair – for us to be righteous is a **tall order** – because **God's standards are perfection** – and we are imperfect.

We'll **come back to that at the end.**

But in our Old Testament Reading from **Joshua 1:1-18** – we have an example of how **people are “trained in righteousness”** [*If you could please turn to Joshua 1:1-18*]

Context (Joshua 1:1-6)

The context of Joshua 1 is:

[Slide 3 – Context]

- It's around **1400BC**
- V1 - **Moses** – who led the ancient Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and led them through the wilderness to the edge of the River Jordan – **has died**
- **Joshua takes over leadership** and **prepares the Israelites** to get ready to cross the River Jordan – and **take possession of the land** that God promised them
- Now remember this **land is already occupied** – and the current occupants will have to be removed

- And remember also there are **many other surrounding nations** – who worship false gods
- So, there **will be major challenges for the Israelites** to face – challenges which can and will **affect their faithfulness to the one true God**
- It's a bit like us living in this world today – even in our own nation – as **Christians** – we are **surrounded by people** – worshipping anything but the **one true God** – and they **can challenge our faithfulness to the one true God** – can't they?
- So, **God gives Joshua a pep-talk** – and in verse 6 – Go tells Joshua ***“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land, I swore to their ancestors to give them”***
- Then God gives Joshua some ***“training tips in righteousness”***
- **Training tips in righteousness** – which will help the Israelites live lives – which are right with God - and - approved by God
- The training tips are **useful for us too** – because they are from God's Word – and God's word is **ALWAYS** useful...

Training in Righteousness (Joshua 1:7-18)

[Slide 4 – Training in Righteousness]

Be Strong and Courageous – Trust in God (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9 and 18)

So, 1st training tip in righteousness – is in verses 6, 7, 9 and 18 – ***“Be Strong and Courageous”***

[Slide 4a-Strong & Courageous]

In these verses - God repeats the same command ***“Be strong and courageous”*** – four times!

If God repeats something – we **should realize it’s important** and take it on board
God knows **the Israelites** are going to **face many challenges!**

God knows we are going to **face many challenges** – and some of us – **are facing big challenges right now** – our pastoral care and prayer list – is on an **exponential curve!**

But this is not **just some glib statement from God** – ***“be strong and courageous”***
No – God backs up His statement – with the reason why it’s okay to be ***“strong and courageous”*** – look at the rest of v9

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go

We can be ***strong and courageous*** – and we don’t **need to be afraid or discouraged** as we face the huge trial or problem in our lives. Why? Because God says – the ***Lord your God will be with you wherever you go!***

I don’t know what each person here is going through right now – but I do know a lot of people - are **hurting** – or **grappling with a problem** - or **struggling with serious health concerns** – or **grieving**

God promises to go with us wherever we go! We have - **His strength** – **His wisdom** – **His guidance** – **His comfort** – **His quiet still voice whispering to us** – **His Spirit encouraging us** – we CAN trust in Him – rather than just relying on ourselves!

So, our 1st training tip in righteousness – is “***Be strong and courageous – trust God***”

Meditate on God’s Word Daily (Joshua 1:7-8)

Which brings us to the 2nd training tip in righteousness – in verses 7 and 8 –
“Meditate on God’s Word Daily”

[Slide 4b-Meditate]

Did we have something to eat and drink in the last few days?

Of course, we did – it **keeps us alive!**

Did we remember to put some clothes on – before we left home today?

Of course, we did – otherwise it would be **a bit embarrassing here this morning!**

Did we remember to take our medication today?

Of course, we did – otherwise **we’ll get sick or the condition we have will flare up!**

God reminds Joshua – v7 - **that there’s something he and the Israelites need daily**

They need God’s Word – God’s Law – **the rule book of life** – and they **must not turn from it to the right or the left** – they need to follow it to be successful.

How well do we think our lives will go – if we break all - or - any of God’s commandments?

For example – if we murder or steal - **we end up in jail**

If we cheat in our relationships – there are **huge consequences** for the people and families involved

If we lie – **we hurt people and no one will trust us!**

If we're rude and angry and aggressive all the time – **we won't have many people wanting to hang around us.**

Our lives will not go well – if we don't follow God's rule book of life!

God tells Joshua and the Israelites – v8 – **to keep God's word on their lips – meditate on it day and night** – and **to be careful to do everything written in it.**

Otherwise, it won't go well.

And if we know even a smidgen of Israel's history – we know – **they didn't always heed this advice** – and **suffered major consequences for it!**

(pause)

I think we **need to be honest with ourselves** this morning!

I'm convicted by this passage – I'm not **spending enough time in God's Word** – and **it's not just spending time in God's Word** – it's actually meditating on it – and actually doing what it says – that really matters.

Spending time meditating on God's Word and following it – should be as natural as – **eating and drinking – putting our clothes on – and taking our meds!**

To help us – I'm not sure if I've mentioned – **our Growth Group Bible Studies** – but **they start this week** – and it's a **great way to meditate on God's Word** – there are sign up sheets in the foyer!

Allow God's Word to Transform Us (Joshua 1:16-18)

Which brings us to the 3rd training tip in righteousness – in verses 16 to 18 –

“Allow God's Word to transform us”

[Slide 4c – Transform us]

Having received the commands from God - **Joshua commanded the people to get ready to cross the River Jordan** – in verses 10 to 15.

The people knew Joshua's words had come from God – and in verses 16 to 18 – they allowed God's Word to transform them - **they promised to fully obey Joshua** – just as they had fully obeyed Moses.

The people were committed to obey God's Word.

You see – we could religiously read God's Word everyday – and **then not take a blind bit of notice of what it says – and not obey any of God's commands.**

We'd have head knowledge – but not heart knowledge – and not hand knowledge.

So, our **challenge** this morning is – as we read God's Word – whatever Bible passage it is – **we need to ask ourselves**

What “change” do I need to make – in my thinking –and - in the words I speak – and - in my actions? What is God trying to tell me here! And then **allow His Word to transform our lives!**

So, from our passage this morning from Joshua:

- God's telling us - **Be strong and courageous in all we do – trust God – knowing He's with us all the time**

- God's telling us - **Meditate** on God's Word daily – it's our spiritual food and drink – that keeps us spiritually alive
- And God's telling us – we need to do more than just read God's Word – we need to allow it to transform us!

If we do this exercise with every Bible passage we read – it will **transform** our lives – and - **train us in righteousness**.

(pause)

The Problem we ALL have (Romans 3:10, 23; Phil 3:8-9; 2 Cor 5:21)

[Slide 5-Heading]

Now we could ALL follow these training tips in righteousness that the ancient Israelites were given – but - still **not** gain **complete** righteousness.

Remember at the beginning - I said - **God** is **perfect** and **we** are **imperfect**

[Slide 5a-Romans 3:10]

And so, the **Apostle Paul** in **Romans 3:10** – quite rightly points out

*As it is written: “There is **no one** righteous, **not even one**”*

[Slide 5a-Romans 3:23]

And in **Romans 3:23** - ***all** have **sinned** and **fall short of the glory of God***

So – the bottom line is – **ON OUR OWN** – **we** can **never** be **fully right** with God – and – **we** can **never** be **fully approved** by God!

(pause)

[Slide 6-Phil 3:8-9]

But **praise God** – because of **His love for us** – we have **Jesus** –

The **Apostle Paul** in **Philippians 3:8-9** explains what it means for us to have Christ Jesus in our lives...He says:

I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

So, Paul is saying ultimately, **we get righteousness from God** on the basis of believing and accepting that Jesus died for our sins to be forgiven and believing and accepting Jesus was raised after 3 days, so we can have eternal life.

So, we are righteous – because of Jesus – not because of what we think or say or do!

In His grace and love and mercy – **God did an amazing thing for us** – again the Apostle Paul explains it - this way in **2 Corinthians 5:21**

[Slide 7 – 2 Corinthians 5:21]

God made Jesus who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Jesus we might become the righteousness of God.

It's like a swap deal – **Jesus swaps our sin** – **and gives us righteousness**

We didn't earn it – or deserve it – **it's a free gift** – that's **GRACE!**

Conclusion (Joshua 24:15)

[Slide 8-Heading]

Having established that **we can only be truly righteousness through Jesus** – does that mean **we do nothing?**

(pause)

If I was out swimming in the ocean at Soldier's Beach – and I got **caught in a rip** – and I was **drowning** – and **someone came and rescued me and saved my life** **Would I ever forget that?**

Wouldn't I be thankful to that person for the **rest of my life?**

(pause)

Jesus has saved us from the Hell we deserve - we deserve Hell - because we can't stop sinning and we can't reach God's perfect standards

We should never forget – Jesus saves us for Heaven – instead of us ending up in Hell!

And **we should want to thank Jesus and serve Him for the rest of our lives – and live lives that are righteous – lives approved by God and pleasing to God – NOT so we are saved – Jesus did that bit – BUT – so we can say thank you God for sending His Son.**

(pause)

We began - this morning - with Joshua and the ancient Israelites about to enter the Promised Land in Joshua chapter 1

By the end of the book of Joshua - chapter 24 – the Israelites are well established in the Promised Land – and Joshua gathers the Israelites together – He reviews

their history, reminding them of God's faithfulness, how God brought them out of slavery in Egypt, brought them through the wilderness and into the Promised Land

Then Joshua challenges the people to make a choice between serving the Lord (who saved them) or serving other false gods.

We all have that same choice – we can serve God who gave us Jesus – or we can serve the gods of this world – wealth, materialism, entertainment, sport and our self and so on...

Let me finish with Joshua 24:15 – which is the choice we have before us – **to live a righteous life, pleasing to God:**

[Slide 8a-Joshua 24:15]

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

Maybe we could display that verse in our houses!

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your Word – that it is useful for training in righteousness.

Help us to be strong and courageous – trusting in you in all things – knowing you are with us wherever we go

Help us to be diligent in meditating on your word daily – and applying your word to our lives – and obeying it!

Thank you that even though Jesus is sinless – He became sin – so that we could become righteous – right with you and approved by you.

Help us and our households to commit to serving you each day.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Benediction (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. AMEN.