

**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. <sup>18</sup> 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!”

## Hebrews 4:1-11

### A Sabbath-Rest for the People of God

<sup>4</sup> Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. <sup>2</sup> For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>3</sup> Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger,

‘They shall never enter my rest.’” <sup>[b]</sup>

And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. <sup>4</sup> For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “On the seventh day God rested from all his works.” <sup>[c]</sup> <sup>5</sup> And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.”

<sup>6</sup> Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, <sup>7</sup> God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.” This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted:

“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts.” <sup>[d]</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. <sup>9</sup> There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; <sup>10</sup> for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, <sup>[e]</sup> just as God did from his. <sup>11</sup> Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

There are **Bibles** in front of you

And a sermon **outline**

Please have your **Bibles opened** up firstly at **Joshua 1**.

Let me pray first...

## Context (Joshua 1:1-2)

This morning we are beginning a series on the book of Joshua in the Old Testament (OT)

### [Slide-Context]

The context is – it's around about **1400BC**

And verse 1 – God's great servant and prophet, **Moses, has died!**

Remember decades earlier, God had spoken to Moses from a burning bush and revealed His plan for His people – the Israelites.

God told Moses “ *I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey*” (Exodus 3:8)

Moses was a great servant of God – and through 10 amazing plagues God sent on Egypt – the Israelites were rescued from slavery in Egypt.

Moses faithfully led the Israelites out of Egypt, through the wilderness – crossed the Red Sea with God's help – and brought the Israelites towards this Promised Land - this land - flowing with milk and honey.

The journey through the wilderness was not without its hiccups. The Israelites grizzled and complained against God and Moses! They disobeyed God. And a journey that should have taken a few weeks took 40 years.

Now the Israelites are finally on the brink of the Promised Land – and their leader, Moses, has died!

The founder of the Methodist Movement – John Wesley – famously said “*God buries His workers but carries on His work*”

Moses had a protégé whom he'd been training up to carry on the work.

His name is **Joshua, son of Nun**.

### Application

As some of you know I did my schooling in Manchester in the UK

Manchester is a **textile city**

My Dad used to work in a textile mill that spun yarn on huge spindles – He operated this complex machine that could spin yarn onto 50 huge spindles all at the same time. He worked 12-hour shifts. When his work was done – the fellow on the next shift would continue on that same machine – the machine operated 24 hours 7 days a week.

God's work is like that textile machine

When we've done our "12-hour shift" – someone else will take over God's work.

Imagine in 10 years' time – Eli, KK, Rachel, Aaron, Addie, Molly – could be Friday Jaffa leaders or Sunday Jaffa leaders – and carry on God's work

It begs the question – who are we preparing to take over God's work that we are doing right now?

If the answer is – "**no-one**" or "**I have no idea?**" – then perhaps we need to think about that and pray who we might hand over the baton to...

(pause)

Thankfully God has planned ahead and Moses trained up Joshua!

V2 - God tells Joshua and the people to get ready to cross the River Jordan to take the land God has promised

The tense of the Hebrew here in v2 – is **to get ready to cross immediately without delay - no procrastination.**

## Application

In a similar way - Jesus commands His followers - His church – that us – and He says “*follow me*” – and again there is no room for procrastination. In Luke 9:59-62 various excuses are made not to follow Jesus – but Jesus says “*No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God*”  
(pause)

So here in Joshua 1 – a great leader is gone. A new leader steps up.

### **A huge task lies ahead.**

This Promised Land is occupied by many different tribes – who don't worship the one true God, YHWH, but instead worship many false gods – and they will be hostile to God's people! The future for Joshua and the Israelites will be challenging!

Like Joshua taking over from Moses we can face challenging times in our lives – for example:

- We might have to take on a new leadership role – in church, in ministry or in our family or at work
- We might have to take on new responsibilities
- We might have to move to a new place – or start a new job
- We might have the challenge of facing a health crisis or a financial crisis or a family crisis
- We might have to let go of the past – like the Israelites leaving Egypt, leaving the wilderness and letting go of Moses – we have to let go and trust God with our future no matter how uncertain is

- We might have to step out in faith. Just like Joshua and the Israelites were about to start a new life - we might be entering a new season of life – like starting a family – or retiring

**Moments of big changes or big challenges in life - are often moments of fear!**

God understands it's scary for Joshua and the people – and God understands it's scary for us

Therefore God makes some **promises**...

### God's Promises (Joshua 1:3-5, 9, 13-15 and Hebrews 4:1-11)

#### [Slide-Inheritance]

In vv3-4 - God promises Joshua and the Israelites they will **inherit the land**. He says He will give them *“every place where they set foot”* and their *“territory will extend to the desert of Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates— all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west”*

Likewise as Christians - we too have a promise of a future land – an **inheritance** in Heaven. 1 Peter 1:3-4 says: *“God has given us new birth into a living hope... into an **inheritance** that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you”*

#### [Slide-Victory]

God also promises Joshua **victory** – v5 – God says *“no one will be able to stand against you (Joshua) all the days of your life”*

Likewise as Christians – the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 8:31 *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* We too have victory because of God!

### [Slide-Presence]

This victory is possible for Joshua and us – because **God promises His presence**.

In v5 – God says “*I will never leave you nor forsake you!*”. That same promise is also for Christians in Hebrews 13:5. And Jesus Himself promises us in Matthew 28:20 -“*I am with you always, until the end of the age*”.

It does beg the question – if Jesus is in Heaven – how can He be present with us now? The answer is:

- Jesus is present with us – by the **indwelling of the Holy Spirit** inside us
- Jesus is present with us – **through His Word** speaking to us – remember Jesus IS the WORD OF GOD
- Jesus is present with us – **through His people** – He says He is there amongst people when two or more are gathered in His name (Matthew 18:20)
- And Jesus is our High Priest in Heaven – **interceding for us right now!** (Hebrews 7:25)

### [Slide-Rest]

In Joshua 1:13–15, **God also promises to give Israel rest** by giving them the land to dwell in (Josh 1:13, 15).

For Christians, however, we are given **the promise of a deeper and greater rest**—and that’s where our New Testament reading from Hebrews 4 comes in.

[Please turn there now.](#)

Hebrews 4:1–11 is both a **warning and an invitation**.

It calls God's people to persevere in faith so that they may enter God's "rest," and not fall into the same pattern of unbelief as the Israelites did in the wilderness (Heb 4:1–2, 11).

The main point of Hebrews 4:1–11 is this: **God has promised a "rest"—a state of salvation, peace, and completion in Him (Heb 4:1, 9).**

But not everyone enters this rest (Heb 4:3, 6).

The determining factor is **faith expressed in obedience** (Heb 4:2, 6, 11).

**Hebrews 4 draws on three key Old Testament ideas**

**1) 1<sup>st</sup> OT idea – The disobedience and unbelief of the Israelites in the Wilderness (Numbers 13–14)**

- The Israelites were rescued from Egypt but refused to trust God when it came time to enter the Promised Land.
- Because of their disobedience and unbelief, a whole generation of Israelites were barred from entering the land—they missed out – hence 40 years wandering in the wilderness (Heb 4:6; cf. 3:17–19).
- Hebrews 4 uses this as a warning to say: you can be part of God's people outwardly and still miss His rest through unbelief (Heb 4:2, 6, 11).

**2) 2<sup>nd</sup> OT idea is - A Warning from Psalm 95**

- Quoted in Hebrews 4:7: "*Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...*"
- Many of the Israelites had hard hearts in the wilderness. We need to watch out for that same thing ourselves!

### 3) 3<sup>rd</sup> OT idea is – **The Sabbath Day Rest (Genesis 2:2)**

- God “**rested**” on the seventh day – after creating everything (Heb 4:4).
- This becomes the pattern and ultimate picture of **rest**—resting in God’s completed work and enjoying it.
- Hebrews 4 says believers are invited into that kind of **rest** (Heb 4:3, 9–10).

### So what kind of “**rest**” is it - that Hebrews 4 is talking about?

You see - even long after Joshua brought the Israelites into the land, God still speaks of a future “**rest**,” showing that the promised “**rest**”, given to Joshua, was not fully realized at the time (Heb 4:7–8).

So this **rest**...

It’s more than rest in the Promised Land of Canaan.

It’s more than resting on the Sabbath Day.

It points to:

- **Resting in the Salvation Jesus gives**—it’s rest from striving, by trusting in Jesus’ finished work – through His death and resurrection (Heb 4:3, 10)
- **And it’s an **eternal rest** with God**—a future, heavenly rest that still remains for God’s people (Heb 4:9, 11)

### But there is a warning

Like Israel, people can hear the good news but not benefit from hearing this good news if it is not accompanied with faith (Heb 4:2).

Like Israel, there is the danger of hardened hearts and drifting into unbelief (Heb 4:7).

So Hebrews 4:11 – gives us our response – it says:

*“Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.”*

“**Make every effort**” might sound like we earn our salvation—but that is not the point.

Rather, it means we must **actively persevere in faith**, continuing to trust God so that we enter that promised eternal rest (Heb 4:11).

The simple message of Hebrews 4:1-11 is: **God promises true and eternal rest—but only those who trust Him and continue in faith will enter it. So do not repeat Israel’s mistake of unbelief** (Heb 4:1, 6, 11).

Back to Joshua 1 then....

With God’s promises of: **land** – **victory** – **His presence** – and **rest**...

God now gives Joshua **commands** – in verses 6 to 9...

### God’s Command (Joshua 1:6-9)

#### **[Slide-Commands]**

**Three times** God commands Joshua...

V6 – *“Be strong and courageous”*

V7 – *“Be strong and very courageous”*

V9 – *“I 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!”*

This command to be “***strong and courageous***” is repeated to show Joshua how **important** it is!

Courage is not about our personality – but about our trust in God!

Fear is the opposite of trusting God!

The Apostle Paul reminds a young fearful Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:7:

*God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

God doesn't tell Joshua and us - to ***feel*** strong — but to ***be*** strong - because God is with Joshua and God is with us!

**Our courage is grounded in God's presence, not our ability.**

**Our strength and courage is grounded in standing on God's promises - as we sang earlier!**

God gives Joshua a fundamental reason why he can be strong and courageous – and that's **the Centrality of God's Word** – that's verses 7-8

### The Centrality of God's Word (Joshua 1:7-8)

**[Slide-God's Word]**

Look at v7 - *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*

We are to **follow God's instructions carefully...**

*A few years ago at Christmas – Heather and I bought a big swing set for the backyard for when the grandkids come over.*

*Heather’s family visited on Christmas Eve – and ‘did me a favour’ and decided to assemble this swing set. It was about 90% assembled when they left. But – they didn’t quite follow the instructions – there were parts left over!*

*Over Christmas – I spent a couple of days – reassembling it!*

God’s Word is a **guide to our life** – if we don’t follow God’s instructions carefully – there is always **consequences!**

The beginning of v8 says - *Keep this Book of the Law always **on your lips***

God’s Word is to be **constantly spoken, remembered, and rehearsed**—not just read privately, but shaping our speech and our thinking every day.

The next part of v8 says - ***meditate on it day and night***

This means: **continually think about, reflect on, and internalize God’s Word**—not emptying your mind, but *filling* it with God’s truth.

The Hebrew idea of “meditate” even carries the sense of **murmuring or quietly speaking to yourself**—turning God’s Word over again and again in our minds.

This is not a once-a-week activity—it’s a way of life.

Joshua is to keep bringing God’s Word back into his mind—when he wakes up, when he lies down, and in the decisions of the day.

He is to **chew on it, turn it over, and apply it**, so that God’s Word shapes his thinking more than his fears or circumstances.

And that’s the same for us!

The next part of v9 says - *so that you may be careful to do everything written in it.*

So it's not just a matter of head knowledge and heart knowledge but also hand knowledge – Joshua and us – need to **DO** what God's Word says!

And the result of DOING what God's Word says – is in the rest of v9 - *then - you will be prosperous and successful.*

**Success in God's eyes is not achievement, but obedience.**

James reminds us in James 2:22-23 - *Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.*

And why should we **obey God's Word**?

Jesus tells us: *"If you love me, keep my commands"* (John 14:15)

And the great thing for us is...

Under the Old Testament (covenant) God wrote His law on **stone**.

But under the New Testament (covenant), through the Holy Spirit - God has written His law on our **hearts** (Hebrews 10:15-16)

And so the Holy Spirit living inside us as Christians – is not just telling us what to do—but changing us so that, increasingly, **we want to do it!**

How good is God!

### **Our Response (Joshua 1:13-18)**

Joshua chapter 1 demands a **response** from us – this morning

## [Response 1]

Here's 4 take home responses...

### 1. Trust God's promises

Joshua moves forward not because he feels strong, but because God has promised to be with him.

So for us, the question is not "How strong am I?" but "Will I trust what God has said?"

## [Response 2]

### 2. Persevere in faith

Hebrews warns us not to drift away from God like the Israelites in the wilderness did.

We are to keep trusting Christ—not just at the start, but all the way to the end.

## [Response 3]

### 3. Walk together in unity

In Joshua 1:16-17 - The Eastern tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh committed to standing and fighting alongside the rest of the tribes of Israel. And that's a picture of the unity of the church—we don't follow Jesus alone, but help each other keep going.

As Hebrews 10:25 says: "*do not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*"

## [Response 4]

### 4. Obey God's Word wholeheartedly

The people told Joshua in v16 "*Whatever you command us we will do.*"

This was not partial obedience—but **wholehearted obedience**, flowing from hearts changed by God.

## Conclusion/Jesus the Greater Joshua

To finish up then

As we continue through the book of Joshua

We will see time and time again

### **Jesus is the greater Joshua**

#### **[Slide-Conclusion]**

Even their names are connected. The name “**Joshua**” comes from the Hebrew **Yehoshua**, meaning “**The LORD saves.**”

And the name “Jesus” is the Greek form of that same name—“**The LORD saves.**”

Joshua led God’s people into the Promised Land.

But Jesus leads His people into something far greater.

Joshua could bring Israel into a physical land—but he could not give them lasting rest. That’s why Hebrews 4 says that a greater rest was still to come.

Jesus is the greater Joshua because:

- Jesus doesn’t just lead us into a place—He brings us into **eternal rest with God** – now and in Heaven!
- Jesus doesn’t just defeat earthly enemies—He defeats **sin, death, and the devil**
- Jesus doesn’t just go before us—He **gives His life for us** to welcome us in to His rest!

Let’s pray...

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are a faithful God who keeps Your promises. Just as You were with Joshua, we thank You that You promise to be with us and never leave us nor forsake us. Please help us to be strong and courageous, not because we are strong, but because You are with us. Help us not to be afraid or discouraged, but to trust You in all the things You call us to do.

Help us to love Your Word, to read it, to think about it, and to obey it in our daily lives. Please guide us as we follow You, and help us to walk in Your ways this week.

We thank You that Jesus leads us into the true promised land and gives us rest and eternal life. Help us to follow Him faithfully. In His Name. Amen.