

My Courage is Bigger than Your Courage

Josh 1:2-3

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

I. Introduction

1. The book of Joshua is a record of how Israel pursued God's promises to them, all the way back from the days of Abraham. God had promised Abraham that the land he was traveling through was going to be inherited by his descendants.
2. This is more than a history lesson, because the reality is, history repeats itself.
3. And that is often the case because we don't learn the lessons from history, so we have to go through the tests all over again before we learn those lessons.
4. What do we do with promises that are unfulfilled at this time? Are there any secrets hidden in scripture to help us make it through times when there are hostile adversaries standing between us and the promises of the Lord?
5. You want blessings, but you are looking at shortages.
6. You want health, but you are confronting suffering.
7. You want peace of mind, but that territory is being crowded out by anxious thoughts.
8. You want fullness but are fighting an adversary called inadequacy and emptiness.
9. So tonight, I want to look back to help us learn how to plan ahead.
10. There is, I believe, a "secret" revealed in scripture regarding how courage works.
11. How is it that this intangible, unmeasurable thing called courage can help us? How do we get it? How do we lose it? How do we fare when we face an adversary who also has courage? Whose courage wins?
12. Tonight I want to preach on this thought, "My Courage is Bigger than Your Courage."

II. I give you this land

A. Promised to Abraham

1. Let us start by looking at a grant promise God made to Abraham—the promise of the Promised Land:

Gen 12:6-7

6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him

2. The extent of that land was great.

Gen 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

3. **[image: Promised Land]**

4. So after Moses led Israel out of Egypt into the land of Promise, God reminded him of the promise made almost 500 years earlier to Abraham:

Deut 11:24 Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from

the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

5. And after Moses' death, God gave Joshua the job of taking that land:

Josh 1:2-4

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. [That is a reference to Deuteronomy 11:24]

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

6. But the land they actually conquered and inhabited was a much smaller territory. **[image: Map Tribal Distribution]**
7. The limitation was that their leaders, Moses, and Joshua, did not tread their feet on lands outside of the smaller territory.
8. A slightly larger area was conquered during the reigns of David and Solomon during Israel's golden age. **[map: David and Solomon]**

B. Lack of courage—focusing on lack

1. So the question has to be asked, "If God promised all that land to Israel, why was the land not taken by Joshua and his armies? Or even by some of the great kings of Israel that followed?"

2. During Joshua's conquests, they found out they just didn't have the strength and courage to conquer.

3. Like the tribe of Ephraim. They ran into trouble with the Canaanites:

Josh 16:10 And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

4. The tribe of Manasseh ran into the same trouble:

Josh 17:12 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

5. But what is interesting is how these two tribes responded when they were unable to conquer the Canaanites.

6. Rather than confronting and conquering the adversary, they went back to Joshua and requested that other territories be given them that were less of a hassle to inhabit.

Josh 17:14-15

14 And the children of Joseph [that is the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh] spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto?

7. We are a great people—he is referring to their number. But Joshua answered back playing on the phrase, "great people."

15 And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

8. You are great—you can do this. It doesn't matter that the mountain was covered in trees. Cut them down. It doesn't matter that there are giants in the land, cut them down also.

9. But they had another comeback for Joshua:

*Josh 17:16 And the children of Joseph said, The **hill is not enough** for us: and all the*

Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Beth-shean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.

10. They had problems with the **hills** and the **valleys** and asked for something else that offered less trouble.
 11. Wow. What a parallel to you and I.
 12. Of course, it is easy to say we don't like the going through valleys. Especially the valleys that have giants and an iron-strong enemy fighting us.
 13. But does this sound whiny? My mountain top experience is not enough and I don't like valleys. Give me something else!
- C. Answer for low courage—listen to the right voice
1. But Joshua replied to them with an answer to inspire courage. Thank God for a good leader who sets us on the right path:
Joshua 17:17-18
*17 And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, **Thou art a great people, and hast great power:***
 2. [So what's the big deal for you?]
thou shalt not have one lot only:
*18 But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and **though they be strong.***
 3. Manasseh and Ephraim were ready to give up on the inheritance that had been allotted to them because it was just too difficult: a tree covered mountain, giants, and an enemy with iron chariots.
 4. But Joshua reminded them they **WERE** a great and powerful people. How could that adversary stand against such a great and powerful army like them?
 5. Joshua's emphasis was on their ability to drive out the enemy. And Joshua expressed it as merely a side note, "though they [the Canaanites] be strong."
 6. Who is stronger?
 7. Whose courage is bigger?
 8. Courage is an emotional asset, not a tangible substance to measure, like gas in the tank.
 9. Is the enemy strong? Be stronger. Do they have courage? Get more.
 10. There is a secret here about courage that I believe we can learn from.
 11. There is a time when we just need a good talking to. And you would be wise to realize when you are at that point and are willing to ask the question and listen to the answer.
 12. One of the problems we face at times when we need courage, is that we tend to listen to the wrong voice.
 13. Perhaps it is an inner voice that tells you all the reasons you are a failure. Maybe it is someone else who speaks doubt into your mind.
 14. Fortunately, Joshua's voice of courage won over the voice of doubt.
- D. Lean on your courage and rename the problem
1. Here is another case to look at that is so much like what we just read, but there was enough courage in place without the pep talk.
 2. This time it pertains to the tribe of Dan and their inheritance:
Josh 19:47 And the coast of the children of Dan went out [they lost parts-it was hard to conquer] too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against

Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

3. Oh, what a lesson there.
4. They realized what the percentage of their inheritance that they had conquered was too small of a place for them.
5. But notice they didn't go whining to Joshua. They knew what they needed to do, and that was to courageously confront the enemy who was possessing their possession.
6. And did you notice this? They took the territory and renamed it.
7. Whatever the devil called it before, you courageously conquered it and gave it a new name.
8. He had called it shortage, you renamed it blessing.
9. He had called it suffering, you renamed it health.
10. He called it anxiety, you renamed it peace of mind.
11. He called it inadequacy and emptiness, you renamed it fullness of joy!
12. You see the secret to courage at work here. My courage is bigger than your courage!
13. Rise over this thing!

E. Leaning on arrogance

1. Here is another wonderful case of courage meeting courage.
2. After conquering Jericho, that formidable city, Israel felt a little cocky and downgraded their estimation of the adversary in the little city of Ai. O Little Town of Ai, how still we see they lie.
3. Joshua's advisors suggested only a small contingent of soldiers could capture the city.
4. In other words, it would not take a lot of courage to conquer this city. Reducing courage when going against an underdog is always a downfall of the great.
5. Because courage wins the battle.
6. So Israel sent a small army with large arrogance, but little courage.

Josh 7:4-5

4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

*5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore **the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.***

7. Notice that courage can melt! And notice what happens when low courage meets courage. Low courage melts in the face of greater courage.
8. Regardless of the size of your military assets available to you, courage must accompany you into battle.
9. Israel was high on arrogance and sin.

F. Picking up courage after a loss

1. But the battle humbled them and forced them to address the sin in the camp. After they did, their courage got a great boost.
2. Notice how courage faced courage here. The soldiers of Ai were now operating from the position of arrogance, and by now, Israel had replaced their arrogance with courage.
3. Using courage and a witty battle plan of attack, retreat, and ambush, they were able to set the city on fire to the surprise of the soldiers of Ai.

4. Notice the impact when low courage/high conceit of Ai met Israel's newfound courage: *Josh 8:20 And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and **they had no power to flee this way or that way:** and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers.*

III. Conclusion

1. Let's conclude with comparing two stories and the level of courage at work in each.
2. When Moses and Israel reached the border of the Promised Land the first time, Moses sent 12 spies to search out the land.
3. Joshua and Caleb came back with a high-courage report that saw them conquering the land.
4. 10 spies came back with a high-fear report saw them as grasshoppers facing giants.
5. That is the opposite of courage. And listening to the wrong voice caused fear to spread instead of courage. Both can spread depending on which voice you amplify.
6. The second scene is 40 years later but in the same location—on the edge of the Promised Land.
7. This time Joshua only sent in two spies.
8. These two spies found a hideout in the city of Jericho in the home of Rahab, after the king of Jericho heard they were snooping about.
9. Listen to what Rahab told the two spies, as this will help us further understand how critical courage is to victory:
*Josh 2:9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that **your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.***
10. She recounted testimonies that were being told around of how God had done mighty things for them, and she admitted,
*Josh 2:11 And as soon as we had heard these things, **our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.***
11. Do you know how to conquer an adversary? Get courage that is bigger than their courage.
12. Remember some testimonies of some God-events in your life, or testimonies from others, to lift your courage.
13. All you need to do to conquer, is have just a little more courage and confidence than what has risen against you.
14. As our final thought, compare these final two stories.
15. 40 years before, the spies denounced Joshua and Caleb's courage as foolish talk, and as a result, they did not go in and conquer Jericho at that time.
16. But 40 years later, when Joshua was in charge, his two spies came back with a report just like his had been those 40 years before:
*Josh 2:24 And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even **all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.***
17. What happens when courage meets courage, is that the greater courage wins. When Israel realized they could trust in God's promise, and when the adversary heard of how God had blessed them, the courage balance tipped in Israel's favor.
18. If you are facing a circumstance where you have been hindered by a lack of courage, make sure you:
 - a. Get rid of sin in the camp

- b. Have a promise of the Lord to stand on
 - c. Listen to the Lord's voice and turn off the enemy's voice.
19. What have you been listening to?
20. When you need courage, quit listening to the voice of those who have nothing good to say, and listen to the voice of confidence and courage.