

GOD ESTABLISHES JOSHUA AS MOSES' SUCCESSOR

Joshua 1:1-18

Key Verse: 1:6

"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them."

In today's passage, God establishes General Joshua as Moses' successor. When we look back on the story of Moses the servant of God, we want to be as great a general as Moses. When we look back on the story of Moses the servant of God, we want to be as humble as Moses, whose humbleness covered the face of the earth (Nu 12:3). Moreover, when we look back on how God used Moses the servant of God, it is very tearful to think about. God chose Moses when he was in a most fatalistic situation. God, in his great mercy, let him live in the palace of the Egyptian Empire as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. God trained him as a noble prince for forty years. All of a sudden, God brought him to the wilderness because of a tragic event of killing an Egyptian, siding with the Hebrews. There God trained him in humbleness. God put him among seven women, who by birth were very talkative. In order to bear with their talkativeness, he silenced himself. As a result, he became a man of few words. In addition, God made him a shepherd of sheep for Jethro the priest. There he had shepherded faithfully in great loneliness, for sheep cannot speak English well. In the wilderness, God gave him humbleness training so that he might be a leader of 600,000 Israelites who were still under the bondage of slavery in the Egyptian Empire. Finally God called him through the burning bush. God told him the mission he had to carry out. It was to liberate his people Israel from the yoke of the Egyptian Empire, and to lead them to the entrance of the promised

land. Moses might have thought he would set his foot in the promised land. But God was very clear. Because he sinned against God by striking the rock with his staff two times in anger, he did not reveal God's glory to his people. So he was disqualified to enter the promised land. This story is repeated in several places in the Bible. God did not let him enter the promised land. But it was not really because of his failure, but because he had fulfilled his mission. He brought his people out from the hand of King Pharaoh, and gave them daily bread training for forty years in the wilderness. After that, he brought his people to the mouth of the promised land. In this way, he had fulfilled God's mission. As God had told him he went up into the Abarim Range and see the full view of the promised land, and die there on the mountain (Dt 32:48-52). Now God is going to establish a successor of Moses. He chose General Joshua as his successor and gave him instructions on how to be the leader of his people.

First, God gives Joshua several instructions as a leader (1-5). Look at verses 1-2. "After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: `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.'" These verses are an implication that as Moses crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, so his people under General Joshua's leadership, will cross the Jordan River--as their fathers crossed the Red Sea by faith. These verses also imply that God would not give them the promised land free of charge. They must cross the Jordan River where the enemies made a defense line. In short Joshua, the successor of Moses, must fight and conquer the promised land. From God's point of view, the promised land was the promised land, but it would not be given without any cost. They had to conquer and drive

out all the inhabitants of all kinds and take possession of the land.

The territory of the promised land was not a small one. It was a vast land with over fifty tribes of people. Look at verses 3-5. "I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates--all the Hittite country--to the Great Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up 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." The people of Israel were not strong enough to fight against so many enemy countries and defeat them. But it was possible when their leader was strong and courageous.

Second, be strong and courageous (6-9). In verse 6, God said to General Joshua, "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them." At the beginning of verse 7 God says to Joshua, "Be strong and very courageous."

Here we have to think about what it means to be strong and courageous. The first condition of being a leader is strong courage. Without strong courage, no one can be a leader. We like the story of Napoleon Bonaparte; there is a hidden dream in all men's hearts to be like General Napoleon and Emperor Napoleon. Napoleon Bonaparte was a very strong man and a genius in military strategy. As we know, there was a Russo-Austrian allied army, whose number was a little more than 100,000. General Napoleon Bonaparte's army was nothing but 10,000. Napoleon's army was surrounded by the Russo-Austrian allied army on three sides, and on the other side was the open sea. Russo-Austrian

commanders were sure that they could capture them or drive them into the open sea. In this situation, Napoleon was not weak. He was very strong and courageous. He was more than confident that he would defeat them, even though the number of enemy soldiers was ten times larger than his. In addition, their headquarters was heavily fortified. But when Napoleon had a strong and courageous spirit, God gave him wisdom to defeat the Russo-Austrian allied army of 100,000. Napoleon trained 100 men who were already experts in guerilla warfare. After ten days, he sent his guerilla soldiers into the headquarters' fortress. Then he ordered around 200 soldiers to play the role of deserters, and the rest of his soldiers to climb up the back side of the mountain where the headquarters' fortress was. When the "deserters" were fleeing, the commander of the Russo-Austrian army followed them and those who were in the fortress all came out to attack the "deserters," the fleeing soldiers of Napoleon. Out of nowhere, there was smoke and fire arose in the fortress of the Russo-Austrian headquarters. Napoleon's guerilla soldiers killed all the commanders and high-ranking officers in the fortress. Then those who had climbed up the back side of the headquarters' fortress began to chase the Russo-Austrian army. That day those who drowned among Russo-Austrian soldiers were more than those who were caught by Napoleon's soldiers. Because of this one event, Napoleon became very famous. Napoleon was courageous and a genius in military strategy. But his human integrity was known as very proud. So all the European people began to fear to stand up against him. One day, when he his stomach stuck out, he lost his courage and was defeated by Wellington, an English General. Another leader was Adolph Hitler. He was very handsome and a genius in speech. Because of this, all European people, especially young people, were fascinated by his appearance and

his power of speech. They blindly supported him. His support was more than by his own country people. His support mostly came from all other European countries, except England. He looked as if he had courage, but he did not. He was very deceptive. Making an issue of racial discrimination, he massacred the Jewish people who, in actuality, had built and educated Deutschland. After the massacre of Jews, his popularity went down. In this way, he lost his power as the top leader. And, at the same time, he lost the second World War, and he committed suicide.

We thought a little bit about men of courage in human history. Their courage arose according to the national situation or their personal appearance. But Biblically speaking, "Be strong and courageous" means to have great courage by having an absolute love of God in the heart.

It sounds unreasonable. But it is true. When we love God with all our strength, God gives us unquenchable courage and wisdom. This is the reason Deuteronomy 6:5 says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." This verse was the secret that enabled the people of Israel to conquer the people in the promised land, and to maintain God's blessing to the end.

True courage is not duel fighting. Once Andrew Jackson heard that Charles Dickinson made an insulting remark about his wife. He challenged him to a duel. They say that he fought many duels. Fighting duels is not true courage. This is no more than empty pride. Andrew Jackson needed to know the love of God. When we review world history, in a real sense, it is the history of love. One who just loved God could love his enemies too. This is the source of courage. Paul said in Romans 8:35-37, "Who

shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." Paul, who experienced the love of God, was a man of courage. Paul was in a Roman prison; he was old and tired. But he taught the Bible to Jewish immigrants from his prison cell. His people did not keep their Bible study promises. So he taught the Bible to the prison guards. It came from the love of God he had received from the Risen Christ when he was called on the road to Damascus and appointed as an apostle for the Gentiles. Paul knew that he was in charge of evangelizing the whole world. In actuality, he conquered the world in his time with the gospel of Jesus. He was not afraid of misunderstanding from his people and trial and imprisonment. We don't know how he died, because there is no legend about his death. But it is very sure that he was martyred. He was not afraid of martyrdom, because he was courageous in the love of God. Love of God changes a man. Love of God changes the world. Love of God changes all the weaklings and lazy people and physical people. When we study Luke's Gospel, we see the baby in a manger. The baby in a manger is the revelation of God's love for all mankind. God gave his one and only Son as a ransom sacrifice for the sin of the world. Here we see that true courage comes from the love of God.

The love of God comes when we obey the word of God. Look at verse 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." Also verse 8a says, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and

night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it." Human wisdom has a great limit. Time magazine chose as "Man of the Century" Albert Einstein. In America in the past, there were signs in many places which read, "No dogs. No Jews." It is ironic that once America despised Jews, but honored a Jew as the "Man of the Century." Einstein was Jewish and he lived in Germany. But he didn't like Hitler killing his people. So he came to America and disclosed the formula of making atomic bombs. Of course, he is very famous because of his theory of relativity. He was chosen as "Man of the Century" in America because he contributed the formula of making atomic bombs to the U.S. government. However, when we read about Einstein, we find that he concentrated so much on his work that he did not even know when his wife left him. His eyesight was very weak, so he used a magnifying glass to read something. Finally he said, "The secret of this world is that it is made by God." But he did not have space in his heart to have God or to love God. He played the violin when he was lonely. But his violin performance was very poor. He was indeed a great man. But he was like an orphan in an orphanage. One who knows the love of God should have adopted him so that he might have learned the love of God. Then he could have had rest in his soul. He could have had the peace of God in his soul. He could have had the love of God, which compels him to love his wife. And he could have had several kids around him. But it was impossible, because he was living in the world of theory. However, the Russians through "Pravda" claimed that Albert Schweitzer was the light of the 20th century.

We are living in "Generation X." The 1900's was a "Generation X." The new millennium 2000 will be a "Generation X." Why is it so? Because people do not obey the word of God with all their strength and soul.

This is the reason God told General Joshua, "Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you" (7). How can we keep the word of God unceasingly? We must see everything from God's word's point of view. When we are going to keep the word of God we confront the cultural difference, and the philosophy of modern people, and the obsession of young people in this generation. They think they can achieve something, make a lot of money, and then live forever with the money they earned. This is the modern psyche. But God said to General Joshua, "Do not turn from it to the right or to the left" (7). He also said to General Joshua, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night..." (8). This is the way we can be strong and courageous: by keeping the word of God in our hearts as our life standard. Sometimes we want to fall down to the left; sometimes we want to fall down to the right. But the word of God holds us to stand firm. Without the word of God, we become scatterbrained and soon, promiscuous. One's weak heart is not pleasing to God. We must have the word of God in our hearts and stand firm. Therefore, Colossians 2:6,7 says, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." These verses fully explain that we must take root in the word of God and keep it growing as a big tree so that we may not fall down because of the stormy winds or the ever-changing worldly pattern of life.

When we summarize what we thought about so far in this lecture, we can come to the conclusion that without God's help we cannot be strong and courageous men. It is true that God is Almighty. God created the heavens and the earth. And God gave each of us his life to live in this world for a certain amount of time and no more. God is the source of

power and God is the source of love. God's power is God's love. A true leader is a man of God who has God's power and God's love in himself.

Third, people recognize Joshua as their commander (10-18). When we study world history, we always remember Julius Caesar and Brutus, and Lenin and Stalin, and Wilhelm II and Bismarck. The worldly politicians really wanted to have a proper successor after them. A good example is Lenin and Stalin. But when Stalin was rising to power, old and sick Lenin wanted to cast him out. But by any means Stalin rose to power. He killed according to what Lenin had planned. World history is nothing but a power struggle and lobbying activity. Those who have power struggle to defeat opponents. Those who are smart and weak want to gain benefits through lobbying.

It is amazing to know that Abraham Lincoln became the father of America, even though he was the sixteenth president of the United States. It was not his achievement that made him the father of America. It was his noble human integrity which made him the father of America. No one disagrees that Abraham Lincoln is the father of America. According to his biography, he was honest, he was hard working, he read the Bible always, and he prayed in the midst of intensive fighting between the North and South. In short, he was a man of God who loved God's truth more than his own life. We are greatly honored that Abraham Lincoln is our national father, throughout the generations, and forever.

Why did the people of Israel recognize General Joshua as their commander? It was because they sensed he had the Spirit of God, and that he had the word of God. In this way he looked like a strong and

courageous leader that no one can say anything against.

Look at verses 10-11. "So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 'Go through the camp and tell the people, "Get your supplies 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.'" General Joshua's order was thunderous and terrifying to the people of Israel. To cross the Jordan River, which was the defense line, was beyond imagination to the people of Israel. But when Joshua told them with the authority of God, and according to the promise of God, people immediately responded to his command. General Joshua gave special orders to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. His order was as follows: "Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: 'The Lord your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.' 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, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to help your brothers until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land that 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" (13-15). If General Joshua had ordered, "Advance and attack," it would have been easier for them to obey. But General Joshua ordered the chief tribes, the Reubenites and the others, "Leave your family members behind and go and fight; help your helpless brothers first. After that you may go back to occupy your own land." That's a very difficult command to obey. Usually we work for our children and our family. But General Joshua ordered them to fight and die in order to help the weaker tribes

of his people first, and let them have their territory. After that, they could go back to occupy their own territory. Do you think they could obey him? If we tell people one by one, "Go, work hard and make money for your brothers, and next make more money for yourselves," then nobody would say, "Amen." They would answer, "Are you talking to me?" But the people of Israel obeyed Joshua's command as they had obeyed Moses. Let's see what their response was. Look at verses 16-18. "Then they answered Joshua, 'Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 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. Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!'"

It was not likely that they would obey General Joshua's command because they had been under Moses' command. Moses' shoes were too big for General Joshua. Still, people obeyed his command even though it was a somewhat difficult command that they occupy the land first for their weaker brothers and next for their own families.

It is indeed amazing that they not only obeyed, but also strongly encouraged Joshua by saying, "Only be strong and courageous!" Here we learn that the people of Israel wanted a strong and courageous leader above them. How can a leader be strong and courageous? As verses 7-8 say, to be strong and courageous they must obey the word of God and be firm in the word of God. They must also be men of thought who meditate on the word of God day and night.

Through Joshua chapter 1 we learn that God successfully established

Joshua as Moses' successor. At the time of appointing him as Moses' successor God gave him a few words. The main point is "Be strong and very courageous ; keep the Law of God day and night; don't stray to the left or the right." When we carefully review what we have studied, courage comes from the word of God. Courage also comes when we love God with all our hearts, strength and soul. Why are there so many who are cowardly these days? It is because they do not have the word of God in their hearts. Let's have the word of God in our hearts and be strong and courageous men of God.