



When You Are Afraid – Part 1

Passage: Joshua 1:1-9

Key Verse: “Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you.” V.7“

I was lying on a stretcher at the ER while a doctor and two nurses surrounded me. The doctor’s hand rested on my arm: “You’re not dying, Patricia. There’s nothing wrong with you. We’ve checked it all.” And yet, no matter how many times he repeated that medical truth, my brain told me something different: I was dying. I just knew I was.

A panic attack. Another one.

My personal hell on earth.

Fear is noise that keeps you from Hearing God’s voice.

Never have I experienced this truth in a more powerful way than on the year I became a Christian.

It happened twenty years ago, but I can vividly recall how fear paralyzed my thinking and my life. Extreme stress took me over the edge. And the devil milked it for all it was worth...

He breathed defeat and death into my ears... and I believed.

Fear is real. It’s real for the strongest believers, as much as it is for the youngest in the faith. The difference is that, as we grow in knowledge of God, as we experience His sovereignty and power, we become more equipped to overcome all fear.

That’s where Joshua was in his faith walk as God charged him to take possession of the Promised Land. Fearful... yet equipped.

He had been with Moses as God empowered Israel’s leader to accomplish the impossible. Over and over again, he watched as Yahweh took care of His people.

Now the giants waited across the Jordan. They were bigger, mightier than Israel.

Yet, God said : “*Do Not Be Afraid. Go Get them.*”

All he needed was the courage to obey.

Following last week’s post, I’d like to highlight two more important truths we must hold on to as we’re challenged to overcome fear:

Truth #3 *Doing God’s work requires courage:*

“ Be strong and **courageous!** Do not tremble and be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you **wherever you go.**” (Joshua 1:9)

We cannot easily count the “fear nots” of the Bible. These are not just soothing words, but they are very often a call to battle and victory. To be a follower of Jesus requires strength of character and courage to stand alone in many circumstances. On Chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews, almost each time that the Author refers to one of His saints’ faith, He attributes their greatness to their **courage**.

Each giant of faith had to defeat the giants of fear and feelings of inadequacy... They had to courageously take a giant leap of faith... before God delivered... provided... healed.

Indeed, we can choose to shrink in fear and live a mediocre life... Or choose to say yes to God’s charge to conquer the impossible and stand in awe as He delivers His supernatural best.

Truth #4 *It takes surrender to conquer*

“(...) *Be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.*” (v.7 – NASB)

The world thinks we are crazy when we declare that success follows submission and obedience. By society’s viewpoint, obedience is a sign of weakness. The strong control and the weak are controlled – that’s the world’s order.

For Joshua, on the other hand, success would only come as he was controlled by God.

God told Joshua that, in order to succeed, he must obey ALL God’s instructions and His law. Not just partially, not with some personal twist here and there, but the *entire* law.

God was actually giving Joshua these instructions because He knew there would be times when Joshua would not exactly SEE where God was taking Him, and therefore His law would guide him.

So it is in our lives, as many times we cannot see where God’s paths are leading us.

That is when we must read His Word, obey It entirely, and trust that “*He who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it*” *Philippians 1:6*.

The reason Joshua was victorious was because he believed and obeyed. Not because of his talents, weapons or his ability to fight the battles... but because he obeyed.

Conquering fear follows courage. Courage follows obedience. Obedience follows surrender.

That’s Heaven’s order.

Fear is indeed the father of every failure...

Fear of conflict, fear of shame, fear of rejection, fear that God will leave us alone and our prayers unanswered.

Fear exaggerates the problems, hates the tasks ahead of us, and postpones obedience. Fear is crippling and fear does NOT come from God!

Whatever giant you are facing today, remember Yahweh’s encouragement as He repeated it again and again throughout His Word:

Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

Be strong and courageous, my friend! The same God, who was with Moses and Joshua, is going into battle with you.

Move forward...

Obey...

Be confident...

And as you move into the Giant’s territory... remember:

If God is for you, with you, in you... who or what on earth can be against you?? Romans 8:31

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