Stepping into Transition with Joshua

Sermon outline · Grace Chapel · Joshua 1:1–9 (with Ephesians 3:10 and Philippians 1:6)

Introduction

- A moment to breathe and do something different during a season of transition, rather than continuing into the next chapter of Nehemiah.
- Joshua 1 holds many examples and truths to embrace during transition.

Context: The Story So Far

- Moses led Israel out of Egypt; the wilderness was a "crucible of sanctification" and purification before the Promised Land, not merely being lost for 40 years.
- Moses, at 120, does not enter the land (he disregarded the holiness of God by striking the rock twice instead of speaking to it). He goes up the mountain, sees the land, and dies.
- Moses' life in 40-year segments:
- First 40: finding his identity.
- Second 40: identity broken down through surrender, humility and transformation, in the wilderness.
- Age 80: begins leading Israel.
- Side note: where is God leading you in places of achievement, transformation, and legacy and long-term significance?
- End of Deuteronomy: Moses equips, challenges and comforts the people, getting them ready for his leaving (read Deuteronomy 31 to the end).
- Joshua's resume:
- Exodus 17: fought the Amalekites while Aaron and Hur held up Moses' arms.
- Met with God at the tent of meeting.
- Numbers 13: one of the spies, with Caleb, who said "we can do it."
- Identified and installed by Moses and by God.

Scripture Reading: Joshua 1

Point 1: Change Is Hard — Grieve, and Trust That God Moves Us Forward (v. 1–2)

- "Moses, my servant, is dead." God says it plainly: hard news, a change is coming.
- Change is hard; it takes a lot of energy to start something for 10 years and to sustain it, and there are seasons ahead that will take energy.
- Israel grieved Moses for 30 days. There should be a sense of grief, an acknowledgment that this is different.
- God doesn't leave us in that hard place: "Now therefore arise and go over this Jordan."
- God works in patterns, and His are for the sake of the gospel, foreshadowing His goodness and embedding it deep in our hearts.
- The gospel is in this verse: Moses died; arise and go into the land. Jesus will die and rise; He has a people, His church, and a kingdom is being planted. The Jordan is even a picture of baptism.
- The gospel will be embedded in everything that happens moving forward, as it has been to this point.
- Question: is the gospel tucked into every nook and cranny of your life?

Point 2: The Leader May Change, but the Promises Don't (v. 3–4)

- "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses" — a promise going back to Abraham.

- Joshua didn't have to offer a new mission or become Moses; he had to step into what God had already promised.
- Not "name it and claim it": it is stepping in fulfillment and obedience to what God has already promised. They had to step on the land to claim it.
- Question: what is the place God is asking you to step?
- The word "land" is the same word used in Genesis 1:1 ("the heavens and the earth"): everywhere we step in faithfulness, we claim land for heaven and expand the kingdom.
- Grace Chapel: everywhere we step, we bring the kingdom of God into that place, for the peace of the city, the joy of all, and the reconciliation of families and marriages. When people of Jesus step into a place, we bring the kingdom with us; just as there was a creation, there is a new creation.

Point 3: God's Presence Goes with Us (v. 5)

- "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you."
- Joshua knew the giants, the fortified cities and the villainous people, and God still said no one will stand against him.
- The same "heavenly resources" that backed up Moses back up Joshua.
- A comfort to Alex, to the elders: the same God who called Jake into this place will lead in the next steps and the next season.
- "I will not leave you nor forsake you": God will hold on tight and never walk away (the person falling off a cliff and being held on to).

Point 4: Three Charges — Be Strong and Courageous (v. 6–9)

Charge 1 (v. 6): Be strong and courageous to lead people into their inheritance

- "Strong" means holding on to God as He holds on to you; together there are bold works.
- "You shall cause this people to inherit the land."
- There is a weight in this. Jake has been carrying a weight for this church; it is being transferred. We all inherit it to a certain extent, but Alex and Crystal will hold it differently. We remember that with honor and with prayer.

Charge 2 (v. 7–8): Be strong and very courageous — hold to the law

- "Be careful to do according to the law… Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left… this book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night."
- Holding to the law means loving the Lord with all your heart and loving others as yourself.
- Grace Chapel: Scripture will be the standard. We will go to the Word, soak in it, share it, meditate on it, and not apologize for its convictions, while living them in a way that honors God and others. Not a compromising people, but a people who stand firm in the faith; when we slip and fall, we'll see that.
- Success and a prosperous life come from living according to God's word. It doesn't mean life is easy; it means we are most alive.
- Most of our brokenness is inherited by stepping away from the law. In heaven there is no brokenness, only restoration ("my job won't exist in heaven"). Why not embrace it now?

Charge 3 (v. 9): Be strong and courageous — do not be frightened or dismayed

- "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

- God reminds Joshua of His presence once more, like the end of Matthew: "I will be with you even to the end of the earth."
- The person may change, but God's promises stay the same; His presence is always with us, and His purposes are always true and forever.

Point 5: The Church — Weird, Hard, and Loved by Jesus

- Church can be weird; it will do hard things and may hurt your feelings, but Jesus still bled and died for it because He loved it.
- Ephesians 3:10: "Through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places." The church is what God uses to demonstrate wisdom to the angels.
- When we live in harmony, step into what God has for us, live according to the word, hold each other in love, face hard things, and are strong and courageous, we show the wisdom of God to the demons and the angels of heaven.
- For all who have church issues: let's be wise, and show the angels how it works. That is what we want to do over the next two years.

Conclusion: God Will Complete the Work

- Philippians 1:6: "He who began a good work in you is faithful to complete it."
- The work started in a room, in a heart and a moment with Jake and others, and has been sustained to this place.
- God will complete this work for however long Grace Chapel stands, no matter who the face is or who the title is, because it is God's work and God's mission.