* **Series Slide**
* Today, we are going to begin a series of messages through the Old Testament book of Joshua.
* In light of the horrendous and heinous events that took place in our nation’s capitol this past week- Joshua is going to hit home.
* It's a book about the passing of leadership from one leader to another.
* It's a book about the unity of a nation when division is on the doorstep.
* It's a book filled with violence…and misunderstandings of power and the way it should be used.
* It contains people acting in prideful self-preservation…and it also shows the beauty and hope of humble repentance.
* It deals with the harsh and sometimes confusing judgment of God…and also his baffling kindness and patience.
* During a week…and honestly a entire year.., when we feel worn out, helpless, wondering what in the world is going on and how in the world we can keep going… God has a message for us in Joshua.
* **“Be Strong and Courageous…Do not be afraid or discouraged for the Lord your God is with you”**
* And in a time where many people are confused about who will save them- Well, Joshua literally means “God is my salvation”
* Be strong and courageous. God is our salvation.
* No immoral political leader.
* No pastor.
* No parent.
* No child.
* No doctor.
* No lawyer.
* No sports team.
* No political party.
* No president.
* No vaccine.
* No, none of those will be our salvation.
* Be strong and courageous. God is your salvation.
* **Before we continue- I’d like to lead us in a prayer for our country.**

This has been an exhausting week…month…year.

If you feel that way- you have a lot in common with the people of Israel at the beginning of the book of Joshua.

They’ve been walking in circles in the desert for 40 years. In fact, they've been seemingly making no progress for 40 years.

When Moses led them out of slavery in Egypt…they did a ton of dumb stuff that not only delayed their arrival in the promised land…but it cost human lives.

They complained. Blamed Moses. They took for granted God’s presence and love. They didn’t want to listen to his prophetic calls for them to repent. They built a golden calf and worshipped it because it was something they could see- a quick fix- while they had to wait for Moses to bring them God’s Covenant. And then- they called the Golden Calf YHWH. They bowed to it. They justified their self-soothing orgies with the Holy name of the great I AM given to Moses. They attributed God’s salvific acts to that cow. They put YHWH in bed with their evil practices.

And then people died. Violently.

But if not for Moses intercession for the very people who betrayed him- all might have been lost. Yet, they were saved.

But then- it kept happening. The ingratitude. The cynicsm and doubt of God. The entitled demanding of God to fit into the way the Israelites thought he should act.

They were thirsty. Complaining about God’s lack of care. Thinking only of themselves. AGAIN. And Moses had enough. And in what comparatively seems like a minor act of losing one’s temper- akin to honking the horn too long at the guy who won’t go on the green light- Moses strikes a rock in anger and is himself- banned from ever entering the Promised Land.

The previous book ends with Moses looking with longing and hope into the Promised Land- while he delivers a final speech to the survivors- those who will enter and settle there. And then he dies.

Now,- Israel finally arrives…and the hard stuff is just beginning. Now they have more battles ahead of them. More enemies in front of them.

Kind of feels like all of us who were hopeful that we would flip the calendar on New Year’s Day and we’d put 2020 and all of her problems behind us- and then we’re watching news coverage of dangerous, arrogant, violent fools pouring into the capitol.

The anger. The fatigue. The confusion. The WHERE IS GOD IN ALL THIS? Who is going to lead us? On whom can we depend on?

Where is our salvation? Where is our rest?

And to that, God answers both Israel…and all of us…with the book of Joshua.

* **Joshua 1:1-18**
* **After the death of Moses the Lord’s servant, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’s assistant:**
* **2 “Moses my servant is dead. Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I am giving the Israelites. 3 I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses. 4 Your territory will be from the wilderness and Lebanon to the great river, the Euphrates River ​— ​all the land of the Hittites ​— ​and west to the Mediterranean Sea. 5 No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you.**
* **6 “Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their ancestors to give them as an inheritance. 7 Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. 8 This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. 9 Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”**
* **10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, 11 “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get provisions ready for yourselves, for within three days you will be crossing the Jordan to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you to inherit.’ ”**
* **12 Joshua said to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, 13 “Remember what Moses the Lord’s servant commanded you when he said, ‘The Lord your God will give you rest, and he will give you this land.’ 14 Your wives, dependents, and livestock may remain in the land Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But your best soldiers must cross over in battle formation ahead of your brothers and help them 15 until the Lord gives your brothers rest, as he has given you, and they too possess the land the Lord your God is giving them. You may then return to the land of your inheritance and take possession of what Moses the Lord’s servant gave you on the east side of the Jordan.”**
* **16 They answered Joshua, “Everything you have commanded us we will do, and everywhere you send us we will go. 17 We will obey you, just as we obeyed Moses in everything. Certainly the Lord your God will be with you, as he was with Moses. 18 Anyone who rebels against your order and does not obey your words in all that you command him, will be put to death. Above all, be strong and courageous! ”**
* **Title Slide- “Closeness. Humility. Unity. Faith.- What It Actually Means to Be Strong & Courageous”- Joshua 1**

In that passage you hear the command over and over- be strong and courageous. The passage shows us what it means to be strong and courageous.

Strength and Courage come from being close, humble, unified and faithful.

CHUF if you need an acronym.

You know what the word Chuff means? At least in American English. In British slang, it's the part of the body you sit on.

But in America, you can look it up- to CHUF means to move with a regular sharp puffing sound. It's an onomatopoeia. It's the sound a steam engine.

Remember the Little Engine That Could? I think I can. I think I can.

Ever the optimist in a world of pessimism and doubt. The little engine chuffed along at her own risk in or to deliver all the toys and gifts to the children on the other side of the mountain.

That little engine is not a bad picture of Being Strong and Courageous- using her power to serve others.

In a world of evil, anger, disappointment and discouragement- Joshua chapter one defines Being Strong and Courageous as having CHUF.

**1) Strength & Courage come from being relationally CLOSE to God.**

* + Intimacy with God is one of the last things that comes to mind for most of our society when we talk about strength.
  + Intimacy…closeness- is a weak word.
  + Because if you let someone close- they are bound to hurt you. And if you can be hurt…you are vulnerable.
  + But there are 2 things that God says to Joshua, that show us the importance of this intimacy with God as it relates to strength and courage.
  + **V 5**
  + God says to Joshua, after Moses has died, and Joshua and all of Israel is wondering- was God’s presence with us only dependent on Moses.
  + Remember- Moses is the one who asked God to spare the people when they worshipped a Golden Calf.
  + Moses is the only one who could go into the tabernacle.
  + Only Moses could ascend Mt. Sinai to receive the Law.
  + SO maybe it was over.
  + But God comes in a assures Joshua- “I’m not leaving.”
  + Remember during our Deep Roots//Good Life series a couple of months ago we defined attachment love as when you are confident the person that loves you is not going to leave you.
  + There is a new way you relax into that person. You become vulnerable. You aren’t afraid of rejection so you have a new level of openness and honesty. AND- you are much more likely to receive what that person has to say- even if its hard to hear- because you know they are speaking to you in love.
  + Notice that God is ENCOURAGING Joshua. He is putting COURAGE IN him. he says- “No one is going to be able to stand against you. BECAUSE of my WITHNESS. Because I am WITH you.
  + Its not- “Joshua- prove that you are strong and courageous and then I’ll associate myself with you.”
  + No- Its RECGONIZE I’m with you. AND I WANT TO BE WITH YOU. I will not abandon you…and from that you can be sure that no opposition will stop you.
  + You cannot be strong and courageous. Fearless and Resilient- without knowing the attachment love of God. The I will not abandon you…and you cannot lose- love of God.
  + It is THE MEANING of LIFE. To know and love God and realize you are deeply known and loved by God.
  + It is how the universe began- and it is how the universe will one day go on forever. Withness. Brothers and Sisters together with God.
  + The New Heavens- New Earth that Jesus is brining is described in terms of a marriage- not a war. The world is hurtling toward attachment love with God- get in on it now. The Kingdom of God is at hand.

Great- how?

* + Well- here’s where to start. Not to be a broken record…but…
  + **V7**
  + Read your bible
  + God says to Joshua- carefully observe- or put into practice my instructions. Don’t turn from it. Don’t make excuses for not doing it. Don’t get sidetracked.
  + Because in my covenant law- I have given you the secret to life. What it means to be a human…and what it means to know and love me.
  + **V8**
  + Then he says- meditate on it day and night. Read it. Repeat it. Think about it. Work it into your daily life.
  + Literally he says- don’t stop speaking it.
  + That word meditate means to verbally process it. To Mutter. To verbally think it over.
  + That’s what we have been teaching you to do at City Church for years.
  + Why?
  + Because no matter what you want to define being a disciple of Jesus as, or how you want to say a person gets close to God…you absolutely cannot separate that from knowing and practicing God’s word.
  + I have never known a single person whose life has exemplified closeness to God that does not receive almost DAILY sustenance from meditating on the Bible. Period.
  + Your life is busy. I get it.
  + You don’t like reading. Fine.
  + This is difficult to understand- wait until we get to the Canaanite conquest in a couple of weeks.
  + The point is- none of that will change this one truth- **You cannot deeply know God without deeply knowing and trusting his word.**
  + Anymore than my wife and friends could deeply know me without hearing my words or trusting what I said was true.
* **Back to 1)**
  + If you want help with this. Go back and listen to the Deep Roots//Good Life series we finished in November on the app or get some of those resources there to help with meditating on Scripture.
  + Ask your community group leader for help.
  + Listen to the podcast where we do this meditation a couple times a week. Get on our app and follow the daily Bible Reading Plan.
* You aren’t NOT ENGAGING Scripture because you don’t have enough resources. You probably aren’t engaging it because deep down you believing its as vital to your prosperity and success as God says it is.
* And that means- that you won’t know God as intimately as you could.
* And that means- fear and discouragement are on the doorstep.
* It means you are way more likely to get swept up into politics as your savior- rather than asking your SAVIOR how you should apply his word to your politics.
* Read and Meditate on Scripture. Your intimacy with God depends on it…because you can’t know God without it.
* …and that brings me to a short but important second idea…

**2) Strength & Courage come from being humbly submitted to God as your King.**

* + There is no separation in this passage from meditating on Scripture and obeying Scripture.
  + Its not, read the stories…and appreciate what they are saying, but then you do you.
  + There is an inherent humility to knowing God that always works itself out in submitting your ways to his ways. In letting what he says command what you say and do.
  + **Micah 6:8**
  + The Prophet Micah puts it like this.
  + He says- there is only one way to walk with God.
  + That is HUMBLY.
  + You can’t have a closeness to God and then also have an unchecked Ego.
  + You can’t walk with God and parade yourself as better than everyone else. It is IMPOSSIBLE.
  + To act pridefully- to sing your own praises- to pridefully ignore what Scripture says because you are so sure you can’t be wrong about anything…
  + To villianize and demonize those you perceive to be your enemies and slander them online or in real life- to do all you can to be sure that you are up front and on top- means you are not walking closely with God.
  + There are 2 parts to what Micah says here.
  + That word faithfulness is the word HESED. Remember- that is the Hebrew for attachment love. LOYALTY. GOD’s kind never giving up on us.
  + That’s one wing of walking humbly with God.
  + The other- DOING JUSTICE.
  + Its an action-
  + Its carrying out the commands of God to show off his goodness and righteousness in the world.
  + Those are the 2 wings of walking humbly with God.
  + Loving his attachment love- knowing that even though you don’t deserve it- he sticks with you and deeply loves you.
  + AND- humbly putting aside YOUR WAYS- YOUR AGENDA- and bringing his WAYS and HIS AGENDA into the world so that many can flourish and know his attachment love.
  + Listen- you cannot get close to God arrogantly.
  + Because you cannot be close to God without repentance.
  + And you cannot repent without saying, “I’m wrong.”
* **Back to 2)**
  + And you won't bring beautiful justice and flourishing into the world UNTIL you start by humbling yourself under the WORD OF GOD.
  + He must be your king. He must call the shots. Do not twist his word to your agenda- trust him to bend your agenda to his word….and as God tells Joshua- That will takes strength and courage.
  + Did you notice that?
  + **V 7**
  + The first thing we think about this command to be strong and courageous is typically about confronting and outside enemy.
  + And those are waiting FOR SURE, for Israel in this promised land.
  + But note- in the STRONGEST of these be strong and courageous commands- the one that has the modifier VERY- its not about someone on the outside.
  + God says- Be strong and Very courageous TO OBSERVER ALL I HAVE COMMANDED YOU.
  + In other words- the enemy is as much within- as they are waiting for you in the land I promised.
  + Your pride. Your hubris. Your “I’ll get this done the way I want to do it” is going to challenge you as much or more than the Canaanites will.
  + That word Courageous means Resilient.
  + We typically think of Courage has happening in a moment of time. Like running into a fire to save the kids.
  + Or stepping up to confront a bully.
  + And those are courageous moments, no doubt.
  + But when we think about Resilience- or its opposite- discouragement…it seems to apply more to boring bits of life.
  + Will you choose to humbly submit to God as your King when your anger rises about your perceived political enemy who just typed that thing on Facebook that you totally disagree with?
  + Will you make the boring everyday choice to remind yourself that you are not more righteous than your political opponent?
  + THAT- is the courage- not to veer to the right or the left- AMEN?
  + Actually- what a TIMELY word- right here in this text- DO NOT TURN FROM GOD’S WORD to the RIGHT or THE LEFT.
  + I’m not saying Joshua knew about American politics in 2021 and wrote that as a secret CODE….but I am saying that is FAITHFUL application of this text.
  + **James 1:21-22**
  + **Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, humbly receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.**
  + **22 But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves**.
  + Humbly- let God be your King- not your politics. Let Scripture determine how you vote. Don’t let your voting loyalties determine how you understand Scripture.

**3) Strength & Courage come from being unified under God’s adoption.**

* + A quick Israel history.
  + A big part of Israel’s story up to this point is that they are the only people on Planet Earth at this time that God calls “My People”.
  + In fact, Israel is referred to in the OT as God’s Son.
  + And over and over in the OT, God underscores the fact that he didn’t choose Israel to be his people because they were stronger than other nations, or because they looked better, or were superior in any way.
  + Listen to what Moses told them just before he died.
  + **Deut 7:7-8a (end at “loved you)**
  + **The Lord had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But because the Lord loved you**
  + You know what that is right?
  + Its adoption.
  + An orphan. Ignored and helpless. And then a Father with power and resources, because of his great love says “You are mine”.
  + That’s adoption.
  + That idea is reinforced by Israel’s prophets.
  + And those who are adopted by the same parents become a family.
  + And families are to be loyal to one another and unified under the same name.
  + Ok, a little more background.
  + There are 12 tribes in Israel. 12 different groups. When Israel was moving closer to the Jordan River- 2 and ½ of those groups (The tribe of Gad, Reuben, and half of the Manasseh tribe- said, “You know, this is real nice land over hear on the East Side. I think we’ll just settle here. You think that would be OK Moses?”
  + **Joshua 1:14-15**
  + And Moses, with God’s blessing says- OK. Yes- but when it comes time to take the Promised Land- you have to fight WITH and for your brothers and sisters.
  + So Joshua, knowing how important both obedience to God’s word is, and as a leader how important it is to unify God’s people…says, we’re not splitting up over this. Just because your homes are on the other side of the river, doesn’t mean you don’t risk and sacrifice to help your brothers and sisters have a home and rest.
  + In fact, you’ll see all through the book of Joshua- that unity is a PRIME commodity. Something that is constantly being pressed upon.
* **Back to 3)**
  + Church, its no different for us.
  + In the New Testament- if you are in Christ- you are an adopted son and daughter of a Father that loves you with HESED.
  + And disunity threatens the church at every turn.
  + That’s why letters to NT churches are replete with commands to be unified under our common adoption by God.
  + Listen to this example from **Ephesians 4:1-6**
  + **Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received,**
  + **2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit ​— ​just as you were called to one hope at your calling ​— ​ 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.**

**Back to 3)**

* + Church, do NOT let the partisan politics divide the family God has made here. Do NOT let partisan politics re-define WHO is in the family of God and who is Not.
  + God defines that by his love.   
    It is God who adopts and calls righteous, and says, “This is my child whom I love”.
  + Neither a MAGA HAT nor a BLM shirt define who is and is not in the family of God.
  + And listen close to me. Because walking humbly with God means DOING JUSTICE. It means not just reading the word, but obeying it…there are going to be some differing opinions on how we live that out.
  + For example- A faithful Christian ABSOLUTELY must value human life. Do Not Murder is a NON-negotiable.
  + But- two faithful Christians may disagree about HOW to protect human life.
  + One may think, we need more good guys to have guns. This will keep those who seek to hurt with guns in check.
  + Another faithful Xian may think, no- we need stricter gun control laws to help protect human life.
  + Both of those Xians should be able to come to the Lord’s table and fellowship and rejoice under our common adoption. AND they should be able to peacefully discuss and seek to help one another understand.
  + But JESUS LEAVES US NO ROOM for dehumaninzing that brother or sister with slander. And when you dehumanize with slander- yes even on social media platforms- that disunity and sin translates into real life….and it becomes that much easier to hurt, maim, threaten, or murder. And we saw that at our nation’s capital this past week. And we’ve seen it in our streets. We’ve seen peaceful vigils become violent riots.
  + Church, we have GOT to be united under Christ. Our world needs a picture of people who can disagree on some issues politically- yet deeply love and fellowship with one another under our common adoption.
  + We will be Strong and Courageous as we let the LORD bind us together under his love.
  + We will be fearful and discouraged as we let our politics push apart to hate one another.

Finally-

**4) Strength & Courage come from having faith in God to keep his promises**

* + The big question that Israel has for God as they prepare to go into the promised land is “Do God’s promises still apply to us, now that Moses is Dead? Will God still be with us? Was Moses our only connection to his love and presence and deliverance?”
  + God answers that question with Joshua.
  + Joshua means “God saves”.
  + And the fact that Moses is gone, and yet God still comes back to Israel and says, “Everything I told you I was going to do, I’m still going to do”- that is huge for Israel.
  + But there is a big question now for Israel?
  + Will they believe it.
  + Because their circumstances are going to say something different.
  + There are horribly evil and unrighteous people in the land of Canaan. People who will seek their lives. Nothing they are about to embark on is the result of pushing an easy button.
  + Their strength and resilience is about to be tested.
  + So will they measure God’s faithfulness on how EASY it is to obey- or will they measure God’s faithfulness by whether or not he has already delivered them from slavery, and hunger, and dehydration, and enemy in the past.
  + Will they have faith? Or put God on trial?
  + Strength and courage come not from doubting God’s promises and saying, lets see how my circumstances turn out.
  + Strength and courage comes from believing God at his word- from looking at how his love has delivered in the past- and believing that…no matter what the circumstance…that you will find HIS brand of success and prospering as you stay close to him.
  + **Joshua 1:16-17**
  + And so Israel- responds.
  + They say YES- despite the circumstances- we believe what you have said. And that faith will translate to obedience.
  + We will follow Joshua…and we know that you are with Him…and you are With us.
  + Now, here’s the thing. Israel is going to let God down again…just as they did through 40 years in the wilderness.
  + And yet, God will still see his promise through.
  + But as much as Israel believed God- they prospered. When they got fearful and discouraged- that’s when they fulfilled their own prophecy- they died.
  + This is still the way with God.
  + He simply is asking- will you believe my promise and live by it?
* **Back to 4)**
  + Did you know that Joshua is the Hebrew name for Jesus.
  + They are both Yeshua.
  + Joshua is type- or preview of Jesus.
  + Jesus is the truer and better Joshua.
  + See Jesus, is the one who not only leads us to God’s salvation…he lived a life in perfect obedience to God…and then he gave us the results of that life. Rest. Prospering and success as God defines it.
  + How does God define success- knowing and loving and being know and loved by him forever.
  + That is eternal life.
  + And because Jesus gives you his righteousness- you can have that.
  + But Jesus also takes our curse. Jesus dies for our sin.
  + **Josh 1:18**
  + Anyone who rebels against your order and does not obey your words will be put to death. Above all be strong and courageous!
  + Do those things sound contrary to you?
  + Not a great motivator to courage right? If you mess up- you’ll be put to death.
  + Well, in Jesus, we are forgiven that debt of death that we owe for our disobedience, because on a cross- Jesus died in our place.
  + **John 14:1-3**
  + **“Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.**
  + **2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also**.
  + See- Jesus is our trailblazer into the promised land. He goes before and makes the way for our rest. He didn’t stay on the other side of the Jordan- he went to the front of the battle to fight for us…against our biggest enemy- sin and death.
  + And in his closeness to his father- he humbled himself on a cross to die a shameful death- to unify a people that God had adopted through his blood…and now- by faith- you have access to his Rest.
  + **Matt 11:28-29**
  + **Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**
  + Jesus is the promised land.
  + He is where we find rest.
  + Jesus is also Joshua.
  + He is God’s salvation that leads us to that rest.
  + The only question is- will you believe him? Take him at his word.
  + When you do- when you belive Jesus died and rose again to give you rest and bring you home to your Heavenly Father….
  + Then Absolutely NOTHING can shake you.
  + **Romans 8:31-39**
  + **What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? 33 Who can bring an accusation against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies. 34 Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us. 35 Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:**
  + **Because of you**
  + **we are being put to death all day long;**
  + **we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.**
  + **37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
* Boy- that sounds like strength. That sounds like courage.
* But it only comes from getting close to God, humbling yourself under his word, making unity with his church a priority…and believing that he did what he said he did, and will come back and finish what he says he will.
* CHUF. Don’t give up little engine- There is good stuff for all the little boys and girls on the other side of this mountain.
* Be Strong and Courageous- for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.
* **Lords Supper**-
* Close.- you are my friends- intimacy of a dinner
* Humble.- foot washing
* United- We are together in this- even though you will desert me.
* Faith- Do this in remembrance- so you can believe for what you haven’t yet seen.