

# "Be not afraid"

By Tim Disney (Joshua 1:6-9)

Living in a time of uncertainty, not sure what the future holds for each one of us here today can create a certain amount of anxiety. Wanting to be confident, positive, knowing that everything will be alright with my life, the life of my family, friends and in all our financial concerns can really tax our joy and happiness.

Well, it does take courage to stand strong and true and faithful in all these trying situations, especially when challenged with feelings of fear and doubt. Hindsight tells us that we could have done a better job. This leads to feelings of despair and sometimes depression.

But, we are reminded over and over again that we, who are in the Lord, do not walk by sight but by faith. And if we walk by faith than we no longer walk in fear.

The example of the Israelites being led through the wilderness is no different from our personal lives that we live today. The question here is "are we wandering like the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of the Israelites out of fear to enter into the Promised Land.

After wandering for 40 years in the desert, a new generation is ready to enter Canaan. But first God prepares both Joshua and the nation by teaching them the importance of courage and consistent faith. The nation then miraculously crosses the Jordan River to begin the long-awaited conquest of the Promised Land. Like Joshua, we too need faith to begin and continue living the Christian life.

God is telling Joshua in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of the book of Joshua to **"Be strong and very courageous."** Verse 8. **"Do not let this Book of the Law (word of God) depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified (afraid); do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."**

Many people think that prosperity and success come from having power, influential personal contacts, and a relentless desire to get ahead. But the strategy for gaining prosperity that God taught Joshua goes against such thinking. He said that to succeed Joshua must be strong and courageous

because the task ahead would not be easy. He said that he needed to obey God's law, and constantly read and study the book of the Law (God's word). For us to be successful, we need to follow this same example God gave to Joshua. We may not succeed by the world's standards, but we will be a success in God's eyes--and his opinion will last forever.

"Be strong and courageous." Hebrew word **Chazag (Khaw-zak)** strong like a rock, confident.

Backing up to verse 6..... **"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. 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."** God said to Joshua and he is saying to you and me that if you will trust me and be faithful to my word, you will be blessed in everything you do.

In **2 Chronicles 15:2**..... **"The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. 7... But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."**

We need to be strong and courageous especially in time of prayer, when we bring our request before God. We must trust that God will always do what is best!

One of the things Joshua had going for him even before this so great of an opportunity in leading the nation of the Israelites is that he was a great listener.

**Question: Are you listening to God?**

We don't consciously and deliberately disobey God--we simply don't listen to Him.

**Oswald Chambers** puts it this way: "God has given His commands to us, but we pay no attention to them--not because of willful disobedience, but because we do not truly love and respect Him."

**John 14:15** Jesus tells us plainly..... **"If you love me, you will obey what I command."** Are we listening! The Holy Spirit is the very presents of God within us and helps us live as God wants. And if we are listening to the

Spirit's lead in our lives, then by faith we can appropriate the Spirit's power each day.

**Oswald Chambers** goes on to say..... "Once we realize we have constantly been showing disrespect to God, we will be filled with shame and humiliation for ignoring Him.

Remember the Israelites at Mt Sinai under Moses' leadership. **Exodus 20:19**..... " **They said to Moses, 'You speak with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die.'**"

We show how little love we have for God by preferring to listen to His servants rather than to Him.

Again **Oswald Chamber** expresses it this way..... "We like to listen to personal testimonies, but we don't want God Himself to speak to us. Why are we so terrified for God to speak to us? It is because we know that when God speaks we must either do what He asks or tell Him we will not obey. But if it is simply one of God's servants speaking to us, we feel obedience is optional, not imperative. We respond by saying, "Well, that's only your own idea, even though I don't deny that what you said is probably God's truth."

Am I constantly humiliating God by ignoring Him, while He lovingly continues to treat me as His child? Once I finally do hear Him, the humiliation I have heaped on Him returns to me. My response then becomes, "Lord, why was I so insensitive and obstinate? This is always the result once we hear God. But our real delight in finally hearing Him is tempered with the shame we feel for having taken so long to do so."

The 1<sup>st</sup> generation Israelites ignored God, every one of them except Caleb and Joshua. They treated God as one of their many idols with no relationship, no affection and no love. And they wandered until the day they died.

Listening to God is essential to our physical well being and our spiritual health.

Earlier I quoted some scripture from **2 Chronicles 15:2 and 7**. God spoke these words to King Asa of Judah. King Asa listened to the words of God and was blessed with 35 years of peace for obeying and trusting in the Lord. But he quit trusting God and began trusting other people. God reminded him of what he once had when he fully committing himself to God. He became angry, bitter and frustrated. 39 years into his reign Asa became afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness

he did not seek help from the Lord, but only from the physicians. Then by the forty first year of his reign Asa died.

**Closing,**

**Listening and doing**

We are reminded to take note in **James 1:19-25.....** **“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.”**

Therefore, let us remember the words of Jesus in **John 14:27.** **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you”.....** **“Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”** Amen!!!