

# Between Jericho and the Cross: An Introduction

by Michelle Flaugh



**H**ow often have we heard the phrase “Be strong and courageous”? It seems rather cliché sometimes. We say it as a means of encouragement and edification, but do we really know where it comes from? Who spoke those words and to whom? What do they mean to us today?

These words were the very charge given to Joshua when God called him to lead the Israelites out of the desert into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 31:3,7). Anointed. Called. Blessed. Joshua, being rewarded for his faithful service to God and Moses, was called to take his people beyond the desert and into their destiny.

“Be strong and courageous...Be strong and very courageous... This is my command - be strong and courageous!” (Joshua 1:6-9) Not merely a suggestion, but a directive! **BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS!**

Driven by faith, driven by trust in the Lord God Almighty, Joshua, whose name means “YAHWEH is Salvation,” took his position before God and the people of Israel and stood with God. Even when his fellow soldiers feared taking the land promised to them, Joshua, alongside Caleb, saw the vision, the promise fulfilled before it came to pass (Numbers 13:30, 14:6). Joshua had faith

that surpassed all faith as he traveled alongside the double-minded Israelites toward Canaan.

So what makes him different? What can we learn from this man who's unwavering trust in God gave hope to a nation and a will to see beyond what his physical senses could detect? What is it that set him apart?

So little is known of this man of faith but what we do know is that he believed God at His Word. To look at Joshua as merely a character in a Bible story that children sing about strips him of his rich heritage and the many lessons that can be found in the rubble at Jericho, Joshua's most famous battle.

In spite of what he was feeling, Joshua pushed on. We aren't told of the depth of his fears, but what we do know is that the Lord knew he was afraid. Why else the charge to "be strong and courageous?" It is repeated to Joshua five times! Yet, in the face of all the fear that existed around him, Joshua persevered. He walked in faith, by faith and with the favor of the Lord upon him.

Just like his predecessor, Moses, Joshua had a promise from God. But Moses allowed the unbelief of his people to overcome his faith in the great "I AM." Moses was saved to save a nation in bondage, yet he allowed unforgiveness and anger to lure him into disobedience and keep him from the Promised Land (Numbers 20: 10-12) As Moses lay on his death bed, the Lord had him pass that blessing onto Joshua, which the Lord, Himself, would repeat after Moses died. And, this time, the promise was filled with more than the land the Lord had given them, more than deliverance - the promise of God's constant presence and favor.

Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you." (Deuteronomy 31: 8, NLT)

The very presence of God had been promised to a generation. The promise of favor, of blessing, spoken over a nation of fickle souls whose beliefs changed with the wind.

We are that generation! The favor of God has been set before us and we can choose to walk in it or strike against the rock and miss our divinely appointed destiny. Like Joshua, fear encamps about us and we are swayed by our emotions and the things we can see, touch,

and feel. Yet, the very promise of God's presence has been passed onto us in a tangible, real way - a babe sent from Heaven's bosom to walk and live among us and show us the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Is truth so easily defined? Will we know it when we see it? How do we take hold of such truth and walk in the freedom of its promises? Why do answers escape us when they appear to be within our reach?

Walk with me as we seek God for the answers. Walk with me along the road between Jericho and the Cross. Come see and know that the great "I AM" still resides with His people and continues to keep His promises.