

Jesus our Joshua (4)

We Will Do It!! Joshua 1:16-18.

“What ever you have commanded we will do.” v16.

Peter said, “Yes Lord you know that I love you.” John 21:16

Years before this particular moment Joshua had been one of twelve spies who had been sent into Canaan. Forty years had past and the unbelieving generation had died.

Now both Joshua and the people had been prepared for the conquest and events before them. Joshua called the Officers together and gave them detailed directions. The people were instructed to meditate and to specifically follow the book of the law, not merely in the letter but in the spirit of it as well. v 7-8 They were not to be distracted or to turn from it to the right or left. How well do we seek guidance through the Bible today?

Jesus gave similar detailed instructions about the Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount especially in regard to loving enemies, adultery or sexual relations, divorce etc. His standard was specific. (Matt. 5:48). Jesus speaks here not of the degree of human excellence but of the kind of excellence which would distinguish His disciples and characterise His Kingdom.

Joshua was not just a raiding tribal chieftan; he was like a Field General taking orders from God. He called the officers together, gave them detailed directions and they responded. *“All that you have commanded us we will do.”* They were focused and ready to obey although they faced a perilous expedition. After Joshua conveyed God’s instructions the people shouted in effect, *“We hear you Joshua and we will obey and follow you whatever it takes.”* Peter had been enthusiastic also. Before Gethsemane he had said to Jesus, *“Even though all become deserters, I will not.”* (Mark 14:29)

In a similar way we are called on to have a single focus and allegiance to Jesus Christ in a threatening world and to bind ourselves to do what He commands us through his word. What might Jesus be calling his people to do in this period in which we live?

The Officers had a function to fulfil and as we are instructed to pray for those in authority so here the Officers prayed for their leader. v17, (1 Tim 2: 1-2). God raised a number of extra-ordinary leaders like Moses and Joshua but in these times while the church has Leaders, Pastors/Shepherds, we are all led by a risen Lord through the presence of the Helper, the Holy Spirit.

This was an exciting moment for the Israelites on the edge of a new beginning. How are we to think of the moment as we face the future of God’s unfolding plan? We may be inclined that the time of miracles in the desert have come to an end or passed away. We need to be sure that God’s time of ‘miracle’ continues. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has come to us and we live in threatening but exciting times because Jesus specifically sent the Holy Spirit to equip and lead us into the truth. (note the response v 16) We are led into the truth as we meditate, reflect, discern the times in which we live and respect God’s Word.

Only a few special leaders were empowered by the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times, but the Church was born when the Holy Spirit was poured out on all who believed on the day of Pentecost. People of the Old Testament had not heard of the resurrection but we live in a privileged time when like Israel on the verge of Canaan we stand equipped, not with sword or bow but with the knowledge of the resurrection and the indwelling presence of the Lord of Life.

The call to loyalty and surrender to Christ (our Joshua) has not diminished in any way. It is still all or nothing. The final outcome and triumph is now guaranteed. The call to enlist remains the same. *“Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”* Luke 14:27. The cross is not a sign of ease or prosperity. It stands in stark contrast to every success and extravagance the world offers. We servants are not greater than our Master. And if the Master gave His life in order to do the will of God, what will we do to follow Jesus today?

Reflection:

As Joshua faced a seemingly daunting task leading the Israelites to the Promised Land. God gave reassurance multiple times. *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”*. *“Be strong and very courageous.”* *“Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”* *“Be strong and courageous.”* *“Only be strong and courageous.”* Our faith can be just words until tested by action. These attributes don’t come from within. They come and can be claimed because the Maker of all things is in control of all things and is sustaining all things. This is why we are called to pray and in doing so to “cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Discuss Jesus final statement *“I am with you always to end of the age.”* (Matt 28:20.) How do we experience His presence?

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