



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Numbers, Deuteronomy Sermon Series

Supports Session 1: The Journey

Sermon Title: "Obedience in the Journey" (Joshua 1:1-9)

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### Connection to Session 1

We learned in this morning's Bible study that God was with the children of Israel as they traveled throughout the desert prior to entering into the promised land. Today's sermon will show us that God was still with the children of Israel as they traveled into the promised land. Since God was with the children of Israel throughout this entire time, and He is unchanging, we can rest assured that He is with us even today.

### Introduction/Opening

Some of us may have seen a bumper sticker that says, "God is my co-pilot". When we see this, we need to quickly discern that someone is in the wrong seat. God does not need to be our co-pilot; He needs to be the pilot. This may seem rather scary to us, especially if we desire to be in control. But, if we can learn to trust that He is with us, even when it is difficult, then we are more apt to walk in faithful obedience. We need not be constrained by fear.

### Outline

#### 1. God promises His presence in the journey (v. 5)

As we begin this study, we need to understand the context for the original audience. The children of Israel had roamed through the wilderness for forty years. As we learned in our group study this morning, God had journeyed with them throughout this time. Verse 1 indicates that Moses, their leader, had died and Joshua would soon take them into the promised land. In verse 5, God extended the promise that He would be with Joshua and the Israelites.

It is vital that we look at several phrases in verse 5. God articulated to Joshua twice in this verse that He would be with him and the Israelites. This was written as a factual statement. God did not say that He had *hoped* to be with the Israelites or that He *might* journey with them into the promised land. God also stated that He would neither leave nor abandon them in this journey. This too was a factual statement. They were soon to enter into a land that was possessed by others. God promised them that He would be with them every step and would not leave them at any point.

While we may not have a promised land in which to walk, we may, however, have steps in our journeys that bring about fear and apprehension. When we feel these things, we can choose to allow fear to stop us, or we can trust that the same God of the universe who promised to be with the Israelites, is the same God who is walking with us in our journey. We can allow our feelings to tell us we are alone, or we can trust that God is with us each step of the way no matter how we might feel.

## **2. We are called to walk in obedience (vv. 3, 7-8)**

*a) A walk indicates forward movement (v. 3).* We once again need to consider context as we study this vital point. Forty years prior to God speaking with Joshua in this passage, twelve spies went into the promised land. Ten came back with a fear-filled report; two said that God had given them the land and they needed to proceed. The voices of the ten won out. In Joshua 1, a new generation stood on the edge of the land with God's promise that every place the sole of their feet would tread would belong to them.

The verse "treads" indicates forward movement. If we are going to tread from our pews to our cars and then to Sunday lunch, then we must have forward movement. We cannot have the soles of our feet tread somewhere and remain motionless. While God called the children of Israel to tread into the promised land, He is calling His church to be salt and light while going and making disciples. If we are going to walk in obedience, then we must move forward.

*b) Our walk is based on God's commands (vv. 7-8).* As we move forward, we must move according to His commands. God called Joshua and the children of Israel to "observe carefully the whole instruction" of His commands (v. 7). He also said that the "book of instruction must not depart" from Joshua's mouth (v. 8).

Joshua had the written Word of God. We, today, have the Word of God and we, like Joshua, need to stay committed to following God's commands as outlined in His Word. We may be tempted to believe that we can follow new ideas or theories. Let us as a church today determine in our hearts and minds that God's Word is sufficient, and we will follow His Word both as a church family and individuals while trusting Him for the results.

## **3. We are to walk in faith and not live in fear (v. 9)**

We typically respond to fear in one of several ways. 1) We will fully engage and fight against the fear; 2) we will allow the fear to freeze us and do nothing; 3) or we will allow the fear to overwhelm us, and we will flee from it. The same God who told Joshua and the children of Israel to "not be afraid or discouraged" (v. 9) is the same God who is telling us the same message. He is with us as we stand on the truths of His Word. He will not abandon us as we strive to walk in obedience and fulfill His commands in the world in which we reside. We need not run or freeze in fear. Instead, we should engage this world with the hope of the gospel and trust Him for the results.

## **Conclusion**

The title of today's message has been "Obedience in the Journey." For some, our obedience is to understand that God is with us as we stand on His truth at home, in our schools, at work, and throughout our journey. For others, obedience can be found in setting aside fear and trusting that God will lead. The children of Israel initially feared walking into the promised land. Some today may fear getting out of the pilot seat of life and surrendering to God's direction. The children of Israel eventually walked into the promised land. What will it take for some to surrender your heart and life to Jesus as Lord and Savior? Don't let fear win—trust God and His Word. Surrender today.

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