

Preparing for Promise

Sunday Plan

SCRIPTURE

Joshua 1–2

MEMORY VERSE

Joshua 1:7; James 2:25

God calls ordinary people into extraordinary responsibility. Facing an entirely new life in a new place called for courage and leaning on God as Israel faced many great uncertainties.

Welcome & Introduction

SAY

“Imagine you’re about to step into something big—your first job interview, a major test, a tough conversation, a new school. It feels like a locked box. You know there’s something important inside, but you’re not sure how to get to it.”

ASK

“What usually makes moments like that scary?”

They’ll say: fear of failure, not knowing what’s coming, not feeling ready.

But imagine you were given a key to this locked box—but the key wasn’t like what you expected it to look like. Maybe it’s a weird-shaped key, a tiny key, or even a key attached to something random like a toy.

TRANSITION

“In Joshua 1–2, God gives Joshua a ‘key’ to courage—but it’s not strength, talent, or experience. It’s His presence. And in Jericho, God uses a totally unexpected ‘key’—Rahab—to open the way for Israel. God’s keys don’t always look like what we expect, but they always work.”

On the Threshold

Joshua 1:1–9

Teaching Points

- Moses has died and Joshua has been installed as the new leader of Israel as they are about to enter the Promised Land.
- Three times in these nine verses, God directs Joshua to be courageous and to reassure him, God promises to be with him (v.5).
- Also, God repeatedly confirms to Joshua that he will be successful in every military campaign. Victory is assured beforehand but Joshua must still follow through.

DISCUSSION

1. In what ways does God instill confidence in Joshua to be courageous?
2. As you face uncertain situations and challenges, how might being reminded of God’s presence with you instill courage?
3. God was giving the land and victory to Israel, so why did they still have to go and take it?

KEY TRUTH

Living by faith and obedience is much more than merely saying you believe God. It often requires courage to DO what He requires of us in the face of a world that is not friendly to God’s people.

Courage Can Be Contagious

Joshua 1:10–18

Teaching Points

- Godly leadership inspires willing followers. Joshua's courage and conviction compelled his people to obey and follow him as he followed God.
- As with Moses, effective leadership doesn't come from force of personality but from an unswerving commitment to the Lord.
- The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh had already inherited their land east of the Jordan, but they were still committed to fighting with the other tribes to help them take possession of their promised inheritance.

DISCUSSION

1. What qualities make you want to follow someone? Would you follow someone who didn't seem committed to the plan we were all to execute?
2. The eastern tribes helped fight battles that weren't directly theirs. What does that teach us about supporting others, even when we're comfortable?

NOTE

The demonstrated commitment to obedience and unity among the people demonstrated the kind of faithfulness that Yahweh expected of Israel as they entered the land.

KEY TRUTH

The demonstrated commitment to obedience and unity among the people was necessary to their continued success. These characteristics will always serve God's people well.

Spying out the Land

Joshua 2:1–7

Teaching Points

- Forty years before, Joshua had been one of only two spies (Caleb) who gave a positive report on conquering the Promised Land. Now he selects only two to scout out Jericho before they assault the walled city.
- The spies do not go undetected and stir up suspicion and danger. But God has placed Rahab in the exact position to protect the spies. This shows that God often prepares the way long before we see it.
- Rahab is not only a foreigner, but she is a prostitute. God often works through those that seem very unlikely sources of support.

DISCUSSION

1. The spies needed help from someone they never would've expected. How does this challenge the way we judge or overlook people?
2. Why do you think Rahab chose to hide the spies even though it put her life at risk? What might motivate someone to take that kind of stand today?
3. Read Hebrews 11:31 — Although Rahab lied to the authorities, why do you think the Bible praises her faithfulness?

KEY TRUTH

God rewards those who seek Him. Rahab made her loyalty to God clear by choosing to identify with Him and His people rather than her own culture and nation.

Risks and Rewards

Joshua 2:8–21

Teaching Points

- Rahab's confession in Joshua 2:11 is remarkable: "the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." She is affirming Yahweh's dominion over the realms claimed by every Canaanite god. A prostitute living among pagans recognized what later generations of Israel, who grew up with God, couldn't manage to hold onto. Her confession shows more faith than the 10 spies showed 40 years earlier.
- Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17) and Rahab already heard and believed in the God of the Israelites before encountering them.
- When we are introduced to Rahab, she is a prostitute living among pagans. Yet by faith God weaves her into the story of the nation of Israel and the line of Jesus (Matthew 1:5).
- Rahab's fear of God was greater than her fear of the Jericho authorities. So much so that she risked her life and the lives of her family for the salvation that only God could provide.

DISCUSSION

1. The spies promised to save Rahab's whole family. What does this teach us about God's heart for families and communities, not just individuals?
2. Much like the visible blood on the lintels and door posts at the Passover, Rahab obediently hung a scarlet cord from her window in order to identify the household to be preserved. How can we display our faith to the world today?
3. According to Joshua 2:10–11 the citizens of Jericho were terrified of Israel's God. Why should we have greater faith and confidence being His people today, than those in our world who are far from God?
4. Read Matthew 1:5 — Rahab, formerly a prostitute, is the great-great grandmother of David, and in the line of Jesus. What does this say about God's love and ability to transform lives?

KEY TRUTH

The scarlet cord functions as a covenant sign, just as circumcision marked Abraham's covenant and blood marked the doorposts at Passover. The cord itself didn't save Rahab any more than the blood on the doorposts saved the Israelites in Egypt. Rahab had faith in Yahweh and in the covenant promises He had made through the spies; the cord was the outward proof of that inward faith. We

KEY TRUTH

should be careful not to confuse the sign with the substance. The same warning applies to us: baptism and the Lord's Supper are covenant signs of real faith, not magic rituals that work on their own.

Scouting Report

Joshua 2:22–24

Teaching Points

- Encouragement Fuels Courage. Joshua had already been told to “be strong and courageous,” but now the spies bring back a message that boosts the whole community’s confidence.
- While Israel waited on the other side of the Jordan, God was already stirring fear in the hearts of their enemies and preparing the way for Israel’s future victory.

NOTE

Encouragement: the action of giving someone support, courage, hope. Literally, to have heart and not to allow fear to control one’s self.

DISCUSSION

1. Read Romans 15:4 — How do stories, such as the story of Rahab and the Israelite spies encourage us to trust God today in our modern lives?
2. Read Numbers 13:30 — 14:4? What differences do you see in the report of the Israelite spies 40 years earlier vs. this report in Joshua as they are on the edge of the Promised Land?
3. Read 2 Timothy 1:7 — What application do you see in God’s direction to be strong and courageous then vs. our lives today?
4. Can you recall a time when you were facing a troubling situation and someone’s encouragement gave you the confidence to go on?

KEY TRUTH

The command to be courageous is the most oft repeated direction from God to His people in all of Scripture. The phrase “fear not” occurs more than 100 times. In other forms some find more than 350 occasions of this sentiment.

Application & Reflection

DISCUSSION

1. In Matthew 28:20 and Hebrews 13:5 Jesus promises to never leave us. How does this promise of His presence with us in troublesome times give us courage?
2. Moses was a defender of oppressed people. When others bully or mock someone, do you find yourself taking their side or do you sometimes join in ridiculing them?

Memory Verses & Closing

Memory Verses

- Joshua 1:7
- James 2:25

Challenge for the Week: This week seek out how you be the kind of person who brings back a “good report” that strengthens someone else’s faith instead of discouraging them.

Close in prayer.