

"For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."
Genesis 18:19 NKJV



Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Classes / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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Joshua's Decision; The Resolve of Leadership (Joshua 24.15)

Great leaders are often remembered by a single statement made in their life time: Nathan Hale's "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country" or Patrick Henry's famous words, "Give me liberty or give me death." But no greater statement of leadership can be found than that of Joshua's last words to the children of Israel in Joshua 24.14-15: "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and ... choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua's decision to serve the Lord was one he had made many years before, but was now held forth as a challenge to the people. His resolve as Israel's leader can be attributed to at least three things.

First, Joshua's decision showed him to be a man of *courage*. His words were those of manly resolution and of the strength to stand alone. It didn't matter what everybody else did, whether they agreed or disagreed, Joshua would serve God. His stand was the result of the Lord's own personal exhortation, "Be strong and of good courage" (Joshua 1.6, 9).

Men often succumb to the pressures of having to stand alone. If any one ever felt the pressure of being in the minority, it certainly would have been Joshua. For very early in his life, Joshua had been one of the twelve spies sent into Canaan. When they came back, ten of them reported, the people “are stronger and we. They are like giants ... and we are as grasshoppers in their sight.” But Joshua took his stand along with Caleb and, by faith, said, “We are well able to overcome it ... the Lord is with us do not fear them.”

Many a good man may be afraid of taking such a stand because of opposition from the majority or of fear of being intimidated. For this reason, the church of our Lord today has few leaders. Sometimes men, who otherwise possess the necessary qualifications for elders, are reluctant to serve because of fear.

Fear is the opposite of courage. The parable of the talents in Matthew 25 teaches us that fear is one of man’s greatest enemies. The one talent man buried his because “I was afraid” (verse 25). The talents were opportunities given in relation to their abilities (verse 15). This brought about personal responsibility on the part of each. As has been said, “Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility.” However, where there is fear on the part of man there is often the shrinking of responsibility, no matter how much ability he may have or how great his opportunities.

Secondly, Joshua’s courage and ability to lead was based upon *conviction*. He knew that Moses was gone, but God was not! He basically said to the people, “You make your choice, but I know in whom I believe regardless of what you believe.” Joshua’s successful leadership over Israel was due to his strong conviction that Jehovah was with him. This, too, was in response to the Lord’s exhortation, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Joshua 1.5). Joshua’s faith in God had not been a blind faith, but one based upon a knowledge of what God could do. He had seen God’s power demonstrated in the ten plagues that came upon Egypt, in the parting of the Red Sea, in the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai, and in the miraculous events of the wilderness.

Ephesians 3.20 speaks of “the power that worketh in us.” And when it comes to serving God, we know, as Paul did, that we can “do all things through Christ” who strengthens us (Philippians 4.13). Every leader among God’s people today must be a man of strong conviction. His faith must rest upon a knowledge of the Word of God and his trust in God’s power must know no bounds.

Thirdly, strong conviction leads to full *commitment*. Joshua was committed to God. In the fifth chapter of Joshua, we find that he met with the captain of the Lord’s army. In reverence, he fell down on his face before the commander and worshipped, demonstrating his complete loyalty to God. Every leader today, whether in the home or in the church, must be faithfully committed to the great commander, the chief captain and shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Joshua was also committed to the people of God. He had demonstrated this commitment time and time again as Israel’s leader. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29.18). Joshua was a man with vision and purpose. In leading the nation to Canaan, he knew where he was going and what he must do. Others follow those who know where they are going and never lose sight of their goals. This is a basic requirement of effective leadership.

Joshua was committed to his family. He was a leader in his household and his resolution indicates a determination to influence his family for that which was right. Families today need husbands and fathers who are not afraid of accepting the responsibility to become spiritual leaders in their homes.

As Joshua heeded the Lord’s words of encouragement, let us do the same, making the same resolution to serve the Lord and be a leader among the people of God. “For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power” (2 Timothy 1.7). And “He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say [with courage, JB], the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Hebrews 13.5-6).

Written by; Jim Bell

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