PLEASANT SPRINGS CHURCH • SERMON • THE CONQUERING KING, PART TWELVE

Conquering Fear

Be strong and courageous — an exploration of Joshua 1:1–9

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The Conquering King, Part Twelve — Joshua 1:1–9

Preached Sunday, October 11, 2026 by Pastor Jeremy Arnold

Joshua 1:1–9 • Matthew 28:20 • Joshua 1:9 • Revelation 19:16 • Joshua 1:5 • Psalm 23 • Joshua 21:44 • Romans 8:37 • Romans 8:31

Last week it was the ground we quietly refuse to give God. This week it is the thing that keeps us from giving it. Moses is dead, the river is up, the land is full of giants — and God does not tell Joshua to feel brave. He tells him Who is going with him.

THE SERMON TEXT

Joshua 1:1–9 (ESV)

“After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, “Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

WHAT FEAR DOES

- Fear can distort our vision, leading to compromise.
- Fear sows seeds of doubt — even doubting God's Word.
- Fear can cause us to retreat.
- Fear can cause us to disobey.
- Fear can divide, because when we are afraid we begin protecting ourselves instead of trusting God and walking together with His people.

When we are afraid we often focus on the size of the giant or the enemies we face, the mountain ahead, the valley to cross, or the task in front of us — instead of the greatness of our God.

Point

Fear can be paralyzing.

JOSHUA'S POSITION

- Moses is dead.
- God is now commissioning him to lead the people.
- They are about to enter a land full of giants, where there will be war.

IDENTIFYING FEAR

Fear does not usually announce itself. It sounds like this:

- “I don’t think I can do that.”
- “What if something goes wrong?”
- “What will people think?”
- “What if I get hurt?”
- “I can’t, because I don’t know what is going to happen.”

Point & Application

We have to stop looking at what is in front of us and look to Who it is with us — Jesus.

The God who promised to be with Joshua has revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ, and Christ has promised His people:

> **Matthew 28:20 (ESV)**
> “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

GOD ENCOURAGES

Look at what God says to Joshua in verses 5 and 6, and then again in verse 9:

> **Joshua 1:9 (ESV)**
> "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Notice what God gives Joshua when fear is ahead. He does not give him a motivational speech. He gives him His Word.

- Obey God's Word.
- Turn not from it.
- Meditate on it.
- Do what is written.

Fear is conquered not through positive thinking, but through confidence in God's Word and obedience to God's Word.

We operate from the position of Christ, not in Christ.

A QUESTION

> *Why would God tell Joshua to be strong and courageous, and not to be afraid?*

Because He knows what is ahead.

The Lesson

Courage is not the absence of fear. It is trusting God in the presence of it.

FEAR AND FAITH

- **Fear** focuses on the size of the problem.
- **Faith** focuses on how great our God is.
- **Fear** magnifies the enemy.
- **Faith** magnifies God.

As we watch Joshua fighting real physical battles, we are reminded that we face a spiritual battle in the unseen that is just as real — and the same principles apply.

- The devil is powerful, but he is not sovereign.
- He is a creature, not the Creator.
- His throne and his dominion are not equal to God's.

May I remind us: God has no equal. He has no opposite. The devil is not His counterpart.

> **Revelation 19:16 (ESV)**
> "On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."

There is only one Sovereign — King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus the Christ, the Son of God.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Joshua 1:5 (ESV)

“No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.”

Psalm 23 (ESV) · Septuagint Psalm 22

“A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

DAD'S SAYING

We often ask the question, "What if?"

My dad has a saying: if a frog had wings, he wouldn't bump his butt every time he jumped.

The point I would like to make is this — God is still God.

- **What if we get a bad diagnosis?** God is still God.
- **What if we are rejected?** God is still God.
- **What if our marriages fall apart?** God is still God.
- **What about when we go through financial difficulty?** God is still God.
- **What if things get harder?** God is still God.
- **What if I don't understand?** God is still God.

God is faithful.

Where that faithfulness rests

"Our trust stumbles. Our confidence cracks under pressure. But Christ's faithfulness never failed. He was faithful in the wilderness. He was faithful in Gethsemane. He was faithful on the cross." — *Rooted in Christ: The Seed, the Blood, and the Fruit*, on Galatians 2:20 and the faithfulness of Christ.

Read Rooted in Christ →

Point

Our confidence is not in knowing what tomorrow holds, but in Who holds tomorrow.

IN CLOSING

At the end of Joshua's life there was a time of rest, when the wars had subsided:

> **Joshua 21:44 (ESV)**
> "And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands."

That is a picture of temporary rest. The resurrection of Jesus gives us eternal rest, knowing that He has overcome the power of death, hell and the grave — and that we too are more than conquerors in and through Christ Jesus our Lord.

> **Romans 8:37 (ESV)**
> "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

I want to leave you with a question to ponder. It is found in Romans 8:31:

> **Romans 8:31 (ESV)**
> "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

> *If God is for us, who can be against us? — Pastor Jeremy Arnold*

QUESTIONS TO PONDER THIS WEEK

1. The giant, or the God.
What am I measuring this week — the size of the thing in front of me, or the greatness of the One who is with me?

2. My own "what if."
Which "what if" have I been rehearsing? Say it out loud and finish the sentence: "… and God is still God."

3. The Word, not the pep talk.
God answered Joshua's fear by giving him His Word. What has God already said that I have stopped reading?

4. In the presence of it.
Where am I waiting to stop feeling afraid before I obey?

GROW FURTHER

THE CONQUERING KING, PART ELEVEN

Conquering Compromise

Last week — the ground we quietly refuse to give God. This sermon names what keeps us from giving it.

DISCIPLESHIP

Rooted in Christ

Where the faithfulness in this sermon actually rests — Galatians 2:20 and the faithfulness of Christ.

DEEP RESEARCH

Joshua 1:1–18

The commissioning this sermon preaches from, measured verse by verse in the Hebrew and the Septuagint.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9 (ESV)