

Be Courageous (*there is more to do*)

Purpose: to encourage God's people to be courageous and hold fast to the LORD, because no one will be able to stand against us when we stand for Him

How many of you have experienced God at work for you?

I hope that today's example from the children of Israel will encourage you to be courageous, because there is more to be done.

Here is where we are in the book of Joshua, chapter 23:

Jos 23:1 - Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age.

Jos 23:2 - And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: "I am old, advanced in age.

Jos 23:3 - You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God *is* He who has fought for you.

Jos 23:4 - See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward.

Jos 23:5 - And the LORD your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

So far:

- The children of Israel are in the land
- They are now a powerful presence in the land
- They have seen that God has fought for them
- But there is still more to possess and there are still enemies in the land

In so many ways, as believers in Christ we are like them today:

- We are living in western culture
- We still have a powerful presence in the UK and in other western nations
- We have seen God fight for us
- But there is still so much to be done before Christ returns

Hear what Joshua tells them, and what we can learn from it:

Jos 23:6 - Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left,

Jos 23:7 - and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause *anyone* to swear *by them*; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them,

Be courageous – courage is only necessary when there is something to fear. What did they have to fear?

- Turning aside to the right hand or to the left
- Being among the nations that remain among them.
- Serving their gods

When you are surrounded by the ungodly, it is easy to become intimidated. Look what we face today:

- There is an agenda regarding sexual behaviour
- There is an agenda regarding male and female behaviour
- There is an agenda regarding creation and the existence of God
- There is an agenda regarding religious practices

All of these are very aggressive, and to make a stance in the ways of God could cause you to be persecuted. But here is the encouragement that they received, and if God can do it for them, then He can do it for us:

Jos 23:8 - but you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day.

Jos 23:9 - For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but *as for* you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day.

Jos 23:10 - One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God *is* He who fights for you, as He promised you.

Jos 23:11 Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God.

What is God saying? Hold fast to the LORD! And what did He remind them of?

- No one has been able to stand against you to this day
- The LORD fights for you, just as He promised
- Take careful heed to love the LORD

Remember that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world:

Mat 5:13 - "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

Mat 5:14 - "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Mat 5:15 - Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house.

Mat 5:16 - Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

But what happens when we begin to cling to the ungodly?

Jos 23:13 - Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you,

Jos 23:14 - know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

If we don't keep to God's word, and if we cling to the ungodly;

- God will no longer drive them out – He is to source of our power and victory
- They will be snares and traps – they are the source of our failures and defeat

So,

- We have seen God at work on our behalf
- But there is still much more to do.
- Be courageous and hold fast to the LORD
- Don't be intimidated by the world, because no one will be able to stand against you when you stand for Him