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“Take Courage”

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

Tuesday, April 24, 7:00-7:55 AM in HHR #4

(hot breakfast provided)

Capitol Commission is non-partisan and non-denominational

As we study chapter eight in the book of Joshua, I want to point our attention to four things:

- Message of Courage
 - Message of Direction
 - Message of Dedication
 - Message of Elevation

1. Message of Courage – 8:1 “Do not fear or be dismayed”

Israel faces the Ai army, though small, Israel lost their first battle. A loss might linger, a doubt might lark, fear might cloud faith.

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (1:9)

In that God knows human nature, He inspires courage and hope; He reminds one of faith and assures one of His presence. A planned redundancy offered by God to shift Israel’s focus from the fight to the friend they have in God.

He begins the narrative in Deut. 31:6: **“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”**

At least 38 times God tells Israel’s leaders to “be strong”; to “fear not”; “I will not fail”.

Now, the declaration, “I have given them into your hand”. Once again, we are reminded that God fought their battles; and that God will fight our battles. (8:1b)

Our personal battles look different than Israel’s national battles. And, we each have battles. Relational battles, financial battles, health battles, death of loved ones and friends’ battles, moral battles and political battles.

In the midst of your battles, might I remind you, the Lord is with you, so, be strong and courageous, do not fear your foes.

2. Message of Direction – 8:3–29

The Lord gave them a strategy to ambush Ai. The Spirit and the strategy pointed them in the right direction.

“Stretch out that javelin that is in your hand toward Ai for I will give it into your hand” (8:18)

Similarly, to what Moses was told to do by God: “Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back.” (Ex. 14:38)

3. Message of Dedication – 8:30–35

- It’s all about renewing God’s covenant with Israel. It’s a repeat of Duet. 27:4–8, 12 where Moses commanded Joshua to live faithfully in the LORD’s covenant.



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- They built an altar to God in Shechem – where Abram built his first altar. Shechem is nestled between Mt. Ebal, to the north and Gerizim, to the south.
- The altar was built from uncut stones, and burnt offerings were made on it to the LORD.
- They wrote on the stone a copy of the law of Moses. The Torah is rooted in the nature and commands of the LORD.
- All Israel, leaders, officers, judges, stood on both sides of the Ark in front of the Levitical Priests.
- Half of the tribe of Israel stood in front of Mt. Gerizim, and the other half in front of Mt. Ebal.
- Joshua read all the words of the law.
- They made a covenant renewal and reaffirmation, at which time they are reminded of God’s expectations for a faithful covenantal relationship.
- Joshua reminds Israel what will happen if they obey the covenant, as well as, what will happen if they are unfaithful to the covenant. These are known as the cursing’s and blessings of the LORD.

4. Message of Elevation – 8:35

“There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them.”

In the day, women, children and gentiles were the marginalized. No power, few rights, and a low-volume voice.

Joshua elevated the lowly. The Scripture and the holy Spirit are for all. The deduction, God’s presence and promises are for all.

God sees no gender borders, God does not marginalize anyone. Society continues to marginalize select groups.

Some accuse the Christ-follower of marginalizing people groups. It is inaccurate; the Scripture demonstrates actual events in history where Jesus removed human made boundaries. The Apostle Paul affirms it:

*“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”.
(Galatians 3:28)*

We are called to give voice to the voiceless. Jesus elevates all grounded in the understanding that every person was made in the image of God.

That fact alone levels the playing field.



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Missouri

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