

Memorial Day

Tomorrow is a day of memory, known as Memorial Day.

Memorial Day is a [federal holiday in the United States](#) for remembering and honoring the people who died while serving in the [country's armed forces](#). It is different from Veterans' Day which honors military veterans who have served or are serving in the armed forces.

Someone has written,

“America the home of the free, because of the brave.”

Through the years, millions of heroes have given their lives for our freedom. Today we remember their sacrifice

Lord we thank You for those who have served in the armed services. For their example of bravery and patriotism in the face of mortal danger, we give You thanks. We honor them for their sacrificial and heroic service. Through Jesus we pray. Amen.

Moses led the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt and then over a period of 40 years he led them through the wilderness to the edge of the promised land, and then he died. Joshua had been his assistant, serving him through that period. Now Joshua was to become the leader in Moses' place.

Tozer writes,

“We cannot think rightly of God until we begin to think of Him as always being there, and there first. Joshua had this to learn. He had been so long the servant of God's servant Moses, and had with such assurance received God's word at his mouth, that Moses and the God of Moses had become blended in his thinking, so blended that he could hardly separate the two thought; by association they always appeared together in Joshua's mind. Now Moses is dead, and lest the young Joshua be struck down with despair god spoke to him with assurance, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.” Moses was dead, but the God of Moses still lived. Nothing had changed; nothing had been lost. Nothing of God dies when a man of God dies.” [A. W. Tozer, The divine Conquest]

The Lord challenged Joshua to be courageous in facing the coming battles:

No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have 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 success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

(Joshua 1:5-9)

God’s Instructions: Be focused on God’s Word, Be Obedient, Be Courageous

- God would be with Joshua
- God guaranteed victory to Joshua.
- Joshua’s part was his obedience.

J. I. Packer writes,

“A wise man has said that your Christian life is like a three-legged stool. The legs are doctrine, experience and practice (that is obedience), and you will not stay upright unless all three are there. In recent years, however, many Christian people have not kept these three together. Some have concentrated on doctrine (usually Calvinistic), some on experience (usually charismatic), some on practice (usually causes, good or less good), and the all-round Christlikeness which doctrine experience and practice together would produce has not appeared. To say it the other way round, the imbalance of our efforts to honor the Holy Spirit as teacher or lord or leader seems actually to have quenched his influence, so that amid much talk and bustle we find little life and power.”¹

Without three things the chair tips over: truth, obedience, & Christlike living.

¹ Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Christian Life*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2017), [J. I. Packer’s writing in the preface], ix.

I. Joshua's Encounter with God.

Joshua's relationship with God was the starting point. There he received his calling from God to lead the nation, and vision for service - to bring God's people into the promised land to possess it. To do this he would have to conquer fear

No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. (Josh. 1:5-6)

II. Joshua's accountability to God

Joshua was under obligation to know the truth and to obey it.

Only be strong and courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. (Josh. 1:7)

Courage and strength always come from an obedient heart.

We must know the truth, then we must obey it. Our success depends on it.

"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 success" (Vs. 8).

The Word of God plays a key role in making a leader.

Isaiah writes to God's people comparing water to himself and a relationship with Him:

¹Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
And you who have no money, come buy and eat.
Come buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

²Why do you spend money for what is not bread,
And your wages for what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,
And delight yourself in abundance.

³Incline your ear and come to Me.
Listen, that you may live; (Is. 55:1-3)

The prophet illustrates the Word of God with water:

10 For as the rain and snow come down from heaven,
 And do not return there without watering the earth
 and making it bear and sprout,
 And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;
 11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
 It will not return to empty, Without accomplishing what I desire,
 And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. (Is. 55:10-11)

God's way of blessing us is to produce a heart of obedience through the knowledge of His Word [meditating on His Word day and night]. Knowing the truth and obeying it we open the door to God's blessing. Our experience of God's blessing confirms His grace in our lives.

III. Joshua's Test of Obedience

Crossing the Jordan. God's Miracle and a Memorial.

Joshua 3:5-17 --Crossing the Jordan (at flood stage).

They left the bondage Egypt through the Red Sea on dry ground.

They left the wilderness into the Promised land through the Jordan on dry ground.

The ark of the Covenant represented God's presence with His people.

Joshua 4:1-7 Elders gather stones

First, a memorial of stones from the middle of the Jordan were taken to the other side to set up a future memorial to commemorate God's stopping the Jordan so the people could cross over on dry land. (4:5-7)

Then, twelve stones were set up in the middle of the Jordan where the priests were standing. (4:9)

The ark speaks of Christ. Christ was the Ark.

The stones in the riverbed speak of identification with Christ in death.

The stones on the west bank speak of identification with Christ in resurrection.

Joshua 4:19-24 --The Memorial: Twelve Stones from the middle of the Jordan.

When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying,
 'What are these stones?'
 then you shall inform your children, saying,
 'Israel crossed this Jordan on dry ground.'
 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you
 until you had crossed, just as the Lord your God had done to the Red Sea,
 which He dried up before us until we had crossed;
 That all the peoples of the earth may know
 that the hand of the Lord is mighty,
 so that you may fear the Lord your God forever."

The importance of Courageous Obedience

God's words to Joshua;

"...Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed,
 for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (v. 9)

The people's response to Joshua as their new leader:

They answered Joshua, saying,
 all that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send
 us we will go. Just as we have obeyed Moses in all things, so we will
 obey you; only may the Lord your God be with you as He was with
 Moses...**only be strong and courageous**" (Josh. 16-18).

David said to his son Solomon as he was commissioning him to build the temple,

"Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for
 the Lord God, my God is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake
 you until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is
 finished" (1Chron. 28:20).

Jesus commissioned His disciples to go and make disciples,

And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying,
 "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go
 therefore and make disciple of all the nations, baptizing them in the
 name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to
 observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even
 to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20)

We are in our promised land.

In it are the souls of Christ's sheep who are waiting to hear His voice.

Jesus spoke of them,

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;
and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish;
and no one will snatch them out of My hand.” (John 10:27-28).

Jesus commission his followers to go into all the world and make disciples.
Our promised land isn't property, it's people, His sheep.

Isaiah concludes in chapter 55 with these words

“¹²For you will go out with joy
And be led forth with peace;
The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you,
And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.
¹³Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up,
And instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up,
And it will be a memorial to the Lord,
For an **everlasting sign** which will not be cut off.”

Myrtle: fragrant, flowering hardwood, used in both perfume and pharmaceuticals.
Symbol for peace, joy, and justice.

Cypress: very hard, durable timber, contains a lot of resins and therefore lasts for centuries. Used in the construction of King Solomon's temple

Thorns – not useful for fruit, difficult to handle.

Memorial: praise, beauty and usefulness.