

Joshua & Peter: The Sufficiency of God

Lesson 2: The Sufficiency of God's Promise

Key Verse: 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.~Joshua 1.5

Contrary to conventional wisdom, and likely personal preference, once Moses had died, Joshua was promptly commanded to cross the Jordan and take possession of the land “now” (V 2). This suggests that God could not wait to fulfill His 400-year-old promise! God’s fulfillment of His promise throughout Israel’s history reveals God as **Sovereign**. That He uses His imperfect people as leaders to do so reveals Him as **All-Sufficient**. *Sovereign God, thank You for showing us who You are through history. Thank you for being clear in Your commands, while never neglecting the hardships and circumstances that challenge us in obeying Your commands. May You increase our knowledge of You as we study personally, and as we come together in our groups. Amen.*

Joshua 1.1-18 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, **2** “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. **3** Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. **4** 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.

5 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. **6** Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. **7** 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.

8 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. **9** 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.”

10 And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, **11** “Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.’”**12** And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, **13** “Remember the word that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.’ **14** Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, **15** until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

16 And they answered Joshua, “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. **17** Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! **18** Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”

Diamonds:

Though this sixth book of the Bible is called “Joshua”, the story of Joshua’s life does not begin in the book bearing his name. Rather, Joshua’s story begins in Exodus and continues in Numbers and Deuteronomy. In the 27 times he is mentioned prior to the book of Joshua, Joshua is revealed not as having a charming personality, challenging struggles, nor as innately remarkable. Rather, Joshua is a faithful, successful soldier under the leadership, mentorship, and tutelage of Moses.

1. Choose one story about Joshua to read from the options provided. Write your observations about the

story so that when your group comes together, everyone will learn more about Joshua's backstory: Exodus 17.8-15; Exodus 24.12-18; Exodus 32.15-35; Exodus 33.7-11; Numbers 11.22-30; Numbers 13-14.38 with Deuteronomy 1.19-39; Numbers 27.12-23; Deuteronomy 3.21 with Numbers 21.32-35 & 32.28-33; Deuteronomy 31.1-23; Deuteronomy 34

2. What stands out to you about Joshua's backstory? How do you think God prepared Joshua to be the leader of God's people as they finally entered the land God promised to Abraham (Genesis 17.8)?
 - a. Review your list of responsibilities and answers to questions 1-3 from lesson 1. How has God been developing you, your skills, and/or your circumstances to equip you to fulfill His responsibilities, or "calls", that are most challenging (Lesson 1, Questions 2 & 3)?
3. Verses 3-5 are promises of God to His people. God promises to give all the land He promised to give them more than 400 years ago (V 3,4), to overcome their enemies (V 5a), and to be with Joshua (V 5b). God reinforces these promises by mentioning and referencing His history with Moses. Why do you think God did this when commissioning Joshua?
 - a. Scan 1 Peter 1 noting the references to Christ "sufferings". Why do you think Peter writes about Christ's sufferings to encourage Christians toward perseverance?
4. Before Joshua commands and instructs "the officers of the people" (V 10), God finishes His commissioning of Joshua with several clear instructions and assurances. What instructions and assurances do you find in verses 6-9?
 - a. Which of the instructions stands out to you and why?

Deity: All-Sufficient¹~God has granted us everything we need for life and godliness through knowing Christ and trusting in His all-sufficient promises (1 Peter 5.10).² No problem, whether emotional, physical, or spiritual, is too big for our God. If we learn to take refuge in Him and lean on Him alone for strength, then we can face the most extreme crisis in confidence because God is with us, and He is sufficient (Psalm 46).

But God does not insulate us from problems. Rather, the Bible teaches that God is our help in times of trouble, acknowledging that God's people are not exempt from trouble. Psalm 46 and Hebrews 11.35-38 list much trouble and terrifying circumstances God's faithful believers have had to face. In fact, Hebrews 11 is a brief review of much of the hardship experienced by God's faithful servants. Their faith in God as all-sufficient is their hallmark, not God "blessing" them with health, wealth, and pleasant circumstances, as we often desire as

¹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/psalm-46-our-sufficient-god>

² <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-2-our-all-sufficient-resources-christ-2-peter-13-4>

God's favored servants. As then, so now trouble will strike the godly as well as the ungodly.

But God is the believer's refuge, relief, and comfort in all circumstances. In fact, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, God's strength is made perfect in His daughters' (His people's) weakness (2 Corinthians 12.9)! His protection and strength are immediately available the moment we turn to Him (Psalm 46.1).

5. Note that God uses the past tense to His promises in His commissioning of Joshua (twice in V 3, once in V 5), shifting them to guarantees. How does this expand your understanding of God as All-Sufficient?

6. How do you resolve, or understand, the tension of God blessing His people with success, His good favor, and good things, while His people also suffer from disease, distressing circumstances, stresses, unjust hardships and more?

Doctrine: Sovereignty of God~God is sovereign, which means God is in control of His universe and determines the outcome of all things according to His own wise purpose. He has absolute authority and rule over His creation (1 Chronicles 29.11-12; Psalm 47.7).

Nothing is outside the scope of God's rule (Ephesians 1.11). He controls and guides all events for His glory and for our good (Romans 8.28-29). God does not exercise His sovereignty capriciously but only in such a way as His infinite love deems best for us (Isaiah 38:17)³.

God does not adjust His plans according to the events of human history nor does He wait to see what man will decide before He decides what He will do, though He does respond differently when people pray or do not pray, and when people obey or disobey. As Max Lucado⁴ explains, "God's sovereignty doesn't negate our responsibility. Just the opposite. It empowers it."

God's decrees govern history (Daniel 4.34-35; Acts 2.23; 17.24-27). This includes the calling of those who will be saved by Him (Romans 8.29-30; Ephesians 1.4; 1 Peter 1.2). Knowing that God is sovereign gives us a fuller understanding of all other doctrines and gives comfort and security in difficulties and temptations (Romans 8.31-39). Additionally, God's people are secure in their trust in Him with all earthly circumstances, even in death (1 Corinthians 15).

7. How does Joshua's command and instruction to God's people (V 10-15) reveal that Joshua believes God as sovereign?

8. Joshua led the conquest of Canaan for over 7 years, yet the people only occupied a small section of the total land that was promised! We will study why that happened throughout this year (spoiler alert: the people disobeyed). The third paragraph of this definition addresses this issue. How does understanding God as sovereign encourage you to fully embrace "your responsibility", and "empower" you (Max Lucado's quote)?

³ Bridges, J., *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts*

⁴ Lucado, M. *You'll Get Through This: Hope and Help for Your Turbulent Times*

⁵ Boice, James Montgomery, *Joshua, An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989) pgs. 9-26

⁶ Jackman, David, *Joshua: People of God's Purpose, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014) pgs.15-31

Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer: Write out the instruction and assurance that stood out to you from verses 6-9. This is found in our answer to question 4a. Mark through all the pronouns (you, your) and replace them with your name. Read it aloud. What did you think when you heard your name tied to God's instructions and assurances? What impacted you, and what will you do?

Lecture Outline:

Aim: God's sovereignty guarantees His faithfulness.

- I. Joshua's Commission (Joshua 1.1-9) **T1:** God-given strength and courage equips believers to trust Him and obey His Word.
 - a. How does God's promise that "He will never leave you or forsake you" help you trust Him more?
 - b. Which of God's glorious covenant promises have helped you endure when life frightens or dismays you?
 - c. How are you moving forward in obedience to God's Word?
- II. Joshua's Command (Joshua 1.10-18) **T2:** God-given strength and courage equips believers to successfully fight spiritual battles.
 - a. In which area of your life are you still refusing to obey God's Word?
 - b. How might that refusal affect your success in fighting spiritual battles against the world, your flesh, and the devil?
 - c. How is your failure to successfully fight those battles keeping you from fully possessing all God has given you?

Joshua 1.9 Prayer: "O Sovereign LORD! You command me to be strong and courageous. You command me to not be frightened or dismayed. I know that I cannot do this apart from You. O God, You have declared that you are with me wherever I go. You sovereignly reign over everything that happens or does not happen. And You promise to never leave me or forsake me. You are the All-Sufficient God! I want to walk in complete obedience to Your will. I want to live to the praise of Your glory this day and every day."