

First Baptist Church, 10-16-16 AM Notes
"Qualities of a Life Worth Following"
Joshua 24:15
#10 in Series "A Vision Fulfilled"

1 Corinthians 11:1 (KJV) "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

1 John 1:9 (NIV) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

By definition, a person who is discipling another person is a leader because the disciple is following the discipler as he or she is following Christ.

I. The Preparation for Joshua's Leadership

A. God Used Suffering to Prepare Joshua

Exodus 3:7, 9 "The Lord said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings...Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.'"

1 Peter 5:10 "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

B. God Used Submission to Authority to Prepare Joshua

Matthew 25:21 (ESV) "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'"

Joshua 1:7 "Only be strong and very 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."

C. God Used Disappointments to Prepare Joshua

Hebrews 6:12 (NIV) "We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."

Colossians 4:14 "Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas."

Philemon 1:24 "Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers."

2 Timothy 4:10 "for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica..."

II. The Characteristics of Joshua's Leadership

A. Joshua Chose Courageous Obedience

Joshua 1:6a "Be strong and **courageous**..."

Joshua 1:7a "Only be strong and very **courageous**..."

Joshua 1:9a "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and **courageous!**"

Joshua 1:18b "...be strong and **courageous**."

Joshua 24:15 (NIV) "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Acts 4:31b "...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness."

B. Joshua Followed a Careful Plan

C. Joshua Practiced Continuing Perseverance

D. Joshua Was Consumed with Glorifying God

Joshua 3:10a "Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite.'"

Joshua 4:23-24 "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."

Joshua 24:26-28 (NIV) "And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the Lord. 'See!' he said to all the people. 'This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the Lord has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God.' Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own inheritance."

First Baptist Church Powell 10 16 2016 AM

Sermon 10: Qualities of a Life Worth Following

Series: A Vision Fulfilled

Joshua 24:15

Thus far in our study from the book of Joshua, we have focused on principles that relate to how we fulfill the vision that God has given to this church to pour out our lives to make disciples. Those disciples we are

to make may be in our own home, in our neighborhood, in our school, in our workplace, in West Africa, East Asia, Kenya, Salt Lake City, or South Asia.

Discipleship begins when a person is saved by faith alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. Discipleship continues as we continue in an ever deepening walk of following Jesus. We have emphasized in almost every message in this series that discipleship is helping another person follow Jesus, but I want to add something very important to that simple and true definition. The discipler (the one doing the discipling) is not just a dispenser of truth; the discipler is one whose life must exemplify the truth. An effective discipler can say with the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1 (KJV): “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”

Can you say that to your children, to your spouse, to those you work with or go to school with? Perhaps this is the biggest obstacle some are dealing with in making disciples. When we say, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ,” we are not speaking of sinless perfection; we are talking about a person who as a pattern of life follows Christ. In following Christ, we stumble, we sin, we fall short, but when we do we deal with the sin God’s way – we repent, and manifest that repentance by confessing our sin. 1 John 1:9 (NIV): “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” If our sin was against another person, we also confess to them and ask their forgiveness.

In this last message from Joshua, I want to focus on the life of the disciple maker. We have said multiple times that every Christian, wherever that Christian is in his or her spiritual maturity, can disciple others. When it comes to knowledge of the Bible, you just have to know a little more than the person you are discipling. But in saying these things, I am speaking of maturity and Bible knowledge, not of a disobedient believer. Can you truly say to someone who is a new or immature Christian who is willing to spend time with you to study the little booklet, *Discipleship Basics*, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ”?

In this message, we will emphasize that the one who would disciple another is a leader. You may not have what the world would call leadership abilities, but every Christian can be a leader in discipling another believer if that Christian can say, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” One of the simplest definitions of a leader is this: “A leader is a person who has someone following him.” By definition, a person who is discipling another person is a leader because the disciple is following the discipler as he or she is following Christ.

In the Old Testament sense of the word, Joshua was a discipler. When he laid out the challenge we read in Joshua 24:15, he was challenging the people to follow him as he followed the Lord. In this final message in the book of Joshua, I want to look at Joshua’s life that was so effective in leading Israel to follow the Lord. I am convinced that we will see many qualities that will guide us in being fruitful disciple makers.

I. The Preparation for Joshua’s Leadership

When God chooses to accomplish something through a man or woman, He prepares that man or woman for the task. Many times that preparation takes decades. When you look at Joshua’s life you can see how God was preparing him even while he was a slave in Egypt. If you are a Christian, you need to know that God doesn’t waste your trials. He causes or allows circumstances in your life to equip you for what He has prepared for you.

A. God Used Suffering to Prepare Joshua

Joshua was born into slavery in Egypt. He knew what suffering was. We read in Exodus 3:7, 9: “The Lord said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings...Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.’”

It seems that for God to greatly use us He first chooses to let us go through some times of trial to get us ready. 1 Peter 5:10: “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His

eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.” Suffering, when submitted to as being allowed by God, equips us to minister to and indeed disciple others. Just this last week, I was told of a woman in our church who is going through a horrific trial and getting with another woman who has gone through it. There is some real discipleship going on in that relationship, though they probably neither one thinks of it as being discipleship.

Suffering in and of itself does not guarantee that we will become better through it. Some people get bitter through suffering! When suffering (at whatever level) is a motivator to ask for, and by faith receive God’s enabling grace, it becomes a tool to mature us and equip us for discipling others.

B. God Used Submission to Authority to Prepare Joshua

Throughout Joshua’s life, he matured in his walk with God through submitting to authority. God matures us and prepares us to be used by Him through putting us under human authority and teaching us to trust Him to work through that human authority. God has delegated authority in four different realms on earth. God has delegated authority in the home, government, workplace and church. All of these areas have limited authority that is under God’s full authority. For instance, when your boss, your government, your church leaders, or your husband, or parents, tell you to do something that directly contradicts a command or a prohibition from God through His Word, you should disobey the earthly authority and obey God rather than man.

Having given that exception, it is God’s will that we submit to the authorities in these four areas. Submitting to authority matures us and equips us to trust God. We must learn to obey those in authority even when we may not fully agree with them and trust God to work through them. Joshua was Moses’ assistant and the leader of Israel’s Army for forty years while they were in the wilderness. Never once do we see Joshua refusing to obey Moses’ orders or being disrespectful to Moses.

There were two rebellions against Moses. There was the rebellion of Korah and the rebellion of Moses’ own sister, Miriam. Joshua stayed true to the one God had put in authority over him – Moses. God matures us and teaches us to trust Him to change the heart of the one in authority. We read in Joshua 1:7: “Only be strong and very 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.” As you submit to God’s authority including His delegated authority, God will entrust people who need to be disciplined to you.

C. God Used Disappointments to Prepare Joshua

Hebrews 6:12 (NIV): “We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.” Joshua had many disappointments. There were the disappointments related to the release of the Israelites from Egypt. Several times after one of the plagues, Pharaoh said that he would let the Israelites go, only to change his corrupt mind.

After a period of time in the wilderness of getting the law and learning to worship in a way that pleased God, there was the very painful issue of the spies. Joshua was one of the twelve spies that Moses sent into the land of Canaan to bring back an encouraging report of the richness of the land. Instead ten of the twelve spies brought back a negative report. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, the spies said that Canaan was too strong to conquer. As Joshua and Caleb protested and argued for believing God and taking the land, the people turned against Joshua and Caleb tried to stone them. As Israel was turned back into the desert, God announced that with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, all of the Israelites twenty and over would die in the wilderness. Try to imagine the disappointment of Joshua. All of his life he had dreamed of freedom and the land God had promised to his ancestor Abraham and now almost forty more years in the wilderness.

One of the ways God prepares His leaders, His disciple makers, is to teach them patience through disappointments. Let me make a special application to disciple making. A life of discipling others will lead to many disappointments. I cannot count the number of people that I have poured my life into in counseling (true biblical counseling is discipleship), teaching, praying for, and encouraging only to have

them go back into the world, avoid talking with me, and even turn against me. That is heartbreaking, but God uses it to teach us patience.

The Apostle Paul knew that disappointment. Let's look at just one example. He was a minor character in the New Testament, but caused Paul major heartache. His name was Demas. We read of Demas first in Colossians 4:14: "Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas."

In the letter to Philemon, Paul is sending greetings from his co-workers and he says in Philemon 1:24: "Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers."

But the last time we hear of this co-worker of Paul is in 2 Timothy 4:10 "for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica..."

In other translations, that word "deserted" is translated "forsaken."

A life poured out in making disciples will have many disappointments. The disappointments serve to purify our motives, teach us patience, as was alluded to in Hebrews 6:12, and teach us to do all that we do as unto the Lord.

God prepared Joshua for leading through suffering, submission to authority, and disappointments. Have you experienced any of those? Allow them to accomplish their maturing and equipping work in you.

II. The Characteristics of Joshua's Leadership

Remember, disciple makers are leaders. You may not be able to lead a large ministry; you may not be able to lead a business or a non-profit organization, but you can lead one other person to Christ, and then disciple them.

Allow me to take a "time out" to show you the potential of just making one disciple a year who would then make one disciple making disciple a year. There are several hundred people listening to this message in this auditorium, but let's just suppose that 200 people committed to pour out their lives in making one disciple over the next year. As a part of discipling that disciple, they would instill the vision for them to make a disciple. At the end of the first year, there would be 400 disciples (the original 200 plus the 200 disciples they poured their lives into). In year two, suppose that all 400 of those disciples said, we are making this a lifetime commitment to disciple at least one person a year and teach those we disciple to make one disciple the next year while we find a new person to disciple. At the end of year two, there would be 800 disciples. At the end of year three there would be 1,600 disciples. Let's jump ahead to year six when there would be 12,800 disciples. By the time we get to year thirteen, there would 1,638,400 disciples! I know that not everyone would follow through for thirteen years, but I wanted you to see the potential. It's not about numbers for numbers sake, but each number represents a soul that is going to spend eternity in heaven instead of hell and even more important, a soul that will be a worshipper of the one true God for all eternity instead of a rebel for eternity.

Let's get back to Joshua and his leadership. Remember that disciple makers are leaders. Let's look at several characteristics of Joshua's leadership.

A. Joshua Chose Courageous Obedience

In the very first chapter of Joshua, God commanded him to act courageously.

Joshua 1:6a: "Be strong and courageous..."

Joshua 1:7a: "Only be strong and very courageous..."

Joshua 1:9a: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous!"

Joshua 1:18b "...be strong and courageous."

To lead a disciple requires courage. There will be loving confrontations, teaching unpopular truths that are counter cultural. There are times when compassion is called for, but there are times when firmness is

called for. Sometimes we must say things that risk ending the relationship. Throughout the book of Joshua, we see the courage of this one who is an example for disciple makers. Perhaps the most courageous stand of Joshua is the stand he took in the last chapter of the book. Joshua 24:15 (NIV): “But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

This is really just an affirmation of where Joshua stood all along. Joshua is saying that there is a required decision to make; either you choose the Lord of glory, the one true God or by default you will have chosen the one called in 2 Corinthians 4:4: “the god of this world.” Like Joshua, if you are going to pour your life out in making disciples, there must be courage to obey the command for every believer to make disciples, and the courage to call out those who need discipling to make a decision to follow the Lord or follow the “god of this present world.”

Perhaps you say, “I’m sorry, but I’m just not that bold.” Neither am I in my own strength. Look what happened in the book of Acts when the Holy Spirit (the same Holy Spirit that indwells you) filled those early believers. Acts 4:31b: “...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”

B. Joshua Followed a Careful Plan

I would encourage you to study the book of Joshua. There was a well-planned strategy that was skillfully executed to take the land of Canaan; it was not a haphazard affair. First, Joshua cut across the land east to West and isolated the north from the south. Next, he conquered some of the stronger nations in the south and then moved to the north. When the major opposition was dealt with, they divided the land among the tribes and each tribe was to conquer their allotment in the Promised Land.

A person who just drifts with the current and changes with every new wind that blows will not be an effective leader and certainly not an effective discipler. Joshua had clear direction from the Lord. The Lord instructed him to take the land of Canaan and then the Lord gave Him the details of carrying out that plan. Because Joshua followed the Lord, he wasn’t sidetracked by trivialities. The discipling relationship must be flexible, but that doesn’t mean that there is no plan. The key is flexible plans.

C. Joshua Practiced Continuing Perseverance

Nothing could stop Joshua. When he experienced defeat at Ai, he admitted his failure, repented, sought the Lord for what to do next, and then and then went back to Ai and defeated this wicked enemy. In chapter 9 Joshua foolishly made a treaty, or a covenant, with the deceitful Gibeonites without seeking the Lord, he repented of his prayerless decision and with integrity honored the treaty even though it was made on false pretenses.

A godly leader – discipler is not the one who is always right. Successful leaders are those who when they fail repent, learn from their failure, and keep on courageously leading, discipling, and following the path God has put them on. It may be that there are some who are reading this message who think that God could never use you to disciple another person because of things in your past. I am here to tell you that if you truly repent, the grace of God will restore you and use you in other’s lives more than you could imagine.

D. Joshua Was Consumed with Glorifying God

Throughout the book of Joshua, we find Joshua focusing on giving God the glory He is due. When he led Israel across the Jordan, His focus was on the glory of God – Joshua 3:10a “Joshua said, ‘By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite.’” When the people were safe on the other side, Joshua said in Joshua 4:23-24: “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.” Throughout Joshua’s life, there was the consuming concern that God would be glorified. At the end of

Joshua's life, it was a concern for God to be glorified that consumed him. He said to the people in Joshua 24:26-28 (NIV):

And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the Lord. 'See!' he said to all the people. 'This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the Lord has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God.' Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own inheritance.

Joshua refused any glory aimed at himself and throughout the book deflects all glory to God. That is a quality of a person who is a godly leader, and especially a discipler.

Conclusion

If we would obey God's command to make disciples, we must have a life that says to those we seek to disciple, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Who is it that the Lord is leading you to disciple?

Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the NASB.
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