



# 1 | JOSHUA 1

## OVERCOMERS

*Entering into All of Christ, our "Promised Land"*

### Outline

1. **LISTEN TO GOD** (1:1-2)  
*Hillbillies vs Sophisticated Warriors*  
Personal Responsibility  
Entering In
2. **BELIEVE GOD** (1:3-4)  
The Footprint Camp  
New Testament Promises
3. **EXPERIENCE GOD** (1:5-9)  
Experience God's Presence  
Experience God's People  
Experience God's Power in His Word  
Experience God's Peace  
*The Fear of the Lord*

### Call to Worship

Psalm 96, Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! <sup>10</sup> Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns! ... <sup>11</sup> Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; <sup>12</sup> let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy <sup>13</sup> before the Lord...

Let us worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!

### Songs

*O Praise the Name*

*Christ Our Hope in Life and Death*

*Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*

*What a Powerful Name*

*Yet Not I But Christ in Me*

## Announcements:

**WELCOME:** Welcome visitors – Welcome Flages! The Flage’s are living temporarily about 2 blocks from our church!

**LYDIA:** Lydia Hoffmeyer is moving and has a bunch of furniture to give away. If you are interested call her or see me or Pastor Mike and we can connect her with you.

**GIVING:** Last week’s offering was \$13,600. What a miracle! You can give over Zelle through your bank with no fees. We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center.

**BUDGET:** The deacons sent out a proposed budget which has been distributed via email, and we will have our annual meeting notes and voting over the email beginning Wednesday. We will also be considering taking on Ahmed and Stephanie (Mecca to Christ, International) as missionaries. We will then looking at Martin Alexander coming back as a deacon.

## Introduction

We begin a series in the book of Joshua called “Footsteps of Faith.” We’ve entitled the message: “Overcomers.” Joshua is a leader from the tribe of Ephraim. They are going into the Land of Promise to settle their inheritance. The way they go in, is they have to go in together. It’s like the Marines – they leave no one behind.

In the book of Exodus and Numbers, we get the pre-story. Joshua is 80 years old. The last 40 years he’s been in the wilderness. But **now he is chosen to take God’s people** into the Promised Land. They are all overcomers in the Lord. Like the New Testament says: “we are more than conquerors” in the power of our Lord.

The book of Joshua is one of entering in, not only to the Promised Land, but pressing into God. My hope for this study is that we will enter into God’s presence. We will begin to see what God has for us. One of the things I love about this passage is that the Lord speaks to Joshua. I need God to speak to me. YHWH speaks. He speaks to us. He wants Joshua to enter into the land. The way they enter in is stunning and thrilling. I was there in Israel just last week where these opening chapters took place. God speaks to Joshua and God speaks to us.

The scene opens in the territory of Moab, east of the Jordan, across from Jericho, where the people of Israel are camped (see Num 33:48–50; 36:13). Moses has died and his helper Joshua is now in charge. The Lord tells Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan into Canaan. He says that he will keep the promises he made to their ancestors and give his people the whole land. But his promise to be with Joshua has a condition; Joshua must study the Law and obey all its commands, and in this way he will be assured of the Lord’s help in all that he undertakes.<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. LISTEN TO GOD (1:1-2)

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Joshua 1:1-2 | After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, <sup>2</sup>“Moses my servant is dead. Now

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<sup>1</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and Barclay Moon Newman, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Joshua*, UBS Handbook Series (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1983), 10.

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.

### *Hillbillies vs Sophisticated Warriors*

There's so much here. God had a land for Israel that was massive with a very sophisticated group of warriors. The Canaanites and the Hittites were not thugs. They were an advanced people group with iron weapons and iron chariots.

For you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they are strong (**Joshua 17:18**).

Were the Canaanites depraved? Yes. They worshipped many gods: Baal, Dagon, Asherah the "Queen of Heaven," Moloch, and many others. Most of these gods were linked to fertility and success. Some of them included human sacrifice.

The Canaanites were later known as the Phoenicians, and they were people of the sea. Their influence was far and wide, even influencing the myths of Greek polytheism. In short, these were depraved, but people with sophisticated technology for their time. Their new weapon, the chariot revolutionized warfare. They were unbeatable.

Israel on the other hand had nothing as far as technology. They came to the battle with only their trust in the Lord. That's a good place to be.

### **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

God says it. You can't depend on the last generation to have faith for you. You have to have a living personal faith in the living God for yourself.

**Joshua 1:2** | "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.

Moses and all the previous generation is dead. It's time to experience God personally and uniquely for this new generation. It's not enough to listen to the stories of the past generation. Where are your stories of God breaking into the impossible?

**Moses may die; God's promise lives on.** There is the passing of an era yet the endurance of the promise. The Lord's faithfulness does not rely on the achievements of men, however gifted they may be, nor does it evaporate in the face of funerals or rivers.<sup>2</sup>

The people of Joshua's day were to enter into the Promised Land. We've got a Promised Land better than Israel. Our inheritance is Christ himself. He says to us: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5).

### **ENTERING IN**

Have you entered into the Promised Land of Christ, or are you still in the wilderness of sin? Are you born again? Have you touched the hem of Jesus' garment? Is he the center of your universe, or just an add on?

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<sup>2</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *Joshua: No Falling Words*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 17-18.

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## 2. BELIEVE GOD (1:3-4)

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Joshua 1:3-4 | Every place that **the sole of your foot** will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. <sup>4</sup>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.

Joshua believed God. His whole life, he waited on the promises of God. God had given that promise of the Promised Land to the children of Israel. “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given you, just as I promised...”

This promise is identical to what God gave Moses in Deuteronomy 11:24-25. From the Jordan to the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea – It’s all the place where God writes his name. It’s the land of Israel.

God promised Joshua that “every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you” (1:3). God later says, “I swore to give this land to your fathers” the Patriarchs (1:6). In other words, this is about God’s integrity. He has promised to be gracious and good to unworthy sinners. Let’s believe him.

They were to enter crossing the “great river” – the River Jordan. The most direct route from Egypt to the land of Canaan would *not* involve crossing the Jordan River. However, the Israelites had earlier forfeited their right to enter the land directly when they embraced the spies’ discouraging report about the impossibility of taking the land (Num 13–14).<sup>3</sup>

Joshua knew that when God promises something, there’s nothing impossible for God. So when they finally crossed the Jordan and set up camp at Gilgal, the very walls of their camp were formed in the shape of a footprint.

### THE FOOTPRINT CAMP

They believed God’s promise (“every place the sole of your foot will tread...I have given you,”) so much so that whenever they made their camp, which they called “Gilgal” they fashioned it in the shape of a foot. In ancient Mesopotamia, property was transferred from one person to another by the former owner lifting his foot from his property and placing the new owner’s foot on it at the same time a deed was drawn up. Thus, the action with the foot symbolized a legal property transaction. The Hebrew term translated as “tread” in **verse 3** relates to the setting of one’s foot on territory or objects in order to take ownership.

Indeed, later God calls them to cross the Jordan on dry ground. As soon as the priests foot touches the water, the Jordan River parts. It’s the same place in the Jordan where John the Baptist baptized Jesus. And they were to set up twelve stones there as a memorial. The Bible says: “those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal” (4:20). Gilgal means “roll away” because God had “rolled away the reproach of Egypt” from the people. It is memorialized by the 12 stones they set up at each camp to remember God’s promise.

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<sup>3</sup> David M. Howard Jr., *Joshua*, vol. 5, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 76.

Archeologists have found six Gilgals discovered thus far throughout the land that are in the shape of a foot or a sandal dated to the time of Joshua.<sup>4</sup> According to two Professors (Adam Zertal and Dror Ben-Yosef) of the University of Haifa, “The ‘foot’ structures that we found in the Jordan Valley are the first sites the people of Israel built upon entering Canaan and they testify to the biblical concept of ownership of the land with the foot.”<sup>5</sup>

Until God’s people got to Shiloh, they would use the Gilgal sites as gathering places for their national feasts, including Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, and Feast of Weeks (Pentecost, Giving of the Law). Before they set up the Tabernacle at Shiloh, they would meet in the footprint at Gilgal. There was an altar there built upon the twelve stones. That altar is there today at the first Gilgal. Another place was Mount Ebal (8:30-33). That altar was just recently discovered (2004).

What I’m saying is, Joshua and God’s people believed God in a profound way. What God says, he will do. Every single word. Every jot and tittle. He will do it. You can trust him!

### NEW TESTAMENT PROMISES

If we would believe God is gracious, he would pour out the heavens for us. What does this promise mean to the New Testament Christian?

The Promised Land is a picture of the Christian life. We are promised everything in Christ. We are “heirs with God and co-heirs with Christ.” You have everything you need for “life and godliness” “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence (2 Pet 1:3).

The children of Israel had made excuses not to enter the land 40 years earlier. But now they are ready to enter. The only way this is possible is for them to believe God.

Do you believe God to sanctify you? I want you to name the hardest part of your life: the area you may have a besetting sin.

Let me ask you a question: Are you living the Christian life in all the power and grace that Jesus promised?

If you’re married: does your marriage reflect Christ?

Do your words reflect Christ?

What is it that you want to get rid of, but you feel powerless?

What is it that you know you need to do, but you’ve lost the sense of God’s grace?

Married men and women, you can and must treat your spouse with kindness and grace. Your words seasoned with salt to edify the hearer.

Stop living in the wilderness. Believe God for the Promised Land. It’s your inheritance.

We have so much more than Israel of old. We have Christ and the entire cosmos. What are you waiting for?

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## 3. EXPERIENCE GOD (1:5-9)

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<sup>4</sup> John Black. *Footprints of Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, 2013), web article accessed 31 Jan 2018. <https://int.icej.org/news/special-reports/footprints-ancient-israel>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

There must be a determination to follow God in obedience. It takes courage. God says, “be strong and very courageous” (vs. 7). Where does that courage come from? It comes from fearing God and knowing him. We experience God and we trust him and fear him and fear nothing else. Listen to what God says to Joshua. What was God’s secret to abiding courage? It is God’s abiding presence.

### EXPERIENCE GOD’S PRESENCE

**Joshua 1:5** | 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.

God says, “Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you” (1:5b). In the New Testament, these words are attributed to Jesus. He says, “I am with you always” (Mt 28:20), and “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb 13:5). God’s presence is the only thing that can satisfy you. “In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psa 16:11). Knowing God rips out all the idols from your heart. God satisfies where nothing and no one else can.

God says to Joshua, you are an overcomer. You are a conqueror. You will always have the victory because I am with you. “No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life” (1:5a). No king or warrior would ever be able to stand in victory over Joshua. We too as Christians are “more than conquerors through him who loved us”. We are overcomers. Our enemies are the world, the flesh and the devil. They will not have dominion. They do not have to enslave you as a Christian. Sin will not have dominion over you. You say, “That’s a great idea. What’s the secret to overcoming sin?”

It’s the abiding presence of Jesus. Remember Jesus says in John 15:5,

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing (Jn 15:5).

### EXPERIENCE GOD’S PEOPLE

It’s God’s presence, but there’s something else that gives us courage: God’s people.

**Joshua 1:6** | Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

They couldn’t do this alone. They had to go into the promised Land all together. That’s how the Christian life is. You can’t do this alone. You must not isolate. You must not escape from life. You must bring your problems and sins to your brothers and sisters.

### EXPERIENCE GOD’S POWER IN HIS WORD

There is a courage that comes from the power of God’s Word. You want to be an overcomer? You need to meditate on God’s Word. You need to constantly counsel yourself in God’s Word!

You will not have success and victory without a personal commitment to the authority of God’s Word in your life. Do you read the Bible? Do you memorize and meditate on it? Without it you cannot have victory. You cannot live the overcoming life without a constant



**meditation on the Word.** You will have no courage to walk in faith unless you are saturated in God's Word.

**Joshua 1:7-8** | 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. <sup>8</sup>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.

You want power? Look at Psalm 1.

**Psalm 1:2-3**, The blessed man's "delight is in the **law of the Lord**, and on his law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

You want power? It comes through living by faith through **God's Word** and Spirit. Constant, careful absorbing of the Word of God leads to obedience to it. Lack of study results in lack of obedience.<sup>6</sup>

The Lord explicitly tied the obedience of faith to success (v. 8b). The God who had promised to give the Israelites the land would not do so apart from living out their faith in obedience. The experience of their fathers forty years earlier gave grim testimony to the importance of obedience.

We will not get far in our Christian discipleship by listening to God's Word but **never acting on it**. Remember the words of Pastor James in Jerusalem.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing (**Jas 1:22-25**).

You want power? It comes through surrender to God's Word. Meditate on God's Word. Mutter it to yourself over and over again.

### EXPERIENCE GOD'S PEACE

**Joshua 1:9** | 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.

My daughter asked me if it is safe to be a missionary. "Is it safe to be a missionary in China?" she asked. Being in the center of God's will is the safest place to be. It doesn't mean we won't suffer, but we are right where God wants us to be. So there's nothing to fear.

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<sup>6</sup> Davis, *Joshua*, 19.

Martin Luther used to define faith as saying, “Yes, this is for me.” You have to look at all the Word of God as applying to you.

That is the lesson we are being taught here, as Joshua was. We are called to say yes to God’s resources—his grace and power, his constant presence—and appropriate them to the exact point of our conscious need.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Fear of the Lord*

You must not let fear control you. You are called to be a courageous overcomer. There ought to be an excitement about the life of faith. Do be frightened or dismayed. God is with you wherever you go. That’s the fear of the Lord.

**Proverbs 1:9**, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

### **Conclusion**

Let us take the footstep of faith in our prayers. Transformation, power, and God’s presence all begin on our knees before we take even one footstep of faith.

God wants you to live an overcoming life. Sin should not be dominating the Christian. If it is, you have to ask first, “Am I really a Christian”? And if you are a Christian, then you need to access the presence and power of God right now in Christ.

Stop living in the wilderness. Enter in to all the promises you have right now in Christ.

The way forward is in the fear of the Lord. Is Jesus Christ awesome and amazing to you? Do you tremble because of the love he has demonstrated to you?

There may be some here who need to be bold and courageous for Christ. You’ve not been trying to reach the world, but maybe the world is reaching you. Are you evangelizing the world. We are called to do that.

**Mark 16:15**, “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

Some of you need Christ yourself. You need to be saved. Jesus says, “Come to me and I will give you rest.”

Some of you need to come forward for baptism. You’ve come to know Christ, but you’ve never confessed Christ openly before his church. That’s an important part of your journey into God’s promises.

Some of you need the accountability of church membership.

Others of you need the accountability of fellowship. If the only time you see the people of Living Hope is at church, you are in trouble. We are forever family. We need to be constantly discipling and ministering to each other.

Illustration: The Old Testament Christians were to move into the Promised Land, but for us today, Christ is our Promised Land.

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<sup>7</sup> David Jackman, *Joshua: People of God’s Purpose*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 29–30.



All the promises of God are Yes and Amen in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20).

Are you abiding in Christ? Has Christ made his home in your heart and life. Is it clear that Christ is living in you? Is there any area of your life that is unconquered by Christ? Get some help. Get some discipleship and accountability.