

New Chapter – Same God

Joshua 1:1–6

Scripture Reading

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them." (Joshua 1:1–6)

Devotional Reflection

A Season of Transition

I'll never forget when my family packed up everything we owned and drove across the country to begin a new chapter in life. For years we had dreamed of adventure—Alaska was always at the top of the list. We watched TV shows about it, imagined homesteading there, and even made serious plans. But when the time finally came, God redirected us. We ended up in Texas instead.

That transition was both thrilling and heartbreaking. We were leaving behind lifelong friendships, the church that shaped us, and the comfort of the familiar. There were tears and fears, but also a spark of hope. As I drove across state lines I was reminded: life transitions are a strange mix of sorrow and excitement, loss and anticipation.

That's exactly where Israel stood in Joshua 1. Their great leader Moses was gone. A new leader, Joshua, was stepping up. And the Jordan River—an uncrossable barrier—stood between them and the Promised Land. It was a moment of uncertainty. But God gave them four anchors to hold onto—anchors that are just as steady for us today.

1. Look Back (v.2a)

"Moses my servant is dead..."

God didn't ignore the grief of His people. He named it: Moses, the faithful servant, was gone. Looking back with gratitude matters.

Think of flipping through an old photo album. Memories make you smile and sometimes bring tears. They remind you of where you've been, the people who shaped you, the lessons learned. But photo albums aren't meant to chain us to the past—they're reminders of God's faithfulness that prepare us for what's next.

In your life, looking back might mean acknowledging the mentors, pastors, parents, or friends who invested in you. Their influence matters. But we don't live in the past. We honor it, we thank God for it, and then we move forward.

Truth to Hold: Gratitude for the past fuels faith for the future.

2. Step In (v.2b)

"...Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them..."

Notice God's words: "you and all these people." The call wasn't just for Joshua—it was for everyone.

Transitions in faith are never spectator sports. God calls each believer to step in. Israel had to pack belongings, gather food, and prepare hearts for battle. Everyone had a role.

That's still true today. The work of God in your community or family isn't just about pastors, leaders, or "the strong ones." Every member of the body of Christ is called to step in—praying, serving, encouraging, giving, and showing up with unity.

Think of the farmer who prays for rain. One just folded his hands and waited. The other prayed—and planted seed. Which one lived by faith? Faith is always active.

Truth to Hold: God's mission for tomorrow requires everyone's participation today.

3. Stand On (vv.3–4)

"Every place where you set your foot I will give you, as I promised Moses."

Transitions test what we're standing on. Israel could have put their hope in Moses, in past miracles, in organized camps, or in their own strength. But God reminded them: the future isn't uncharted—it's promised ground.

We're often tempted to stand on slippery stones:

- **Personalities or leaders** – "If we just had the right leader, everything would be fine."
- **Traditions or past successes** – "It's always worked this way before."

- **Programs or resources** – “As long as we have enough money or structure, we’ll be secure.”
- **Personal effort** – “If I just try harder, I can make it.”

But these stones slide out from under us. Only God’s promises are solid ground:

- We are God’s children (Romans 8:16–17).
- Our future is secure (1 Peter 1:4).
- The Holy Spirit is God’s down payment (Ephesians 1:13–14).
- Christ has already won the victory (1 Corinthians 15:57).
- We are never alone (Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20).

Think of crossing a river on stepping stones. Some wobble, some are slick, some sweep you downstream if you trust them. But firm stones carry your weight safely across. In the same way, only God’s promises can hold the full weight of your soul.

Truth to Hold: Our confidence doesn’t rest in people, traditions, or resources—but in God’s unchanging promises.

4. Go With (vv.5–6)

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you."

This is the greatest promise of all: God’s presence. Leaders change. Seasons shift. But God Himself goes with His people.

Think of a child on the first day of kindergarten. The room feels huge and intimidating, but courage comes when mom or dad walks in holding their hand. In the same way, we step into new seasons with courage—not because the future is easy, but because God Himself is with us.

Transitions are less about “Who will lead me?” and more about “Who walks beside me?” And the answer for every believer is the same: Christ Himself.

Truth to Hold: Our courage doesn’t come from who leads us, but from Who walks beside us.

Reflection Questions

1. When you look back at your past, what are some ways God has been faithful? How can you thank Him for those memories without clinging to them?
2. Where is God asking you to “step in” right now instead of waiting passively for someone else?
3. What “slippery stones” are you tempted to stand on—people, traditions, resources, or self-effort? Which promises of God can you lean on instead?
4. How do you personally experience God’s presence in uncertain seasons?

A Prayer for Today

Lord, thank You for being the same yesterday, today, and forever. Thank You for the leaders, mentors, and friends who have guided me, and for the ways You have provided in the past. Give me courage to step into Your calling today—not as a spectator, but as a participant in Your mission. Teach me to stand on Your promises instead of trusting in unstable ground. And most of all, remind me that I am never alone. You go with me, You walk beside me, and You will never leave or forsake me. Help me to be strong and courageous because You are faithful. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Challenge

This week, take one practical step of obedience that reflects “stepping in” rather than standing back. It could be signing up to serve, making a call to encourage someone, giving generously, or sharing your faith with a neighbor. Whatever it is, choose to act—not because you’re strong, but because God is with you.