

17.06.18 Evening service

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[0 : 0 0] let's turn back to Joshua chapter 1 as we do let's ask for the Lord's help as we come back to his word Heavenly Father we thank you for the word that is open before us we thank you that we don't have to come up with our own ideas we don't have to dig around for philosophies that are fresh and trendy but that will pass with ourselves we thank you that we have your word which is inspired by the Holy Spirit and will endure for all time we thank you for the promises of God given to Moses and to Joshua we thank you for the promises of God that were given to David the psalmist and we thank you that these promises remain promises that we can grasp by faith still tonight we thank you that the Lord will keep our souls we thank you that we are preserved from all the ill that sin and Satan and death and hell would seek to press upon us we thank you that our souls are secure in Christ and we pray Lord that the promises of your word and the truth of your word which we meditate upon

Lord that you would help us to believe that you would help us to trust that you would help us Lord to put our full weight upon all that you give to us and you ask us to stand upon we pray Lord that you'd forgive us for the times that we dragged off into ways of thinking which are not your ways or your will we pray that you'd forgive us when we feel something of the age and the generation that tells us that we should not believe we are constantly bombarded with people who do not take your word seriously forgive us if we lose confidence at times help us Lord to remember that this is the living word of God and that you have changed so many lives through this and you continue Lord to change lives day by day across the nation we thank you that within this word is the good news about Jesus Christ an amazing message that we could never make up ourselves the wonder of the fact that God the God of heaven and earth would come to this world and determined to die in our place so that we could be forgiven and that we could know everlasting life so that our souls could be kept

Father we pray that we would not take for granted your word that we would not become over familiar with the gospel but that we would be amazed as we meditate upon the truth that is before us day by day so help us Lord we pray as we lift our eyes to the things of heaven we pray for the help of your Holy Spirit we pray Lord for that freedom for that liberty of the assurance that the Holy Spirit is at work amongst us and with us and within us and we ask Lord that you would open up our hearts to all that you have to say to us hear our prayers, take away our sin we ask it in Jesus name, Amen I always like it when the children have gone through to Sunday school and I can hear, not very much but I can hear just wee echoes of the choruses that they sing and sometimes I recognise these choruses from years gone by because they stick these short choruses that the children learn and they sing they stick with us

I was reading through this chapter this week again and my mind went back 30 years to Aberdeen and on a Saturday night we used to go out to something that we called Camp Club and basically what you would do all evening is you would play football and there was a tuck shop so for me it was just absolute perfection you could play football all night and I had enough money to go back and forth buying Mars bars and cans of coke and that was the evening we spent two hours playing football and sweating buckets and then at the end of the evening there'd be a short talk, just ten minutes and there'd be half a dozen choruses so we'd sing the choruses and the one that came back to me this week I won't sing it, much to my girl's relief but the line that was repeated in the chorus was this one

Kingdoms may rise Kingdoms may fall And nations refuse to heed God's call but the word of the Lord endureth forevermore I can just still hear it going round and round and round Kingdoms may rise Kingdoms may fall Nations refuse to heed God's call but the word of the Lord endureth forevermore And that's a commentary that we could take and apply to to all generations That's a

message that we see and we learn and we learn generation after generation and it's a commentary that that sticks and it applies to the the passage that we're in this evening Joshua chapter 1 we see here again as we've read through the text it begins with the death of Moses Moses was dead that's the opening line of the book after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord we thought last week about the the huge impact that death would have had on the people [6 : 35] Moses was such an amazing leader there was none like him they'd never known anyone like Moses before they had such leadership through him and now he was dead and so many people would have been saying what comes next how can we go on how do we go on what comes next Moses is dead but the fact was that the word of the Lord is still enduring one of the commentators says we need to recognize that God is the constant one in this story people come and go leaders come and go but the Lord and his word remain forever God is the constant one in your life and mine God is the the constant one going through history it's his story people come people go some make a massive impact most of us less so but no matter how huge the personality no matter how big a print they leave on history they go but God and his word and his purposes his plans they remain and they progress the promise that God made to his people that we could go back to Genesis 12 and read for the first time a promise made to Abraham is still enduring Abraham had risen up and he had fallen down Moses as we've read he rose up and he fell down but the word of the Lord the promises of God they were enduring 1 Peter chapter 1 and verses 24 and 25 say this all people are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field the grass withers and the flowers fall but the word of the Lord endures forever and this is the word that was preached to you the fact that we are here tonight the fact that we are here tonight is testimony to that we are here this evening thousands and thousands of years after these words were written we are here far removed thousands of miles away from the location and the context into which these words were written and we could track through history and see attempt after attempt to try and suppress and burn and ban and bury this book we have heard year after year we hear it more so now than ever attempts to belittle and ridicule this book this gospel and yet this book still remains on the best seller list across the world and has done through the generations this book has been read more than any other book across the world this book is the testimony that relates to so many lives that have been transformed why is that?

it's because it's the word of God and it contains the promises of God it contains the good news about Jesus it endures forever we will rise and we will fall but this book God's word will endure so the first thing to really take on board tonight I think is that we are to be we are to be confident in the Bible in an age where we are constantly being bombarded with propaganda to say don't believe this don't listen let's be confident in the Bible let's not lose confidence in the promises of God let's not lose confidence in the purposes of God life sometimes seem chaotic our country can look shambolic at the moment but

God's promises and his purposes continue so don't be dismayed don't lose confidence in God and his promises and his purposes let's kind of get more to the story of the text now last week some of the the children from City Scott went to the rural sports did any of you go to the rural sports one or two of you might have gone to the rural sports and I was hearing about that at the school assembly in the middle of the week and one of the events that one of the years did well in was the relay what do you do with the relay how do you do the relay can you remember how that race goes what do you have in your hand for the relay you have a baton don't you so you've got the track and you're running around the track but you're not running the whole way you have a baton in your hand and you're on the first section there's somebody waiting for you and they're waiting for you and you run up to them and you hand it over and they grab it and they do the next split and somebody else does the next split and somebody else does the next split and you're all running to try and get to the next point to ultimately get to the finishing line now you can see that's kind of what it looks like here boys and drugs

God had called Moses to do a job to lead his children his people and he had done a stretch and he'd he'd led them the path that God had marked out for them and now Moses was dead he died but God takes the baton and he hands it over through Moses to Joshua and calls Joshua to run and calls Joshua to trust in God's promises and to lead God's people as he called them to and I said this kind of to the boys and girls this morning I'm going to say it again tonight God uses many people in his work in working out his purposes there's lots of different runners in the relay of faith so be willing to run like Joshua be willing to run like

[13 : 46] Moses nothing brings a smile to Cunas face like Emily running along there it's lovely to see the wee ones boys and girls you listening to me just now all of you have a job to do in God's team all of us have a job to do we've all got a stretch that God wants us to run so be willing to run remember we saw the stadium this morning all these people they're sitting down just watching God doesn't want us to be just watchers he wants us to get involved he wants us to run the Christian race there's no unemployment in God's government no one who's not given a job there's no minimum age for working for God you can be too young to work in Harris House you can be too young to work in Briny Shop but you can't be too young to work for God there's no minimum age and there's no maximum age you're never too old to work in the

Lord's service there's no retirement age think about the greatest revival that we've ever known in these parts we think about that revival and we read the history of it how does it trace back what what's the cause of that well ultimately it's God but who does he use in the early stages of that revival it's not young slick preachers it's a few old ladies who are gathered in a house to pray and ask him to do a work in that area no one else can see them but God can see them and he hears them and he uses them as they pray to do a massive work for him so boys and girls and botox and calliox let's be willing and available to work for

God he uses many many different people in the working out of his purposes but let's be aware as we do that although he uses many people there's only one saviour there's only one saviour Moses had done a very important job but he wasn't the saviour and Joshua was just on the cusp of doing a very important job but he wasn't the saviour and when he died God's work would go on just as when Moses died God's work went on and we might do lots of jobs for God he might ask us to do lots of different things but we're not the saviour I can't save anyone you can't save anyone God's work will continue when you and I drop and stop breathing there's only one saviour and his name is boys and girls what's the saviour's name yeah

Jesus God God the son there's only one saviour and his name is Jesus and he has done all the work to save us he lived for us he died for us he rose he finished the work of salvation so let's make sure we're trusting in him and let's be willing to work for him as Joshua was so God calls Joshua to do this work and he gives him courage to do this work now when you and I start a job we usually get given bits of paper we get given a contract of employment and in that contract it tells us the conditions of employment what's expected of us and what the employer will do for us as God calls Joshua and as he calls Israel under Joshua's leadership what were the conditions that were placed upon him what were the things that

God called them and wanted them to do well the conditions that God asks of Joshua and Israel they were threefold they were to look to him and they were to listen to him and they were to obey him so let's think about these three conditions they were to first of all look to God verse 6 we get the text here now long introduction don't worry we haven't got a whole lot of time to go the conditions were to look to God listen to God and obey God first of all look to God look at verse 6 the Lord says to Joshua be strong and courageous because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them be strong and very courageous get verse 9 have I not commanded you be strong and courageous do not be terrified do not be discouraged so repeatedly in this chapter

[19 : 15] God says to Joshua be strong and courageous he says to the children of Israel through Joshua I know what you're seeing I know the fear that's within your camp but I'm telling you to be strong and courageous why were they to be strong and courageous because of the one who was speaking to them and the one who was making promises to them they weren't to be strong and courageous because of their own strength because they had no strength they were just a we nation they weren't to be strong and courageous because they had great technical equipment to take them over the Jordan they had no means of getting over the Jordan they weren't to be strong and courageous because they were such a mighty army and they had the best tanks and guns and weapons they were none of these things the reason they were to be strong and courageous the reason they were not to be terrified or discouraged was because

God had promised that he would be with them wherever they went and because God had promised that he would lead them into the land that he swore to their forefathers to give them God to Joshua is not told to grit his teeth and screw up his courage on his own he is to be strong only because Yahweh the Lord is with him and not because the Lord prefers leaders who are positive thinkers they were being called to remember Psalm 121 they were being called to lift their eyes to the Lord

they were not being called to look around at the problem they were not being called to look inside themselves for some inner kind of strength they could muster up but they were being called to look to

God the God who had made everything the God who was holding everything together the God who had a plan and who had promises and who communicated that to them and the God who had proved that he was faithful God was calling them to look to himself they were being called to have faith in God and we know from Romans chapter 10 verse 17 faith comes from hearing so the second condition placed upon them was they were to listen to God they were to look to God and now they were to listen to God look at verse 7 as God speaks to Joshua be careful to obey to obey all the law to turn to the right or to the left that you may be successful wherever you go do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it so if they wanted to have faith in

God they were going to have to hear from God and if they wanted to hear from God they needed the word of God and so they had been given the book of the law given to Moses passed down to Joshua and the Lord says to Joshua listen open this book don't deviate from this book but be in this book and this is not something that I have been aware of really in trepidation but this is an overlap with the morning because this is all the recurring message from the one God the old New Testament and he calls us to look to him and he calls us to listen to him many respects nothing has changed this message is fresh tonight as it was in the day it was first preached if we want to hear from

God we don't look up into the skies we don't look down into our stomachs we don't open cosmic books and play about with candles and crystals you want to hear from God we have his word commentator here says life in the kingdom of God must be lived out of the word of God Joshua 1 and Sam 1 tell us that a life pleasing to God does not arise from mystical experiences or warm feelings or a new dimmage no it comes from the word God has already spoken so the condition placed upon Joshua and the people of Israel the condition placed upon you and I is that we are to be looking to God constantly we are to be listening to

[24 : 44] God constantly and finally under this section we are to be obeying God and here we have another crossover we have come from James in past weeks that was the last book that we studied and James was constantly saying to us that we are not just to be hearers of the word but we are to be doers of the word God's word is not to come in one ear and go out the other it is to stick in the heart we are to live out and so the children of Israel were here being called to be obedient to God's word and the two are linked we know that in our lives and our experience if we neglect God's word we know that it's inevitable that very soon we're going to be in disobedience but when we are disciplined in coming to God's word to listen to what he's saying and by the Holy Spirit absorbing that word into our hearts then we find ourselves more able to trust and to obey so the word is saying here to

Joshua and to Israel don't just hear me but obey me and be strong and be courageous and get ready to proceed into the land that I have promised that I will give you proceed and experience get ready get organised take me at my word and go forward obey then we're saved you will be prosperous and successful then the promise that I have given will become a reality the conditions of God upon the people they were to look to him they were to listen to him and they were to obey him it's not rocket science is it it's very simple it's absolutely crucially important and it's so hard for us to actually live out how does this relate to us well it's not hard to figure is it when we face hard times and perhaps even more so when we don't face hard times we're to look to

God and we're to listen to God and we're to obey God it's what he expects from us it's what he calls us to look to him listen to him obey him will that save us no Jesus saves us are we able to do that perfectly no we can't Jesus did that perfectly but if we want to live a life that pleases God if we want to know his presence and his power in our lives if we want to have that assurance that we are his children if we want to have the joy of the Lord in our lives which is our strength this is the conditions that God has outlined for you and I in holy living look to him listen to him and obey him these were the conditions so what happened next what is the response that we see following on from this let's think about first of all the response of Joshua verse 10 so Joshua ordered the officers of the people go through the camp and tell the people get your supplies ready three days from now you will cross the

Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God has given you for your own and then in verses 12 to 15 we haven't got the time to go there we see the detail of what Joshua said to the Reubenites the Gadites and the half tribes of Manasseh but simply put if we summarise this Joshua does what God asks him that's the response of Joshua to all that God says Joshua does what God asks him he obeys he says what God tells him to say he doesn't spin it he doesn't twist it he doesn't dilute it he doesn't play it down he doesn't hype it up he simply relays the word of God to them God speaks to Joshua and Joshua passes on what the Lord says Joshua says to the people of God you will cross the Jordan because God has said you will and you will be given rest because God has said you will so get ready and be strong and be courageous and proceed in obedience that's the response of Joshua

God's man and that's the job description of any minister of the gospel in any place at any time any ambassador for Christ are calling us to do what God commands to go where God points and to say what God says that's why I say to you week on week open your Bibles check to make sure that what I'm saying is in here and if it's not then boot me out the door but this is not just for me this is for you as well you will be and you are asked to serve God in the places that he has put you you have been called to the great commission to speak God's word so be careful to do that and be disciplined in doing that every

[30 : 53] Christian has a sphere of influence that no other Christian is able to actually access there are people who you can reach that I can never reach and God has put them in your sphere of influence so that you will show them Christ and you will tell them about Christ and in a country where we are told in our workplaces that more and more and more we must not speak about Jesus and if we do speak about Jesus we've got to be very careful how we say it and what we say in a country where we feel such pressure on us to fudge things and to blur the lines and not to be crystal clear on the message of the gospel how are we to respond we're to respond as Joshua responded and to be absolutely clear and courageous in speaking forth sensitively and respectfully what God has said how can a man or a woman or a boy or a girl be saved how can a get to heaven

John 14 6 says there's one way and that's through Jesus is that okay to say today no it's not but will you say it what you and I are called to what about all the other religions what about all the other ways is that not something that's going to cause offence certainly it will but we're still called to say it not in order to cause offence the gospel is an offence but it's also the means the only means through which people can be saved and if we blur the lines if we start to go grey on us then not only are we disobedient but we're playing with the souls of those that are in us the response of Joshua is he is crystal clear he is courageous and being obedient to God and speaking clearly what God has given him to say what about the response of Israel to verse 16 then they answered

Joshua whatever you have commanded us we will do whatever you send us we will go just as we fully obeyed Moses so we will obey you only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words whatever they may you may command them will be put to death only be strong and courageous what do Israel do as a nation as God speaks to them through Joshua but will they obey God that's just so many of it they believed in the Lord and his promises they had faith in the Lord and so as they are told get ready to proceed based on all that God has promised they got ready to proceed they packed their bags they got organised and they committed themselves to the Lord knowing that he would direct their paths they saw the Jordan River one mile in width fast flowing impossible to cross how would they cross it they didn't know but they packed their bags and got organised because the Lord promised he'd take them across and he'd take them across they thought about beyond the Jordan River all these hostile nations stronger than them better armed than them how would they defeat them they didn't know the odds looked poor but God promised and so they looked to God and they listened to God and they obeyed God as Joshua called them to that was the response of Israel and finally what was the response of the Lord he imposed these conditions on them as he made these promises to him so how does he respond what does God do well for this flick for a moment we're finished so be encouraged

Joshua chapter 24 I said at the beginning of the last service that I'm going to do what some people do read the first few verses of Joshua and then flick to the end and this gives us the perspective on where this book is going this gives us the insight into what God is doing and what he will do if you scan through Joshua chapter 24 what you see as you get towards the end of the chapter is that there is three further deaths beginning of the book there's one death it's the death of Moses we flick

to the end of the book we read of three deaths verse 29 of chapter 24 we read of the death of Joshua in verse 32 we read of the death of Joseph in verse 33 we read of the death of Eliasim now here's the question goes back to this morning as well is this a happy ending and the answer is yes it is a happy ending death is not the end for God's people let's always remember that death is not the end physical death because there is a promise of a place that's prepared for the

[36 : 49] Lord's people so although Joshua and Joseph and Eliasim although they have died we know from God's word that they haven't died in the second death terms they've gone to be with the Lord but there's good news here even as we see the record of their deaths and the good news is in the fact of the place of their burial verse 29 we're told that Joshua was buried at Timnah Serah in the hill country of Ephraim north of Mount Gash Joseph was buried in Shechem and Eliasim was buried in Gibeah in the hill country of Ephraim you might say why are you raising this the reason I'm raising this is if we take chapter 1 and chapter 24 and we draw a line between the two what we will see is that all that

God promised his people he delivered on all three men were buried where it was in the land that God promised them which means that the children of Israel did cross the Jordan and it means that they did receive entry into the promised land and it means that they were given rest they did enjoy victory they did enjoy protection and God was with them there and so the point to finish on is simply that God was as good as his word and no one no nation no situation could stand in the way of his promises and his plans which means that

God was faithful and Israel could trust him and as we go through Joshua in however many chapters we go through we see ample evidence of that God was faithful and everything that he promised he delivered on but the greatest evidence for you and I of that is found not in any of these obscure names in the land that God promised but it's found at Calvary that's where we see the fullness of the reality that God is faithful because that's where we see his son our saviour laying down his life as was promised the man of solace suffering and dying purposefully to save us and to give us that absolute assurance that he will take us into the place the land that he has prepared for all who love him and all who trust him and when you think about that surely no matter what we're going through we can be strong and we can be courageous and we can be encouraged to keep on trusting in him and we'll leave it there tonight sorry we're firing this over lord we pray for faith to trust you we think about the children of israel and how much they must have been fearful as they saw the prospect of a river they couldn't cross and a land they couldn't figure out how they would ever enter how fearful they must have been when they saw all the threats and the enemies and the potential dangers that were in them in the land that was before them and yet lord you promised that you would be with them and you delivered fully on that promise and as we look at christ we see the wonder of the extent of your love for us and sending jesus as was promised we ask lord that as we read your word and as we meditate upon it and as we look to jesus the word made flesh we pray that we would go into this new week into a world where we're conscious of such opposition to you and lord that we wouldn't be fearful but that we would be courageous and that we would be faithful to all that you call us to be so hear our prayers and help us we ask in jesus name amen