

# Be Strong and Courageous - Mr Gordon Macleod

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 04 January 2026

Preacher: Mr. Gordon Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] We turn back to the reading that we had in Joshua, in Joshua chapter 1.! And just as we seek to study, this is obviously the commissioning of Joshua as he takes on the! as he takes on the role to be successor to Moses.

We may ask ourselves the question, who is Joshua? What made Joshua the one that was going to be the successor to Moses?

Well, if we look at some of the information that's provided for us as we read through the first five books of the Old Testament, we're told that Joshua was the son of Nun.

We can read in Numbers 13 and 8 that actually when he was born, his parents gave him not the name Joshua, but the name Hosea.

And it wasn't until he came to work for Moses, and we read further on in Numbers 13, that Moses actually renamed him Joshua.

[ 1 : 19 ] Joshua. What's in a name? Well, the name his parents gave him was given to him when he was born in Egypt.

And he was given the name Hosea, which means salvation. And that's probably exactly what his parents hoped for at the time of being in bondage when they were there in Egypt.

But then he came to work for Moses, and Moses renamed him Joshua. What does Joshua mean? Joshua means the Lord is salvation. And it's very apt for the name change to come about, that people wouldn't look at Hosea and think that he was their salvation as he led them out into the land that was promised to them, that they would recognize that while Joshua was there to lead them, that the Lord was actually their salvation.

And that's something that we need to think about right at the beginning of this service. Is the Lord our salvation? Is the Lord the one that we put our trust in?

[ 2 : 39 ] Is the Lord the one that leads our life? What else do we know about Joshua? The first time that he's actually mentioned in the Bible is in Exodus 17.

And at verse 8, where we find, or sorry, in verse 9, Amalek had risen up to fight against the Israelites having left Egypt.

And who did Moses call to lead? The people of Israel in battle. We read in verse 9, So Moses said to Joshua, Choose for us men and go out and fight with Amalek.

Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand. So Joshua did as Moses told him and fought with Amalek. And we know the story of how Moses, while his hands were raised up as he held up the staff, the children of Israel, progressed against Amalek.

And how Aaron and her had to come and hold his arms up to make sure that the staff of God was held up high. Then there's an interesting thing that's written further on in Exodus there.

[ 4 : 02 ] In 17 and 14, Then the Lord said to Moses, Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua.

We see here that this victory that was recorded was to be rehearsed and spoken back to Joshua to encourage him in his walk.

So that he recognized that as he walked with God and he put his trust in God, that God was on his side. That it wasn't him and himself that had won that battle.

That while the staff of God was raised high, causing Moses to later build an altar, calling it the Lord is my banner. That Joshua would remember that as he puts his trust in God, that God would be with him and God would help him to be a victor.

So he was a soldier. We then read that not only was he a soldier, but he very quickly rose to be Moses' assistant.

[ 5 : 14 ] Exodus 24, 13, So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua and Moses went up into the mountain of God. He was guided by Moses.

He was in the shadow of Moses. But we also recognize that this was a position that he took from his youth. Numbers 11, 28 says, And Joshua, the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, from his youth. There was something about Joshua that was identified when he was a young man that Moses took him under his wing to guide him, to teach him, and prepare him for what was ahead.

How do we look at our young people here in the congregation? Do we see them as a nuisance? Do we see them as being too young to take on any responsibilities? Moses took Joshua under his wing and he taught him, he guided him, he mentored him.

It wasn't clear at that time that Joshua was going to be the one that then became the next leader of Israel. But Moses spent time with him.

[ 6 : 30 ] Moses encouraged him. And Moses walked with him for the time that he was learning from him. Are we teaching our young ones?

Moses was a role model for Joshua. Are we the role models that we need to be for our young people growing up within our congregations, within our communities?

So we see that he was a soldier. We see that he was Moses' assistant. We also learn that he was faithful. Faithful in his walk with God.

Exodus 33, 11. Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Joshua knew what he was able to meet with God. Joshua was faithful in his work, but he was faithful in the time that he spent with God.

[ 7 : 41 ] Are we encouraging our young people as we try to encourage them this morning in God's Word, in reading God's Word, and recognizing the importance of God's Word?

Even in terms of coming to our prayer meetings, where we learn more about God, where we see people praying, we hear people praying, and there's an opportunity for fellowship.

Are our prayer meetings such a place that our young people have a desire to come and learn more about God? He was faithful to God.

Not only was he Moses' assistant, a position that didn't give him special privileges or protect him from going out and doing other work, we read in Numbers 13, verse 8, that he was one of the spies that was sent out to look at the land of Canaan.

He was given special duties and he went out and he was faithful in these duties. We can read, and we all know the story of how Joshua and Caleb came back and they told the people to go and take the land.

[ 8 : 59 ] But the other ten spies that came back instilled fear within the people to the extent that Moses and Aaron fell on their face and cried out and Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes.

We can read of it in Numbers 14, 6 to 10. They tore their clothes and they cried out and tried to encourage the people to go in and take the land that God was with them and not to turn aside from God.

Again, we see the faithfulness of Joshua as he sought to be a man of God. He was prepared to stand up against the people.

He was prepared to stand for God even when the congregation were prepared to stone him. We just pause for a moment as we think of Joshua.

Are we prepared in our daily lives to make a stand for God even when everybody else is against us? Or do we shy away and say nothing?

[ 10 : 14 ] Joshua and Caleb had the opportunity not to open their mouths. Ten men were saying, no, don't go. But they stood up in front of the crowd and they witnessed for the faithfulness of God, for the promises of God.

Are we prepared to stand and make our stand for God? And in standing we read that Joshua and Caleb were set apart from the rest of the people.

There had been a census taken. Anybody over the age of 20 was recorded in the census. And in God in visiting his wrath upon the people because of their disobedience, anybody over the age of 20 was not going to enter into the land, the promised land, apart from two men, Joshua and Caleb. They had stood for the promises of God and they were going to inherit the promised land with everybody else. They were set apart. And then we come to our passage this morning as we read in

Numbers 27 when Moses asked, God, as to who was going to be his replacement, he was told, take Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whose the spirit and lay your hand upon him. Make him stand before the priest and all the congregation. And it takes us to our text this morning and I am conscious of the time.

[11:56] Joshua 1, verse 6, Be strong and courageous for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

If you're looking for a title, the title is Be Strong and Courageous. There's a command given, there's conduct that has to be done and shown by Joshua and there's a commission given.

We see three times in the passage before us. Verse 6, verse 7 and verse 9, Be strong and courageous. Only be strong and courageous.

And then finally in verse 9, Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Verse 6 on its own might have been an instruction. Verse 7 might have been an encouragement, but we see in verse 9 that be strong and courageous is a command.

A command to Joshua then, a command to each and every one of us if we walk with God on this day that we are to be strong and be courageous for God.

[13:15] Joshua had been told, Moses, my servant is dead. He's standing before the congregation once again.

Previous generation had sought to stone him. He's there standing before them and the word is given to him, Be strong and courageous.

You shall cause this people to inherit the land that I promised to their fathers. The task was given to him. The instruction had been issued.

And as we go through, we will see that as he sought to be strong and to be courageous, that God was with him each and every step of the way.

he had been with Moses and seen what Moses had done when Moses came into Egypt, when they crossed the Red Sea, when he cried out to God and manna was provided, when they cried out to God again and water was provided from the rock, not to mention the many other miraculous things that were done in the wilderness.

[14:31] Joshua had seen Moses do that, but now Moses was dead. and Joshua was the one that was standing before the people. Did he need to be told to be strong and courageous?

Absolutely. The task before him was absolutely huge. Did he need instruction in what he was to do? Yes.

Did he need an encouragement to do it? Yes. And did he need to be commanded? Absolutely.

When you come here this morning, as God's word is opened, is it instructing you this morning to go and do something?

Or are you coming to God's word having had that instruction before, needing encouragement to go and do what God is asking you to do? or is that word coming to you again this morning as a command, to be strong and be courageous and go and do what I asked you to do?

Or are you sitting here this morning having heard God's word before? It's knocked on your heart's door. You were encouraged to open it, but you didn't.

[16:01] It's that command coming to you this morning, behold I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice, open the door. Be strong and be courageous because what we learn as we go on through this, we don't do this in our own strength.

So there was a command given. But there was also conduct that needed to be applied by Joshua. We find that conduct in verses 7 and 8 of the passage before us. Be strong and courageous, it said, 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. 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, then you will have good success. Conduct that Joshua had to abide by was he had to abide by God's word.

[17:31] Clear and simple instruction. He was there being prepared to lead the people of Israel, lead them into the promised land, lead them into a land that before they got there there was going to be trials, there was going to be faithless action by the people of Israel, there was going to be doubts.

what was the command given to Joshua to be strong and courageous?

But where was he to gain that strength from? Where was he to gain that courage from? He was to gain it from the word of God. I don't need to teach you, you've learnt it yourselves when you were younger, you maybe even teach it to the children now.

A shorter catechism. What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him? The answer, the word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and the New Testament, is the only rule to direct us on how we may glorify and enjoy him.

And what do the scriptures principally teach as we look at question three? The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.

[ 19 : 04 ] Only within the scriptures of the Old and the New Testament, learning them is one thing, believing them and putting them into practice is something quite different.

We can learn the catechism, we can recite the catechism, but do we believe what the catechism teaches us and do we live it out?

Do we recognize the importance of God's word each and every day in our lives, reading it, meditating on it, and talking about it to each and every one of us, amongst ourselves.

James Montgomery Boyce says, like ourselves, Joshua was to live by obedience to the written word of God and not in hope of special revelations.

Even more, that written word is what ties us to Joshua, just as it was what tied him to his illustrious predecessor, Moses.

[ 20 : 15 ] Indeed, the Bible is what ties us to God, for God has decreed that it is only through his word that he will be made known. Do you have a desire to know God?

Are you reading God's word to find out more about him? Has your eyes been opened to read God's word? Is your mind alert to understand God's word?

And is your heart warmed to know more about God? My prayer for each and every one of you is that it would be. Joshua was standing before God and the whole congregation.

God knew the task that was before him. He commanded him to be strong, commanded him to be courageous, and he gave him clear instruction and where his strength and his courage would come from.

In the word of God. The word of God was to be his director. The word of God was to be the plan that he followed, because that's how God had revealed himself to Moses.

[ 21 : 30 ] Moses had recorded that, and Joshua was now to read it. And as we read further on, we see that he was to read it regularly before the whole congregation.

of the children of Israel. Instead of a commission, what was the commission that was given to Joshua?

He was to be strong, he was to be courageous. He was to cause the people to inherit the land that had been promised to their fathers, sworn to their fathers to give them.

Exodus 3, verse 6 to 8, reminds us of the commission that was given to Moses as Moses stood in front of the burning bush.

And God said, I am the Lord your God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

[ 22 : 33 ] then the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their task masters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them out of the land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

That promise that was given to Moses, that had previously been given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was repeated here again as Joshua was commissioned to go and lead the people.

God had given him a commission. There's something that we need to note. When we read the word commission, we need to think about it as a commission.

And why do I say that? Well, in Joshua 1, verse 9, we see there that while Joshua is encouraged or commanded to be strong and to be courageous, not to be dismayed, not to be frightened.

Why? For this Lord, for the Lord your God is with you, wherever you go. God commissions us.

[ 24 : 05 ] He never leaves us. It is a commission. He is with us wherever we go. We can go into the New Testament.

We can read at the end of Matthew, you go there for and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I

have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. we go on into Acts. When Jesus was leaving his disciples, he told them that they would be given a comforter.

And we see in Acts 1 verse 8, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, meaning that you will not be by yourselves.

And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. We start a new year.

[ 25 : 14 ] God is speaking to each and every one of us here this morning. He may be calling you for the first time to come to him. If you are weak, if you are heavy laden, to come to him and cast your cares, your anxieties upon him.

He may be asking you to go for him. The one thing that he promises that we will never be on our own. There is a co-mission.

I will never leave you nor forsake you. I am always with you to the end of the age. What is it that you need to be strong and courageous for this morning?

What is it that God is asking you to do? Where is God leading you in your life today? You might be saying, well, I am too old.

I am not able to go and do that. What did we read in Acts 1 verse 8? You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was where they were.

[ 26 : 23 ] In your own home are you a witness for Christ? In your own community here in Barbos, are you a witness for Christ? Some of you may go and work outside of Barbos.

We can think of that as Judea. Are you a witness in your place of work, in your place of education? Some of you may even travel to the mainland, to Samaria.

Are you a living witness for God as you go to these places? And you might even be called to go to the ends of the earth.

But wherever you go, my prayer for you is that you go in the hand of God, that you're strong and courageous, not in your own strength, but you draw your strength from God, and you walk according to His paths, and according to His word, that you will know what it is to be commanded by Him, to have a conduct that is a living witness for Him, that you'll recognize that it is a co-mission. Wherever He leads you, He will be with you. Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your word. We thank You for Your promise.

[ 27 : 46 ] And Heavenly Father, that if we put our trust in You, that You will never leave us, that You will never forsake us, that You will be with us, even to the end of the age.

And that Heavenly Father, that as You call us, that You will equip us through Your word, if we keep Your word close to our hearts, if we meditate upon it, if we talk about it as it is on our lips each and every day, that Heavenly Father, that would not depart from us, but it would indeed be our ruler, our guide, to be able to glorify and enjoy You forever and share Your word with those round about us. In Jesus' name, Amen. I'll bring our service to a close, singing in metric, sorry, sing Psalms 119 from verse 33, teach me to follow Your decrees, then I will keep them to the end, give insight and I'll keep Your law with all my heart to it attend, remove from me the shame I dread, Your laws excel in uprightness, oh how I long for Your decrees, preserve me in Your righteousness.

If you're able, please stand and sing. Teach me to follow Your decrees, then I will keep them to the end.

Give insight and I'll keep Your law with all my heart to it attend.

[ 29 : 52 ] Lead me in Your commandments path, for then, O Lord, delight I find.

Incline my heart to all your laws, from selfish gain, please set my mind.

O turn my eyes from worthless things, give life according to Your word.

To be your servant, keep your pledge, so that you may be O Lord!

We move from me the shame I tread.

[ 31 : 29 ] Your rules excel in a brightness. O how I long for your decrees.

Preserve me in your righteousness. Close with a benediction.

To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible. The only God. Be honour and glory forever and ever.

Amen.