

11.13.22 – Pentecost 23, Veterans Day Recog. & Leland Sunday

“Inspired to Lead!”

The United Baptist Church, Annandale, VA

Joshua 1:1-9, 16-18 (NLT) ~ Pam

The Lord's Charge to Joshua

¹ After the death of Moses the Lord's servant, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, ² “Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. ³ I promise you what I promised Moses: ‘Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you— ⁴ from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.’ ⁵ No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

⁶ “Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. ⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. ⁸ Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. ⁹ This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

¹⁶ They answered Joshua, “We will do whatever you command us, and we will go wherever you send us. ¹⁷ We will obey you just as we obeyed Moses. And may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses. ¹⁸ Anyone who rebels against your orders and does not obey your words and everything you command will be put to death. So be strong and courageous!”

L: These are the Words of God. All: Thanks be to God!

Romans 10:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ¹⁵ And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

Leader: These are Motivating Words from Paul. All: Thanks be to God!

Please pray with me:

God, you are trustworthy! We thank you for your promises, the strength and the courage to be your people. We thank you for the legacy of Biblical leaders like Moses, Joshua, Jesus, and Paul. Out of ordinary life, both trials and delights, come extraordinary and divinely led leaders. Thank you for our country's veterans, both leaders and followers, and for the sacrifices they made. Thank you for the John

Leland Center for Theological Studies, its new president, Dr. Pruitt, and its students and faculty. We are grateful for the freedom to study and worship today in your house. Please be with those who cannot be here today. Open our minds and hearts now as we hear your word through this humble messenger. Amen.

Well, folks, we survived Election Day! Never thought I'd have to say that; it used to be one of my favorite days to see Democracy in action, and we did. But no matter your politics, I am happy that the ads are over even though the debates continue! So, let's make Veterans Day, Celebrate Leland Sunday, Thanksgiving (almost here), Christmas and Easter our favorites this year! And again, thank you Deborah for your energy and remarks, and thank you Veterans for your service.

Our church year's theme is "Listening for the Work", and we are hearing God's direction for us personally and for the church. This quarter we are striving to see the extraordinary in the ordinary through Scripture, everyday living, and missional opportunities. This will lead us into next year's topic, "Divine Experiments!" One might say Joshua's leadership into Canaan to secure the land for the people of Israel was one of those.

As we apply these two passages today, let us think about the context of "calling" and "leadership." The veterans we recognized today and on Friday probably didn't begin as strong leaders. There was serious training required to defend our country, and field experience to grow and be promoted through the ranks. Deborah's skills were surely gifts God called her to use in Christian leadership, but she is also gaining more education for professional development in her calling. My own Leland seminary education laid the groundwork for ministry, and my life experience in construction prepared me to lead this particular church. Answering the call to pastor here at United opened the door to even more development

of my faith and calling because of what you are teaching me about ministry. All the things **Joshua** needed are things any strong Christian leader must embrace, so let's go back to hear that part of his story.

You may recall that Joshua (יהושע? Yehoshu'a, meaning salvation of Yahweh, or Yahweh saves) was the successor to Moses. He had worked with Moses, as his apprentice, learning the law and doctrine, while God built his character. God had chosen both for the specific mission to take the land, and Joshua answered God's call to lead. Although Moses was dead, the work must go on; verse 5 reads: “⁵ No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you (Josh 1:5).” Joshua could rely upon God's presence in all he attempted to do if he remained obedient. He was to serve the people and lead them across the Jordan River into the land God would give them. He faced a strong Canaanite military campaign and needed God's strength to prevail. God's promise to him required that he be an example to the people; he too must follow the commandments God gave to Moses and the instructions Moses gave to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 5-8. God told Moses to “Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors (Deut. 8:1).”

As Joshua would carry on the task of Moses, God also required of him several things: 1) he must do what was written, not just meditate on God's law and statutes, but to act on them. 2) he must obey in all circumstances, without reservation or question. 3) he must live ethically in good conscience. 4) he must obey God's direction and not turn from it toward any right or left because there are errors in both. 5) he must be

strong, courageous, and resolute. 6) for his obedience, God will encourage him by results he could witness, fulfilling the desires of his heart.

Thinking about the list just read, aren't those guidelines needed for leaders today? And isn't "continuing the task of Moses" like that which leaders (especially Christian leaders) are called to do? Yes, we bring our unique spiritual and practical gifts to the position, and yes, we continue to learn and grow in our leadership; but we also stand on the shoulders of our predecessors and build on **their** legacies. Here too, at United, courage is called for as we figuratively rebuild, remembering Nehemiah's courage and obedience to rebuild Jerusalem! Mutual responsibility between the leader and the led is crucial for loyalty, encouragement, and trusting in the Lord! Are you being a responsible Christian leader?

In the Romans passage, Paul recaps Moses' leadership as the Israelites were close to entering the promised land. Paul also declares his personal testimony to the Roman church. God's promise included the ultimate leader, Jesus Christ. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13)." But Paul continues to ask how can salvation come to mankind (especially the Gentiles) if they've never heard of Jesus' saving power?! They need the leadership and charism (gift) of evangelism and prophecy to know about Jesus. That means preachers, teachers, and congregational testimonials. We know that God opens the heart to his Son, and a person listens for God's call to believe in Him, but someone must share the actual Good News of Jesus!

We must be those people to be strong of good courage to share our faith and stories with others who do not know Christ. Our battle is not

with Canaanites or Rome, but with distraction, ego, entitlement, greed, ambition, busy-ness, etc. You name your own sin that keeps you from sharing your faith; I have and confessed it.

Christian leadership in any area of life (not just the church) that is of high character and strong faith depends on God's inspired calling to salvation and work in His name. Scripture gives us the inspired word of God, and sometimes an inspired response to lead in His will. Men and women in the armed services are inspired to lead and protect our country, often based upon God's calling. Men and women in service to the Lord (missionaries, pastors, spiritual teachers, seminary staff, faculty, and students) are inspired to lead the church and the Kingdom through God's calling and His help, strength, and courage. Thank you to those who responded YES! And I pray God's blessings on those who are currently still responding to His call! These may seem like ordinary decisions, but extraordinary change happens in the lives of those who listen for the call and the work God directs us to do. Amen? Amen! ||

Will you pray with me? Faithful God, thank you for these illustrations of both human leadership and divine promise. May our faith and courage **stir us** to reach goals set by you! May we continue to listen for your call to action and seek your guidance. Strengthen our resolve as we serve you in whatever capacity. We humbly ask these things, in Jesus' name, **Amen.**