



# HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Actually Moving Forward

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Joshua 1:10-18

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*<sup>10</sup> And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, <sup>11</sup> “Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.’”*

*<sup>12</sup> And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, <sup>13</sup> “Remember the word that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.’ <sup>14</sup> Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, <sup>15</sup> until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.”*

*<sup>16</sup> And they answered Joshua, “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. <sup>17</sup> Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! <sup>18</sup> Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”*

*(Pastor prays)*

*Sitting* in a car and actually *driving* a car are two fundamentally different things. *Sitting* in the driver's seat of the car and actually *driving* the car are two different things. At some point, for it

to be considered driving, you've actually got to put your hands on the steering wheel and put the car in gear. That's exactly what some of you need to do, and that is certainly what we see Joshua doing in this passage. In verses 1-9, God commissions Joshua. Moses is dead and now it's time to lead. Be strong and courageous God says three times. He's had the call from God but that call is no good if it's not followed by action. Isn't that what James said? Faith without works is dead? For some of you the fog is lifting, God is calling and now you need to respond because...

### **The People of God Are People of Action**

What does right action look like?

#### **Immediate obedience**

Let me show you what I mean in verse 7. God tells Joshua what to do and then again in verse 9 God says again, "Have I not commanded you?" Then we get to verse 10 and we find out that Joshua immediately obeyed God's command. Joshua not only complied with God's order, he did so promptly and without making any excuses. Why? Because procrastination is nothing more than a deliveryman for disobedience. A. W. Pink says that the readiness or tardiness of our obedience is a good index of the state of our hearts. John 4:17 says, *So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*

What habit do you need to quit? What relationship do you need to repair? What apology do you need to offer? What discipline do you need to take up? What sin do you need to abandon? What ministry do you need to start?

For you who are not sure about whether or not you are a Christian, the writer of Hebrews says, "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart." The Gospel. Do you believe the gospel? Do you believe that God is holy and you are a sinner separated from God? And that God loved the world so much that He gave His only son Jesus who died on the cross in the place of sinners. He took all the punishment for all the sinners who will ever be saved. And now the Spirit moves you to believe that. It takes repentance and faith in that. Do you trust him? You see, the people of God are people of action. You need to practice immediate obedience.

#### **Clear Intentionality**

When you read verse 11, you hear what Joshua says. <sup>11</sup> *“Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.’”* Get ready because we are going to take possession. There was planning, thinking through and then prioritizing the things of God.

In verse 11 Joshua speaks to the leaders of the people and lays out his plan. It was sort of a defined chain of command. God spoke to Joshua; Joshua spoke to the leaders, and then the leaders spoke to the people.

Now I also want you to see the compliancy of God's absolute sovereignty and man's genuine responsibility. Go with me to the end of verse 11. *It's the land that the Lord your God is giving you.* He gives it because He has prerogative. He's the potter and we are the clay. It's like salvation. We understand it is an absolute gift of absolute grace. God does it but even still there is a clear responsibility.

Look with me at the middle of verse 11. *You are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land.* In other words, God is doing it and it is all grace. But you've got to receive it. That's how it works with salvation. That's how it works with sanctification. Isn't that what Paul told the church at Philippi? Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Fight the good fight, strive toward the goal of an upward call.

I'd like to ask a couple of questions. Are you trusting grace that you received at the cross? Are you trying hard and being disciplined? Have you read the Bible through? Have you prayed with a child, spouse or friend? Have you articulated the Gospel to anyone? You see, the people of God are people of action. It requires immediate obedience and clear intentionality. It also requires...

### **Sacrificial Unity**

Now this is a little longer of a passage that will require some back story. Let's read it and then let me talk about it just a bit. We will read verses 12-15:<sup>12</sup> *And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said,* <sup>13</sup> *“Remember the word that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest and will*

*give you this land.' <sup>14</sup> Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, <sup>15</sup> until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.*

This takes us back to a few years prior when, in Numbers 32, the Gadites and the Reubenites, who had a lot of livestock and owned land on this side of the river where the land was good. And they asked Moses if they could not cross the Jordan and stay on this side of the river. Moses didn't like it but he allowed it on this one condition. And Joshua reminds them in verses 13-15 what their obligation is. It's a selfless and sacrificial responsibility to the people of God. Basically Moses told the Reubenites and the Gadites they could stay on the wrong side of the river, but first they had to come and help their brothers get settled. That is sacrificial unity. It takes humility. And it would be costly. But it would honor God.

And unity is an excellent thing in the body of Christ. It's part of what Jesus prayed for us. But I'd like to say a few words about unity because sometimes Christian people make unity a goal, and it's not the only goal. If you make unity the primary goal; then somewhere along the way you compromise on truth in an effort to be unified.

I have found it helpful to talk about unity using 3 D's. The first one is **doctrine**. We must be unified on the fundamental doctrine of the faith, and more specifically a determination to be submissive to the inerrancy and sufficiency of scripture regardless of how difficult or out of step with the times that will make us become. We don't want to die on every hill, but there are some hills worth dying on. And as the culture around us continues to devolve into moral, spiritual and sexual anarchy, it's going to be increasingly vital that we are unified around clear biblical teaching without exception.

It requires **devotion**. What I mean is a clear and costly impulse to put others first. It means to turn the other cheek and to go the extra mile and to do unto others. And the more you turn your attention to ministry and helping others, the less you will collapse inward onto your own hurt. Even in this passage, what Joshua is calling them to do is to leave the comfort of their homes and join the struggle with their brothers in the Lord. The church could really use a lot

more of this right here. This sort of Sermon on the Mount kind of cross-centered love for one another that doesn't compromise truth but also doesn't forget love.

So there's doctrine and devotion but there is also **direction**. Maybe a better word for that is "mission," and it's in verses 12-15. Joshua laid out the mission clearly. It was going into the promised land until the Lord gives rest which will become a theme throughout the whole Bible. Rest is the goal of a created order. Rest is celebrated by Israel in the Sabbath. Rest is pointing to God and redeeming Israel from Egypt. Rest is fulfilled in Christ, and in Hebrews 4 as a church we cannot ever forget our threefold mission, which is to exalt Christ, make disciples and pass the torch.

And as the people of God we are people of action. It is immediate obedience. There is clear intentionality and sacrificial unity and there is...

### **Godly Encouragement**

I won't stay here long, but it had to be encouraging to Joshua, the new leader, when the people responded like they did in verses 11-15. Joshua laid out the plans and gave the commands and look how they answered in verses 16-17. <sup>16</sup> *And they answered Joshua, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go."* <sup>17</sup> *Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses!*

It was encouraging but Joshua couldn't put all his hopes for happiness here. The people were well-intentioned and their encouragement was obvious and good for his soul. But he couldn't rely on his people. They were going to let him down. These very people, the Gadites and Reubenites, will be the first of God's people to go into outright rebellion. You've had it happen. You've had friends, children, and maybe a spouse go into rebellion. All will devastatingly let you down. So Joshua had to hang on the Lord's truth and not the people's sentiment. The Lord is with you. Verse 18 says be strong and courageous. I'd like to add one more thing here and it's also a good place for the Gospel.

As people of God, we have

### **Real Conviction**

The people understood immediate justice. Let's read verse 18. <sup>18</sup> *Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death.* Whoever rebels or disobeys. Joshua's commandment was the Lord's commandment. There will be a lot of immediate justice and wiping people out in Joshua. It serves as a reminder to be thankful for the Gospel of Jesus.

Here's how Paul told it to us in Romans: All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That's a problem without a solution. The wages of sin is immediate death. The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ. That is the God-given solution. God demonstrates His own love to us while we were yet sinners. And Christ died for us and gave us love and grace. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

That is a response. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. That shows us trust and security. There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The wrath is gone, we are forgiven and are now a child of God.

The people of God are people of action. There's an immediate obedience and clear intentionality. There's godly encouragement and sacrificial unity and real conviction. And by God's grace that's who we are.

*(Pastor prays)*