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This week at MRC we started a new series in Joshua that will take our time & attention for the next couple of months. Joshua is a book that is meant to provoke us to trust, faithfulness & obedience because of the Faithfulness of the God whom we serve.

The context is that the people finally are on the edge of the Promised Land. Following 40 years of wilderness wanderings and discipline from the Lord they have arrived again and the implicit question is will they trust him this time?

We saw the passage structurally splits into 2 - the first section being the Lord commissioning Joshua as his new leader, the second section as Joshua urges the people towards obedience as they prepare to enter the land.

1. The Lord commissions Joshua (v1-9).

The book begins with the death of a leader (as do a number of bible books eg Exodus, Judges, 2 King and 2 Samuel), Moses. From this we're meant to draw that leadership is in one sense expendable but God and his promises, plans and purposes are not. The mantle of responsibility falls then onto Joshua - from v3-6 for example we read of parallels with Moses as God reiterates his promise of land (larger than they ever occupied), victory and presence. The relay baton is passed on because God is faithful.

How will Moses respond? Will he be 'strong and courageous' (v6, 7, 9 and 18) as the Lord encourages him to be (fuelled by the Law)? We see the answer is yes as he takes the message of obedience to the people in v10-18. Rather than faltering like Moses did in Exodus when asked to act of the

Lord, Joshua is faithful and obedient. We noted that the 'strong and courageous' charge is foundationally for Joshua as the leader of the people, winning for the people the Promised Land and so Jesus is ultimately our Joshua who trusted and provided God's promises for his people. It is then because of his obedience, courage and victory at the cross that we can be 'strong and courageous' as we follow after him.

2. Joshua commissions the people (v10-18)

As Joshua commissions the people then we see 2 aspects and charges. The first is a general charge for them to gather their stuff and get ready because they will be entering soon. He secondly also speaks specifically to the The Reubentites, Gadites & ½ tribe of Manasseh who were farmers. Moses had allowed them to claim land outside the Promised Land because it was especially fertile and good for agriculture. Joshua reminds them of their promise to send fighting men to help them capture the land before they then settle at a later date.

The key thing though is that the people's response is positive. They promise to zealously obey. The mantle of leadership has passed onto the next person.

Here are a few questions to bring some of these ideas to life in the lives of people in your groups

Give a bible overview so far... How have we got here? What happened back in Numbers 13? How is that relevant?

Why do you think bible books begin with the death of a new leader? As the story unfolds what does this show us about how God works?

What aspects of the promise in v3-6 does the Lord re-iterate? How do they apply to us today? What is most encouraging? Why?

Why do the people never inhabit all the land they were promised?

Moses is called to be 'strong and courageous' - is that a charge for us? Why? Why not? How is it also foundationally a charge for Jesus?

How is he able to be 'strong and courageous' (v7-8)? Why do the scriptures help us (and him)?

In the second half of the section (v10-18) what do we see as the response of the people of God? How do we respond to our faithful God?

How are we to live in the light of his faithfulness? What does that look like?

Where do we struggle to trust him?