

THERE'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD WAITING FOR YOU

Joshua 1:1-9

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Graduation Theme, June 5, 2011

A small boy was searching through the stock of cards in a Hallmark Store. After a while a clerk asked the lad, "May I help you find something, young man—a birthday card, anniversary card, get-well card, or a card for a special friend?" He shook his head, "Not exactly." Then he asked wistfully, "Have you got anything in the line of blank report cards?"

Those of you who have just graduated have a blank report card now—sort of. There's not a D-minus or an F on it. . . . yet.

- In Joshua 1 we find the Lord handing Israel a blank report card. It was the beginning of a new era for the people of God.

A new generation of Israelites with a new leader (Joshua) was about to enter a new land.

A whole new world was waiting for them.

- Some of you graduates may have been waiting a long time to get out of the desert waste of high school.

Will you let me offer you some time-tested principles from Joshua 1 to guide you as you charge into the new world waiting for you?

I want to be certain that you all understand that Joshua 1 is not about graduating from high school. Obviously. It's about God's people entering into something great and grand and new—the Promised Land. The principles that were important for the Israelites are important for God's people today; **and especially for** new graduates who have a whole new world waiting for them.

I. EMBRACE CHANGE. Joshua 1:1-4

Perhaps you've heard it said that "the only person who *likes* change is a wet baby."

That's not true. New graduates have also been waiting for change for so long that they don't just embrace it, they practically squeeze the life out of it.

But some are anxious about the coming changes. It means leaving the familiar and venturing into the unknown.

- That generation of Israelites was so accustomed to being homeless in the desert that getting their own homeland would be a bigger change than anything they had experienced before.

¹ *After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide:*

² *"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them-- to the Israelites.*

"Get ready to cross the Jordan" doesn't have the oomph of the original Hebrew text. Literally, it is "Arise. Cross over." It means, "Get up and go."

There was a whole new world waiting for them on the other side of the Jordan. It was the Promised Land.

³ *I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.*

⁴ *Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates-- all the Hittite country-- to the Great Sea on the west.*

There's a huge lesson here. If they were going to be successful, that would only be because God gave them success.

If you want to be successful in all the exciting and scary changes ahead of you, please make a commitment to God today that you won't try to do it without him.

Change, without God, is a recipe for huge disappointment.

II. BE COURAGEOUS. Joshua 1:5, 6, 7, 9

To be courageous, most of us need some encouragement. To encourage means to put courage into someone.

The Lord encouraged Joshua by promising to be with him. That meant anyone who fought against Joshua would be fighting against God.

⁵ *No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

Have you noticed how often in our prayers we ask God to *be with* the people we're praying for?

It's a sort-of blanket prayer that covers everything. But what does it really mean?

It means life is too dangerous for any of us to handle alone. We need the Lord to be present with us wherever we go.

⁶ *"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.*

⁷ *Be strong and very courageous*

⁹ *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."*

Being strong and courageous was not a suggestion. It was an order.

Don't be afraid to go into that new world waiting for you.

- If you have placed your trust in Jesus Christ, then the Lord is with you. You can be strong and courageous.

III. OBEY GOD. Joshua 1:7b, 8, 9a

God's people were about to cross over into the Promised Land.

And what was the main thing God told Joshua, the man chosen to lead them?

It was all God's word, the Torah, God's will for his people..

- This principle holds for you today.

The world into which most of you grads will be immersed in the next few years does not hold to absolute standards of right and wrong, good and bad.

Most people out there have tossed aside the standards of the Bible as a collection of antiquated notions.

Your peers are going to urge you to do whatever makes you feel good, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else.

- Please don't toss aside this truth: if you ignore God's word, you will become just like the world around you.

Even though it looks exciting, it's a messed up world.

If you ignore God, you will become seriously messed up.

^{7b} *Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.*

God said to Joshua—and this principle still stands—"Do not turn from God's revealed will, either to the right or to the left."

Then you will find true success in life.

⁸ *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. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

^{9a} *Have I not commanded you?"*

- God told Joshua to tell his people to do three things with his word—what we call the Bible:
 1. Don't let it depart from your mouth. Speak about it. Let people know that God's Word is your standard.
 2. Meditate on it. Don't just say it. Mull it over prayerfully.
 3. Do it.

The word translated "meditate" literally means "mutter."

When I was a kid in Africa we had a domestic helper, Elsie, who was constantly muttering with the sorryest look on her face. She was a faithful worker, but as gloomy as a foggy night.

The muttering of God's word that Joshua was charged with was not gloomy.

The truths of God's Word must be part of your daily life. That's an encouragement and a warning. Ignore God, and you will have more disappointment than success.

- I expect that in some manner each of you graduates will become a leader.

Joshua had to learn to obey before he was ready to lead.

Civilization is always in danger when those who have never learned to obey are given the right to command.

(Anon.)

Let me speak frankly again. If you become a leader, and you have never learned to obey God, you will become a dangerous leader. You will cause trouble.

So before you cross over into the new world waiting for you, renew your commitment to obey God

- In the New Testament, James wrote, *'Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.'* (James 1:22)

If you do nothing more than listen to what I have said from God's word today, you will deceive yourself.

Do what God's word Says: Embrace the changes that are coming to you, courageously, and with a sincere commitment to obey God according to his Word.

Then you will have real success.