Living Your Inheritance  
Part 1  
Joshua 1:1-9  
Pastor Charles Price  

Now if you have your Bible with you I am going to read from Joshua and Chapter 1, Joshua and Chapter 1.

I want to begin this morning looking into the book of Joshua for a number of weeks – not sure how many. But I want to begin here in Joshua Chapter 1 and read the first 9 verses, which are probably familiar to many of you. If you are not familiar with this book, you will enjoy getting to know what this book has to offer us and what it has to teach us.

And if you need a Bible from the seats, there are some there.

Joshua is the sixth book of the Bible.

Joshua 1:1:

“After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: ‘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 them – to the Israelites.

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

“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.

“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.

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

“Be strong and very courageous. 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.

“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.

“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.’”

And that is as far as I am going to read this morning.
Joshua is the sixth book of the Old Testament and it serves really as a key transition book, a hinge if you like, between what has gone before and what is going to come after, because the previous books of Moses, the five books of Moses, all are about the events that prepared the people of God to enter, occupy and live within the land that God had set apart for them.

The completion of that comes here in the book of Joshua when they occupy the land of Canaan.

Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy; those four books all record events in the 40-year period of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and their journey through the wilderness after 430 years of living in Egypt.

You remember they had gone to live there at the time of Joseph and now 430 years later, they are on their way back and the book of Deuteronomy ends with them at the border of Canaan, which was the place God had promised to them and where He told them He would make them into a great nation, and from that position they would be a source of blessing to every other nation of the world.

That’s the first five chapters that lead up to Joshua. And now Joshua tells the story of Israel occupying this land, and the rest of the Old Testament is the story of Israel’s life in the land of Canaan.

Now there is a time when they were taken out for the Babylonian exile and then moved to Persian and came back under the reign of Nehemiah.

But basically the Old Testament story is the story of keeping three important ingredients in the purposes of God together. It’s keeping the right people in the right place for the right purpose.

The right people in the wrong place could not fulfill the right purpose.

The right people in the right place, if they lost sight of the right purpose, ended up becoming disjointed and frustrated and eventually were moved off into exile during the time of the Babylonian captivity.

And I am calling this series that we are going to be following through over a number of weeks “Living Your Inheritance” because Joshua 1:6; in that verse God says to Joshua,

“Be strong and courageous because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.”

Now inheriting is normally receiving property or titles or rights or even debts and obligations that come to you normally on the death of an individual.

This is about the people of Israel inheriting the land that God had promised to Abraham when He called him from Ur of the Chaldeans centuries before and said, “Set off; I am not going to tell you where you are going, but when you get there, I will tell you that you are there.”
And so it was a sort of mystery tour that Abraham set off on not knowing where he was going, only knowing who it was who was leading him and being willing to trust who it was that was leading him to put him eventually in the right place for the right purpose.

And so when they got to Canaan in Genesis 15:1, God said to Abraham,

“I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land and to take possession of it.”

So far everything is on track.

By the third generation, Abraham had a son Isaac; Isaac had a son Jacob. Jacob, the grandson of Abraham was the one who went down to Egypt taking all his family with him because of a famine in Canaan.

And one of his sons, Joseph, had been sold as a slave down to Egypt but had come into a very good position and had become prime minister over the whole of the land. And so they went down because of the famine and stayed there for the next 430 years.

That’s a long time.

Meanwhile Canaan is occupied by at least 7 other nations who have taken possession of it and have bedded down and made it their home and their place.

And now in the book of Joshua more than 50 times God speaks of Canaan as being an inheritance. They were to enter into the inheritance, an inheritance that was being given to them on the initiative of the giver, which of course was God.

Now this book is not just about the land, a piece of prime real estate. The land was a means to an end. God had called Israel in the first instance to Himself. He says that several times in their history.

“I have called you to Myself. That is the first thing that My relationship with you is about.”

“Having called you to Myself, I am going to put you in a place where you are going to live and from where you are going to be the means of being a blessing to the whole of the world.”

And that of course, ultimately was to be through the coming of the Messiah, and through His work He would bring about the blessing that we are enjoying today here in Toronto thousands of miles away, thousands of years later, when all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed through the Lord Jesus Christ.

But for that to happen, they had to have the right people in the right place.
So Joshua had to get the wrong people out in order to get the right people in. And then the challenge for Joshua, and it follows through the Old Testament then, is the challenge of keeping the right purpose in view. Which is not a self-centered agenda - though it easily became that - but out of a wholesome living relationship with God (that was the bedrock of it all) they would be a source of blessing to other people.

Now like so much of the Old Testament stories, they are pictures of Christian experience, and this is the way the New Testament frequently refers back to and talks about the Old Testament.

We too, you see, have an inheritance into which we are to enter and to enjoy.

In Ephesians 1:13 Paul writes there,

“Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession.”

Now he says you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit has entered your life, and in doing so, He has sealed you forever, but He is only the down payment guaranteeing our inheritance.

In other words, there is more that you are to enjoy and more that you are to experience.

In Colossians 1:12 he speaks, Paul speaks of,

“…joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

Now of course some of this inheritance is future and we will not enter into the full inheritance until we are forever out of this life and forever in heaven in the presence of God.

But there are aspects of that inheritance that we are to increasingly enjoy that grow increasingly rich in this life here and now.

Having been sealed by the Holy Spirit, you have begun the journey, but that is not the end of the journey. You can be a Christian – genuine Christian – and utterly bored with your Christian life, utterly bored with Jesus Christ, frankly disinterested in God because you have never begun to crack open the richness of the inheritance that is to be ours that we begin to enjoy, we begin to experience.

And in Ephesians 1:18 Paul says,

“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.”
Now that’s God’s inheritance in us; that is part of the inheritance that we are to enter into and to enjoy.

And in teaching us how the people of God under the Old Covenant entered God’s inheritance for them in the land of Canaan, there are truths and principles and examples and stories that all help to teach how the New Testament speaks of our entering into the inheritance we have in Christ.

And this is the way the New Testament talks about this story, particularly in the book of Hebrews. There are analogies in the book of Ephesians, all of which can be traced back to this event here.

Now when the book of Joshua opens, Joshua is being commissioned to replace Moses as leader of the nation of Israel. Remember it was Moses who brought Israel out of Egypt and he led them through the wilderness on a journey that ended up lasting 40 years. It need only have lasted 11 days; the book of Deuteronomy tells us that.

It says it is an 11-day journey from Horeb (which is where God met Moses at the burning bush) to Kadesh-Barnea, which is the southern tip of Canaan, where they were told to enter many years before.

Realistically, with all the people involved, a few weeks it should have taken them. But instead they went round in circles two years into the journey. They came to the border of Canaan at Kadesh-Barnea.

And Moses sent 12 spies to look into the land and they were to spend 40 days there and then come back.

And when they came back, the majority of those 12 spies – in fact, 10 of those 12 spies said, “Everything in the land is amazing, it’s fantastic, we brought back some of the fruit, grapes and pomegranates on our shoulders because they were too heavy to carry.

“But although it is fantastic, everything God said was true about Canaan, it would be utterly impossible for us to take it. There are 7 nations who live there and they are bedded in. They live in 45 cities; they are well armed and well trained in warfare. They have their own civil wars between themselves and they would be fully equipped to deal with people like us.

“And some of those tribes have names that make us very nervous. There is a tribe called the Hittites and we don’t like that. They sound as though they like to hit. There’s the Amorites who couldn’t care around anybody else but ‘Amorite’.” (That’s okay – we won’t try to do that.)

There were two of the spies – and one of them was Joshua – who said, “All of that is true, but you are forgetting something. It is God who will give us the land.”

They said, “Don’t be so spiritual. You have got to be realistic about these things.”
And they took a vote. It was 10 to 2. And they went back. And God sentenced them to spend the next 40 years in the wilderness, or the next 38 years, 40 in all, one year for every day the spies had been in Canaan.

And during those 40 years, God said, “Every single one of you who was over 20 when you left Egypt will die before in 40 years you cross the Jordan River into Canaan.” Everyone except two that is - Caleb and our friend Joshua.

Today, under the overall series of this theme, which I am calling “Living Your Inheritance”, I want to talk from the first few verses about what I am calling “Your Past Matters.”

Your past matters because men of God like Joshua and women of God that you find throughout Scripture don’t just arrive on the scene out of the blue.

When you read the first verses of Joshua where God said to Joshua,

“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 them – to the Israelites.”

We can read that very matter-of-factly and think, “Oh well, good old Joshua, God has picked you up and made you His successor to Moses. That’s a pretty good role to have. How fortunate. Hope you have a good time Joshua.” As though it was a kind of lottery by which Joshua was picked up and selected for that task.

That would be to read it extremely superficially.

During the previous 40 years God had been preparing Joshua in many important ways through events, through trials, through hardships, through battles, through victories, through discouragement, through defeat.

And do you know, in our own lives, nothing is being wasted. Every event we face in life, beginning when we are young, becomes an opportunity for God to be molding and producing.

And even when there are things in our lives which we know are wrong, maybe before you ever knew Christ or even after you knew Christ, there are things in your life that you know were wrong, but they have become part of your history; those things in themselves can be taken by God because this is who are you – they can be taken by God and made into something that equips you and something that is beautiful.

Wordsworth, an English poet in the 19th Century, one of his famous phrases is, “The child is father of the man.”

What he is saying by that is the person a man becomes depends on the child that they were.

That is, that the experiences of a child, the disciplines of a child; the experiences of a child are what make the man when he becomes a man. So the child is father to the man.
It is very interesting in the Bible how many children God begins to work with significantly. And they became, years later, men and women. Whether it’s babies from Isaac, or Samuel, or Samson who messed up a lot but as a baby God had an interest in him. Or whether it is Mary the teenaged fiancée of Joseph who was to become the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ. Or Ruth who married a young man in their youth and he died and she is left and she sticks with the mother-in-law and the integrity of that woman become the means of God bringing about some great things.

You see David as a boy, teenager, is described as a man after God’s own heart. Samuel the prophet was sent on a search and he was told to go to the house of Jesse. Jesse had 9 sons and Jesse produced 8 of them that he thought were suitable candidates.

And Samuel looked at the first one, “My, Eliab, he was tough. Look at the muscles on his body and you know, he shaves with a chainsaw and he kind of scratches himself with barbed wire.”

And Samuel said, “Surely this is the man.”

And God said, “Not him.”

The next brother: “Oh this must be him.”

“No.”

“Next one.”

“No.”

Do through 8 of them. Samuel was confused and he said to Jesse their father, “Are you sure these are all your sons?”

And Jesse was a little embarrassed. “I’m sorry, there is another one. I didn’t bring him here – he’s out with the sheep. He’s the youngest. He’s a harpist, you know, he’s a musician. He’s got the kind of musician’s temperament and he sits out there, you know, sheep are running everywhere and he is just playing his harp and he writes songs. He writes lovely songs but he comes home and sings them to us every night. Last week he wrote his 119th and he sang it to us. It has 176 verses and he sang every verse.”

“Go and fetch him.”

“I wouldn’t think…well, really? I mean, I know him. He’s the youngest. He’ll probably have a flower in his hair when he comes in, if you don’t mind that.”

David comes in and God says, “This is the man.”
He said to Samuel, “Learn a very important lesson: God looks not at the outward appearance as man does; God looks at the heart.”

By the way, don’t be overtaken up with your outward appearance. Look nice enough of course, but don’t be overly taken up with that. You might start to kid yourself that’s the real you, and it isn’t.

And as a boy, David was put through all kinds of experiences that prepared him to be the king.

Jacob, you know, was the son of Isaac. He had twins – Esau and Jacob. And Jacob was the younger one. And he was a nasty bit of work I’m afraid. His name Jacob means twister. And his older brother had got the birthright because he was born about 20 minutes earlier. And he wanted to get it from him so he cheated.

Then he had to get the blessing from the father so he went and told lies to the father and cheated. And eventually with this kind of twisted cheating – and then he did cheat and he married a girl – he married two actually. He married one by mistake which fortunately you can’t do that now, but he did then.

And he cheated his father-in-law and his father-in-law cheated him. I mean he was just a cheat, cheat, cheat.

And one day he had a meeting with God and they had to wrestle and God wrestled him to the ground and Jacob went on fighting and God knocked his hip out of joint. And the tune changed and Jacob said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me.”

Eventually when God had finished with him in sort of human form what we call a theophany, a physical appearance of God; when He finished with him with the sweat on poor Jacob’s brow, can’t walk now; he is out of joint in his hip, God says, “I’m fed up with Jacob. I am going to change your name. I am going to call you Israel (means prince with God), but that’s because I fought with you and battled with you.”

And the tide turned in Jacob’s life.

God does that when a man is young.

Jesus, before He ever began His ministry, learned obedience by His suffering.

Timothy is told by Paul, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young.”

No, some of God’s best work is done when you are young. Some of the life that you live and the benefit of that life you live when you get older is because of what happened when you were young.

And in Lamentations 3:27 Jeremiah is writing this, and he says,
“It is good for a man to bear to bear the yoke while he is young.”

It is good to be harnessed to something and carry the burden of it while you are young.

We are not sitting around, you know, and suddenly God says, “Joshua, you have got nothing to do, have you? I would like you to lead the people.”

No, no. Life doesn’t work like that. And what goes on in our lives when we are young usually makes what we are later. The child is the father of the man.

Over a number of years now a British television company has followed a group of young people and they were young at the age of 7 back in 1963. It was called “Seven Up” And Hilary and I have watched this again recently on Netflix (you can get the whole set there).

I don’t know, is it 15, 20 young people from across Britain, from every kind of background – those from wealth and private education and everything they needed materially and physically to those who were completely poverty-stricken, their homes, lived on back streets, and in between the whole range. They got as wide a range of people as they could.

And they adopted what really is a Catholic saying, as the theme of this program: “Give us a child till he is 7 and we will give you the man.”

And so the first program spends a couple of hours just looking at the lives of these kids when they were 7. Then people watched the program and forgot about it. Seven years later in 1970 they produced another program called Fourteen Up – the same kids; they are 14 now. And then 7 years later: Twenty-one Up, Twenty-eight Up. It’s now up to Fifty-six Up. And that isn’t on Netflix yet so we watched up to Forty-nine Up.

And you know, all kinds of things happen and unpredictable things, unexpected things happened in some of their lives. But basically what happened to them, what were norms in their lives, what were experiences they were put through, what hurts and pains they went through as children, as adults are now huge great blisters in their lives if they were pains when they were young. Or they have become the means of them developing a compassion and an outlook they would otherwise never have had.

And we don’t have any control over our young years really, but it is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young, says Jeremiah. It is good to have to do things we don’t like to do when we are young. It is good to have it tough when we are young, as well as the joys of youth and childhood because we do not know what God is preparing us for. And He is preparing us for whatever the raw material makes us by our experiences when we were young.

Now I say all that to point out that Joshua appears 7 times in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, in that 40 year period in the wilderness.

On those 7 occasions, you can look at them and realize that he was learning lessons that come back again in Joshua Chapter 1 that are crucial to what he is going to be doing.
When I started preparing this I thought we would look at all 7. Then I thought, “No that is far too many to look at them properly. So I dwindled them down to look at all three.

And I came in this morning intending to talk about all three but in the first service we only looked at the first two because the clock went faster than it should have done. And so we are going to just look at two. Only if a miracle happens or I forgot something and had a mental blank, we can always look at the third, but we probably won’t.

Two things: and these are representative of the seven ways in which God was teaching Joshua vital things that prepared him for his leadership.

The first was in learning how to meet battles. The first time Joshua ever appears in the Bible is in Exodus Chapter 17. Joshua spent his life meeting battles but the first time was in Exodus Chapter 17. You can look at it if you like – I will tell you the story briefly.

The Israelites have just left Egypt and they have met their first enemy, which are a group of people called the Amalekites. Now it is significant the Amalekites were there to fight the Israelites and try to waylay them because the Amalekites were actually relatives of the Israelites.

Amalek was a grandson of Esau who was the twin brother of Jacob, and the blessing went to Jacob. So in actual fact the Amalekites, had the blessing gone to Esau, would really have been one of the tribes of Israel.

So they are out to attack them; whenever the Amalekites appear, they are attacking the Israelites. This is the first occasion.

And it says in Chapter 17 of Exodus and Verse 8,

“The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

“Moses said to Joshua…”

(First time his name ever appears now)

“Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites.”

“That’s your job description, Joshua. Have you got it? Get an army together, go down into the valley and fight the Amalekites.”

“Okay, Moses, what are you going to do? What are you going to do?”

Well, here it is:

“Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”
I am sure Joshua thought, “Well, that’s a pretty nice thing to have to do. Why can’t I go and stand on the hill and you do the fighting?”

Well there is a very important lesson he is going to learn.

Verse 10 says,

“So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill.

“As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.”

What an amazing way to fight a battle. “Joshua, get the army, go down there and fight, fight, fight. And Joshua [Moses] is up on the hill and when he holds his staff in the air, Israel is prevailing over the Amalekites and they are seeing victory.

And then Moses gets a bit tired; maybe he just wants to rest his arm for a while (this is tiring) or maybe stop for a scratch or something.

And suddenly the Amalekites begin to prevail against the Israelites. “Whoop! Get that staff back up there!” And the Israelites prevail over the Amalekites.

And maybe there is a bit of a slack in the battle and so Moses thinks, “Oh I can have a rest now. Phoooh. Good. Uh-oh here is the marker coming. He is running up, he is coming closer, closer, closer. Oh...got him!”

You know it’s an amazing way to fight a battle isn’t it? What is God teaching them?

“What, you have got to get the army together. Joshua, you have to fight, but that is not going to be the source of your victory in itself. Moses on the hill, holding the staff of God (and we won’t go through the history of the staff of God to see why that was significant, but it was significant); it was the staff of God, his doing business with God and saying, “God, this is Your business, not ours. We have to fight but it is not our business.”

And then while Joshua was sweating out in the valley, battling hard, Verse 13,

“Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.”

Then in Verse 14:

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write this on a scroll as something to remember and make sure Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.’

“And Moses built an altar and called it in Hebrew Jehovah Nissi.
Some translations have not included the Hebrew words there but this is what it means:

“The LORD is my Banner.”

So he built an altar. Jehovah Nissi: The LORD is my Banner. And God said, “Make sure Joshua hears about it.”

Why did he say, “Make sure Joshua hears about it”?

Because Joshua, you have been fighting and you are covered in sweat and probably covered in blood and you are weary and tired and so are your men. But I want you to understand this: that although you have to fight and although you have to get busy and you have to get dirty in the process in terms of getting contaminated with all the debris of a battle, it is God who is giving you victory.

And so with one eye on the battle in which we engage, the other eye is on God who gives the victory.

These words parallel Ephesians 6:10:

“Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”

Not “Be in the Lord- you don’t need to be strong.” No, “Be strong in the Lord.”

But your roots are in Him and you are fighting in the battle. And the lesson Joshua learned was that victory against the enemies of God is not won but it is received. All the fighting skills in the valley was necessary but would have been completely insufficient and were insufficient the moment Moses took the staff.

That’s why it’s not the people on the front line in battle or the front line in ministry or the front line in witness who in themselves are the key.

Billy Graham, in the heyday of his ministry back in the 50’s and 60’s; it used to be said of Billy Graham he was the most prayed for man in the world.

And Billy Graham used to say, “If we weren’t being prayed for, our crusades would be just a noise.” If there weren’t those on the hill dealing with God, the battle in the valley would have accomplished little.

Now I have heard a couple of very exciting stories this morning from people here of those people in the first service, where they have been praying and interceding in an area where nothing seems to be happening and suddenly fruit has begun to happen. And the only explanation is God has done it.

But they have been active, waiting for what God would do, to come to pass.
Go back to Joshua 1:3. Let me read to you what God said to Joshua and let me ask you how you would think this would resonate with Joshua.

Joshua 1:3:

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

“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.” etc.

Now says God: “I will give you every place where you set your foot as I promised Moses.”

How did Joshua know if that was going to be true?

Because he had experience. Nearly 40 years before, where in battle with the Amalekites, God had given them victory in what clearly humanly was an impossible situation, because when Moses’ staff began to decline the Amalekites had all the energy, they had all the advantage.

Now when God says, “I am going to give you victory.”

“Thank You God, You taught me that when I was young.”

These are lessons you cannot learn as a theory. It’s no good having a theory of God being victorious if you don’t have any experience of it.

You won’t learn very much at all listening to me this morning – I am sorry about that. But what I am talking about this morning you will learn if it explains when you look back and say, “Oh yes, I have seen God do something. Yes, I have that in my memory bank. I have that behind me now. I have that to fall back on.”

Or you go home saying, “I am going to look for those opportunities where God is going to be at work” and that will become your teacher.

Our experience of God in the past is a resource for today, it’s a reservoir really from which we draw.

When I was a student many years ago, I spent a summer mission in Spain with Operation Mobilization. And we were a team of about 12 people. And we jammed in a minibus and drove all the way down from Belgium where the OM conference had been before we divided up – about 1000 young people – across Europe.

And we had to sell books from door to door, Christian books. And the income that those books generated paid for everything – our food, petrol – gasoline, rather, for our car, our
accommodation. And if there were no sales, there was no food and no accommodation and so on because we had no cash.

We ran short of money. We weren’t selling very well. And one night our leader got us all together and he said, “Ask God for a target figure of book sales for you tomorrow. And this will be an opportunity to see God work in lives. Don’t pull something out of a hat; ask God to give you something.”

The most anybody had sold that week was 600 pesetas worth of books – that was the Spanish currency at that time. I hadn’t sold anywhere near that so I thought, “Well, maybe I should go for 600 pesetas and just kind of equal what has been the best seller up until now.” But I didn’t know, maybe I should go for 500. But I honestly began to sense God said to me, “Plan to sell 1000 pesetas worth.”

Our leader told us not to tell anybody but just to write it down on a piece of paper that evening.

The next day I went out and we were selling these books and I sold a few, didn’t seem to be anything particularly special. But we sold a few.

And on the way back to the place where our van was parked, I passed 3 or 4 men together and I offered them some books and they didn’t want them.

And as I was leaving one man reached out a hand that had some loose coins in it and gave them to me and said, “Yeah, take this.”

I put it in my pocket and I didn’t look at it to see how much it was – I don’t know how much it was. It was just coins rather than notes.

When we got back to the van we counted up our money. My money came to exactly 1000 pesetas – no 999, not 1001 – it was exactly 1000 pesetas.

And God taught me something that day which has meant the only ground I now have on which to not trust God for His resources is sheer disobedience, because God has told me He is sufficient, or sheer unbelief.

Now of course we always battle when we face these issues. “Do I trust Him; don’t I?”

But if you have no experience in the past then start at the beginning. And every battle we face and every victory you see and every work that God does in us as young people equips us not just for then but for later as well.

Looking back on the wilderness experience in Deuteronomy Chapter 4:9 – Deuteronomy is looking back the last year of the journey in the wilderness - and in Deuteronomy 4:9 Moses said this:
“Only be careful to watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart for as long as you live.”

What a great statement. Don’t forget the things your eyes have seen, don’t forget the experience of that, and don’t let them slip from your heart - not just from your memory bank, but from your heart. Because the things you have seen, the things you have experienced as they live in your heart, will equip you for tomorrow and the next day and they will grow and develop.

“So Joshua, wherever you place your feet, I am giving it to you.”

And Joshua could say, “Thank You, I know You are capable of that, not because Moses told me, not because I read it in a book, but because I have experienced it in the battle with the Amalekites plus other places as well, but certainly in the battle with the Amalekites.”

Secondly, very quickly, and this is important. The second place that Joshua was prepared - that was in meeting battles (the first one), in meeting God is the second one.

In Exodus 33, we have a wonderful chapter where Joshua is with Moses in the Tent of Meeting. It’s a wonderful chapter. I recommend you read it sometime – not now but take it home – Chapter 33 and read it.

And God had warned them that He would not go with them further because of their unbelief. He said to them in Verse 2,

“I will send an angel before you…”

And in Verse 3:

“But I will not go with you.”

And when the people heard this they began to mourn and in Exodus 33:7 it says,

“Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the ‘tent of meeting.’ Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp.

“And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances of their tents, watching Moses until he entered into the tent.

“As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses.

“Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped each at the entrance to his tent.

“The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.”
Now listen to this bit:

“Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.”

Why not? Because he wants to meet with God himself. He has seen Moses meeting with God, speaking with God face to face as a man speaks with his friend. And he has been there with him and seen it.

And Moses leaves the tent to go back to get on with his business and Joshua did not leave the tent. He longed for this intimacy with God, where He was not just his God, but He was his friend.

It was a wonderful day when Jesus said to His disciples, “I do not call you servants; I call you My friends.

Servants don’t know what their master is doing, but friends do. And we move beyond just being servants now; we have moved into a new level of relationship. We have moved into the level of relationship where “you are My friend.”

Joshua longed for that. You know some people hear the voice of God and others of us, when we hear someone say they have heard from God, we haven’t a clue what they are talking about. We get cynical about it.

Because God can be someone you know about but not someone you actually know. God can be someone you believe in but not actually believe.

And Joshua heard Moses’ conversation with God, and Verse 12 it goes on:

“Moses said to the LORD, ‘You have been telling me, “Lead these people,” but you have not let me know whom you will send with me.’”

And then in Verse 14,

“The LORD replied, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’”

And then in Verse 15,

“Then Moses said to him, ‘If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.’”

In other words, says Moses, “If Your Presence does not go with us, I dare not, I cannot, I will not move on,” because the key to Moses’ life was the Presence of God with him.
And Joshua saw it and Joshua, in those intimate moments of Moses’ meeting with God, did not leave the tent, he wanted to linger and stay.

Now let me take you back to Joshua 1 as we finish.

Joshua 1:5, how do you think Joshua responded when God said this in Verse 5?

“As I was with Moses…” (Middle of Verse 5)

“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

“As I was with Moses” – what do you think happened to Joshua’s mind at that point? It went right back to the tent of meeting when Joshua met with God and met with Him speaking face to face as a man speaks to his friend.

And he heard Moses say to God, “Unless Your Presence goes with us, I will not move on from here.”

And God said, “My Presence will go with you Moses.”

Now says God to Joshua, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.”

That’s not a bullet point on a doctrine of God that He is with you. You don’t know that apart from experience of that. And God puts us into situations where we have no alternative but for His Presence to be the pre-eminent feature.

And Joshua learned that seeing Moses at the tent of meeting and Joshua learned that the Presence of God came from communion with God, which came from wrestling with God as Moses had been doing. (“I will send an angel but not Myself.”) And Moses wrestled with God over that.

You see we can’t just switch God on and off by a brief prayer, you know, we are going to do something –“Let’s just close our eyes and have a brief prayer and now suddenly God is going to do work.”

No, no, it is bigger than that, much deeper than that – much deeper than that.

And sometimes when your back is up against the wall and you have got to fight because sometimes by our own making, through our own foolishness, through our own sin, whatever it may be, or through some circumstances, we have got to wrestle and we come out of it saying, “I know God in a way I didn’t know God before.”

Joshua learned this when Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent. That’s what he learned. And so now he can say to the people when they face the Jordan River in Chapter 3:5,

“Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.”
Is that wishful thinking? It that hopefully, “God I have said it now, I hope You are going to fulfill it.”

No, I know enough to know that if the God who was with Moses is with me, His Presence with me, He is going to do amazing things.”

There’s the city of Jericho in Chapter 6, when they were to take the city of Jericho, they had to go round and round the city seven times.

“And Joshua commanded the people, ‘Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!’”

They came to the city of Ai – Chapter 8:7:

“The LORD your God will give it into your hands.”

This is His business now because we have dealt with Him.

They reach a coalition of ten kings in Chapter 10:8:

“The LORD said to Joshua, ‘Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand.’”

And so it goes on, until at the end of the book they renew the covenant with God at Shechem in Chapter 24:17 and Joshua says,

“It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled.

“And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land.”

Why is Joshua so confident about this? Because he has experienced the Presence of God as Moses had. And in seeing and experiencing the Presence of God, nothing frightens him anymore. He knows God is sufficient.

So these two, only two of seven lessons Joshua learned that equipped him for this book, in meeting battles God will deliver. In meeting with God, His Presence will be enough.

Do you know God in that way? Is God giving you an opportunity to learn things about Himself? Don’t unshirk them. It’s good to bear the yoke. If you are a young person here - I have just been in Japan and they called me a young man because Japanese live a long time, so it’s a great place to go to feel young because they go on and on and on.

But I am not really a young man. I know because I listen to that and really feel pleased and then look in the mirror and then my wife makes a comment.
No, no. Whether you are young – you see some of us start our Christian lives in the middle of our physical lives; we just didn’t know about Christ before we came to Christ. Many of you came to Christ later in life, but don’t miss the learning, teachable moments because it’s how you respond to God in the battles that you didn’t want, in the circumstances you thought you would be eliminated now that you are a Christian (that’s often a misunderstanding that we have), but in them we discover God is my strength, God is my victory. His Presence is with me. He is my Friend.

Every time you learn that lesson, you are better equipped for the next time, the next day, the next week. Until one day, “Joshua, lead the people. Why? Because you have learned the lessons when you were young.”

Let’s pray together and then Phil is back for one more song. Lord, we are grateful, deeply grateful that Your Word encourages us, but Your Word can never be detached from Yourself. You Yourself have to be active independently of Your Word as You work in our lives and circumstances.

And I pray that many of us will look at our circumstances this week with fresh eyes. We will see this is an opportunity to trust and to experience God and we walk by faith, not by sight. We trust You and we wait until we can look back and see that God has been active. And this is Your business.