**God’s Charge**

Introduction:

1. On July 6, 1987 my dad passed away. I was 32 years old, and I realized that the torch had just been passed to the next generation.

2. I could no longer go back and ask him what to do in a situation where I was confused. No more waiting for him to make the tracks for me walk in. I was the point man.

3. As I approach my three score and ten the more and more immediate it becomes to prepare the next generation for the passing of the torch.

4. In this passage Joshua was receiving the torch from Moses. Joshua would be God’s point man from this point forward.

5. And this is what God said to him.

6. Reading Josh. 1:1-9.

7. I would like to make 6 observations with you on the basis of this text. I want you to think about where you are in your life whether you are young, middle-aged, or older. I want you to think about your role and place in the plan of God and ask yourself where you stand in light of these six observations.

Discussion:

I. As one generation passes, another must accept the leadership to execute the plan of God (1-4).

 A. It’s an inevitable transition.

 1. Like it or not every one of us is dying. We are all terminal.

 2. We can pretend like it is not going to happen.

 3. We can choose to ignore it.

 4. We can accept the reality.

 5. But it is going to happen.

 B. The plan of God spans generations.

 1. Both Moses and Joshua understood this.

 2. They saw themselves as part of the execution of that plan.

 3. They recognized a personal role in it.

 4. They knew that God was real and active in their lives and in the lives of His people.

 5. We need to recognize the same.

 a. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not just the forefathers of Moses and Joshua

 and Israel.

 b. They are our forefathers too.

 c. God made promises and executed His plans through them and He is doing the

 same through you!

 d. Most people don’t understand this and I even think some Christians don’t get it,

 and so, they go about their business without understanding the role that God has

 for them. The clearer we are on our part the better we are going to be in

 executing the plan.

 6. It is the plan of God that we are in the business of executing, not our own plan.

 7. God called on Joshua to continue the execution of the plan (3-4). He is calling on

 us to continue the execution of the plan. Cf. Heb. 4:8-10. Even Abraham was

 looking past the land of Canaan (Heb. 11:16).

 C. Are you accepting this leadership? Are you preparing yourself? Are you helping

 others to see their role in this plan?

II. It is a plan empowered by God (5).

 A. God never gives us a responsibility that He will not empower us to perform.

 B. You may recall how Moses hesitated at the burning bush when God commissioned him

 to go to Egypt (Ex. 3).

 1. Moses complained that he was not a good speaker (Ex. 4:10).

 2. God’s response was, “Who made man’s mouth?” “I made your mouth. Now go and

 I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say” (Ex. 4:11).

 C. Too often I am afraid we would depend upon our own strength rather than the strength

 of God.

 1. Gideon defeated the whole host of the Philistines with 300 men.

 2. The little boy David defeated Goliath.

 3. God is not concerned to defeat his enemies with many or few. He is not

 concerned about our little strength.

 4. He even sent angels to strengthen Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, as He

 prayed.

 5. And promised to be with His disciples as they took the message of the gospel into

 all the world.

 D. The power to execute His plan is in God’s hands not our hands. It is a matter of us

 placing our trust in Him and allowing Him to work through us.

III. It calls for strength and courage (6, 7, 9).

 A. This is repeated 3 times in this text.

 1. It must be the critical message that God wants to get through to Joshua.

 2. It is repeated again in verse 18.

 3. Again in 10:25

 B. Verse 7 says, “be strong and **VERY** courageous.”

 1. “Be strong” (2388) comes from a primary root meaning to be or grow firm. It is

 variously translated in the NASB—with concepts like be firm, be powerful,

 encouraged, grow strong, give support, be helped. Caleb used the term to

 describe himself, now 85 years old, in 14:11, as being as strong then as he was

 when he spied out the land of Canaan 45 years earlier. He asked for the hill

 country and the fortified cities there.

 2. “Courageous” (553) comes from a primary root meaning to be stout, strong, bold,

 alert. It too is variously translated in the NASB with concepts like determined,

 hardened, firm, strong, etc.

 3. It was this same language that Moses used in Deut. 31:6, 7 to encourage all Israel

 and Joshua as they entered into Canaan.

IV. Such strength and courage is founded upon faith in God and is evidenced in doing what He has communicated (7).

 A. Deut. 31:3ff emphases this.

 1. Moses knew that strength and courage came from faith in the Lord’s power and

 promises.

 2. He had experienced it personally.

 3. Note verse 9 says, “Moses wrote the law and gave it to the priests.” It was to be

 read at the Feast of Booths. See verses 9-13.

 B. The source of strength and courage is reiterated in Josh. 1:7-9.

 C. Fear and confusion is a paralyzing force for those operating on their own strength. It

 results in trembling and dismay. Strength and courage belong to those who have

 placed their confidence in God, in His power and in His word.

 D. We have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28). It is founded upon

 the power of God, on His word (Heb. 13:7-9). Isn’t this the message of Heb. 11-12:3?

 E. What we are doing here tonight is no mere academic exercise. Our strength and

 courage comes from the word of God. It is living and active (Heb. 4:12). It is powerful.

 And as we depend upon it there is strength and courage to accomplish His purpose.

 Paul said, “Be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might.” He said, “Gird up

 your loins with truth; take the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation and the sword

 of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:10, 14-17).

V. When we do this our way prospers (8-9).

 A. Joshua and Israel were able to take possession of the land of Canaan.

 B. We have a promised rest that is superior to the land of Canaan (Heb. 4:1-12).

 1. Hebrews calls on us to be faithful.

 2. And reminds us of the need for endurance (Heb. 10:32-12:3).

 3. It reminds us that we have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb.

 12:28).

 4. And says, “Here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is

 to come” (Heb. 13:14).

 C. Thus, He works in us that which is pleasing in His sight (Heb. 13:21).

 D. Christianity is not just about living a good moral life. It is about faith in the power, the

 promises and word of God.

VI. There is no need for trembling and discouragement (9b).

 A. Trembling and discouragement stem from a lack of faith.

 B. Joshua conquered nations.

 C. We conquer the world, the spiritual forces of darkness, inherit a kingdom and enter

 the city that is to come. Satan is crushed under our feet (Rom. 16:20). All by the

 power of God as we submit to Him.

 D. But we have to see ourselves in His plan. We need to trust in His judgments and in

 His revelation to us. We need to act in faith, strength and courage. He will not desert

 us, nor will He ever forsake us.

Conclusion:

1. Will you lead in the accomplishment of God’s plan?

2. Will you teach His people? Will you encourage them? Will you be faithful yourself? Will you be found trembling before the task or confident in His power? Will you be strong and courageous?