

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Change Your Mind – Change Your Life - Week of April 14

Introduction

When our minds are overwhelmed with fear, doubt, family issues, confusion over our purpose or God's will and direction, it is hard to move forward in faith. Let alone move forward courageously! It has been said the battleground is the mind, and one of the devil's greatest strategies is to catch us off-guard – when we are fatigued and exhausted – and whisper words of defeat and discouragement. Often the devil will then stir up a couple other folks (even loved ones) to misunderstand our intent or question our motives. The voice of darkness doesn't have to do much after that because for many of us, sadly, this is all it takes to send us spiraling down in defeat.

Joshua had been Moses' faithful assistant for many years; now when it is time to lead the descendants of Israel into Canaan, after 40 years in the wilderness, Joshua still battles fear and discouragement. To be fair the assignment ahead of Joshua and the Israelites is gargantuan in size. The inhabitants of Canaan are fierce and the walls of the towns formidable. It is no wonder the recurring message of the LORD to Joshua is: "Be strong and courageous!" At least one thing we learn from Joshua is that courage is not the absence of fear, but it is pressing forward in the Lord's assignment (doing the right thing and leading with integrity) despite the fear. Often it is when we step forward in *faith* that the very presence of God shows up!

Read Joshua 3:9-17 and 4:1-18

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

*"Today you will know that the living God is among you.
He will surely drive out the Canaanites..."*

What is the Ark of the Covenant, according to Exodus 25:8-22. (Notice the Ark of the Covenant is the first thing God gives Moses specific instruction to build and have in the Tabernacle. Why?)

What is significant about the entire nation of Israel crossing the Jordan River on *dry* ground?

What do you make of the twelve stones taken from the riverbed (where the priests were standing with the Ark) and placed in the camp (Joshua 4:1-8), as well as the twelve stones placed in the river where the priests had been standing? (Joshua 4:9)

2. What are you going to do about it?

Did you know the Lord still drives out the enemy when we call upon His Name! Referring to Deuteronomy 33:26-29, when Moses had spoken these words in the presence of Joshua and all the people, what does it mean *for you* to live into the promise. In what ways is the enemy intimidating you and your family these days? Do you find this lesson from Joshua encouraging? If so, explain and share briefly with your Life Group.

3. How can we help you?

Gilgal sounds like the Hebrew word *galal* which means 'to roll'. In a sense, this second generation of Hebrews needed to know that God was good on his promises and big enough to *roll* away the reproach of 400+ years of Egyptian slavery. Do you believe God is good on his promises *for you*? Do you believe the Lord is strong enough to roll away the reproach of your past? What do you need to roll away today?

According to the opening words of Joshua, chapter five, "all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings who lived along the Mediterranean coast ... lost heart and were paralyzed with fear because of them" (Joshua 5:1). Throughout Scripture God's people, indeed all people of the earth, are instructed to fear the LORD. This is because God is holy; He is great and greatly to be praised. If you belong to the Lord, the enemy knows you are a child of God. You do not need to be afraid of anything or anyone. Yet, understand... the courage and strength in which we stand comes from one source: God and God alone. As Jesus told his disciples, "... apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Read Joshua 5:2-9

CHANGE YOUR MIND - CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Text: Romans 8:37-39, Joshua 4:9-18

PLAIN TRUTH

Timidity defines us by our _____ and
courage by God's _____.

1. Timid mind is centered on _____ -
Courageous mind is centered on _____.
2. Timid mind is _____ - Courageous mind
is in _____.
3. Timidity leads you to choose _____ - Courage
leads you to _____.
4. Timid mind hungers for the _____ -
Courageous mind hungers for His _____.

The new generation of Israelites needed to live into the LORD's covenant to Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14). Before they entered Jericho, Joshua was instructed to make sure all males bore on their bodies the mark (sign) of the covenant God had made with Abraham (see Joshua 5:2-9). The covenant of circumcision was more than a physical sign; it pointed to a greater call to cut away (or remove as a blemish) the sin, pride, and corrupt nature of the flesh – the *old* you, the *old* me. Christ calls us all to bear upon our hearts the true mark of faith. This new nature into which we are being made (recreated through Christ into the full *Imago Dei*) will be experienced personally as well as evidenced in the people with whom we do life.

Close by reading together –

“For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision. No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by God’s Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God not from people” (Romans 2:28-29).

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

Apr. 14: Joshua 9:3-10:43, Luke 16:19-17:10, Psalm 83:1-18, Proverbs 13:4

Apr. 15: Joshua 11:1-12:24, Luke 17:11-37, Psalm 84:1-12, Proverbs 13:5-6

Apr. 16: Joshua 13:1-14:15, Luke 18:1-17, Psalm 85:1-13, Proverbs 13:7-8

Apr. 17: Joshua 15:1-63, Luke 18:18-43, Psalm 86:1-17, Proverbs 13:9-10

Apr. 18: Joshua 16:1-18:28, Luke 19:1-27, Psalm 87:1-7, Proverbs 13:11

Apr. 19: Joshua 19:1-20:9, Luke 19:28-48, Psalm 88:1-18, Proverbs 13:12-14

Apr. 20: Joshua 21:1-22:20, Luke 20:1-26, Psalm 89:1-13, Proverbs 13:15-16

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