

**So What Now?  
Joshua 1:1-11**

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**Text Introduction:** Through the years you have grown accustomed to my question, “So What?” at the conclusion of my messages. I fell into this practice a few years ago as the result of making sure that every message ends on a note of action. As I routinely say, “We gather not so much for information, but for inspiration and transformation.” So, it seems fitting today to conclude my pulpit ministry with this message titled, “So What Now?”

**Text:** After the death of Moses the LORD’s servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’s assistant: <sup>2</sup>“Moses my servant is dead. Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I am giving the Israelites. <sup>3</sup>I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses. <sup>4</sup>Your territory will be from the wilderness and Lebanon to the great river, the Euphrates River—all the land of the Hittites—and west to the Mediterranean Sea. <sup>5</sup>No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you.

<sup>6</sup>“Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance. <sup>7</sup>Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. <sup>8</sup>This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. <sup>9</sup>Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

<sup>10</sup>Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people: <sup>11</sup>“Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get provisions ready for yourselves, for within three days you will be crossing the Jordan to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you to inherit.’”

**Introduction:** The book of Joshua picks up the story of the people of promise to the Promised Land. With new leadership, Joshua, we see God’s continued presence. Joshua is one of the most inspiring books of the Bible. Though there are pockets of disobedience, like Joshua 7, the history of the people of God, under Joshua’s leadership is a great example to us today of what it looks like to follow God.

Joshua’s story is also a good example to us of the transition or transfer of leadership. Transitions can be scary. This is where we find ourselves in Joshua 1. The future is uncertain, but with God, we are also assured that the future is certain.

Now, I am grateful that our application is slightly different. The text says, “Moses is dead.” I’m glad I’m not dead, but everything else about this text seems to speak to us today.

Here’s the big idea of this text: Sometimes things change. Sometimes leaders change. But God does not change.

Hebrews 13:8 is a favorite of ours at this point. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

When Joshua begins, everything in the first five books of the Bible has pointed toward the people of God entering the Promise Land. To Abram, God said, "Get up and go to a land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation." To all of the Patriarchs, God gave this same promise. As Genesis ends and Exodus begins, Israel is growing into a mighty nation. In Moses, they have their deliverer to lead them out of Egyptian slavery and set out on their journey to the Promised Land. Through Moses, God gave them the law to show them how to live and prosper in this new land. The giving of that law continues through Leviticus. In Numbers, they hesitated their entry into the Promised Land, and therefore wander around in the wilderness for 40 years. Deuteronomy is the second giving of the law to a new generation poised now to enter into the Promised Land. Again, everything to this point is about moving the people of Israel into the land that would be called Israel. And then, everything changes. Moses dies. Leadership changes. What do you do when a leader dies? What do you do when leadership changes?

Yahweh's faithfulness does not depend on funerals or Pharaohs. Yahweh's faithfulness does not depend upon rivers or giants. And Yahweh's faithfulness does not depend on leaders or preachers, or the giftedness or lack thereof of those leaders. God's faithfulness depends upon God's faithfulness.

So What Now?

Though leaders change . . .

**God's purposes are still the same.**

While I have been your pastor, I have tried to keep our purpose in front of you with these words: Know Him and Make Him Known.

At other times, we have said it this way. Preach the Gospel to the next generation and to all the nations all for His glory!

Soon, you will have another pastor. God will give him a vision. He will say it a little different. But God's purposes have not changed. He still wants to use First Baptist Church of Lafayette to spread the Gospel to Lafayette, Acadiana, and the world.

**God' presence is still promised.**

Any time we want to panic, we should linger on verse 5. We find courage in God's presence.

**God's prescription for success is clear.**

Your future and mine is tied to our alignment to the Word of God. This is our protection.

**So What?**

- **Be Strong and Courageous.**

Do not be afraid. God can handle whatever is your now and whatever is your next.

- **Stand on God's Word.**

In this culture, taking your stand on God's word may be the most courageous thing you ever do.

- **Surrender yourselves to God.**

At the end of Joshua in 24:15, Joshua says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." That's our commitment to you.

In 1942, Churchill spoke to the people of England after a British victory over the German troops driving the Germans out of Egypt. The battle marked a turning point in the war. It was the first victory. Churchill would write in his memoirs: "Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat." But in his speech after the victory, he said,

Now this is not the end.  
It is not even the beginning of the end.  
But it is, perhaps,  
the end of the beginning."

Those words are inspiring, but not nearly as important as the words of our Lord.

"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)