**Sermon Date:** January 2, 2022

**Scripture**: Joshua 1: 6-9 (ESV)

6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

**Big Idea**: Resilience is born out of Reliance

**Summary**:

In verse 6, God tells Joshua, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.” This is the foundational command of what God is calling Joshua to. It’s not a calling for the faint of heart or the calling of someone who is half-hearted, but the calling of one that is obedient to God, His plan, and His purpose. God is not dwelling on the passing of Moses. He’s focusing on the installation of Joshua. God is focusing on the present and the future, not because the past doesn’t matter, but because the best it yet to come for Joshua.

Be strong and courageous is a command and a calling that speaks directly to the fact that there are going to be events, circumstances, and battles that we’re going to need to be strong and courageous through – to practice resilience. God is speaking these words so that when, not if, life gets busy, or comfort is threatened, or we get overwhelmed, or life gets out of our control, we can run to the strength and courage of God rather than the weakness and fear of ourselves.

There are three responsibilities that we have as Christ-followers to strengthen our resilience through reliance.

 Responsibility #1 is to have a fierce focus on the Word of God.

 Responsibility #2 is to internalize the Word of God.

 Responsibility #3 is to remember the Presence of God.

**Questions:**

* Did you make a new year’s resolution or select a word for 2022? Share if you feel comfortable. What do you hope to accomplish through your resolution/word?
* These years of pandemic have us longing for “the way things used to be.” We want our lives to return to “normal.” That mindset can keep us focusing on the rearview mirror. Do you have a tendency to focus on the past, present, or future?

How does that shape your perspective?

How does that impact your reliance on God?

* The last two years have taught us that our resilience will be tested, but even greater than that, our reliance on God will be tested. This passage contains three responsibilities that we have as Christ-followers to strengthen our resilience through reliance. Responsibility #1 is to have a fierce focus on the Word of God! In verse 7, God uses a distinctive word to describe how Joshua should focus on his word. What is that word? (Careful.)

How would you describe a “careful” approach to God’s word?

* Unfortunately, many times our approach to God’s word is “careless.” What are some ways that we are careless with God’s word?
* Responsibility #2 is to Internalize the Word of God. Take hold of it spiritually, emotionally, mentally. Take the Word of God and put it into every aspect of your life. What practices help us internalize the word of God?
* Responsibility #3 is to remember the Presence of God. God gives Joshua some final warnings: be strong and courageous, because there are going to be circumstances that will challenge your strength and courage. Do not be frightened, but there will be some things that will scare you. Do not be dismayed, even though there will be some things that will seem earth-shattering. Be strong and courageous not because you are well-equipped but because **I** am coming **with you**. Does this responsibility comfort you or challenge you? Why?

How do you respond when things get challenging, scary, or heartbreaking?

How do we remind ourselves that God is with us?

* As we begin this new year, we must believe that the best has not passed us by, but the best is yet to come.

Being challenged and changed by the Word of God is not behind us, but in front of us. God’s plan is not behind us but in front of us.

Heaven is not behind us but in front of us.

We cannot come into a new year with old habits and expect our personal worlds to change.

We cannot enter in with uphill goals and dreams and downhill habits and mindsets.

We must come into this new year with a strong and courageous grip on the Word of God.

We must enter into this new year with the reminder that we do not go forward alone.

God IS WITH us.

How might these words change the way you approach the future in 2022?