

FACING A NEW YEAR OF LIFE
Joshua 1:7-9

Int. I will not dwell on the importance of thanksgiving for I see that you are full of it. You have considerably answered the Psalmist question when he said: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? He answered his question by saying: "I will thank Him in the assembly of His people, yes, I will praise Him." Hence we are all today.

What I will bring therefore is the Word of the Lord to our celebrants as they face a new opportunity, and new challenge of their own lives.

Our text transmit to us the promise of the Lord: a promise of success and happiness. It is however a conditional promise. The background of our text of Israel given the promise but never reached the frontier God had designated for them because they did not meet the divine requirements. So if the people of God fail to realize their objectives it is not because God has failed them but because they have failed God. God always fulfills his promises. God never walks out on his promises or lets us down. Many times we wonder why life has not realized its objectives. In such moments it is so easy to blame God. The reason for life's unrealized goal is found in the fact that we have not fulfilled the conditions.

What are these conditions?

1. First Condition: BE STRONG.

Man must play his part. There are some things God does not accomplish without the cooperation of man. Life is a two way street. God will do His part, but man must also have a part in the fulfillment. It is easy to leave it all with God and then wonder why nothing comes of it.

The word BE STRONG may mean make every exertion towards the fulfillment of the objectives. It also means to be determined and not weakened in your resolve. When God lead to something He wants you to accomplish do it with all your might and not slackened.

2. Second Condition: TURN NOT. The phrase here is this: "Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go." In the context it means Israel must have total obedience to the law of the Lord. For obedience to the Law always pays in the long run. Here in the case of these three young and promising children of the Lord this phrase means two things: One is that you must not turn away from the guidance of the Lord. Secondly, when God ask you to accomplish something don't stop nor change it to something you think it better. There are many that I know who change course only to find out that they were just a few steps to success. Their turn about brought them back to where they came from, or delayed them which was very costly. Say with Paul when you face an ascending and seemingly mountainous goals: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthen me."

3. Third, BE NOT AFRAID. There must be no hesitation on your part, but

be determine to do God's will in your own life. You must give yourself completely to the completion of your objective. The fundmanetal requirement is that you shall be a man of faith who will dare to venture even in the face of the impossible. You must act as if you have nothing to lose and live as if nothing can throw you out. You just face your task and your goal with the assurance from Jesus Christ, in Mk 9:23 "All things are possible to him that beleives."

CONCLUSION: The the reason why we should ~~not~~ hesitate to do the three requirements in order to achieve the goal God has given to you is based on the promise of his ~~un~~-failing presence: "The Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Here is the promise. It means that God never fails those who do not fail him. When life tumbles out of nowhere into being God comes with it. When man begins his journey down the river of time, God does not abandon him. Throughout the whole of life of God's children comes the assurance: "Lo I am with you always" Mtt. 28:20. This means also that always underneath and roundabout are God's everlasting arms. For we never make our way alone through the world. Faces may change and conditions may alter, but God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He keeps an eternal vigilance and stand guard over our life.

Thus our task and objectives may seem impossible when God is left out, but when we live with the awareness of His presence there are no impossibles.

BE STRONG, BE DETERMINE AND TURN NOT, BE COURAGEOUS, FOR GOD IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO!