**Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God *is* with you wherever you go.**

In our scripture this morning, God is talking to Joshua. Moses has died and Joshua has been placed in charge of the children of Israel. Joshua will be the leader of the nation in every sense, but the most important sense is that he will be the spiritual leader of the people. Though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are named the father’s of the nation, in every way, Moses has been their father and now Joshua is their father.

 It’s not easy to be a parent today. It’s not easy to be a mother and it’s not easy to be a father. Today, I am talking to the fathers, particularly the fathers of young children. Fathers, God commands you Be Strong, Be Courageous, Be Focused.

 In our scripture, God starts by saying - *Have I not commanded you?* A Command. Father’s, God commands us to be the spiritual leader of the family. You must love your wife as Christ loves the church and lead your children to know God. It’s not a suggestion to do when there’s nothing good on TV, no video games to play, no child’s event to attend, nothing more fun to do. Hear the command – obey God’s command. When we love God, we keep His commandments.

 The scripture continues - *Be strong.* Father’s – be strong. Be steadfast. The Hebrew word translated strong here means to fasten upon and not let go, seize it and holdfast. Hang in there. The world will tell you you’re doing it wrong – be strong. There will be times your children say they hate you – be strong. There will be times of discomfort with your wife – be strong. When you seize upon Jesus, insist! I’d rather be hated my whole earthly life and know I gave my family a view of eternity, than to be loved all my life and know they missed eternity. Father’s, be strong.

 The scripture continues - *of good courage*. Be courageous. The Hebrew word translated courage means be alert, mentally and physically, be on guard and watchful, protect your family fathers. The world is deceitful and very conniving, always seeking a way in. When it tries to slip in by the door, be waiting. When Satan tries to come in by the window, be ready. When he tries to come in by words of a friend, silence him. You will not always be loved for your vigilance. Be vigilant anyway. You will not always be popular for your stands. Take the stand anyway. When you focus on Jesus, your decisions will be rooted in Jesus. One day, your family will appreciate that. It will be one day… but it might not be today. Father’s, be courageous.

 Our scripture finishes - *do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.* Father’s, be focused. There is only one God and you have only one shot to focus on Him while your children are in a place for you to influence, while your family might be led. A child that sees his father love will likely grow to love. A child that knows his father believes boldly in Christ will likely believe boldly. A child that hears her father pray will likely pray too. Do not be afraid, in awe, struck down in dismay – God is with you the whole way, even when a son is mad, even when a daughter thinks you unfair, even when a wife disagrees. Focus on the Lord and lead as He leads you. Father’s, be focused.

 The world will try to tell you it’s old fashioned, it’s outdated, it’s out of step with the modern times. But the world was saying that to Joshua even back then. Let’s hear how Joshua responded to the world – Joshua 24:15 - *And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* Father’s choose you this day whom your house will serve – be strong, be courageous, be focused – as for me and my house? We will serve the Lord.

 Happy Father’s Day!