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Speaker: Pastor Mark Hanke
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Series: Courageous Living in a Dangerous World

Well – oftentimes when you finish one series, you start another one. Because I'm not ready to leave Joshua, we're not gonna start another one. I was reading some summaries and just different articles, and I came across one. A lady was summarizing – Lisa Pello's her name, and she was summarizing some kind of consensus thoughts or summary thoughts of Joshua. And as I was reading her articles, a number of years old, it kind of reminded me, or it stirred within my heart to take this one last step.

For 14 weeks we've kind of dug down, and we took on the Jericho, and the Ai, and the promised land, and conquering the 33 nations, and the conquering, but periodically I think it's helpful -- and I was kind of doing this -- wasn't planning on doing this for the series, but I decided I want to do something different, and that is to finish -- being inspired by a couple of these articles, Lisa's in particular -- is to kind of take the 5,000-foot level and ask the question: What is the takeaway that I have from this man? For 14 weeks we've sat at his feet. For 14 weeks we've wrestled with his life. For 14 weeks he's taught us. And so, as we go through this, some of these will have a ring of familiarity to them, and some of you couldn't make all of the weeks, but you're gonna be able to get kind of a comprehensive view.

Now. I don't know whether the right number is three, to be a trinitarian. I think that's a little hard for me to figure out three things that I take away from Joshua, so I landed on seven, because that's another biblical number. Ten's too many to remember, for me. So -- we dig in. And my hope is that when you walk away today, there will be these things that kind of are benchmarks. They are stones, maybe even if you will, memorials that Joshua placed in your life as he did mine.

Probably the one area that I maybe admire the most about this guy is what he did as a leader. He accepted an assignment from God that no one would want. No one wants to follow a hero. When you follow a hero -- man, in our world, it is almost inevitably a temporary assignment. No one wanted to follow Michael Jordan -- who could be him? No one wanted to follow John Elway. A good friend of mine is Vice President of a ministry -- a gentleman who's in eighties, been preaching all of his life. And I asked one time, I said, "Why isn't he retiring?" He goes, "Because no one wants to follow him. He's just one of those legendary individuals."

God comes to Joshua. Moses has led the Nation of Israel out of Egypt. Remind yourself again, 400 years these guys were in slavery. You can't imagine the, if you will, the esteem that they would have towards Moses, because he's the one who led them out of this 400-year bondage. They cherished him, they loved him! Yes, at times they wanted to kill him, but by and large they admired this guy. And then

comes Joshua, and God says, "Joshua, I want you to lead." I know Joshua was pleading with God, "Give Moses a pass! I know what he did, it was a little bit, you know, he made you mad, but God, tell ya what – he led us this far. Let him go into the promised land." There's probably more about Joshua going, "God, I don't wanna be the guy. People around here love Moses! I don't know that they're gonna follow me. And by the way," I'm sure Joshua's like, "I know Moses! He didn't make that bad of mistake, and I'm gonna be worse! What are you choosing me for?"

And after 40 years, it's interesting that God chooses Joshua, and his first assignment, would you believe, is to stand right at the Jordan, at flood stage – not even when the river is a trickle. No, when it's a mile wide, and God says, "Your first assignment is to get them from here over there." "Oh, well why not, God, that's easy." And he teaches us a principle – recognize that God brought you here. This wasn't your choice – it wasn't Joshua's choice -- this was God's choice. **Recognize that God brought you here. And follow Him.**

Some of you have been called to a task that you don't like, you don't feel equipped for, maybe you just feel like, "It's not the right gift mix, I'm not the right person. This is not the right season." That's not the questions of the statements that you need to make. Here's the question. And Joshua asked it. "God, are you asking me to do this? Because if you are, then all bets are off. Everything's off the table. God, if you're the one who's asking me to do that, then anything that I bring to you – I'm too young, I'm too old, I don't have enough money, Lord, I don't have enough wisdom, I don't have enough experience – God, this isn't the right season for me" – all of those things are off the table because when God asks you, He's already taken all of those into consideration. And He said to Joshua, "Joshua, I want you to lead."

It was not a career choice. A career choice would have been, "Stay in your sweet spot." It's not the right amount of money – he didn't get a pay raise. God didn't say, "Tell you what – you get a 20 percent increase in your salary. You're gonna get a huge, huge addition to your PERS. This is gonna be worth it – take it, Joshua." The guy didn't get any more money. He already had plenty of livestock. He was fit. So, it wasn't a career move. In fact, it was a bad career move. Following a legend is almost sheer disaster. It wasn't an economic decision. There wasn't any pressure, because no one wanted the job. And I'm sure Joshua was wondering, "God, can I do this? Do I have the ability to lead after Moses?" And maybe the thing that I respect most from this man is that he said yes. With all the inadequacies, and all the fears, he recognized that God brought him here, and his choice was simply, "Am I gonna follow God or not?" And for some of you, that's right where you're at, right now. God has some decisions, or God is tugging at your heart, and He's asking you some things, and you've got a thousand reasons why you're not the right person. That's not the right question, and it's not the right statement. Here's the question you want to ask: "God, are you asking me to do this? Because if you are, I'm in." Joshua teaches me to recognize, wherever you're at, God brought you there. And it's at that point you say yes.

There was a young lady recently chatting with me. It wasn't about a career move; it was about baptism. And she said, "You know, I have decided, I think God is asking me to get baptized, and I don't know fully why and I've been thinking about it for years." And she said, "What do you think?" And I said, "You know, I think you need to recognize that God brought you here to this moment in this season and he's asking you to take that step. You can't explain why you didn't do it five years ago, and you can't explain why you didn't do it seven years ago. What you can do is to recognize God has you in this moment, and He's asking you to do something. And your response always needs to be, 'Lord, if it's you, I'm in.'" Joshua teaches me that.

Secondly – and maybe this is what God taught Joshua, but He teaches us this also, is that **we're always to remember God's promises and hold onto them.** They become, I believe, if you chase that word "promise" all the way through, it becomes a thread that holds all of the text together. God actually starts it this way. He says to Joshua, chapter 1, verses 3 and 5: "I will give you every place where you have set your foot and that I have promised Moses." Now I know Joshua was like, "Yes! Because I know, God, you loved Moses. Not sure about loving me, but I know you loved Moses. And if you promised it to Moses, then I think I can – man, I can land on that, God! I'll hold onto that." And God said to Joshua, "Everything that I promised to Moses, I'm gonna do in you." Now – it's right that you say, "Well Pastor, this is the Old Testament, this is not us." Ah – don't let yourself off the hook. Hebrews chapter 13, verse 5 states this – and he's talking about contentment and he's talking about faithfulness, and he says, "Never will I leave you, and never will I forsake you." The same thing that he promised Joshua. "Joshua, I'm gonna be with you, and every promise that I gave to Moses, I'm gonna fulfill in you." "But Pastor, we don't have promises of, like, land." Well, maybe we do.

I have a good friend who works for the International Students Association. They work with internationals on college campuses, here in the United States and around the world. And they were invited by – and you're gonna hear it correctly – the North Korean government to come and to build an institution that trains the military English in North Korea. So he was on this fact-finding trip, and he was there in North Korea, kinda pinching himself, going, "Man, this is not South Korea – this is not even Turkey. This is North Korea." And they were traveling around. They had, I think it was three locations that they needed to look at to see where they were gonna build this office.

They landed on one installation – it was a military installation, and right there, somewhere on the property, there was a piece of property, they said, "You could build it right here." And they decided that was the place they wanted to build. And so, they began to excavate. And they've started – it's already done; it's been years ago when they did this – but when they began to excavate, they stumbled upon, of all things, a church bell. Yeah. North Korea? Church bell? Where'd this thing come from? They dug up. No one knew. And they started to discover the story. There was a Presbyterian church that was planted there over a hundred years prior to that, by Presbyterian missionaries. It had been bombed; it had been buried.

But I wonder if it's coincidence or if it's God way of saying, "This land was sanctified, committed to the Lord's work a hundred years ago, and God has a way of giving it back to whom it belongs."

Maybe God's promises are not just to the Nation of Israel. Maybe He has some for you. I sat down and began to work through, what are the promises that I hold onto every day? The ones that are top of memory – that's what I wanted. I didn't want ones that I had to study for, ones that are easy to access. Those are the ones I live with. I came up with ten – I won't read them all.

I always live very strongly with the idea that my weakness is not my greatest threat – it's my strengths. Because God says, "Mark, when you learn to embrace your weaknesses, it's then that you discover my strength." I discovered as I was pondering one of my favorite passages in Isaiah 41:10, "**Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and I will help you, and I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**" God promises, "Mark, every day in every situation, I'm there with you. You'll never go in anything, or face anything, that I won't be there to hold you." Romans 8 – it's an incredible comfort to me that God says, "Mark, **there's never gonna be anything that gets between you and me. Nothing. Nothing will separate you from my love. There's no power, including yourself. No principalities – height, depth, nothing, will ever be able to press a wedge between you and me. My love is that penetrating and that strong. Never doubt it. I'm with you every day.**"

One that I really enjoy and I think about often – God says, "Mark, **the enemy is never going to prevail against you or the church.**" Isaiah 54:7, Matthew 16. Matthew teaches us, he says, "The gates of hell – they're never going to prevail against the church." The church may take blows. The church at times will be wobbled and there will be moments throughout the world that the church will, if you will, face its deep struggles. But here's the promise. The promise, God says, is never ever in a billion years is the enemy ever gonna give a decisive blow and victory against the church. No matter how weakened it may get, understand God sides with the church. He loves it. And anyone who comes against it is an enemy of God. I love that promise, because I love the church.

Another promise that God reminded me of is, "Mark, **I never get tired of forgiving you.**" God never wakes up and greets me with, "You know what – tell you what, today's the last day. You don't get it, and I'm done forgiving you." God's never said that to us, and He's never said that to me, and He's never gonna say that to you. He never gets tired. He doesn't. He doesn't grow weary forgiving you. It's not a burden to Him.

God always promises to go beyond what I can ask for. That one is a promise that I just find mind-blowing. Ephesians chapter 3, verses 20 and 21 – God says that, ask, and understand that God will give you exceedingly and abundantly beyond anything you would ever ask or think. I don't know about you, but God's got some work to do. You know why? Because I'm praying for renewal for our north

downtown. It has hit some hard times. A lot of businesses have closed. And so, I'm praying for the Dalke team and for those who are renovating the Nordstrom's new building -- it's gonna build 167 -- and I'm praying for those who are investing in the JC Penney, and I'm praying for those who are thinking about buying the old mission and are gonna build something, and here's my prayer: "God, in three to five years, I pray that when we drive to church on a Sunday morning, we drive into the most vibrant, alive, and healthy section of this city. I pray that when people drive down here, they're just absolutely taken -- not with the difficulty of homelessness, but with the grace and the power of people who will invest in a city and see it healed." And so, I just tell the Lord, "If you're gonna do exceedingly and abundantly beyond anything that I would ever ask or think -- I can't imagine what you're gonna put into TJ Maxx! It's gotta be Disneyland!" Why? Because the Holy Spirit and Jesus are up there conspiring. "Oh Father, we've heard his dribbled prayers. But we're gonna do something beyond that. We're gonna bring life, transformation."

There's a promise in Romans 8 that no matter what comes against us, God says, **"I'm always gonna be able to be up to something good, and no matter what difficulty you face, God has the ability to turn it to good."** Now, here's my encouragement to you. God told Joshua -- "Joshua, I want you to remember my promises. You're gonna go to war -- I want you to remember. I've given you every place you put your foot -- that's gonna be yours. You're gonna get defeated -- you're gonna have times where you're gonna have to learn some things. You're gonna have to be humbled. But in the midst of that, never doubt my promise. I told you every place you put your foot, I'm gonna give you. I made it to Moses and I am a person of my word."

My encouragement to you is this. Take ten promises -- write them out. Try this for three months. If it doesn't work, call me back, I'll give you a refund. Three months. Write down ten promises. Take some that I suggested -- make your own. Read them every day. Make it the first thing you do in the morning. Get out of bed -- whatever you need to do to be coherent, four cups of coffee, I don't care. And then start reading through your promises, and live out of those. Pray out of those. Love out of those. Serve out of those. Because that's not your strength, my friend -- that's God's promise. And He always fulfills His promise. Remember God's promises and hold onto them.

"Saturate your mind with God's word, Joshua. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night." Let's go back and look at that. "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth." In other words, "What I want you to do is, I want you to read the Word of God enough, saturate your mind with it day and night so that when you speak, the Word becomes your native tongue." In other words, when you're talking, it's as if the recording of God's Word is so deeply drilled into your mind and your heart that it's just the way you think. It's the way you act. It's the way you respond.

People often tell me, "Well, that's just my personality. My personality is this way." No, I would like you to respond -- why did you respond that way? Because I have for

six months, for a year, for five years, been saturating my mind with the Word of God. It's the way I think. I'm asking God to wholesale give me the mind of Christ. That's what He told Joshua. "Joshua, in the morning, noon, at nighttime." My wife has a way – this is the way she does it. The things that she wants me to remember, she puts those verses up on the refrigerator. Because she knows I visit that place. You walk into our bathroom, and there's gonna be Scripture passages up on the mirror. You can just walk around our house. What is she doing? She's literally not – it's not just opening the Word of God. Of course she does that. And then she puts the Word of God on her tape, and so it's just being played. And so, you can just walk around the house, and she's listening orally to the Scriptures. And then you walk to the refrigerator and God says, "Whoop whoop. This is what I want you to know today." Then you walk into the bathroom. And really what she's doing is exactly what God tells Joshua. Put in every nook and cranny of your life the Word of God. Why? Because I want you to think that way, I want you to live that way, I want it to shape every fabric of your life. Because then you will be able to do the next one, and that is —obey God's Word.

He says in Joshua chapter 1: "Do not turn to the right or to the left." In other words, obey God's Word. "Then you will be successful and then you will be prosperous." There's a difference between saturation and obedience. There is. You can know that God says, "I want you to reconcile with your enemies" and not reconcile with them. You can walk away and say, "You know what? They hurt me too much. I'm done." You can know the Word of God and dismiss it. You can know the Word of God and know exactly how you're to live as a husband, and the Scripture is really clear. "I want you to die for your wife. I want you to put your life down for her just the way Christ did. I want you to put her needs ahead of your own, I want you to put her life ahead of your own, I want you to live with her just the way Christ lived with you." But there's more than just a few husbands who have said, "But Lord, she's not very faithful, and so, I'm not going to be until she is." That's really not what Jesus said. He didn't say my obedience is contingent upon somebody else doing a better job than you. He just simply said my obedience is, "This is what I want you to do." Be obedient to God's Word.

I said a couple of weeks ago that I think in our culture right now we're on a down side of obedience. We see it as hard and kind of restrictive and fundamentalist. It is if your obedience is a way that you control people, like your kids. Some people use obedience to God's Word – it's their way to control the behavior. Sometimes we even use obedience to control our spouses, or maybe other people. So, when obedience is used as a manipulative tool of control, it is heavy. It's burdensome. It doesn't feel good. But when obedience comes out of like Jesus, where He says, "If you love me, you'll obey me" then obedience is not hard. Because it's never hard to obey someone I love. If I love Christ, if I truly love Him, then obedience flows out of that. I long to be obedient. Because when I'm not obedient, low respect, low honor, low dignity seems to come as a byproduct of my disobedience. It seems to spawn hedonism, selfishness, rebellion, and a demanding spirit where I start laying down the law of what everyone needs to give me so that I'm happy. And

whenever I live that way, I'm not living out of love and obedience. I'm living out of what? Of rebellion and a demand that the world meets my need.

Joshua learned early on. If you're not obedient to God, there are going to be consequences. He learned it with Aiken. He learned it with himself when he made bad deals with people, where he didn't take the time to seek God. But the beauty about this guy is, in humility he learned. And he taught his friends, his family, his nation. Obey God's Word. And keep your focus on God. Why? Because we're always going to be heading into new territory.

I love this section. Joshua is headed into a place where he's never been before. They're getting ready to occupy the land. They've never been here in this geography, they've never been here. They aren't a fighting nation – they hadn't been for 400 years. They were slaves. Then they made this little hike, it was kind of like, you know, round and around in a circle. They're not fighting people. And all of a sudden, they're gonna have to go in and take on 33 different nations and acquire the property of those nations. And the Lord says -- as they're preparing to cross, He instructs them: "I want you to put the ark in front of you." Why the ark? Well, the ark was a picture of God's presence. When you had the ark, you had God, and when you didn't have the ark, it seemed like God was somewhere else. So He says, "I want you to put the ark in front of the people, and I want it to lead right into the Jordan." And this is what God says. And I love this line. He says, "Then you will know which way to go since you have never been this way before." Chapter 3, verse 4. "Joshua, you're heading into territory you've never been. You're leading a people you've never led before. You're gonna face challenges you've never seen before. And you're not gonna know what to do. And there's not gonna be a book that you can go back to, 'This is what we do in this situation.'"

A number of years ago, prior to COVID, the staff was reading, prophetically, I believe, God gave us this book to read. It was called Canoeing in the Mountains. And it's about the development of the West, and those who made their way out west believed at the time that you could make your way from the east coast to the west coast through water. And they got to the Rocky Mountains, and that's where the name came from – Canoeing in the Mountains. They had to set the canoes aside, because they're not gonna get to the Pacific Ocean by canoes. They had to change their strategy. We had read that probably – I can't remember, the staff will tell you – somewhere like six months, or maybe less, prior to when COVID broke. And we all kind of looked at each other going, "Wow. Look how God has begun to stir in us a creativity to respond in this season."

When we were doing seven services and nine services and out in the parking lot, and ringing bells, and communion on the fly, and streaming – everything was different. But it hasn't stopped. I was talking with some folks that work for the Luis Palau Foundation. They've been doing some work at the churches, in the churches up in Portland, looking at their evangelism strategy, but also looking at the effect of the churches, what's happened. And they've noted across the board a 50 percent

departure of people. Sometimes more, but on average, 50 percent from virtually every church in Portland. Life is different. There are some rare exceptions. But anyone who is in the life of the church understands there's a whole different ball game today. And by the way, what we used to do, and the fingerprints of what we used to do and how we used to do life in the church, and how we operated – everyone understands, that won't cut it today. And it won't be just a matter of just good sage wisdom. No, I can hear God speaking to us the way He did Joshua. "Then you will know which way to go, since you've never been this way before."

Some friends were getting ready to make a very, very significant decision, and they didn't know how to make it. It was kind of like it was a paradigm they hadn't thought of. And sometimes, you know, basic questions are the hardest. Like how do you discern the will of God? Um – my address doesn't show up in the Bible, and God, should I take this job or should I move my family here, or whatever the case may be. Those kinds of things – should I buy into this business? Those kinds of decisions don't show up specifically in the Word of God, and so, they struggled, and somebody told them, "I want you to wait upon the Lord, and wait 'til the voice of the Lord tells you what to do." And they were, like, "What?!" God's never spoken to me. What's that look like? I've never been here before." But the decision was of the type that they knew, "We can't afford to make a bad decision. Stakes are too high."

They began to pour over the Word of God. A friend told them to wait upon the Lord. Wait for what? Wait for His guidance. Wait for His provision. Wait for His direction. If you seek Him, God will lead you. They began to pour over the Word of God. They sought counsel from a couple of different streams that they trusted. And God began to put together the pieces of their puzzle. It was as clear as anything. And they had the confidence that God was leading them.

I think the future is going to demand that of the church. Because where we're headed, and the issues that our government is bringing, the things that are happening – I'm not a prophet, I don't mean to speak as a prophet. I'm just experiencing the same thing you are. The sage old wisdom of yesterday is not gonna cut it today. We're gonna need to be directed by the Spirit of God, empowered by God. Because God is gonna say to us much like He did to Joshua, **"You haven't been here before. Follow me. Seek my presence. Keep your focus on me."** You're not gonna be able to go into Christian autopilot maybe like you've done in the past, where you can make it through on three dollars' worth of God. Doesn't cut it. It won't fuel. It won't develop the kind of convictions that you can face, the ebbs and the flows of the currents of this day, and some of the decisions they're making in local districts, in local governments, and in national governments, and maybe even in international meetings that are occurring. And God's gonna say to the church, "A virus took 50 percent of you out." Fifty percent of people in might say, "Pastor, it's okay. That doesn't mean they're not Christians." No, I – I'm with you. But my dear friends, if they're not associated with the body of Christ

utilizing their gifts in the body of Christ to strengthen the body of Christ, at best they're disobedient Christians.

If a virus took 50 percent of the church out, what's gonna happen when my preaching becomes illegal because I don't take the right position on gender? What happens, my friends? Does another 50 percent of the church vacate out because their pastor got arrested? Will there be those of you in this place who will say, "Our pastor's in jail. I got the message." Do we have the strength for that? Because I think we're in territory we've never seen before, and I don't think it's gonna get easier. And we're gonna hear from God. Then you will know which way to go, since you've never been this way before. I think that's ahead of us. So, keep your focus on God, because we're always headed into new territory. Martin Luther was right when he said, "I know not the way He leads me, but well do I know my guide."

The next God tells him is, "**Faith is spelled 'risk' – Joshua, take it.**" What do I mean by that? In this passage, Joshua chapter 3, verses 15 and 16, it says, "As soon as their feet touched the water's edge, the water – the river parted." I wish it read differently. I wish this is the way it happened: As soon as they got to the edge, God saw that they were ready to cross and because He didn't want them to fear that He was not going to act, He parted the water before they ever touched it, and then they could walk across it. That's what I wish God did. I wish I didn't have to live by faith. I wish I didn't have to wake up and take decisions and step into life. But Hebrews 11:6 tells me that the only way we're ever gonna please God is to live by faith. "By faith I believe that Christ came and died on the cross. By faith I believe He rose from the dead. By faith I believe that He imparts His righteousness to me and forgives me." All of that by faith. But it also means that sometimes that faith comes down to decisions that we have to make.

A number of years ago Kerri and I were pastoring in a different city, and I just felt gassed. I was done. I was like, "Man, I'm toasted. I just need to do something else." And so, I resigned to our elders on a Tuesday night, and they said, "Mark, you can't resign. We love you. Take a year off sabbatical." That seemed pretty cool. But I said, "No, it wouldn't be right. I'm just done. I don't have a vision." And my dear friend Darrel looked at me and said, "Mark, they don't hire pastors that aren't working." I smiled, and I said, "Good. I really don't want to pastor ever again." I resigned.

Thursday I'm sitting in my office, cleaning things up, saying goodbyes. Finishing out. I'd given them a month, I think it was. I get a phone call from a friend. "Hey, Mark – we have an emergency." I said, "What is it?" He goes, "Well, the director of our organization" – it was over all of our churches in the Conservative Baptist, and he said, "Man, he just literally" – and they're in an emergency situation – "resigned. And we're sitting around a table, right now, as we speak, and your name came up, and we want to ask you, would you ever have the time to be our executive director in an interim basis? And it was unanimous – we voted you in. Would you accept

it?" This is Thursday – and I'm thinking to myself, "Man, this is cool. God knows. I have such little faith I can only make 48 hours before I'm gonna panic." But you know what? I think sometimes God does that to you. He wants you to take the first step.

I remember years ago when our children's ministry – we went off campus because we wanted to reach the city for Christ, not just disciple all of our kids – which is wonderful, but we wanted to reach more of the kids, so we went off-campus and we changed from the VBS to the skills camp. But then there came this problem of working with some of the schools and predictability. And so, then our director said, "I think we need to go to the east side of town." And I remember people calling and asking us – "Hey, if you go all the way over to the east side of town, I mean, we never drive over there – I don't think people will go." It's like, "We're losing kind of our home base of where we're at." And they had all of these reasons why that's a bad move! Man, am I glad our leaders had faith. Because I think we're up to about 550 kids that are signed up for this year. Somehow, people found us. Because this year we're gonna have 550 or 600 kids. They're gonna hear about Christ. But you know what? It took faith. It took a risk -- for Stephanie and her team to say, "We need to go to the east side." My friends, faith is spelled risk – R-I-S-K. Take it. Because that's the only way we please God.

Last – **you're building the faith of the future. Therefore, make a memorial.** I think it's about 12 different memorials that are built through the book of Joshua. Not one of them was built for Joshua. Not one of them was built for Caleb. Not one of them was built for their peers. They very specifically told us, "When you walk your kids by these, and your kids and your grandkids say, 'Grampa, why is this pile of stones out in the middle of your field of wheat? We're driving around, gotta move the cows around it. It's like – why don't you move this' – 'Oh, son, let me tell you. See over there, that pile of rubble. That used to be Jericho. It was inhabited by enemies of God, and I remember marching around that city, kind of thinking to myself, Lord, is there a better way you can pull down Jericho? But if you want me to march, I will. And I remember, son, marching around that thing, and then on the seventh day we had to get the musicians out, and they started blasting their horns, and the next thing you know, that thing right in front of my eyes came crumbling down. God did that. We didn't touch the rock – God did it. And son, God'll do that for you. Walk with Him – trust Him."

When you take your kids for a walk around your house, is there anything that tells them the story of God? When you take them out on your property and you walk them around, is there any place where they pause and say, "Dad, what's that about?" Because if not, that's your responsibility. That's what Joshua teaches me. Find those places. One of mine is right there. Right there. Our church had paid off \$800,000 in about six months to get that building debt-free. And lo and behold, we discovered that if we didn't own that property over here, this property was no longer going to be able to be used for the worship center. Why? Because we wouldn't have the parking. And we had the lease with the building over there, but

they weren't gonna continue that, and so, we were gonna get to the place pretty quickly that if we didn't have additional off-street parking secured for our church, this became a facility that we couldn't occupy. Man, we were pinched into a corner. If we wanted to be a church for the city, we were gonna have to move to another location. And we just finished this \$800,000 mortgage, and it was like, man, we were debt-free and being debt-free, you don't wanna go back into debt, and it was so glorious. And then all of a sudden we got a notice from a realtor – hey, this property's gonna become available, but you only have eight weeks. And after eight weeks, if you don't put down and secure the purchase of this, it's gonna go to somebody else. We'd just paid off \$800,000 – we were gonna come back to the church and say, “Hey, by the way – now we have to do a \$1.25 million purchase and we have eight weeks to raise it.”

The eighth week – it was a Sunday, and we were gonna receive notes – not cash. And I came down, and this little boy – he was eight years of age – he met me right there. He said, “Pastor, I'm in. I've taken all my allowance for eight weeks. Here it is.” I think it was about a buck a week. Think it was eight dollars. And I said to him, “You don't need to give it right now. Today's just the day you record. And I'll record your eight dollars.” I wasn't trying to dismiss it, but – you know, eight dollars against \$1.2 million – I knew we had a ways to go. You know what that little kid did? He shoved that eight dollars into my hands. He said, “Take it. God's gonna raise it.” Eight years old. I'm gonna watch his life. Because he's gonna walk with God. I'll never forget that place. Different colored carpet – it was uglier than sin. It was red.

My friends, where do you take your kids? I'm gonna take my grandkids to this park over here. You know, the one that's drug-infested and no one takes their kids. There's gonna come a day that we're gonna have a party over there. You know why? Because it's gonna be that safe. And what Joshua taught me is that **I have a responsibility, and my highest and first responsibility is my kids and my grandkids. I must pass my faith to them.** But here's the up side. God has put it within our kids and our grandkids to mirror the very passions that they see in us.

Let me tell you a story to illustrate that. Joseph and Wynifred were a couple -- probably none of you've ever heard of them. They lived in Saskatchewan – this is back prior to the great depression, so that was in the latter twenties and early thirties. They were farmers up there in Saskatchewan and Joseph Haldeman, he – he was a pretty successful farmer prior to the great depression, but it got the best of him, and he lost his 5000-acre farm. Lost everything. So he took a stint at being a chiropractor and tried that. That didn't work. And then he tried to be a politician, and that didn't work. And so, he finally wrapped it all up. His wife urged him, saying, “Honey, the one thing you love most is flying. Let's pursue that.” And so, they did. And they moved to South Africa. They boxed up, kind of disassembled and put their 1948 single-prop airplane in boxes and shipped it over to South Africa, and they put it back together, and he took up flying.

He was kind of an entrepreneur, a creator, and he was always creating new things. After Lindbergh made his famous transatlantic flight in the latter twenties, which was 3600 miles, the Haldemans decided, "We wanna take on that flight," but it wasn't 3600 miles – they actually flew over 30,000 miles from south Africa to Australia, from Australia back to South Africa. When they got back, they got their family together and they showed picture after picture of their trip. One in particular grandson was infatuated with grampa's passion of adventure. He would frequently find himself over at their house, asking grampa, "Tell me more stories about your flight."

You've probably never heard of Joseph and Wynifred, but I guarantee you you've heard of Elon Musk. Elon Musk wants to colonize Mars. I'm not buying. I like the earth – I'm going straight from planet earth to planet heaven. But I do have to ask the question: where did a young guy get the idea of Tesla? Where did a young man get the idea to completely transform aeronautic field? And who dreams up the idea of colonizing Mars? My friends, please don't misunderstand me. I'm not trying to sanctify the character of Elon Musk. I'm simply observing. As one writer of a biography of Elon Musk asked, "Where does a kid discover the passion to redefine the auto industry and the aeronautic industry?" And the answer was, at the feet of his grandfather.

You and I have sat at the feet of Joshua. And some of us will take greater risks because of him. Others of us will make a new commitment to obedience to God's Word. We will all do it. Why? Because Joshua's life is a torch to follow. And his God is a God to trust. That's my takeaway of this man. And when you sit at the feet of a person of faith, you begin to reflect that faith. That's my hope for us as we've sat with Joshua.

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