



Not Frightened nor Dismayed

I don't know if there have ever been more powerful words that have ever been spoken then: "LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

"I sure hope you are" had to be spinning around Joshua's mind. Not only would he have the task of caring for this rebellious nation, but he would have to deal with some of the greatest challenges. The Promised Land was not yet theirs. There were battles to be fought, a war to be waged, reconstruction of entire cities, distribution of lands, governing of this people. These were Joshua's problems now.

But it was the Lord who gave him this assurance. Not some earthly ruler, who was only looking for his own interests. It was the Lord who spoke heaven and earth into existence. It was the Lord whose word had brought his ancient ancestor, Abraham, to Canaan; who had given Abraham children, though he and Sarah were beyond childbearing. It was the Lord whose word had launched Joshua and this people out of slavery and had removed every obstacle in their path with powerful signs and wonders. It was the Lord who had spoken: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9 ESV). These were words of promise in the face of great challenges that lifted Joshua's spirit's and helped equip him for his tasks.

If this were the only place we could find such an assurance, we may wonder if that were true for us. But, but again and again, I read in the scripture our Lord cared for the grieving, met His people with His love, comforted them with his word and granted them the assurance of his strengthening presence. "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." "Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine." "The Lord is my refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble." "I am the vine. You are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him he will bear much fruit." "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

You are not alone. The words Joshua heard are words of promise we can live by. They're words of hope that give us strength – words that pick us up and give us a reason to go on living.

A woman was waiting nervously to enter into surgery. A nurse standing nearby noticed her look of concern and gently asked, "Are you a Christian?" The ailing woman said, "Yes. Why do you ask?" "Well, I noticed how worried you look, but you have nothing to fear. Just remember what it says in the psalm, 'If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.' If you wake up here in this hospital, the Lord will be with you. And if you should open your eyes in heaven, you will be with the Lord. But in either case you and the Lord will be together."

Reflection:

1. In what times of your life have you needed to hear "I am with you?"
2. Do you see any patterns in your life when God has been near? Name them.
3. What area of concern do you need to believe God is near and is working it out?