

28-January-2018

Intro

Have you looked in the mirror lately?

You may have noticed you're not getting any younger.

You might not be 120 years old like Moses in our Bible reading?

But I don't know about you, sometimes I feel 120 years old!

The truth is we're not going to live forever on this Earth

[PowerPoint 1-Intro]

So what will your Christian legacy be?

What would people say about your Christian faith, at your funeral?

Who are you going to pass your Christian faith on to?

(pause)

In our two readings today we see ageing Moses passing the baton on to Joshua and an ageing Paul passing the baton on to young Timothy.

Moses to Joshua (Deuteronomy 31:1-8)

So let's have a look at what we can learn from Moses as he passes on to Joshua

[PowerPoint 2-Moses to Joshua heading]

First some background on Moses

[PowerPoint 2a-Moses background]

- He led God's people, the Israelites, out of slavery and mistreatment in Egypt

- He brought them across the Red Sea - thanks to God's miraculous parting of the waves of the Red Sea
- He led the people through 40 years of wandering in the wilderness
- He listened to their constant complaining - with patience and Godly correction
- He received the 10 commandments from God and passed on God's instructions to the people
- He led them to the brink of the Promised Land

And now God's got other plans

Here in Deuteronomy chapter 31 - if you turn there now

We see in v2

[PowerPoint 2b-Moses to Joshua]

Moses is 120 years old - he can't lead the people across the River Jordan - God has other plans.

And Moses gives the people a pep talk in v3-6 - He says:

- God's going to be with them as they cross the River Jordan into the Promised Land
- God's going to take care of any of the enemies, the Israelites encounter
- The possession of the Promised Land will be successful
- And Joshua will be the one to lead the people now - not Moses
- Moses passes on to the people that God will be with them. They just need to be strong and courageous and not afraid - God promises not to leave them nor forsake them

[PowerPoint 2c-Joshua pep talk]

Then Moses gives a pep talk to his apprentice, Joshua in v7-8

And notice Moses says it in front of everyone - they are witnesses of Joshua's new job description. Moses says:

- Joshua is the one to lead God's people into the land God promised - AND Joshua is to be the one to divide the land between the 12 tribes of Israel - so they can receive the land inheritance that God promised to their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob centuries earlier
- And Moses encourages Joshua - telling him to be strong and courageous because God has chosen Joshua to be the one to lead His people across the Jordan, so it stands to reason God will be with Joshua
- And again Moses makes similar promises to Joshua as he did to the people God will be with Joshua - and never leave him nor forsake him - so Joshua doesn't have to be afraid or discouraged.

Now we must understand - that Joshua wasn't just thrown in the deep end when taking over the leadership of Israel.

[PowerPoint 3-Joshua's training]

- Joshua was Moses' aide since he was young (Numbers 11:28)
- Joshua went with Moses to the mountain - when Moses went to meet God
- Joshua was given opportunities to lead and serve - throughout the book of Exodus (17:8-16 and 24:12-24)

- Joshua showed love for and dedication to the Lord and the tabernacle of the Lord (Ex 33:9-12)
- Joshua proved himself to have courage despite the fears of the majority (Numbers 13-14). While others focused on the obstacles, Joshua saw what the Lord could do for them. It was because of Joshua and his colleague Caleb, who tried to convince the people to trust God that they were even allowed to enter the Promised Land after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. From Joshua we learn that those who would be Godly leaders must stand for what is right even when everyone else wants to do wrong. They must not be intimidated or allow fear to control them.

How did Joshua go?

Well - he successfully led the people into the Promised Land and he divided the land among them as he was told to do

Yes - he had his problems dealing with a stubborn bunch of people - who often rebelled - and often wanted to get mixed up with gods of the surrounding nations.

But it's worth noting - the stand Joshua made with the people

[PowerPoint 4-Joshua legacy]

Quoting from Joshua 24:15

"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the

Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

What a wonderful legacy Joshua has left us

Can we join with Joshua and say - "as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord?"

(pause)

Paul to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:1-13)

Now let's turn to our NT example

Please turn to 2 Timothy 2

And let's see what we can learn from Paul's mentoring of Timothy

[PowerPoint 5-Heading Paul/Tim/Strong]

Notice Paul's relationship with Timothy in v1 - Timothy is like a son - they're family

And again there's the encouragement to **be strong** (like Moses encouraged

Joshua). With Timothy being young - he would find it difficult in ministry - with

people who were older "wiser" and "more experienced" - so Paul calls Timothy to

be strong.

How can Timothy be strong?

He can be strong in the knowledge that He has God's grace as his foundation -

God's grace in sending Jesus - the free gift from God to allow His Son to die on a

cross for our sins to be forgiven. So Timothy can be strong because of the

importance of the message that people are saved from their sin by Jesus

And here comes Timothy's job in v2

[PowerPoint 5b-2 Tim 2:2]

It's our memory verse this week [Which we're going to remember by next week!]

And **the things you have heard me say** in the presence of many witnesses **entrust to reliable people** who will also be **qualified to teach others**

So the same truths about Jesus which Timothy had heard Paul proclaim among many witnesses over the years, Timothy must now entrust to reliable people who will be competent to teach others also. So Paul is not talking about secret stuff he privately told Timothy, but clearly the truths which Paul preached in his public ministry. Paul does not expect future teachers of the church to produce a different teaching - because the message of Jesus is changeless in all ages!

So Timothy's job (and ours) is to pass on the *Gospel* - the *Good News* of Jesus - to reliable people - qualified to teach

What's that going to look like for Timothy and us?

[PowerPoint 5c-soldier's attitude]

See v3-4 - it's not going to be a picnic - Timothy's going to have to have a **soldier's attitude** - being a soldier in Jesus' army

Real soldiers don't give up just because of hardship. As Christians we are called to be soldiers of Jesus - willing to endure hardship for our commanding officer,

Jesus. Willing to detach ourselves from bad things like: pride, independence and self-will - and sometimes even willing to detach ourselves from good things like: fun, family and home - all for the sake of serving Jesus - otherwise we can't fulfill Jesus' call **"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. (Matthew 16:24)**

[PowerPoint 5d-athlete's attitude]

The job's also going to look like having an **athlete's attitude** - see v5

Athletes can't make up the rules as they please. They must compete according to the rules to receive the prize at the end of the race

It's possible to fall into the mistake of thinking we can make up our own rules as a Christian. Having thinking that says: "I know this is sin, but God understands, so I'll just keep going in this sin"

[PowerPoint 5c-farmer's attitude]

And the job will also require us to have the **attitude of a hard-working farmer** - see v6

So we must be hard-working Christians as we serve the Lord - not lazy.

Unlike soldiers and athletes - where they're sometimes might be glamour in the job. The farmer's job is not glamorous - just hard work! It's often tedious, boring and unexciting. If we only work hard when we're in the limelight - they we need to ask God to change our hearts.

And notice Paul says in v6 that Timothy - like a hard working farmer - should be first to receive a share of the crops. When Timothy and us have spiritual food to pass on - we must eat that spiritual food ourselves first. If we're not being fed by God's Word - how can we really feed others?

And like any good farmer, we will have to wait patiently for the harvest of the seeds of God's Word - we've sown in others...

Joshua and Timothy - were not taught overnight!

Neither are we? Nor are the people we will teach!

It requires time and commitment!

(pause)

[PowerPoint 5e-Reflect on the teaching]

Paul then instructs Timothy in v7 - to reflect on what he's just been told

Paul has just given 3 illustrations of a Christian life: a soldier, an athlete and a farmer. All require perseverance to succeed

A soldier who stops fighting before the battle - won't see victory

An athlete who stops running in the middle of the race - won't win

The farmer who stops working before the harvest - won't get any crops

Timothy and us are called to see the importance of perseverance

Paul then explains to Timothy in v8-13 why it is possible to persevere

And it's because the Gospel is the truth and it brings salvation to people through Jesus - and leads people to eternal glory in Heaven - living with God forever

It's that truth that kept Paul going - even though he's chained like a criminal as he writes to Timothy

[PowerPoint 5f-truth]

Paul endures because he cares about people's souls being saved

So Paul reminds Timothy and us - to **hold on to the truth**

That the *Gospel* (Good News) of Jesus was actually part of God's plan even in the Old Testament

Jesus is the Promised Messiah of Israel - from the family line of King David

All history looked forward to what Jesus would do to save people

And Paul says - in v8 - remember the truth - the great credential of Jesus and the anchor of Christianity - is His resurrection from the dead.

Jesus' resurrection was the proof that though it looked like He died on the cross like a common criminal, He actually died as a sinless man out of love and self-sacrifice to bear the guilt of our sin. Jesus' death on the cross was the payment but the resurrection was the receipt, showing that the payment was received as perfect before God the Father

That's why Paul is prepared to suffer like a criminal - in v9

And endure suffering so that people can be saved from their sins - in v10 - saved by Jesus

And so Paul finishes in v11-13 with a trustworthy saying - that Timothy and us - can pass on...

- V11 - As Christians - when we first believe in Jesus - our old self dies as though crucified with Jesus - and we are born into a new life - in the Holy Spirit
- As Christians when we eventually die at the end of our lives - we have the promise that we live on into eternity with God forever
- V12 - If we stick it out - being faithful believers - regardless of the difficulties and trials we face right now. The reward we get is to reign with Jesus in Heaven
- V12 also has a warning - those that disown Jesus will be disowned. So if we disown Jesus - by ignoring His teaching - or by denying what He has done for us or denying what He commands us to do - Jesus will disown us. That's what Jesus means in Matthew 10:33 - **33 But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.**
- Then v13 - If we are faithless, he remains faithful. So if someone does fall away from their faith in Jesus - it doesn't change who Jesus is - He still remains faithful. Jesus doesn't change - He still wants people to come back to Him.

Applications

So how can we apply these two passages of Moses & Joshua - and Paul & Timothy - to our lives today?

[PowerPoint 6-App1]

1. First - God made certain promises in our OT passage today. All those promises were kept. So when He promises He will never leave us nor forsake us - **we can trust those promises**

[PowerPoint 6-App2

2. Second - we need to become those **reliable people** qualified to teach and to pass on the message of Jesus to others. How do we become those reliable people?
 - a. By guarding the good deposit of God's Word entrusted to us - with the help of the HS (2 Tim 1:14)
 - b. By passing on what we've heard (2 Tim 2:2)
 - c. By continuing with what we've learnt - persevering and remaining faithful to God's truth - because it's God's Word and it came to us from reliable people (2 Tim 3:14)
 - d. By being prepared in and out of season - to correct, rebuke, encourage people - with patient and careful instruction (2 Tim 4:2)

Examples of doing that

- i) Reading and studying our Bibles more - learn those memory verses each week
- ii) Join a growth group - lots to choose from here at St. David's or we can start one that suits. They're called growth groups because we grow in our knowledge and faith of Jesus & God and grow in how we apply God's word to our hearts

- iii) Pass on the message of Jesus to children - Sunday School (training available) and Scripture in schools (training available) and at home with your children/grandchildren on your lap. Remember, young Timothy was taught by his grandmother (Lois) and his mother (Eunice) - 2 Timothy 1:5
- iv) By our Christian example. Our family/friends watch us. Model to them what a Christian looks like. They may copy us!

[PowerPoint 6-App3]

3. Third - Find a Joshua or a Timothy to pass on the message of Jesus to. Be praying for a hungry, keen, teachable person to pass on to. Commit this prayer request to God over the next few weeks.

Conclusion

To finish up then...

We have a job to do - to pass on the message of Jesus to reliable people - so they too will - in turn - pass it on to others

But let's not forget - our role and God's role

[PowerPoint 7-Conclusion]

God must be involved - He's at the heart of this baton passing -

As Psalm 127:1 says

Unless the LORD builds the house,
the builders labor in vain.

And let's not forget our role in relation to God's role

As the Apostle Paul says in 1 Cor 3:5-7

⁵ What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷ So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, **but only God, who makes things grow.**

Our job is to plant and water - God brings the growth

Sooooo friends "*the things you have heard said about Jesus*" pass on to reliable people

And watch God grow the harvest...

Let's pray...