

Washington UBF Director Retirement/Inauguration  
Message by P. Abraham Kim  
November 4, 2017

## **BE STRONG AND VERY COURAGEOUS**

Joshua 1:1-18  
Key Verse: 1:7

***“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.”***

We’ve gathered this morning to thank God and celebrate the transfer of Washington UBF chapter leadership from M. Jacob Lee to Shep. Philip Brown. We praise God who has been with his servant Jacob Lee and Washington UBF coworkers for the past 40 years. We also praise God who will be with his servant Philip to lead Washington UBF for the coming years. I’d like to celebrate this very meaningful occasion with the words from the first chapter of the book of Joshua. The words are about God’s promise and encouragement for the new leader Joshua. This is also God’s words of promise and encouragement for Philip and all of us. Let’s read the key verse 1:7. Let’s think about how we can be strong and courageous and be successful.

The book of Joshua begins with ***“After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites”*** (1-2). As God had promised to Abraham, God made the Israelites a great nation in Egypt. Through his servant Moses, God delivered them from slavery and made them his covenant people (Ex 19:5-6). God led them through the wilderness and gave the two and half tribes of Israel the lands east of Jordan. After the death of Moses, God was about to lead his people through Joshua to the lands which he had promised to Abraham. Our God is the God of promises. He carries out his promises for world redemption by raising his servants. This verse tells us that God’s work through Moses was over, and God would do a new work through Moses’ successor, Joshua.

Jacob Lee, the servant of the Lord, is not dead. But the time for God’s work to continue through his successor Philip Brown has arrived. Joshua had seen all what Moses did and taught and he had been faithful. I thank God for raising Philip who has worked with M. Jacob for two decades and who has been faithful. God used P. Jacob greatly for raising Washington UBF as well as North America UBF. As I

pondered why God blessed his life and ministry, I was reminded of the three things among many. First, humble co-working. We all know that Jacob is a strong man. But he is humble enough to work with others, beginning M. Esther Lee, his beloved wife and powerful helper. The decades of co-working among Msns. Jacob, Elijah Park, Dr. Luke Lim, Moses Chang and Shep, David Brogi has been the source of the strength and growth of Washington UBF. Second, missionary sending. From the outset, Washington UBF sent out leaders as missionaries. They are Shep. Wynelle Nett, Steve Haga, Bob Von Moss, Abraham Lee, and Philip Brown. M. Moses and Sarah Chang in Belize became the first silver missionaries sent out from UBF USA. Through missionary-sending, God blessed Washington UBF to serve the world with God's heart and vision. Third, care for regional coworkers. The Mid-Atlantic region covers a vast area from Shippensburg to the north to Auburn, Alabama to the south. P. Jacob cared for the regional chapters and families by visiting them and hosting regional Bible conferences. Washington UBF also cared for the children of the regional coworkers. Through his care, the regional UBF chapters grew strong in the bond of love and unity.

As the spiritual legacy of Moses flew through Joshua, the spiritual legacy of Jacob Lee and his generation will flow through Philip and new generations. P. Jacob Lee will be with you, but he will do a new task still remaining for him--serving the whole UBF with a global vision as International Headquarters' World Mission Department chair. As he goes globally, he will experience new things that are exciting as well as challenging. May God use P. Jacob and Esther preciously for serving his vision and plan for UBF to reach out to all 233 countries of the world.

In verses 4, God reminded Joshua of the scope of the task he would carry out with the new generations of Israel. The territory to conquer was from the southern desert to the Euphrates River and to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. It was the lands full of fortified cities and well-equipped armies. How would have Joshua felt? Joshua must have felt himself too small to fill Moses' shoes and to do the great task. In reality, Joshua was afraid (9). In his situation, anyone would be afraid. So God encouraged Joshua, his chosen servant, in verses 3-6. The key words of God's encouragement were ***“Be strong and courageous.”*** God repeated this encouragement three times (6,7,9). In today's key verse, God said, ***“Be strong and very courageous.”***

Being strong and courageous is not about the super heroes we see on TV or movies. What makes a person truly strong and courageous? Apostle Paul said to his spiritual son Timothy, ***“Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”*** (2Ti 2:1).

God's grace in Christ Jesus makes us strong and courageous. So I'd like to say that being strong and courageous means to have inner conviction of God's grace and to act with it against all dreadful "Ds" like difficulty, danger, disappointment, despair, and even death. How did God manifest his grace to Joshua to help him to have inner conviction?

First, God promised that He would give the land to Joshua and his people. God said, "***Cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised to Moses.***" (2-3) Joshua was a weak human. But if God has decided to give the land to him and his people, who can stand against him? God wanted Joshua to believe this and fight the battles with a conviction of victory.

Second, God promised to be with Joshua. God said, "***No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you***" (5). When God called Moses to liberate his people from slavery, Moses also felt himself too small and he was afraid. So he said, "*Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?...Please send someone else*" (Ex 3:11, 4:13). But God said, "***I have come down to rescue them... and to bring them into a good and spacious land....I will be with you***" (Ex 3:8,12). When God was with Moses, even Pharaoh couldn't stand against him. God enabled Moses to bring the Israelites from Egypt by his mighty hands. God reminded Joshua of this and promised to be with him as God was with Moses.

God called Philip during his adolescence, and led him to discipleship through M. Moses Noh during his college days. When he was first invited to Dr. Noh's small apartment, he prayed to know if it was a safe place to be. Before he finished praying, he saw a pizza man come out safely, so he hopped out and went in. At that time, he failed as an engineering student and had a serious stammering problem. The Lord began to restore him through the word of John 9:3, "*'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.'*" After graduation, God sent him out as an English teacher missionary to YUST, China, though he barely spoke English. God led him to marry Dr. Sarah Wang and to serve Chinese students at Hangzhou, China, for 8 years. God enabled him to preach fluently and, through his house church ministry, God did a great work of raising disciples and house churches. In 2015, God led his family to come back to the States. God has been with Philip, restoring and empowering him by his grace. Now, God has called him to be a full-time minister for Washington UBF.

God's work cannot be done by human strength. The name Joshua means "The Lord saves." Joshua should always remember that it is God, not him, who would carry the task ahead by saving him from all harms. We are weak, but God our Savior is strong. Whenever God called his servants, he promised to be with them (Ge 12:3, 26:3, 31:3, Ex 3:12, Jos 1:5, Jud 6:16, 2Sa 7:9, Jer 1:8, Mt 28:20, Lk 1:28, Ac 18:10). God was with the patriarchs, Moses and Joshua, the judges, the prophets, Mary the mother of Jesus, and the apostles. For the past 40 years, God was with M. Jacob Lee and his generation to raise Washington UBF as a lighthouse of the gospel that sent out missionaries. God will be with Shep. Philip and the new generations and he will do a new and great task which he has planned.

Now ungodliness is rapidly growing in the world. Signs of the end of the age which the Lord predicted are appearing (Mt 24). These indicate that the Lord's coming is near. The time calls the church for a fierce spiritual battle. But we are not afraid, because we have the Lord's promises. He said, "*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come*" (Mt 24:14). The Holy Spirit will work powerfully to convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment (Jn 16:8). The Holy Spirit will give us words to speak and witness (Mk 13:11). Moreover, we have the Lord's promise, "*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the ages*" (Mt 28:20). I believe God will enable Washington UBF to reach out to numerous cities and campuses in USA and the world. God will never leave nor forsake Philip until all God plans to do through him is accomplished. May the Lord uphold Philip to be strong and very courageous by his grace, as Philip firmly holds on to God's promises in his heart and depend on the Holy Spirit in all circumstances.

When we see God's promises being realized in our lives, we are prosperous and successful. For this, God gave Joshua one more command and promise. Read verses 7-8; "***Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.***" During the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln was asked if God was on the Union's side. He replied, "My concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right." The secret of success and prosperity is that we are on God's side. God taught Joshua how to be on God's side always. It

was to obey the word of God. When we submit ourselves to God by obeying his words, the Holy Spirit does his powerful work through us. For this, Joshua was not to turn from God's word to the right or to the left. He was to keep the Bible always on his lips and meditate on it day and night. Then he would be successful and prosperous wherever he would go. The primary duty of a chapter leader is to feed God's flock of sheep with God's word. For this, he should live with the Bible, carrying it wherever he goes, even to his bed. He is to read it, meditate on it whenever he finds time to be alone. May God give Philip a great love and appetite of the Bible, so that he may be a servant of God's word. May the Lord also fill M. Sarah Brown with the Spirit of love and prayer every day.

Joshua accepted God's promises and command. He was fully strengthened by God's grace and ordered the officers to prepare people to cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land (10-11). To the two and half tribes who had already settled in the lands east of Jordan, he commanded all their fighting men to go ahead of their fellow Israelites to fight until the conquest would be completed (12-15). Then they answered Joshua, ***"Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!"*** (16-18) Wow! What a beautiful allegiance to obey God and his chosen servant! Though Joshua was a beginner as their leader, they respected him as God's chosen servant and general and fully supported him. They were spiritual army of God that was ready to conquer the promised land. God honors a community when it honors its leader. May God bless Washington UBF community to move on like the Israelites under the leadership of General Philip as a spiritual army of God.