SONGS:
CLOSE: (I wonder) Have I Done My Best for Jesus?

The Faithfulness of A Servant of God

Introduction to Joshua – 1 of 18

Text: Numbers 11: 21-30

Aim: To emphasise the major quality of a servant – faithfulness.
Use the message as an introduction to the Book of Joshua.

INTRODUCTION:

A. Much could be said about Moses – who the children of Judah called "THE MAN OF GOD" in Joshua 14:6

1. He was zealous, righteous, meek, bold, and enthusiastic—a God-fearing man!
2. He was a great man of faith — **Heb. 3:2** says he was *"faithful in all his house,"* **but none-the-less he was just a man.**
3. He had his weaknesses and failures. At times, he became discouraged and more than once felt over-burdened with the responsibilities God had given Him.

THIS CHAPTER—NUMBERS 11—IS ONE OF THOSE TIMES!

B. Explain Context

As God's appointed leader, Moses had the responsibility to oversee the care of all the children of Israel. **It was up to Moses to see that:**

- God's commands were carried out in the nation;
- Counsel & guidance were given to the nation;
- Proper judgements were made concerning the burdens & problems of domestic life.

Israel was to come to Moses!

It was through him that guidance and direction from the Lord was to come.

NOTE: Moses became weary in his responsibilities – Num. 11:10-15.

We often forget how mighty, how strong is our God. **READ >> vs. 23.** It is easy to trust God when we see his mighty acts (the Israelites saw many), but after a while, in the routine of daily life, God's strength may appear to diminish. BUT God doesn't change, but our view of him often does. The monotony of day-by-day living lulls us into forgetting how powerful God can be.
As Moses learned, God's strength is always available.

It may surprise us to learn that we often become weary from bearing the responsibilities that God **has NOT given us**. Many times we take on more responsibility than is good for us.
Such was the case with Moses.

- God had **NOT** thrown on his shoulders the responsibility of getting Israel out of Egypt, nor of getting them safely into Canaan.
- It was **NOT** his duty to provide water, bread or meat for a nation of over 2 mill. people (Num. 11:21– 600 K footmen alone),
- BUT Moses responded to the necessities of the nation as if they were his personal obligations.

C. Moses Forgot Himself and His Duty as Mediator when the People Sinned.

1. Moses angered by the sin of the people of murmuring and complaining in **>> vs. 1-2, 4-6, 10**. **NOTE:** He ALSO becomes guilty of committing of the same sin of the people in complaining. **As we read in vs. 11-15.**

The whining and complaining multiplied to the point where many were weeping over their presumed misfortune. Indeed, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. The whining and complaining of a few infected the entire camp. God was angered by it and Moses was displeased to the point that he began to complain to God about the burden he carried in leading the people.

His complaint to God ranged from asking rhetorically if he had fathered them to where would he ever find enough meat to satisfy the people. His self-pity turned to despair as it usually does.

Feeling sorry for one's self only leads to depression. He complained, *"I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me."* His complaining led to even worse. He told God to kill him lest he continued in his wretchedness.

Notice the downward progression of wanting relief, complaining about not having it, expressing self-pity, which turns into depression, and even suicidal thoughts.

2. ***Have you wondered why is there different treatment from God concerning Moses in his sin of complaining from that of the people in their sin?*** Does God show partiality or favouritism to His leaders over His people?
3. Observe where Moses expresses his grief and grievances – **vs. 11.**
   a. ***How does this compare to the people's expression?* >> Vs. 1-2, 4**
   b. **Vs. 4 –** *"Mixed-multitude"* – Heb. = motley collection of half-breeds, Egyptians, and other Semitic people who followed the fortunes of Israel out of Egypt. Heb. connotation is that they were "riff-raff, tag-a-longs, rabbles:" this denotes them morally, socially, and religiously, but does not refer to them economically.)
   c. Israel & mixed-multitude ***complained to each other and then to Moses* AGAINST GOD'S TREATMENT!** There is no mention of going to God.
   d. NOTE ALSO that in these verses Moses complained—**BUT NOT** to Egyptians, **NOR** to congregation of Israel, **but to God!**
      1) Moses complaint is not ***OF* the Lord, but *TO* the Lord.**
      2) We're assured in Scripture – our complaints are carried to God *"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers"* (1Pet. 3:12), even though impatience and unbelief are at the root of many of them.

D. Moses Became Despondent = loss of confidence / hope – disheartened

1. NOTICE how many times Moses says in **vs. 11-15,** ***"I"*** and ***"me"*** and ***"my"*** in his prayer. (7 "I's"; 7 "me's"; 1 "my" = total 15 personal pronouns)

Moses concern centres on HIMSELF and NOT in glorifying the Lord in this case!

2. One of the sad results of carnality among God's people, meaning church members, is discouragement on the part of God's leaders.
3. Moses, you would have thought — ***should have known*** — that the same God who delivered them, led them, and provided for them up to this point, would have continued to do so; But *"EYE TROUBLE"* i.e. the personal pronoun "I" causes the disease of short-sighted, self-centredness which *blurs the vision of Faith.*

E. Vs. 15 – Moses Became Desperate and Felt Dejected – so much so that he wanted to die.

1. Imagine if Moses had his prayer answered right there and then on the spot! What a humiliating end for such a great man of faith.
2. *"Let me not see MY wretchedness"* – He couldn't bear to see the total failure of HIS hopes and HIS efforts.

F. Vs. 14 – He Cries To the Lord, "I can't do it all alone, I need some help."

Of course, in himself Moses was not able to provide and lead Israel;
But with God enabling & leading him he could do the impossible!

G. Vs. 16-17 - The Lord Provides Moses with Help, But It Costs Him Something.

1. God took of the Holy Spirit that empowered him, and gave it to 70 others.

Imagine being at a job and…

…You get promoted, transferred or leave for new employment, how would you feel if you knew the company had to replace you with two others? "Hey, would you believe I was doing the job of two people!" How would you have felt, if like Moses, 70 people were called to fill your shoes? You knew you were under-paid, but probably never figured it was by that much!

2. Moses was weighted down with responsibilities, BUT none of his duties did God intend for him to fulfil without His help. Could not have the Holy Spirit given to Moses **alone** all that he needed for his work? ABSOLUTELY!
3. Moses, described as a great man of faith in **Heb. 3:2,** became discouraged and momentarily lost faith—but God who is ever faithful will meet our needs when we go to Him with our failures, just as Moses did.

Moses had a protégé (i.e. one who patronises or is a pupil of another) named Joshua;
Joshua turned out to be a great man of God in his own right!

Note from our text…

I. JOSHUA EXPRESSED A JEALOUSY FOR MOSES, WHICH WAS RIGHT IN PRINCIPLE, BUT WRONG IN APPLICATION.

A. Vs. 25 – 70 Elders prophesied at the tabernacle.

This prophesying was NOT a prediction or proclamation of God's Word, BUT giving of praise (in song or speech) by the inspiration of God. These men spoke extemporaneously, without preparation, in response to the visitation of the Spirit of God, just like Saul, Israel's future king did in 1 Sam. 10:9-11.

B. Vs. 26 – Eldad and Medad were not with the others.

They stayed in camp while others went to the Tabernacle. ***Why?*** No reason given – BUT this did show the Israelites that the bestowal of the gift was an act of God and unrelated to Moses' presence. This therefore would have authenticated the ministry of these men.

C. Joshua Protested – Vs. 27-28

1. **Vs. 28 –** *"My lord Moses forbid them!"* "Who Joshua?" "Why it is Eldad & Medad"

"Moses, theses guys are out of order! This is totally irregular for them to be prophesying when you aren't around! You are the boss; you are the leader—why they are trying to take over! They've got no right to do what they are doing!"

2. **Joshua had an inordinate concern over the leadership of Moses.**
   However, the issue is not the position of Moses but the work of God.
   What matters is the work of God.

During the early days of the Salvation Army…

…William Booth and his associates were bitterly attacked in the press by religious leaders and government leaders alike. Whenever his son, Bramwell, showed Booth a newspaper attack, the

General would reply, "Bramwell, fifty years hence it will matter very little indeed how these people treated us; it will matter a great deal how we dealt with the work of God."
The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching & Preachers, W. Wiersbe, p. 185

3. **Joshua's Motive was one of a Godly jealously.** He wanted to protect the authority and position of Moses, which was given to him by God.
4. Likewise, we should be jealous for God's servants, BUT MORE SO for God Himself in giving Christ the pre-eminence in everything (Col. 1:18)!

D. Vs. 29 – Moses' Reply << READ ALL

1. Moses replied unto Joshua, *"Enviest thou for my sake?"* Moses SHOWED no envy of the two men and no desire for self-exaltation. **Truly the sign of a great man!**
2. Then Moses with humility and unusual perception, kindly rebukes Joshua, expressing *"Would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and the LORD would put his spirit upon them!"*
   a. Moses Desired God's Word to >> GO OUT!
   b. Moses Desired God's People to >> GO OUT!
   c. Like Jesus would later tell His disciples in Luke 9:50, *"He that is not against us is for us."*
   d. We need to beware of putting limits on God—he can work through whomever he chooses.

II. NOTE: JOSHUA'S REVEALED CHARACTER

A. He Followed Moses as "one of the young men" (Vs. 28)

We all, humanly speaking, can benefit from someone to whom we can look-up to, someone we can look to for council, for help and guidance. Joshua was the protégé and Moses was the mentor (i.e. the wise, loyal adviser). As they both sought to do a work for God – Joshua was learning from Moses. He followed his example.

1. Every young person should have some godly role models to follow. Whether we like it or not children will mimic those whom they admire.
2. What example are they to follow?
   a. Kids imitate – whether it is some Star Wars character, Harry Potter, Ninja Turtles, space transformers, sports stars and this is sadly—especially true of teens who want to imitate worldly entertainers and such.
   b. Kids need heroes! In **1 Sam. 18:30** we read that David's *"name was much set by"* i.e. he was a heavyweight among men and much esteemed—someone to look up to **BUT…**
      1) We must guide our children in their choice of heroes
      2) Sure we have Biblical ones to give them, **BUT not only do they need heroes they desperately need to see living ones!**
3. How do we provide them with **LIVING EXAMPLES?**
   a. Role models can be picked from real people they have heard of or told about – *living or dead* – and as their lives or achievements are discussed, reasons will develop as to why they are worthy of admiration.
   b. Believers of all ages can be a role model for another, especially parents and older brother & sisters.
      1) **1 Cor. 4:16 –** Apostle Paul says, *"I beseech you, be ye **followers** of me."*
      2) Who are you following, Paul? – "I am following the Lamb." (Rev. 14:4)

a) Therefore he says later in **1 Cor. 11:1 –** *"Be ye **followers** of me even as I also am of Christ."*

b) He instructed the Philippian church in **Phil. 3:17,** *"Brethren, be followers together of me, and **mark them** which walk so as ye have us for an example."*

4. Someone might complain, "I have no one to follow!"
   a. Then *be an example* for someone else to follow as *you* follow Christ!
   b. **1 Peter 2:21 –** Christ left us an example to *"follow His steps."*

B. Joshua Not Only Followed Moses, But was the Servant of Moses

1. Joshua Paid a Price to Serve Moses.
   a. As *one of his young men,* Joshua had to **set aside some of life's pleasures** that other young men enjoyed in order to follow his leader.
   b. **Set aside** some football games; social activities; personal endeavours, private family times; television—**TELEVISION?!**

      YES! —He was very serious about serving God!

   c. He followed Moses around desiring to learn from him – desiring to have a portion of what that great man of God had.

I read where a 16 yrs. old boy…

…Whose father hoping he would learn a trade he had picked out for him and got him a promising job as locksmith apprentice. BUT the lad had other ideas and ambitions for his life. It hurt him to disappoint his Dad, but he ran away from home, hopping a train to follow after a man he thought would train him to be a magician.

I think he should have tried to work something out with his Dad, BUT I give him full marks, in that he saw in this man what he wanted to do for a living and pursued the best example he had.

2. Joshua had the Distinguishing Marks of a Leader.
   a. **>> TURN >> Lk. 22:24-26** – servant's attitude
   b. **>> TURN >> Matt. 20:27,28** – ministered to others

As a subordinate Joshua could follow orders, he was loyal and could be counted on to be there when needed!

You may note that in the training of U.S. Marine officers – it is all done by NCO's – these NCO's will be the men the officers will be leading in the future, if they complete their training. The Marine Corp figures if these future officers weren't willing to follow subordinates in their training they had no place in leadership.

THE distinguishing feature about Moses life is that he spent 40 yrs. in Pharaoh's courts thinking he was a somebody, then spent another 40 yrs. as a herdsman leading sheep, learning that he was a nobody, so he could be of service to God to lead the nation of Israel for the next 40 yrs. **Heb. 3:2** says, *"Moses was faithful in all his House"*

C. Joshua Learned Faithfulness from Moses

1. **TURN >> Ex. 24:12, 15-18** (**NOTE vs. 13-14 –** Joshua was *"his minister"*).
   a. He went with Moses to Mt. Sinai, and waited with Moses for 6 days before Moses ascended the mount.
   b. From **Ex. Chapters 25 – 31** we can read where Moses receives instructions for the Tabernacle, its operation and the Ten Commandments.
   c. For 40 days and nights Joshua faithfully waited until Moses returned from the summit and both then descended to the camp of the Israelites.
      TURN >> Ex. 32:15-17 – Joshua was there to meet Moses.

2. All through his life he expressed this faithfulness to God's man, God's Word and work and most important of all, TO GOD HIMSELF!

Let me ask you,
"WHAT IS THE GREAT REQUIREMENT EXPECTED OF ALL CHRISTIANS?

Christians Are Required: to be baptised, join a Bible-believing church, give financial offerings, love one another as well as our enemies, read our Bible, pray, respect all authority, attend church services, fight the good fight of faith and serve our Lord among many other things.

Which of these do you think is the most important?

BUT before you answer, consider this illustration.

If you were to take an aeroplane trip this week, what would be the minimum requirement you would desire of the pilot of the plane upon which you happen to be the passenger?

WOULD YOU WANT OF THAT PILOT?

1. A pilot who wrote a book on how to fly aeroplanes?
2. One who flew only pretty aircraft?
3. One who got the highest grades in aviation school?
4. One who was handsome and dressed smartly?
5. One who has flown millions of miles?

Or WOULD YOU WANT a pilot who had all of these qualities but was only 98% accurate in his landings? I.e. One who has 98 out of 100 landings that are always good?

What do you look for? —*What is the ONE supreme requirement for you?*

My Answer would be >> I would want a pilot who faithfully has performed his duty and has flown an impeccable record of 100% safe flights all the time!

Which do you prefer?

A fancy sports car that runs well, ah—usually, or a dependable car that never fails you?

What would be better? A multi-talented marriage partner you can't trust, or a one/two talented spouse who is faithful?

I have seen many multi-talented young preachers…

…Some who possessed charming charisma, great preaching skills; who performed wonderful ministries; had fantastic administrative abilities and were very gifted and blessed men, **BUT** unfortunately, most are not in the ministry today. They lacked on one quality – they never learned to be faithful.

What is the Greatest Requirement of a Servant of God?
There is one thing that is expected of all Christians in any country and in any generation?

It is the one thing you'd look for in a pilot, in a spouse, in a Christian leader—the ONE THING Almighty God would expect of me—that is FAITHFULNESS!

For most of his life Joshua, the young man, followed after Moses, *"the man of God,"* trying to "learn the ropes," trying to learn how to be "a man of God." For many, many years he learned this as a servant.

D. Let's look at the man Joshua some 39 yrs. down the road form our present text in Numbers 11 >>TURN >> DEUT. 31

1. Moses is now 120 yrs. old. He was 80 when stood before Pharaoh in Egypt (Ex. 7:7) and spent 40 yrs. in the wilderness and in now in this text he is ready to transfer his leadership. **Read >> 7 & 8**

2. Joshua has been in the school of Moses for at least 40 yrs.
39 yrs. earlier there were 69 other leaders that were chosen to serve with Moses.
   a. 70 young men – 70 started out together working with, *"the man of God."*
   b. 70 young men – All following Moses who sought to help him with governing the nation.
   c. Out of 70 young men **ONLY ONE** was given the privilege of leadership.
      1) **Was he chosen:** Was it because he was superior in all aspects of leadership?
      2) I don't think so! I think he was chosen because God knew he could depend on him. He counted him to be faithful.
      3) The Apostle Paul in **1 Tim. 1:12** said, *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;"*

E. Let's look at this man Joshua at the end of this conquest >> TURN JOSHUA 24

1. In this Book of Joshua, *"the servant of the Lord,"* led Israel into the "Promised Land" and they experienced victory after victory. Conquest of the enemy was the result of **personal courage, faith in God**, and **faithful obedience** to God and His Word.
   a. Here is a guy that was faithful not only in camp, but in battle! He did more than talk a good fight. The making of a soldier is not how well they perform on the marching field, but how they perform in battle.
   b. Here was a guy that you'd like to be fighting with rather than against!
   c. He wasn't about to quit because the going got tough. He faithfully continued to take city after city until that job God gave him was done or until God was done with him!
2. For 26 yrs. Joshua faithfully led Israel in the conquest of Canaan. He is now at end of his life and makes this statement the year he died **>> READ Vs. 15**
Vs. 29 tells us that Joshua, this *"servant of the Lord,"* died at the age of 110!
3. He started out his career as a young man who followed after God.
   a. Joshua used Moses as a role model or mentor to give him the example and to leadership in way he ought to pursue his walk after God.
   b. For 40 yrs. he followed that, *Man of God* and for another 25 yrs. he has led Israel and challenges the nation in **vs. 15.**
Joshua was faithful till the day he died. ***WHAT A HERO!***

WHAT IS THE GREAT REQUIREMENT OF A CHRISTIAN SERVANT?

> > FAITHFULNESS! < <

***FAITHFULNESS* everyday; all my days to the end of my life!**
It is not how you start a race, but weather or not you finish it that counts!

Have you heard of IRON MAN RACE in Hawaii? – Swim 2.5 mi., bike 120 mi., run 26 mi.

A Woman—who never finished any commitment in her life including her marriage or relation with her son—decided to prove to herself that she could not only compete in this race, but also complete it! Unfortunately, before the competition she broke her arm. Undaunted, she not only entered the race, but completed it with that broken arm, and finished the challenge of a lifetime.

A Man—made promise to his invalid son that they would both compete in this race: the dad pulled the son in raft; peddled him in a bike-seat; pushed him across the finish line in a wheelchair. **>> This reminds me of what Paul said in 1 Cor. 9:24-25.**

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. ***25]*** *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."*

FOLKS! We are not to be competing with one another, but running a race TOGETHER for the glory of God! If we are competing with anybody, it is against our adversary, the Devil!

For sure, he doesn't want us to finish!

How many Christians start out gung-ho for the Lord in their Christian life only to fizzle out and drop off in their service for God?

It is the **Faithful** who stick with it! It is the **Faithful** who keep on serving no matter what!
Many new Christians often start out with zeal & fire, but after a time tire.
A S.S. teacher who once carried a burden for their class loses their vision.
The person who was hungry to see souls saved has become preoccupied with other things.
The believer who just couldn't get enough of God's Word fails to attend services.

Man's Greatest Ability is Dependability!

Think on This: Have you ever considered that NO ONE can be more dependable than you can! No one can be more faithful than you can!

1 Cor. 9:27 is probably the most feared verse in the Bible for preachers.

The Apostle Paul said, *"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."*

The FEAR of being put on a shelf—CASTAWAY!

Have you ever heard this said of others?

They used to be involved in working for the Lord!
She used to be a good Christian!
They used to be dedicated!
They used to go soul-winning!
He used to be a faithful servant of the Lord!
They used to be a living sacrifice!

NOW they are has beens.

1 Cor. 4:2 – *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."*

**It is not so much how you start your Christian life that is importance,
But whether or not you are faithful in finishing your course!**

Hebrews 12:1-3 – *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2] Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3] For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."*

To be a servant of God — it doesn't require brilliance; charisma; talent; education or personality; but it does require FAITHFULNESS! Are you faithful?

24 Mar. `91 - Calvary Fellowship – Cork
22 Oct. `95 - R.V.B.F. - Leixlip, Co. Kildare
15 Feb. `09 – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare
31 Mar. `91 - Lifegate B.C. - Dublin
23 June `02 – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare
9 Feb. `14, Morn – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare