

# The Challenger

## Ministerial Staff

Fred Harris, Pastor • Ted Pate, Associate Pastor

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*Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. 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. – Joshua 1:7*

Much time and ink have been spent this past year on the encouragement to be courageous because we live in such an insecure present and are looking forward to an uncertain future, particularly we Christians who are trying to figure out how to thrive in this culture that's becoming increasingly anti-Christian and illogical. During this current season, the above verse given to Joshua as he prepared for the Canaanite Conquest has received a lot more attention. I of course applaud the sentiment, God should be the source of our strength and courage; but let's all be on the same page of what God is actually promising with His encouragement.

**1) God is not trying to convince us to be courageous by claiming that maybe things aren't that bad after all.** Joshua really did have to fight giants living in walled cities, and I've read the end of the whole Book. Things are going to get REALLY bad for us before they get better!

**2) God is not trying to convince us to be courageous by saying He'll always protect us from the evil that's around us.** Not all of Joshua's soldiers survived the conquest. Good men got killed by the enemy. In the same way, Christians die from sickness, crime, and war. Christians are losing their freedoms through governmental overreach and evil agendas. Christians all over the world are being persecuted, imprisoned, and killed. Jesus promised that before the end, “All nations will hate you because of Me.” (Matt. 24:9)

**3) God is not trying to convince us to be courageous by saying He'll take care of everything while we sit and watch because after all, He's sovereign.** God is sovereign, that's why Joshua was so successful, but Joshua and the Israelites still had to fight. In the same way, God has the list of His elect and He's already mapped out the timeline of human history, but we still have to “Go and make disciples” and remain the “City on the hill” for right even when we're surrounded by people who hate our light because they love their darkness.

All that to say, we have to resist the urge to interpret “Be courageous, God's got this” as an excuse to pursue comfort and ease by being more worried about what people think than what God thinks, be apathetic toward the world's situation, or stay intentionally naïve about the realities of Christian suffering and persecution. Read it again. His above-mentioned call to be courageous was a call to trust Him *in the struggle* and to strive more for the life of obedience than the life of least resistance where we passively wait for Jesus to come. Stay strong. Stay courageous. God knows what He's doing. Let's not grow weary in following His trumpet call to battle.

In His Grip,  
Pastor Fred

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**Mexico Mission Trip will be November 12<sup>th</sup> thru 15<sup>th</sup>!** Please pray for the team as they travel and minister: Josh Brady, Dan Cole, Kassie Dixon, Matthew Dixon, Sarah O'Connell, Ted Pate, Stan Phillips, Bill Petreman, Jennie Miller, Jeremy Miller, Klydie Miller, Peter Miller, Ammon Miller, Fred Harris, Jack Harris, Natalie Harris, Sam Harris, Chuck Olszewski, Luke Card, Robert Toigo, and Diana Gabaldon.



**Come to Family Bible Connection**

**Wednesday Nights**  
**6-7 pm**  
**In the Activity Center**

**Everyone is welcome!**

**Mark your calendar!!**

- 11/02 Men's Potluck 6pm
- 11/03 Hope Pregnancy Center 2-5pm
- 11/05 Church Council Meeting - **DATE CHANGE**
- 11/08 Deacon Meeting 4pm
- 11/10 Hope Pregnancy Center 2-5pm
- 11/11 No School - Veterans Day
- 11/11 Family Bible Connection 6-7pm
- 11/12 Food Box Distribution 3pm
- 11/12-11/15 Mexico Mission Trip
- 11/14 Men's Breakfast 8am-???
- 11/17 Hope Pregnancy Center 2-5pm
- 11/24 Hope Pregnancy Center 2-5pm
- 11/26 Community Thanksgiving Dinner 12-2pm
- 11/25-11/27 Schools Closed for Thanksgiving
- 11/25-11/27 Church Office Closed for Thanksgiving



*Thank you!* Thank you for your outpouring of love, prayers, food, and offers to help when Patty broke her arm. She is healing quickly and working hard at her physical therapy. Your kindness is overwhelming. God bless you for your help. ~ Ted and Patty Pate



***Community Thanksgiving Dinner***  
Noon-2:00pm Thursday, November 26<sup>th</sup>  
Donations welcome: Canned Goods, Frozen Pies, or Cash Donations. Please no cooked food. Please see Freddie for further details or if you would like to volunteer to help serve and/or sanitize tables in between guests.

**Food Box Distribution** is the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday from 3:00pm - 5:00pm. If you are in need or know of someone who may be helped by receiving a box, please share this information. For more information please see Freddie Campbell.

