



## ***St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)***

**Worship Address** : Cerritos High School Auditorium  
12500 E. 183<sup>rd</sup> St., Cerritos, CA 90703  
(Enter at Bloomfield, across Heritage Park)

**Mailing Address** : 11428 E. Artesia Blvd. # 4 ; Artesia, CA 90701  
562-924-5051

**Website** : [www.sp-ecc.org](http://www.sp-ecc.org)

January 17, 2010

### **Theme: God Is Faithful—Part I: The Promise of His Presence**

#### **Text: Joshua 1:1-9**

Today we begin the first in a series of five messages about God's faithfulness. Today we will reflect upon the promise of God's presence. Next week we will think about what it means to say that Jesus is our Friend. Next we will see that God promises to be faithful in our trials. Then we will see that He is faithful in temptation. Finally, we will think about God's faithfulness in keeping his promises.

After Moses died, God made a powerful promise to Joshua. He said, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." Along with that promise, God commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous. We can be strong and courageous people also—not because we are strong and courageous in ourselves. We can be strong even in our weakness because we know that God is always with us and that He will never forsake us. In ourselves we may be weak and fearful, but with God we can be strong and courageous. We all have times when we need to be strong and courageous. It might be when we have the opportunity to share the Gospel with another person. It might be when we are dealing with some sin in our lives. It might be when we are facing family issues and we don't know where to turn. It may be when the pressures of life, work, or school are threatening to beat us down. We can be strong and courageous in good times and bad if we trust in the fact that God is always with us.

The promise of God's presence also brings us comfort in times of trouble. One of my favorite Psalms is Psalm 139. In that Psalm, David praises God for the fact that He is always present with Him. God's presence gave him comfort in times of trouble. He wrote, "...even the darkness will be not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for the darkness is as light to you." David realized that no matter where he was and no matter what was happening to him, God was there with Him and this brought Him comfort. Many of David's Psalms speak of the comfort of God's presence in difficult times. God promises his presence especially to those who are experiencing great heartache. Again David writes, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." God is with us even in our failure. Psalm 37 says, "If he stumbles, he is not down for long; Yahweh has a grip on his hand." (The Message) Finally, God brings us comfort even when we face our greatest enemy which is death. David writes in Psalm 23, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me..."

God's promise of His presence brings to us the blessings of strength, courage, and comfort; but His promise also calls for our obedience to Him. God does not leave us when we are disobedient. However, we are more likely to be able to recognize His



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presence when we are obedient. God calls for Joshua's obedience in three ways in this passage. We have already covered the command to be strong and courageous. There are two additional ways that God calls for Joshua's obedience and for ours: (1) He calls for us to obey His Word. (2) He calls for us to meditate on His Word. First, God commanded Joshua to obey His Word. A steady diet of reading God's Word along with the regular habit of obeying God's Word will bring an ever-increasing awareness of His presence in our lives. Obviously, we cannot obey God's Word unless we know God's word. So the God commands Joshua to meditate upon His Word. This means that we think about the meaning of God's word as we ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand and apply it.

In verse 9, God promises success and prosperity to those who will obey His Word. For Joshua, this meant success and prosperity in a physical sense. He was promised victory in battle as the Hebrews entered the Promised Land. But there is a deeper prosperity—the prosperity of the Spirit. The apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises in the OT. God had promised to give the Spirit to all those who receive and confess Jesus as Lord. He also promises that His presence will never depart from us. The author of Hebrews writes, "Therefore keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, for God has said, 'Under no circumstances whatsoever will I ever leave you; under no circumstances whatsoever will I ever forsake you.'"