

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Be Brave" 8/24/22

*Be brave and strong! Don't be afraid of the nations on the other side of the Jordan.
I the LORD your God will always
be at your side, I will never abandon you. (Deut 31:6)*

Joshua was now the new leader, appointed to lead the children of Israel into the promised land. Into the unknown. The rushing waters, the fearsome giants, the dark valleys, the boogie man which lurked there. It was scary, the unknown is, well, unknown and we may not be in control there. We worry and wonder. We fret. We think up all possible scenarios. We fear defeat.

God had a message, words of encouragement for the people as they prepared to face the new challenges ahead of them, "Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the LORD your God who goes with you; I will not fail you or forsake you."

God repeated these words to Joshua as he pondered the magnitude of the job which had befallen him, of the enemies he may have to cross, "Be brave and strong! Don't be afraid of the nations on the other side of the Jordan. I the LORD your God will always be at your side, I will never abandon you."

As we are faced with a new normal, a loss, the loss of a loved one, or a job, our home, our finances, our health God says, ever so lovingly to us, "Be strong. Take courage. Don't be intimidated. Don't give this new challenge a second thought because I, your God, am striding ahead of you. I'm right there with you. I won't let you down. I won't leave you."

For what seems like the umpteenth time in my life, I am facing a new challenge. Last week the doctor told me I have Leukemia. My heart stopped, I couldn't catch my breath or feel my fingers, my mind whirled and couldn't land on any thought. One wonders what they would say or do, how they would feel if they received a diagnosis, they hoped they'd never hear. I need to take comfort from the fact my leukemia is treatable, I will die with it, not from it. It could lead to another form of cancer, but then I could also get hit by a bus. No sense fighting the giants I can't see. As I face the unknown, as chaos again seems to reign in my world, God's promise of presence is paramount for me in facing the future.

God tells me to not give this a second thought, because He is with me now and is going before me. God won't let me down. He'll never abandon me.

People of God. God's words to the children of Israel as they entered this new land, which was their unknown, as they wondered what their tomorrows would hold, is the same message He speaks to you as you face the expected and unexpected challenges in your life. Hold fast to God's promise. Draw strength from His presence. Rest in His peace. God will never leave you or forsake you. You are not going to have to enter this new land alone. Don't let the chaos defeat you. Don't let the fear of the loss loom so large and dark you cannot continue. God is with you, and He goes before you. God's got this and God's got you.

Please pray with me.

God of the unknown. Thank You for Your promise of presence. Though I feel afraid to face this new challenge, I know You are with me, You will strengthen me to face whatever lies ahead, I am not alone. No matter how alone I feel, help me to hold on to the knowledge You will stay near and never abandon me.

Amen.