

**Homegroup 21Feb10 Josh 8 & Ps 27:1 –
dealing with fear & living courageously**

Introduction

In a society that seeks to protect the vulnerable there are many who believe that we have become overprotective. It could be argued that things like health & safety regulations & CCTV are symptoms of our fears. Certainly the bible takes fear very seriously & we are constantly urged '*do not be afraid*' & '*fear not*' or '*be very courageous.*' In Joshua this is repeated at key moments in his life. 1:7,9; 8:1; 10:8,25; 11:6 Jesus commanded the disciples not to be afraid etc some 21x in the gospels out of 125 commands altogether.

We said fear is the dread of what will happen or it is thought could happen. Do you agree that everyone is afraid of something? What fears do you have & what fears do you see amongst people around you? How easy do we find it to admit we are afraid?

Refer back to **Josh 7:5b-9**. What was the consequence of fear? What are the results of fear in our own lives? Is fear always necessarily a bad thing? Why? How did Joshua deal with his fear? What can we learn from this? Cp *1Pet5:7*.

What is the fear of God? Is this a good or bad thing? Cp *Josh24:14; Ps147:11; 1Pet2:17*. The line of an old hymn says 'Fear Him ye saints & you will have nothing else to fear'. Do you agree – give your reasons?

Read Josh 8:1-10; 10:14; Ps 27:1

As we return to one more look at Joshua we remind ourselves that we are to understand it through Jesus & His teaching. We also recognize the significance of Jesus' coming that removes for ever any recourse to violence or 'holy war' (Jihad). By the same token we reject any government's propaganda that 'God is on our side' as if God can be manipulated to serve our nationalistic interests. The concept of a just war (mostly in defending the nation against an invading tyranny) is somewhat different however. The basic stance is that with considerable reluctance war could be waged to maintain justice & establish peace. [I do not believe eg the invasion of Iraq can be justified morally on this basis].

Joshua does provide us, however, with examples & guidance for our battles of life if we are open to its teaching. Much of the bible consists of stories of real people in their day & under their circumstances seeking to serve God. But remember that like us they do not always get things right & the bible might not always immediately pronounce its verdict.

What three things in Ps27:1 would help us deal with our fears? How are they reflected in Josh 8 & 10:14? How could they help us to have courage in the face of fear? Can you have courage if you have no fear?

Conclude by 'casting the cares of the different members of the group on Him' in prayer.

Pray that we may be bold & fearless in our witness to Christ.