



The Planter

"The seed is the word of God", Luke 8:11



P.O. Box 429 • 2070 Old Highway 27 • Trion, GA 30753 • 706.734.2722 • pleasantgrovecoc.org

The LORD Goes Ahead

Donnie Bates

Did you ever count how many times the Bible says, "Do not fear," or "Do not be afraid"? The exact number of times is...a lot! After Moses told the Israelites that God had told him he would not be crossing the Jordan River, he called Joshua, the son of Nun, and commissioned him to lead the people of God. Moses told him: "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:7, 8). I love that passage!

Think for a moment what Joshua was being asked to do. He was to lead a nation of refugees, over a million strong, into a region made up of several established nations with standing armies and fortified cities and kick them all out! This nation of refugees had proven themselves more than capable of being a handful for their leader. In fact, for almost forty years now, these Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness, forbidden by God to enter the land of Canaan, precisely because of their rebellious attitude. They gave Moses fits. Granted, after forty years in the wilderness, being cared for miraculously by Jehovah God, the people's faith had grown, but this was still no easy task. And Moses says, "Don't be afraid!?" Yeah, right!

However, did you catch Moses' reasoning for saying not to fear? Joshua did not have to be afraid because the Lord was going ahead of him. If you are a running back in football, how would you like your lead blocker to be the Creator of the universe; the One Who can command the opposition (or even the grass) to get out of your way and it has no choice but to obey. I'm not talking about anything miraculous in the application for us today, but imagine...the Lord goes ahead of His people.

I hope no one misunderstands what I am saying here and think that God will condone sinful behavior. God does not go ahead of you or me in endeavors opposed to His will. God did go ahead of Joshua, but when Joshua led the people away from God, or when they abandoned God, He did not remain with them. Notice Joshua 7:12, where God says to Joshua: "Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand their enemies; before they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst." Moses told Joshua that he did not have to be afraid because God was going ahead of him. Now, God tells Joshua that He will no longer be with him unless there is repentance. That translates into, "Joshua, unless you and the people repent, be afraid...be very afraid!!!"

Look what happened next. After Joshua and the people repented and the offender was punished, we read: Now the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not fear or be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land" (Joshua 8:1).

What does all that have to do with us right now? We are facing something in this world what no one under the age of 100 has ever seen before. Most people I know are fairly confident that we will return to some sense of normalcy, but when? That sense of uncertainty (or even fear), has to do with what is coming next in the next week, or day? I don't know the answer to that any more than Joshua did. What he could be assured of is what you and I can be assured of...that the Lord goes before us. As you go about your business, taking care of your family's needs in these coming days, hear Moses' words from Deuteronomy 31:7, 8. If you are guilty of sin, then the words of Jehovah in Joshua 7:12 are vital for you to hear and understand. And when you repent, take Joshua 8:1 to heart.

January 18, 2026

Sunday Morning
Opening Prayer Steve Fletcher
Closing Prayer Joseph Tucker

Scripture Reading Adam Cordell

Sunday Evening
Opening Prayer Dallas York
Closing Prayer Jerry Reaves

Remember in prayer:

Rachel Taylor was admitted to Advent Medical Center with chest pains; tests were conducted yesterday.

Max Hollis is scheduled to have back surgery this Friday, Jan 23rd at Atrium Floyd Hospital. Please keep him in your prayers.

Joan Henry will have surgery on Monday and will be in intensive care following surgery.

Amanda Fletcher (radiation treatments).
Luke Keller, Jill Spears, Wally Booker, Joan Henry, Norene and Ronnie O'Kelly, Don Duncan, Joe Chambers, Bill and Billie Nolen, Stefan Hoglund, Sammy Wyers.

Oak View Nursing Home: Betty Floyd.

Home: Rachel Taylor.

Brothers Keepers Group Two will meet after services tonight. **Group Three** will meet next Sunday night.

Record for the week of January 11, 2025
10 am 11 am 5 pm Wed Contribution
97 85 87 87 \$3949.50

A Three Star Fake

It was a top-secret mission straight from President Trump. The three-star general, Christian Desgroux, had a red helicopter in route to the SAS University's soccer field in North Carolina. The orders were for Desgroux to escort a woman to a classified meeting at a nearby military base. The helicopter arrived where Desgroux and the woman boarded. After taking off though, things became a little unclear as to where they needed to go and soon, they went back and landed on that same soccer field. Finding the entire situation odd, SAS security called the police who eventually arrested Desgroux.

As it turns out, Desgroux wasn't a three-star general or a general at all. In fact, he wasn't even in the military. Nor was he on a secret mission from Trump. He was just an auto mechanic. And it appears all of this might have been done simply to impress the woman he brought with him on the helicopter. Desgroux is now being charged with impersonating an officer on duty which carries a maximum of 3 years in jail and a \$250,000 fine (MSN).

What a crazy impersonation this turned out to be, especially if the end goal was simply to impress a girl. No matter what his intent, Desgroux was trying to be something he wasn't, and unfortunately, too many are walking in the same shoes.

No, I don't mean people are impersonating three-star generals, but many do impersonate a true Christian. They put on the right face. They show up at the right times. By all external measures, they look legit. Sadly, the truth paints quite a different picture.

Such people have gotten used to practicing their righteousness in front of people in order to receive praise (Matthew 6). These are such that might be honoring God with the lips but have hearts that are far from Him (Matthew 15:8). These might be those who are focusing on the outer appearance of Christianity rather than being true on the inside (Matthew 23:25-28).

If we aren't careful, our Christianity can be nothing more than an impersonation. Let's be real. Let's be genuine. Let's be people who do right whether others see us or not. God is looking for the real deal, true Christians. Will we be true to Him?
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Elders:

Steve Fletcher, Hugh Glaze, Dan Logan, Tim York
Deacons: Justin Glaze, Carter Logan, Adam Morgan, Jerry Reaves
Minister: Hugh Glaze
Song Leader: Adam Morgan