



Dear Friends,

This week I have had cause to reflect on the story of Joshua – a good story to think about when there is a change in leadership. Joshua was taking over the leadership of the people of Israel from Moses. A younger man, I imagine him feeling very daunted by the task, uncertain of the future, and wondering what this call to lead them would entail. God’s advice to Joshua was: “Be strong and courageous.” In just 4 verses (yes, just 4 – between Joshua 1:6-9) God tells him this THREE times. As God grabs his attention, I imagine Joshua growing tall in confidence. And God doesn’t stop there but continues with a promise: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1v9)

“Be strong and courageous.” What if God is calling us to be strong and courageous today? What would our worship and witness look like if we were being strong and courageous?

On my way into Formby this morning for our Mission & Ministry Team meeting I was listening to Woman’s Hour on Radio 4. Not always my favourite programme, but this morning it was inspiring. I listened to a conversation about maternal health care in which it was reported that black women are 5% more likely to die in childbirth in the UK. This has nothing to do with their race, but the attitudes of others who treat them differently. What does it mean to “Be strong and courageous” in challenging injustice in our communities and wherever we see it, as ‘Our Calling’ asks us to do?

This was followed by a section on knitting – how knitting over the years has been used as a form of political protest (yes, really!) and how knitting inspires conversations. What does it mean to “Be strong and courageous” in finding imaginative ways to form relationships, start conversations, and to be bold in our sharing of the Gospel in our communities?

God is challenging me to find ways of being “strong and courageous” – join me and let’s be strong and courageous for the sake of the gospel together!

With all good wishes,

Rachel Deigh.