

## BE OF GOOD COURAGE

### INTRODUCTION

We are living in trying times. In some ways I think the most trying times ever experienced in this country. Just to list a few things being faced in this country:

- Corruption, nepotism, general anarchy, crime, poor economy, high unemployment, electricity & water supply problems, ratings downgrades.
- Drought, climate change.
- High divorce rates, abuse, a constitution and legal system that makes what's good bad and what's bad, good.
- Personal challenges, illness, lack of finances, homelessness, racism.

We deal with these challenges on a daily basis! This is the kind of stuff that causes people's hearts to melt within them. It causes people to lose hope and want to give up. It causes discouragement and the enemy thrives on it!

But, amidst all the negativity, God wants us to take courage. He is still on the throne. He told us in His Word that we are in this world but not of it! Jesus said, "in this world you will have trouble." But we can handle it, all it takes is courage!

Today we will investigate: 1. What it means to have courage, 2. The two biblical examples resulting in the need for it, and 3. How to apply our faith so that we can have courage when we need it.

### MESSAGE

**Hebrews 12:1-3** (NKJV) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, **lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.**

Discouragement is a burden, it's a weight that can paralyse us! The writer of Hebrews encourages us to "Run with endurance" i.e. "don't get tired, don't give up, consider Jesus who also had to endure".

If anyone had reason to be discouraged, it was Jesus. Just think of what He went through, but He endured, He saw it through and completed what He had to do. As we consider Jesus example, we should not "**become weary and discouraged in our souls**".

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE COURAGE?

The dictionary defines courage as: "the ability to face and deal with a dangerous or difficult situation".

Courage enables us first to face, and then to deal with dangerous, or difficult situations.

### **Some people have described courage like this:**

- "Courage is fear that has said its prayers."
- General George Patten defined it this way: "Courage is fear that holds on for one more minute."
- Captain A. Riddenbacher put it this way: "Courage is doing what you are afraid to do. Where there is no fear, there is no courage."

When we look at the derivatives of the word courage, we see that circumstances and situations can either:

- Discourage us, or they can...
- Encourage us.

The enemy is the king of discouragement, he wants to "dis" us. He came to steal, kill and destroy.

But Jesus is the King of encouragement! He came to give us life, and that in abundance!

### ***So, my first questions to us here today is this:***

- ***Where is our focus? On that which encourages, or on that which causes discouragement?***
- ***The true test is our heart, and that is revealed through our words! What is coming out of our mouth? A constant stream of negative commentary, or positive words of life?***
- ***Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit. Think of the fig tree!***

## **THE TWO MAIN BIBLICAL CIRCUMSTANCES RESULTING IN A NEED FOR COURAGE:**

### **1. When God called someone do something for Him.**

- **Abram** needed great courage when God said to him, ""Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you".
- **Moses** needed courage when God spoke to him from the burning bush, saying, "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

- **Joshua** needed courage when God said to him, “Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel.”
- **Gideon** needed courage when the Angel of the Lord said to him, “Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?”

(Speak about my own lack of courage when Pastor Pat spoke to me)

***What has God challenged you to do? Have you possibly been holding back because you need to pluck up the courage?***

## **2. When things fall apart and don't go as we would like them to.**

- **Job** lost everything, and his wife told him, “curse God and die”. Job replied, “Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” – It takes courage to endure and trust God through our trials!
- **Elijah** had just won a great battle, called fire down from heaven, killed the prophets of baal and prayed for God to send rain to break the drought, then Jezebel sent a threatening message and Elijah simply couldn't deal with it. He prayed in 1 Kings 19:4 “It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!” – sometimes even after great victory we can face great discouragement and we need God to encourage us to stand up and carry on! God visited him in a cave and spoke to him in **1 Kings 19:13**: Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” After this God gave him a task to anoint a new prophet, Elisha, as well as two new kings, one for Israel and one for Syria.
- **David** was discouraged when the Amalakites raided his hometown of Ziklag and took everything including their wives and children. **1 Samuel 30:6** The men wanted to stone David and he was discouraged. Then we read this: David was greatly distressed, for the men spoke of stoning him because the souls of them all were bitterly grieved, each man for his sons and daughters. But **David encouraged and strengthened himself in the Lord** his God.
- **Peter the Apostle** was discouraged when he denied Jesus three times. In Luke we read after the third denial, “Peter went out and wept bitterly”. Then we read the amazing words of Jesus in John 21 at the sea of Galilee as he restores Peter by confirming his love three times.

***In the Bible, we find a pattern revealing how God dealt with each of these two areas to enable the people to have the courage they needed.***

## **1. GOD'S WAY OF GIVING US COURAGE TO DO SOMETHING FOR HIM**

In each example of the people needing courage, God uses similar words.

**Abram – Genesis 12:1** Now the Lord had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you” – This implies God must have been with Abram so that He could show him where to go!

**Moses – Exodus 3:11-12** But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” 12 So He said, “I will certainly be with you”.

**Joshua – Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go”.

**Gideon – Judges 6:12** And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, “The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!”

**In Hebrews 13:5**, For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

- **When we need courage to rise to God’s call on our lives**, whether it be sharing a testimony, starting a Bible study, street ministry, preaching or simply encouraging someone, **we gain that courage by being aware that the Lord is with us.**
- When we need to stand up and make choices and decisions to live without compromise, to go against the grain or to stand up and speak out when things are not right, we can do it, by saying, **“I am not alone, Jesus is with me!”**

**Romans 8:31** tells us, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” We have everything required to be able to stand up courageous, mighty men and women of valor, enabled by the abiding presence of Jesus Christ in our lives!

**Hebrews 13:6** goes on to say: So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

## **2. GOD’S WAY OF RESTORING OUR COURAGE**

When someone faced a devastating situation that had knocked the courage right out of them, God also dealt with it in a similar manner:

**Job** – From Job chapter 40, we see God speaking to Job, revealing His character to him through a series of questions and answers. The final result was double restitution.

**Elijah** – in 1 Kings 19 God told Elijah to go out of the cave and stand on the mountain. There He revealed Himself to Elijah, not through the strong wind,

the earthquake or the fire, but through a still, small voice, and then He recommissioned him.

**David** – David sought the Lord and the Lord spoke to him through Abiathar the priest, gave him the go-ahead to attack the Amalekites, and then all that was lost to David and his men was restored!

**Peter** – Peter had gone back to fishing. Jesus revealed himself to Peter by telling him to throw the net out on the other side of the boat which resulted in a net full of large fish. He proceeded to commission Peter to serve Him by feeding His lambs and His sheep.

In every case here we see two things happening:

1. God spoke to them.
2. God recommissioned them.

And the result was always restoration and victory.

***What's the instruction here? When the wheels are falling off all around us, when chaos and defeat seem to be the norm?***

- ***Seek the Lord's voice. He speaks to us in our darkest hour.***
- ***Listen, it may be a still, small voice. We may need to separate ourselves for a while and grow still.***
- ***Then arise and do what He commissions us to do.***
- ***And expect restoration and victory!***

## **CONCLUSION**

Church don't allow the enemy "dis" you today! You are not alone; Jesus is with you. And also don't allow him to rob you of your God-given calling,

**2 Timothy 1:7** (NKJV) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

- When we need courage to do what God has called us to do, the key is to realise we are not alone – Jesus is with us and He will be our help.
- When we need courage to deal with the negatives all around us, the life challenges and disappointments which seem to be so rife right now. We need to:
  - Be still and listen for the voice of the Lord – He will speak to us.
  - Wait as He re-commissions us, then obediently follow His leading.

It's time to stand up, stand strong and be of good courage.