



## Be Strong and of a Good Courage!

*The Courageous Series*

May 1, 2022

### **Holy Text: Deuteronomy 31:1-8**

Over the next few weeks (through Father's Day), we will "go back to the wall," attempting to encourage one another in the Scriptures in good and godly, but very foundational things!

I must say that so much of the preaching from last week was conformational. We were already set to take a break from Matthew in order to share some things about which we felt a spiritual burden.

Our hope is that CRC will rise up in faith and obedience, and be reminded yet again the Jesus Christ is LORD (Php 2:11), LORD of all (Acts 10:36), and that His commandments are not only NOT grievous (or burdensome, 1 John 5:3), but good and for our blessing!

**Deuteronomy 5:29 (KJV)** *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*

**James 1:25 (KJV)** *But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

### **Series Goals:**

1. To increase our faith and joy!
2. To decrease fear and anxiety!
3. To fortify our households in faith!
4. To share the Gospel more fearlessly!
5. To grow in our dependance and focus upon God!

### **What is Courage?**

- In Hebrew, the word courage means "to be alert, physically and mentally, and then to establish, fortify, harden, increase, prevail, strengthen (oneself), or to make strong."
- *Encouragingly*, nowhere in the definition is a total absence of fear. Courage manifests "in spite of" and overcomes fear!
- Because of the tendency towards fear, believers need consistent *encouragement*. However, this word does not mean to make feel better like "comfort" or "soothe." Webster (1828) defines *encouragement* this way: "To give courage to; to give or increase confidence of success; to inspire with courage, spirit, or strength of mind; to embolden; to animate; to incite; to inspirit."
- ***Biblical Courage is the ability to hold fast to God's Word, repent in the event of failure, and continue on in obedience, regardless of the circumstances.***

### **Why is this series important?**

1. Because obeying God takes courage and faith!
  - Did you know that one of (if not the most) often repeated command in the Bible is some version of "fear not?" "Fear not," "be not afraid," "fear ye not," "fear thou not," "be

strong," "be of a good courage," and similar phrases are found nearly over 150 times throughout Scripture! Adding verses that exhort faith and trust, that number greatly rises!

- Now, knowledge and study are certainly important. Scripture says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," (Hos 4:6) and "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim 2:15)
- But for many, *I maintain that scriptural knowledge isn't the main issue; fear is!* Knowing WHAT the Bible says and DOING what the Bible says are sometimes separated by fear: fear of loss, fear of pain, fear of persecution, and fear of death.
- **Continually overcoming fear and instead walking by faith is a necessary part of our sanctification and our rendering glory to God!**
- *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* (Heb 11:6)

2. Because one of the greatest tools of the enemy is fear!

- Our sin nature not only produces evil desire in us, but sinful fears as well. One of these sinful fears is unbelief. "Hath God said?" is just as diabolical a question now as it was in the Garden, designed to make us lose our confidence in God's good purposes. John Flavel said:

*Many of our sinful fears flow from Satan's influence upon our imaginations. I do not doubt that he has, by God's permission, a great deal of influence upon peoples imaginations and passions.*

*If this assenting act of faith is weakened in the soul, if the invisible seems to be uncertain in the visible seems to be the only reality, then it is no wonder that we are frightened when visible and sensible comforts are threatened—as they often are in this changing world. The person who is not thoroughly persuaded that he stands upon firm ground will be afraid to stand his ground.<sup>1</sup>*

- **Fear, by its nature, is a loss of confidence in God.** It is an expectation of evil instead of good! Is there anything worse than living life this way...living life afraid to live?
- Beloved, although the enemy uses our fear to foment individual disobedience and societal rebellion, let us remember that, *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."* (1 John 4:18, KJV)
- While encouraging Timothy to keep the faith and use the gifts God had given him, from PRISON he wrote, *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;"* (2 Timothy 1:7-8, KJV)

3. Because courage is contagious (as is fear)! God's people need to see other believers be fearless!

- Do you remember the report of the twelve spies in Numbers 13? Close to the promised land of Canaan, Moses sent out twelve men to spy out the land. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, brought back a good report, while the rest brought back an evil report. They said the people there were too strong, the cities too fortified, and they were giants there!

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<sup>1</sup> John Flavel, *Triumphing over Sinful Fear*, 2011.

- Although Caleb quieted and attempted to encourage the people (because they began to lose courage and lament), the congregation believed this report from the ten: “We be not able to go up against the people; for they *are* stronger than we.” (Num 13:25-33)
- Chapter 14 begins this way:

**Numbers 14:1-4 (KJV)** *And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! 3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? 4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.*

- Had the spies been united in courage and faith, there may have been a different outcome. Sadly, the generation who chose fear over faith died in the wilderness as a judgment.
- Our ability to “encourage” matters!
- Remember Paul’s words concerning those who gained courage by his faith during imprisonment?

**Philippians 1:13-14 (KJV)** *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*

#### 4. Because following Jesus comes with a cost!

- Jesus said,

**Luke 14:26-28 (KJV)** *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?*

- **It will take faith, boldness, courage, and conviction to follow our Master wherever He leads! Because Jesus knows our propensity to fear, He says to us like He said to the disciples, rowing on a boat in country winds: “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid! (Matt 14:27)**
- And in another place, He said:

**Luke 12:4-7 (KJV)** *And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

#### 5. Because honest self-examination is hard!

- It takes courage to look into the mirror of the Word and allow God to change you.
- It is always easier to blame others—admitting our own mistakes not so much.

- Shifting and adjusting life patterns according to Scripture requires spiritual fortitude! In God's mercy, let us cry out like the Psalmist:

***Psalms 26:2 (KJV)** Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.*

***Psalms 139:23-24 (KJV)** Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: **24** And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

### **God's Word to Joshua and Why**

1. As Deuteronomy closes, Moses, the servant of the LORD, knows his time is short. Yet, God's people still had much to do!
2. The LORD had promised them a land flowing with milk and honey...the land of Canaan. And it was a good land! The problem was those who occupied it. They were numerous and tall and fierce. There were literal giants in the land as well as many pagan nations.
3. Have you noticed yet that God always seems to allow the odds to be stacked against His people? Ever wonder why? Might it have something to do with our need for faith and His receiving glory for displaying His strong hand and outstretched arm?
4. In our Text, God gives His people some wonderful promises...promises upon which they could depend and draw courage:

- The LORD promises His Presence (v3)
- The LORD promises His Power (v3)
- The LORD promises a Protector (v3)
- The LORD promises victory as in the Past (v4)
- The LORD promises them Prerogative (authority of rule) (v5)

5. Beloved, the same God that was with them is with you! Not only that, He lives in you!

***John 14:17 (KJV)** Even *the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**

***Galatians 4:6-7 (KJV)** And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. **7** Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

***Hebrews 13:5 (KJV)** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

6. God was (and is!) going to fulfill His promises to His people. God's promises to His children usually involve the faithful activity of those children. But praise God...He promises them that He would be with them! He told them to "be strong," to have "good courage," and to "fear not!" He said He would not fail them or forsake them! (v6) And He repeats it! (v7-8)
7. **Again, these sorts of promises of assurance and help weren't just for Israel during this time; they reflect God's heart for all time concerning His chosen ones!**

### **Encouragement from Scriptures:**

God personally repeats the Deuteronomy promises for Joshua AGAIN after Moses' death:

**Joshua 1:6-9 (KJV)** *Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*

But not only that! He told Abram, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." (Gen 15:1)

David sang:

**Psalms 27:1-4 (KJV)** *A Psalm of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. 3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. 4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*

**Psalms 27:13-14 (KJV)** *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. 14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*

Another Psalmist wrote:

**Psalms 91:1-10 (KJV)** *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. 3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. 4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; 6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. 8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. 9 Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; 10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*

Isaiah cried out:

**Isaiah 35:3-4 (KJV)** *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.*

**Isaiah 41:10 (KJV)** *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

It was likely an angel that told Daniel...

**Daniel 10:19 (KJV)** *...O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.*

The prophet Haggai records...

**Haggai 2:4 (KJV)** *Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:*

Jesus told His disciples:

**John 16:33 (KJV)** *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer (take heart); I have overcome the world.*

The LORD told Paul...

**Acts 23:11 (KJV)** *And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer (or good courage), Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*

Paul wrote to the Ephesian Church:

**Ephesians 6:10 (KJV)** *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

### **Final Thoughts:**

Beloved, the LORD knows our frame. He knows that we are dust. He knows that we are frail and prone to weakness. He therefore has given us many exhortations in Scripture that we might **Be strong and of a good courage**. He wants us to have hope, be steadfast in Him, and boldly say throughout our lives, *"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."* (Heb 13:6)

LORD willing, over the next few weeks, we'll be exhorted in topics like:

- Courageous Womanhood (Mother's Day)
- Courageous Relationships
- Courageous Evangelism
- Courageous Stewardship
- Courageous Parenting
- Courageous Church Membership
- Courageous Manhood (Father's Day)

Let us trust in the LORD with all our hearts. Let us refuse to lean unto our own understanding. Let us keep our mind stayed upon Him. Let us trust in His Word. Let us declare “for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain!” Let us live joyfully, lovingly and peacefully, leaving the results to God. Let us resolve to glorify Him in all we do!

Amen!

Questions for Family Worship

1. What are you afraid of? Do you know why?
2. How has that fear affected you and your service to Christ?
3. Have you taken your fears to God in prayer?
4. Do you think the devil wants you afraid or bold? Why?
5. Do you believe that Jesus can make you stronger and more courageous for Him?