

Remnant Life Church
March 27, 2022
The Church of the Philippians
Part 11
It Takes Courage
Deuteronomy 31:1-8

Last Week:

- Examined the word worthy in the **Phil 1:27**
- The concept of worthy is about weighing two things out
- Or we say that the bonus an employee is receiving is due to their good work
- And so, living a life worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is an important obligation, goal, and function of every Christian
- We looked at the story of the disciples in **Acts 5:29b** - *We must obey God rather than human beings!*
- When your words and actions are weighed out, will they be worthy of the Gospel?
- We determined that you cannot do this alone
 - You must be in communion, contact, and fellowship with other believers
 - Your roots must intertwine with others just like the great Redwood trees of the North Pacific coast

And we said that this was Paul's primary reason for writing to the Philippians

- He wants the people of the church to remain steadfast in their faith when under attack
- He tells them to stand firm

And finally, the three things we said need to be present for you to be in unity

1. You must accept and recognize that you CANNOT do it on your own
2. Second, you must be willing to be a little bit vulnerable
3. Third, make your life in the church a priority and not just one more thing on your already too busy schedule

And there is one more component that is absolutely necessary when you are confronted and told to be quiet and sit down when it comes to expressing your faith – It will take courage

READ – Deuteronomy 31:1-8

Let's begin with first clarifying two important words - fear and courage:

- Fear comes in many forms
 - It can be fear of a person or an activity
 - It can be a fear of heights, tight spaces, deep water, or the dark
 - It can also be a fear of failure, looking foolish, or stupid
- We have looked more than once here at RLC that fear is God-given to protect us but that is not the same as the spirit of fear which is not of God
- Courage is not something you need unless there a situation, a circumstance, or an event that is first evoking fear

- I heard a sergeant say to his men in a movie just before going into battle – “Remember people, there can be no courage without fear”
- IOW – he was saying that it was okay for them to be afraid because that would create their courage.

Well, that is not entirely accurate

- Fear does not create courage
- It is the environment in which courage can be experienced, but courage is chosen it is not just suddenly present
- Nor does courage mean there is no fear
- Courage isn't the lack of fear. Courage is doing what you know you have to do in spite of your fear.

The Israelites often lived in fear

- And we might say that some of that was justified
 - They were a brand-new nation who had never known what it meant to live independently having lived as a people for over 400 years in slavery
- But fear often kept them from experiencing God's will for them in His time
 - For example, in **Numbers 13** – Moses sends 12 spies into the promised land to spy it out
 - Two, Joshua and Caleb, come back and say the land is magnificent and they move in to occupy it immediately (**Num 13:30**)
 - But 10 said, yes it is all that, but the people are giants and we will be like insects to them (**Num 13:27-29**)
 - IOW, they brought back a report of fear
 - As a result, they not only did not get to go into the land God had promised them, but they had to wait 40 years for their next opportunity (**Num 14:26-35**)
 - Joshua and Caleb chose courage over fear – the other 10, and the people, did not

Understanding the connection between fear and courage is important to choosing courage over fear

- For the Apostle Paul in **Philippians 1**, it meant being an encouragement to the people of the church in spite of the fact that his future was very uncertain
- For you and for me, it is going to mean holding to and not backing down from our faith and the truth of God in spite of the fact that more and more Christians are being told to be quiet and sit down

The importance of choosing courage needs to start young in our children's lives (care how this is said)

- Bullying has become a point of tremendous attention within our culture today
- State from the outset that bullying is never right in any circumstance
 - Is it wrong? – yes
- But has our response to it, as is almost everything our culture does good or bad, been taken too far?
 - Again, I think the answer is yes!

- Bullying itself is always wrong but we have pushed how we deal with it to the point that we now prevent and deny our children the opportunity to learn how to stand up and defend themselves
- What do I mean by that?
 - I am not suggesting that you teach your child to respond through physical confrontations, but when and how do you train a child stand up for themselves if whenever they feel the slightest bit uncomfortable they are to report the person who is “making” them feel that way?
 - Now there is certainly common sense wisdom that must be utilized in these situations
 - An adult aggressively antagonizing or coming against a child should be immediately hauled away
- But, by never allowing our children to deal with confrontation of any kind, we are, I believe, creating an entire generation that thinks the only way to deal with something difficult is to have someone else deal with it
- IOW, anything negative in my life is someone else’s fault and someone else will deal with it
- I recently saw an advertisement on TV targeting people who are overweight and having difficulty losing the weight
 - This ad was telling them that their struggle could very well be due to something called “food bullying”
 - This means that when they were young and came from a family that was most often ethnic (Italian, African American, Hispanic, etc) that their mothers or grandmothers would push food on them as a way of expressing care and love for them
 - And so, in fact, these very overweight people had been “bullied” to overeat and that is why they were dealing with this issue
- Even the overuse of the term bullying to describe any uncomfortable verbal encounter weakens the importance of the times when intervention is truly required
 - And in reality, the blame-shifting becomes cemented in a person’s mind so there are now countless adults living with that mindset every day and, as a result, deal with the consequences for the rest of their lives
- But that is not what God teaches and demonstrates in His word
 - Your actions are just that, your actions – and the consequences, both good and bad, are a result of your choices
- **Genesis 3** is the account of the first sin
 - Adam and Eve both tried to shift the blame but God was having none of it
 - Adam said Eve gave me the fruit
 - Eve said it was the serpent who tempted her
 - But God punished all three
- So, what choices will you make when you are told that the Bible is only a book of ancient writings that are out of date, archaic, mythical, and in fact dangerous?
 - What choices will you make when, as a Christian you take a stance against abortion, homosexuality, and our children being told they need to choose their

gender because that is not what the Bible teaches, and, because of that stance, you are called narrow-minded, bigoted, and a hater?

- It will take courage to stand firm and unmoving!

Yet the Bible is filled with examples of great courage for us to study, understand, and emulate

- Noah needed courage for what God called him to do
 - The account of the flood begins in **Genesis 6**
 - You know the story
 - What you might not have considered however was what Noah faced by standing firm and living his life worthy of the trust and blessing God gave him
 - The land where Noah was born, lived, and built the ark was at that time called Mesopotamia
 - It is today the land we know as Iraq
 - There has never been a great deal of rainfall recorded there, so why would a 480-year-old man start building a boat the size of a football field?
 - Not only its size, but there had never been any craft built like that ever!
 - Do you think Noah heard a lot of support and encouraging words from his neighbors?
 - Certainly not – they were wicked, and Noah was righteous
 - But he had the courage to continue building, involving his three sons, and to see it through to completion
 - And he did this for 120 years before the flood waters came!
- Daniel needed courage to stand up against a government that told him it was illegal for him to pray to God
 - Three times a day, Daniel would go into his room, open the window facing Israel, and pray to God
 - He was told he could no longer do that
 - Now, you may have thought that something like that could never happen in this country
 - But after we have been experiencing over the past couple of years, do you still think that way?
- Many of you are more than likely familiar with the term Cancel Culture
 - That means, if you express an opinion that is outside of the main stream thinking, your opinion can be and often is simply erased, deleted, cancelled
 - It happens frequently on social media platforms, and we have even experienced it here at RLC
 - One of my sermons was removed from FB for an extended period of time
 - I have had people tell me they are sending me a video via Messenger that arrive marked “unavailable” making them unviewable
 - The First Amendment was adopted on December 15, 1791 as part of the Bill of Rights
 - The Bill of Rights provides constitutional protection for certain individual freedoms

- Three of the primary liberties they protect are freedom of speech, peaceable assembly, and worship.
- The great concern is if we progress deeper and deeper into this Cancel Culture, more and more freedoms will be removed that are not in line with approved topics and opinions.
- For Daniel, that threat came from the federal government of the land where he was living at the time
 - Our threat comes from the same source
 - Daniel was told he could not pray to the One True God of his people because the government was telling him he had to do something different
- When that day comes here, and if things do not change, I honestly don't believe it is "if", it is "when", will you be able to have the courage like Daniel to say, "I am going to open my window, and I am going to pray to my God?"

Courage is not the absence of fear, it is doing what you know must or needs to be done, in spite of your fear

Do not be afraid, or fear not, is said over 125 times in the Bible

- How does a Christian live in courage?
- By knowing and believing in the power of Almighty God to go with you – *He will never leave you or forsake you (Deut 31:6)*