

Courage to Endure!! (Slide 1)

Something Better is Coming!!

Reading: Hebrews 10:26-39

One of the most critical attributes that the Christian can have is *courage*. Frankly, it takes courage to be a Christian.

Christian courage isn't based on wanting a fight *but* knowing that a spiritual fight is inevitable. Paul tells Timothy; ***"Fight the good fight of faith."*** The fight is inevitable!!

It isn't based on wanting revenge since the fight is spiritual warfare even if it becomes physical (***"vengeance is mine saith the Lord"***), but on the fact that *"something better is coming."*

That belief, our confession, calls us to patiently endure persecution and trial, to act when we must defend our faith and to help a brother in need.

Christian courage is confidence in the advocacy and intercession of Jesus Christ. Without Christ Jesus, all is lost for eternity.

Hebrews 10:31 (Slide 2)

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

To clearly understand this verse one must fully realize that God already holds all things in His hands and always has!! The earth, sky, the stars, the planets, the universe complete, mankind, life and breath.....We have always been in his hands so ***to fall into the hands of the living God*** must convey something deeper.

The Hebrew writer is stating a fact that between us and justice, Jesus is our only mediator. If we reject Jesus, as so many do, we have no intercessor, no spiritual attorney to plead our case before God. Therefore, we are on our own to take our chances with an avenging and just God.

Those who know Christ Jesus also know that he has prepared something better and ***store up for themselves treasures in heaven*** through faithful courage.

Jesus before His ascension into heaven told His Apostles:

Matthew 28:19a *(Slide 3)*

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations

I am convinced that making disciples meant to mold and arm His disciples with courage. To prepare for that spiritual warfare that would cause them to look for something better to come.

Matthew 5:11-12 *(Slide 4)*

11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in

heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

It takes *courage to endure*. Yet, stay the course, no matter what, for something better is coming!!

The Hebrew writer states that persecution came after ***they were illuminated-enlightened***. The Gospel message was preached and they became Christians. *"The fight was on!"* They were persecuted by the Jews and Gentiles for their faith.

Hebrews 10:32-33 (Slide 5)

***32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings:
33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;***

Not all experienced the same degree of persecution. Nevertheless, they were all made a public "*spectacle*" for their belief. Some were mocked, some were imprisoned, some were tortured, and throughout history many in Christ were executed for their faith and even are today.

Reproach means that in some way they tried to shame Christians for their belief. Often because of their close association of those who were more prolific leaders of the faith such as the Apostle Paul. They were publicly ridiculed and mocked.

Hebrews 10:34a (Slide 6)

for you had compassion on me in my chains,

Personally, this is one of the statements in the Hebrew letter that causes me to believe Apostle Paul is the writer.

They suffered persecution because they willingly helped him while imprisoned. They knew beforehand that this would cost them in some way but they were looking for *something better to come.....*

Hebrews 10:34b (Slide 7)

and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.

Whatever possessions they had gained in this life they lost to the hands of their persecutors. How much courage would be needed to maintain our Christian faith if we were to lose our homes, our car, our job, our family because of our faith?

What if we lack courage?

Mark 8:36 (Slide 8)

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

The opposite of courageous is cowardice! A coward occupies eternity with the worst kind of alien sinners.

Revelation 21:8 (Slide 9)

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Notice that **cowardly** and **unbelieving** are not the same thing. The cowardly (translated sometimes as **fearful**) are believers who lack “backbone” for Christ. When their faith is challenged they cower in timidity and sometimes will deny Him publicly even though they know that He is Christ Jesus.

Their condemnation is equal to that of unbelievers, murderers, liars and the like. To be a coward is not Christian and is disgraceful in the sight of God!

If we are to be Christ-like (*Christian*) we are to be courageous like Jesus!

The coward lives his life in a way to avoid such situations where his faith will be tested. The coward runs from spiritual confrontation to “save *his own skin*” so to speak. I don’t say go about seeking a fight, but don’t run from it when it happens! *Stand up for Jesus!*

Cowardice is sometimes linked with someone who has a guilty conscience;

Proverbs 28:1 (*Slide 10*)

The wicked flee when no one pursues,

But the righteous are bold as a lion.

The righteous have the courage to confess their sins and get right with God when the wicked or the coward runs from confession.

I read a story of a young boy who was in school in another land, sitting in class feeling bored, tired and anxious for the school day to end. He was sitting trying to focus on the teacher but his mind was elsewhere, when suddenly the ground shook beneath him and things began to fall from the ceiling and the walls, books fell from the bookshelf and he realized it was an earthquake.

As he recalled later, he wasn't really taught courage because he was the youngest of the family, the baby he said and realized at the moment he had been "*babied*." Yet, he also knew that he had to develop courage and fast.

His grandfather was the principal of the school and he watched him. He was calm and collected as he hastened children from the building. He said he did the same thing encouraging his schoolmates to flee.

They all had no more than cleared the last door to the outside and the building caved in completely. *"I realized at that moment I didn't cry nor did I panic but I had developed courage. I learned courage from the actions and demeanor of my grandfather who acted swiftly to save us all."*

There is much more to his story. As his family moves to the US they survive the devastation of one the fiercest hurricanes in history, utilizing that same courage to act and survive.

Courage then can be learned from a source that we trust. We trust our source because of His promise that *something greater is coming*. Have courage to trust God with all your might!

At 120 years of age and because he was being held accountable by God, Moses wasn't able to lead the children of Israel into the promised land. Nevertheless, he wants them to know that God will lead them and that they should take comfort and have courage because He will lead them to victory over the nations on the other side of the Jordan.

Deuteronomy 31:6 (Slide 11)

"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

That same God of the Old Covenant, our God, is the same today who gives us courage through his Son.

John 13:1 (Slide 12)

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

His courage was to give His life so that we can look forward to *something better to come!!* Have courage for He, the Son, loves us in this way!!!

Even in times that are difficult, that are dark, we can take courage if we trust Him, because He is holding our hand:

Psalm 139:10-12 (Slide 13)

10 Even there Your hand shall lead me,

And Your right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"

Even the night shall be light about me;

(Slide 14) 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,

But the night shines as the day;

The darkness and the light are both alike to You.

Do not fear, but take courage. If we stand with God, God stands by our side!!

Psalm 121:5 (Slide 15)

The LORD is your keeper;

The LORD is your shade on your right hand.

Hebrews 10:35-39 (Slide 16)

35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

**37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE,
HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.**

(Slide 17) **38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;
AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.**

**39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction,
but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.**

The Hebrew writer is echoing the call for endurance found in:

2 Corinthians 4:13-18 *(Slide 18)*

13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak, 14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. (Slide 19) 15 For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. (Slide 20) 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

A little while, momentary, light affliction-if we suffer persecution for the cause of Christ for the entirety of our Christian life and if that life equaled the days of Methuselah, 969 years, it still would be no comparison to that of eternity. The call then is to not throw it away, to shrink back, but to endure, preserving our faith through Christian Courage!!

Invitation

It takes courage to respond to the Gospel call. Humble submission is foreign to our human pride, yet, it requires us to relinquish our will for His.

Today, hear the Gospel call and respond in faithful submission with spiritual courage and become a child of God by the washing and renewing of your soul in Baptism.

If you are a child of God but are anxious, fearful or have a different need remember the written words of Peter:

1 Peter 6-7

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Please let us know today how we may assist you with your walk with God.....

Reading

Hebrews 10:26-39

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

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