

# The Case for Courage

Steve Berger January 21, 2018

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## Review

- **Over the last three weeks — Fear and Dismay**
  - **Today** — talk about two words that PRECEDE Fear and Dismay —
    - **Strong and Courageous!**
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## The Case for Courage

- **Deuteronomy 31:6-7**  
“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.” Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it.”
- **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.”
  - Hazak ve-Ematz- be strong and courageous
  - to be brave, bold and intrepid when facing difficulties and dangers

## FACTS

- if you are engaged in being a passionate servant of Jesus Christ — you are going to need spiritual strength and courage! Face outward and inward...
- **2 Corinthians 7:5**  
For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.
- **John 16:33**  
In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.  
Be courageous, I've overcome the world.

**Question?** — *What does it mean for us, that we can have courage, because Jesus has overcome the world?*

**Answer** — Through Jesus' victory over the world, with all of it's wicked ways and woundings, He offers us courage to face our challenges, so we can overcome, too. GREAT!!!

**Listen** — *as a Pastor I have a front row seat when it comes to watching the most personal, painful and problematic issues people deal with — too often there's a lack of courage — fear terrorizes, dismay paralyzes — too many quit altogether, or stagnate.*

*“A decline in courage may be the most striking feature which an outside observer notices in the West in our days. The Western world has lost its civil courage, both as a whole and separately, in each country, each government, each political party... should one point out that from ancient times decline in courage has been considered the beginning of the end?”<sup>1</sup> Alexander Solzhenitsyn, 1978.*

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## Recover courage, know its Source

- **Deuteronomy 31:6**

“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.”

- **Matthew 28:20**

“I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

- **Hebrews 13:5-6**

...For God Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU.” So we may boldly say: “THE LORD IS MY HELPER; I WILL NOT FEAR. WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?”

**Application** — *to those Hebrew Christians who were falling away, quitting, due to opposition and persecution, one of the most emphatic statements in the entire New Testament is made with two double negatives — “I will never, ever, ever leave you.” SO — boldly, courageously say, “the LORD is my helper, I will not fear, what can man do to me.”*

### THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE IS THE SOURCE OF OUR COURAGE!

*“Blessed are those who can realize the Divine Companionship which was the apostles source of courage and strength. Every humble believer can claim it and can rejoice in the possession of it.”<sup>2</sup>*

*Charles Spurgeon*

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## Jesus' example of courage — Gethsemane

- **Matthew 26:37-39**

And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

- courage isn't the total absence of anxiety, sorrow or distress — courage seeks God, trusts God, and keeps moving, regardless!
- **there is courage available to you for your personal Gethsemane!**

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Detente, Democracy and Dictatorship* (Transaction Publishers, 2009) ,81

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Samuel Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator* (Anson D.F. Randolph & Company, 189?)

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## Disciples' example of courage

- no question they learned from watching Jesus
- every chapter in the book of Acts has at least one act of courage

- **Acts 20:22-24 — summarized**

And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

**Application** — *every city chains and tribulations await me, not moved, my life is God's, finish my race! That is courage rooted in the unending, abiding, Presence of God!*

*“Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.”<sup>3</sup>  
C.S. Lewis*

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## Need courage today...

- **remember** — God is with you, won't fail you, won't forsake you
- **2 Peter 1:3 — receive**  
His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.
- **Hebrews 4:15-16 — go boldly**  
For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Application** — *Jesus sympathizes, He knows, He was there...*

- come boldly to the throne of grace — divine enabling
- obtain mercy — compassion, kind understanding
- find grace — find the enabling power of God
- in your time of need — when you need courage

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## Discussion Questions

1. If you are engaged in being a passionate servant of Jesus Christ, why are you going to need courage?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 7:5; outside were conflicts, inside were fears. Have you experienced this?
3. Discuss Solzhenitsyn's statement about the decline in courage in the Western world.
4. Does having courage always mean the total absence of anxiety, sorrow, or distress? Explain.
5. What does C.S. Lewis mean when he says, “courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.”
6. How can we recover courage, and teach others to do so?

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<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, *A Year with C.S. Lewis: Daily Readings from His Classic Works* (Zondervan, 2003), 343