

Take Courage

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[0 : 00] The Book of the Lord Joshua 1, verses 6-9.

This book of the Lord shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein.

For then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success. 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. Joshua is promised success and favour as he follows faithfully God's Word, as he meditates on it, as he acts upon it.

The Lord commanded Joshua to be strong and very courageous, to be not afraid. Joshua did act upon the Word of God.

[1 : 04] He obeyed the Lord who instructed the people to march around the walls of Jericho, and the walls fell. God's Word proved true.

And we need to take the Word of God. Take it as read. Turn not from it. Verse 7. Unswerving commitment to God's Word. Search the Word for the answers.

Search the Word. Think upon the Word. Meditate upon the Word. Ask the Lord to open the Word to your understanding, to help you to apply it.

The Word of God. We're instructed to meditate therein, day and night. The Word of God. It lights our way. It shapes our life. It guides our steps.

The Word of God. The Word of God. And we're commanded to have confidence in it. So have courage. John 16, 33. The Lord says, These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.

[2 : 09] In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. Or in other words, take courage. I have overcome the world. I have overcome the world.

The world is darkening. Yet we can take courage as God's people. We can be not afraid. Even in fearful times, we can be strong in the Lord, even though in our own selves we're weak and weary. We can have courage and find strength in Christ. Our Lord has overcome the world, and He promises us the victory. As we read elsewhere, this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

Instead of fear, we can know faith. Take courage. It reminds me of a time when I was in hospital. I was in hospital, and the nurses and doctors were preparing for an operation.

A serious operation. As the body was prepared, as the antiseptic was applied, the red dye almost looked like blood.

[3 : 21] And I said to my wife, take courage dear, I must go, I'm going to faint. Because my wife was there about to have a caesarean operation.

And it was my first time I'd been there in that place to observe the conduct, to observe the procedure of a caesarean operation.

And just to see the red dye apply was enough to make me feel very faint. And it was easy for me to say, take courage. Take courage dear.

But I had to say, I've got to go now. I'm going to faint. And so I just went and sat in the waiting area, and just prayed for my dear wife to have courage.

And it's easy sometimes for us to say, take courage, isn't it? To say, take courage. To say, have courage. But we need to see that God can give courage when we're feeling faith.

[4 : 24] And courage is something we can know. It's something that we can find. Courage. That means going through against all the odds, against the crowd, against the wrong, to stand for what is right.

Committed faith. Faith that will stand strong for the right. Courage. Courage to stand strong against temptations. There's temptations all abounding all around us.

Temptations to break our words. To dishonour our marriage. To dishonour our integrity. To...
Temptations to be dishonest.

Temptations of the flesh. We can find courage in Christ when we face such things. Courage can give us that true strength. As we find our strength is in the Lord.

Be strong in the Lord. Be strong in the Lord. That means strong in prayer. Strong in the word.

Strong in the spirit. Someone has said courage is grace under pressure.

[5 : 30] It's when those pressure times come that grace can produce courage in our lives. We can have a boldness in Christ as the character of Christ can shine through in those circumstances.

Think of our Lord himself as he stood tall in that time where he stood against the establishment of his day. He did not choose the easy path. He did not choose the popular way.

And Christ showed that great example of courage to us. Of how we can stand tall. As our ultimate example and role model, our Lord shows that courage.

That grows as we trust him. That courage that our Lord grants us in facing life's challenges. The psalmist said, Psalm 23, that familiar one, I will fear no evil.

Why? Because thou art with me. That is our source of strength. Our Lord's presence. Courage is not necessarily the absence of fear, but rather the presence of faith in action.

[6 : 34] We can know that. You can know that, sister. You can know that today. Brother, you can know that. That courage that Christ can give. Courage that starts on the inside. That's what the Bible shows for us.

That courage that we can know even now in the 21st century. The courage that starts on the inside. The courage that says yes to the call to obey.

The courage that says yes to doing his will in this life, in this world. The courage that says my convictions will stand true. I will do as he's called me to do, no matter what.

There's many quotes about courage, even in the secular scene. For example, one man with courage is a majority. Another courage is fear, holding on a minute longer.

Courage means facing your fears and standing strong. God gives that wonderful promise to Joshua. Joshua, as he was there facing, crossing the Jordan, as he was there with the battles that would lie ahead.

[7 : 39] God gives a wonderful promise to Joshua. He says, verse 9, That's something we can hang on to.

That the Lord is with you, wherever you go. As you face life's difficult challenges, as you know that promise. I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

If God is for us, who can be against us? God says, fear not, fear not. And we can have the assurance of his promises, of his tender care. Consider the people of courage through the pages of Scripture.

The pages of the Word of God that show us biblical examples of courage. For example, Moses. Moses, as he faced up to Pharaoh. David, as he slew that giant Goliath.

Esther, as she stood up for the people of God before the King. Facing potential danger of her own. Peter and John, as they fronted the Sanhedrin.

[8 : 40] The religious council. We see the bravery of Abraham in Genesis 22, verse 3. When our Lord says to Abraham to take his son to the mountain to sacrifice him.

And Abraham rose up early in the morning. Genesis 22, verse 3. He got his beast ready. He took the Word. He went unto the place that God had told him.

He rose up early. Immediately, he acted on the Word of God. He didn't dilly dally to do what God had told him to do. And then in verse 10 of Genesis 22.

And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, here am I.

Just as that knife was about to descend into the heart of his son. The courage of faith. The courage of faith. It calms our fears. God has not given to us a spirit of fear or of fearfulness.

[9 : 43] He's given us a spirit of faith. A spirit of power. A spirit of fearlessness. The Lord told Abraham what to do. And he did it in faith and courage without hesitation.

Think again of the courage of Esther. She went boldly to the king to save her people. It was a challenging step to take. Men and women of God can show that courage.

Biblical courage. The courage of faith. Can we find this faith? This courage? Yes we can. Yes we can. In Adelaide. In Elizabeth. In this place.

In this time. In this season. You can know the same courage that these men and women of God of old did. To stand for what is right. To stand for our faith.

When it isn't easy. Joshua and Caleb are examples again. As they showed courageous faith. As they said. Let us go up at once.

[10:42] And possess the land. Paul. He displayed courage. As he headed towards Jerusalem. When he was told that bonds and imprisonments waited for him there.

We see the courage of Gideon. Also. Gideon who attacked the combined might of the Midianites and the Amalekites. With a small army of just 300 men.

In Judges 7. Verse 9 of our text. It says. Be not afraid. Neither be thou dismayed. Who's ever been dismayed? I'm sure we all have.

And we all can feel. A feeling of being dismayed. Where things just seem too much. Where it seems too hard. But courage has that staying power.

It will stay the course. It will stay the distance. Don't give up. Here's a quote about courage.

Courage is not limited to the battlefield.

[11:38] Or the Indianapolis 500. Or the bravery of catching a thief in your house. The real tests of courage are much deeper and much quieter. They are the inner tests.

Like remaining faithful when no one's looking. Like enduring pain. Like standing alone when you're misunderstood. Courage. Courage will sink you through those tests, those times.

It's faith filled courage. Where does this kind of courage come from? Our Lord. Our God. Our Saviour. Our Master.

Our Lord is that source of courage. Why? He stands with us. He goes before us. And we're never alone. Because He is always with us. He grants courage that we need to do right.

And we can live in that confident hope that is in Christ. We can take courage. Yes. You can take courage. Even though the one saying take courage is fainting.

[12:41] The Word of God is true. But you can take courage in His confident word to you. Take courage. Be strong in the Lord.

Be strong in the Lord. Is our Lord weak? Absolutely not. He's all powerful. And where does He live? He's the hope of glory. He's the hope of glory. Christ in you. Amen. Friends, you've got absolute power. As it were, as you put your faith, as you lean upon Him and His strength, be strong in the Lord.

Act in that courage. Act in that faith. Without fear of man or even of yourself. No fear other than the fear of God.

Be true to the Word of God. Stand against the tide and swim against the stream. Take a stand. Friends, sometimes you'll be in the minority.

[13:37] If you stand in faith, in that kind of faith-filled courage, likelihood is you will be in the minority. It's like someone said, if you move with the crowd, you'll get no further than the crowd.

When 40 million people believe in a dumb idea, it's still a dumb idea. Speak up your faith in Christ. Speak up for it.

Stand for what you believe. For what's good. For what's honest. For what's true. For what's right. And point people to the Lord. We want to be the church. Be the church that our God wants us to be. The church that we're meant to be. The church of the living God. And stand strongly for Him. For His Word. For His truth. To be bold in the Word.

To be bold in prayer. We need that courage that He grants to us. That courage that whatever may face us, we can be strong and very courageous.

[14:34] Joshua went out in faith despite the dangers, despite the opposition, despite the giants that faced them, despite the walled city of Jericho.

Be thou strong and very courageous. We can have that courage. That courage no matter what faces us, we must go forward. There was a story of some years ago of an ocean miner wrecked on a dangerous reef off the New England coast.

And the Coast Guard was called and went to the rescue under the leadership of an old captain. But the vessel's crew of the Coast Guard ship were very inexperienced young men.

And one of these youngsters turned to the captain with a white face. He said, Sir, the wind is offshore. The tide is running out.

We can go out, but we can never come back. All the captain said was, launch the boat. We have to go out. We don't have to come back. Friends, we have to go out.

[15 : 44] We have to go out. Go out. Go and tell. Go and show the Gospel. Be that light to this darkened world. Let us have courage and do our duty.

Let us as God's people be brave, be bold and be strong in our convictions. We need that boldness. As never before in this world of darkness and as we see desperation in many quarters, even in the secular scene, we need a faith that will stand strong and sure.

Solid, firm, courageous faith. Unbending, unhesitating, unrelenting. That kind of faith. The faith that we see the men and women of God through history, through the Scriptures show to us.

We need to be courageous. Be courageous. Be courageous. Be courageous in your witness. As the apostles, disciples of old in Acts 9, 29, it says, Paul spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. But they went about to slay him. You know, we don't have quite that reaction here in Australia. Paul spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus.

[17 : 06] Let's have that confident, courageous witness. Let's have courage in our homes. In our homes. That confidence to arrange our homes after God's pattern. That confidence to trust God's design for marriage.

Of headship. Of responsibilities as parents. As spouses. Fulfilling our responsibilities. God says of Abraham in Genesis 18, verse 19.

For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him. And they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Abraham commanded his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord. Let's have that courage. Let's have that boldness. Let's have that fortitude to display courage in the home life.

In the home situation. No matter what the world's immoral agendas are. No matter what the world does to mock marriage. To corrupt marriage, as it were.

[18 : 11] With so-called same-sex marriage. Let's have courage in a world that jettisons biblical truth. In a world that mocks the headship of a father.

That mocks the biblical discipline of children. That mocks the biblical foundation of a marriage that is in God's order. Where humanism is so destructive to godly family order.

Let us boldly stand in these days with courage to stand up against the forces of the world. And stand up for God's design for the home.

After all, he's the ultimate designer of the home, isn't he? And you can't go down to some worldly builder, Wicks and Macklin or Fairmont Homes and get that kind of home design.

The home is more than bricks and mortar. It's the man, the woman, the children living in godly order and harmony. God helping us to have that. As much as we know it's not always realised.

[19 : 12] But in God's word we see the pattern. Ephesians 5 Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church.

Ephesians 6 Children obey your parents for this is right. Obey your parents in the Lord. And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Let us have courage to aspire to God's design for the family. Let us have courage in the church. Courage to serve. As we see, we read, of deacons who serve well in good standing with boldness in the faith.

1 Timothy 3 To be a church that is true, that is faithful. A church that will have courage to encourage others, to teach, to grow, to build up one another.

Let us have courage that we will abide in him. That we will have confidence in that day of judgement. 1 John 2 28 It says, And now little children abide in him, that when he shall appear, we shall have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

[20 : 26] Confidence and courage that comes from faith. Not to fear man, as our Lord says in Matthew 10 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him.

Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. The Lord's word gives us a boldness. It gives us promises. He grants us his power and his presence to live. That boldness of faith. To live by faith. And it's jam-packed with so many promises.

Friends, we can. Take courage. Take courage. Because the one who says that is true to his word. In Hebrews 13.5 He says, In part, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly

say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

You know, there's times when courage is hard to find. It's easy to take the safer path. It's easy to take the quieter path. To not speak up.

[21 : 36] Friends, be a witness for Christ. In the place that you live. Be a witness for Christ. God helping you. So have that courage to speak up. Let us have courage to speak up.

Let us have courage to press on. As Paul writes in Philippians 3, Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do. Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

He says he presses towards the mark. Let's pray for that kind of courage. Let's pray for a lion-hearted kind of faith and courage. Such that we see in Proverbs 28, verse 1.

The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. That's the kind of faith we can have.

A boldness that is not self-centered or self-generated, but a boldness that comes from the faith that he grants to us. From Christ in us, there's a boldness, there's a fearlessness that he gives to us, as we rest in his word.

[22 : 46] We see it says, This book of the Lord shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein.

For then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success. Hath 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. Are you dismayed? No.

God says, don't be. Don't be dismayed. Are you afraid? No. God says, don't be afraid. He says, be strong. Be strong and of a good courage.

Friends, we see it says, Do the word. Observe to do the word. Meditate on the word. Be strong in the Lord. Know he is with you. Friends, you will feel weak.

[23 : 44] I feel weak most of the time. Friends, we will feel weak, yet we can know his strength. His strength, overarching, overflowing, compensating for all of our weakness, compensating for all of our frailty, compensating for all of our lack and inadequacy.

Know that he is with you wherever you go. Wherever you go. When you take one step at a time, he is with you every single step.

Friends, you don't come and visit God in church and leave him behind for the rest of the week.

Know that he is with you wherever you go. And so where you go, do your duty.

Where you go, whether it be the home, whether it be life, whether it be witness, whether it be in service, he is with you. And he has overcome the world. Take courage.

Take courage. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can find courage in a world where it's easy to be discouraged.

[24 : 46] We can be encouraged with an encouragement of the comforter, who is that great encourager, that great comforter. Lord, we pray that there be any here today that they're feeling a little bit under that cloud of being dismayed.

If there be any here who are feeling somewhat fearful and inadequate, may they find that strength, that stronghold that you are to us as we have that faith that overcomes the world.

Help us, Lord, to see that every step you are with us, every step, wherever we go, you're already there. You're already in our future.

Lord, we thank you that we can put our trust in you. We pray for those any here who have yet to know you for the very first time. They've yet to find that salvation.

Lord, that they'll know what it means to know your cross was the place where everything was paid for. And your blood has made it possible for those who trust you to be saved.

[25 : 55] Lord, we pray that each one will know what that means. That we'll find that faith that makes life real and makes life life because the just shall live by faith.

We thank you, Lord, that you can strengthen the very weak and you can enhance the very dismayed that are here today. We know, Lord, that when we are weak, we are strong.

If we'll just look at you, if we'll just trust what your word says to us and we will be strong, we will be very courageous and we will know the empowerment of your Holy Spirit.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.