

Marks of a Disciple: Courageous in Faith

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, Forth. Good morning. Good morning. I like that. Sometimes I get a personal good morning.

! Good morning, and I appreciate it.! It's good to be back. It's the fall officially.

And it's been a good morning thus far. Amen? And I want to thank, we have a number of folks that helped kind of put the morning together, Melissa and the entire team, and just thank you for hours of prepping and organizing.

And hopefully you have found a group of folks that you can walk with this semester, discipleship, relationship, whether that's Sunday morning, whether that's midweek. But it's a grace that the Lord has given us other believers to do life with, that we can stay encouraged, that we can use our spiritual gifts and encourage others.

And if you've not figured out a way to deeper connect than just Sunday morning, I just want to encourage you to, you know, after service, we're still going to have the table set up, and we really want you to get a 1 Peter handbook, and it's just an opportunity for us to get in the Word.

[1 : 15] And so we're really, we're exhorting us to be in the Word during the week, to be a people that actually abide. I had an experience last night.

I was driving a gal, because my true profession is that I am a very sophisticated and skilled Uber driver. And I was driving this gal, and we were talking, and come to find out about halfway through the ride, she's like, yeah, I go to Northview.

I said, you go to Northview? I said, I heard you guys hired a pastor recently. And she says, let me tell you about him. And so I got to hear all these wonderful things about Cole last night, and his beautiful wife, and I said, well, I concur, because we're from the church that's sending them.

So at any rate, Anna and Cole, it's their last Sunday with us, and Scott will mention a little bit more after service. We're going to celebrate with them, but at any rate, that was super fun to have that interaction.

All right, if you guys have a Bible, turn open to Matthew 25. We're going to be looking at verses 14 to 30 this morning. We're finishing these stories of a disciple, what it means to be a disciple, and we've looked at actually three others in the course of the summer and the last few weeks, and we're going to complete this series this morning.

[2 : 34] Next Sunday, we will launch into 1 Peter. So let me pray for our time, and then we will begin our study. Lord Jesus, it truly is good to be here this morning.

We're thankful that you are a God that loved the foolish in the world to shame the wise. And in fact, your word says that you chose what's weak to shame the strong.

And so Lord, we are a gathering of ordinaries who have experienced your grace, and it's the reason we're here. Jesus, we want to worship you today. We want to draw near to you.

We ask that you would be at work through your spirit, ministering to every individual, whatever the need is. Lord, would you do that? And would we leave here this morning closer to you, resolved to pursue you with greater vigor, and in addition, increase joy?

And so we commit our study to you. Would you speak to us through just the beauty and the power of your word? We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. God loves a good story.

[3 : 50] God loves a great story. In fact, our God is a storytelling God. He's in fact given us a book that contains the greatest story that will ever be told.

The story of a king who creates a people, who redeems a people, returns for those people, and then will reign with those people forever.

And the book that you have in front of you, if you have a Bible or the one in the pew, it's about 50% of it is narrative. It's a story. Our God is a storytelling God.

This is for free. I wasn't even sure if I was going to share this because you guys are going to go, that's what's happening inside of Jay's brain. Yes, this is the things I think about. God's a storytelling God.

And I think about the fact that we have creation around us and it's fascinating to me that in Job 9, in Job 38, Amos 5, we have three passages that talk about the fact that we have stars and constellations and names them, Orion and the bear and Pleiades.

[4 : 57] And it's fascinating to me that the Bible records that God's ordered the stars in some sort of pattern and actually they have names. They're named in Scripture. And it's like there's a storybook in the heavens.

Our God's a storytelling God. And I sort of imagine, this is not in the Bible. This is total conjecture. But I wonder if in the heavens, the story of creation, the story of redemption, it's all there and there will be a day someday when the earth will be God's cathedral and we will see the stained glass over us of the greatest story of all time.

That's sort of what I imagine. And I could be wrong, but I just think it's fascinating to think about that our God loves stories. And in fact, the story that should most profoundly impact us is the Gospel story.

Right? Because stories change us. Stories alter us. Stories influence us. If you have this story in your head, this mind that, well, this life is all there is, it will profoundly affect how you live.

Well, if this is all there is, then I'm going to live for possessions. And I'm going to live for comfort and indulging my flesh. Or here's another story, very popular in culture right now.

[6 : 14] Gender is fluid. That's a story that is getting a lot of airtime. And if you embrace that, you then begin to advocate for youth to be transitioned. Right?

Socially, and then hormonally, and then surgically. Stories influence. Or how about this story? Maybe you have this mind that, man, I've committed the sin that Jesus can't forgive.

That will impact your life. You will live in despair, anxiety, depression. We're a people that should be defined by one central story, the Gospel.

That Jesus forgives real sins. And as we believe that, not for our neighbor, but for ourselves, it then translates into greater peace, greater joy, as we live out our days.

Now, the Gospel story is a central story that ought to define us. But it's interesting to me that Jesus gives us more stories in the New Testament. And we call them parables.

[7 : 22] They're in the Gospels. At camp, earlier this summer, we looked at the parable of the rich fool. And it's a story that meant to provoke us to be a more generous people towards God.

The God, you get all of our stuff, our time, our talent, our treasure. We considered recently the vine story. It reminded us to be people that actually commune with the Lord. It's about friendship.

It's about relationship. So abide in the vine. Go home this week and start reading through 1 Peter. And hear from the Lord. Let him tell you personal things about himself.

And then we looked at the story of the Good Samaritan last week. Is that true? I was gone. I skipped. I apologize. It was, okay. It happened. Okay?

The Good Samaritan calling us to be a selfless people towards one another. This morning, we're going to consider our fourth story. The story of the talents.

[8 : 22] And this story is actually found in Matthew 25. Let me tell you a little bit about Matthew 25. If you're not there, go there now. But this story is the third parable. Some consider it the fourth if you consider the fig tree a parable.

It's pretty short. It's not really a story. But the third parable is part of the Olivet Discourse. What's the Olivet Discourse? Well, this is chapters Matthew 24 and Matthew 25.

This is the conversation, the sermon that Jesus gives to His disciples just days before His crucifixion. They're on the Mount of Olives.

And this discourse, Matthew 24, Matthew 25, is all about God's people being prepared for His second coming. Okay? Let me give you a key text from that Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24, 44.

It says, therefore, you also must be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. And then what we have all throughout Matthew 24, we're given all these different signs, indicators, that the return of Christ is coming upon us.

[9 : 32] It's coming soon. And we have all sorts of things that are listed in chapter 24. Deceptions of false Christs, wars and rumors of war, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, persecution of Christians, falling away of those who profess Christ, increase of wickedness, and a decrease in

love.

And some of you are like thinking like, well, I can, yeah, that one, not that one, yep, that's happening. Okay? And there's this escalation in Matthew 24 of birth pangs.

That Christ's return is imminent. And it's interesting because in Matthew 24, some Bible scholars consider the whole thing to occur during the tribulation.

Some say it's before and after, but there are certainly events within Matthew 24 that we associate with the seven-year tribulation period. because it talks about in 24 verse 15 the revealing of the Antichrist and him setting himself up as Savior of the world.

Talks about this thing called the abomination of desolation. That the Jewish temple has been rebuilt and this individual desecrates it and essentially designates himself as Savior of the world.

[10:53] And perhaps you're listening to this this morning and you're thinking, wow, Jay, if Matthew 24 is about the tribulation, then why do I need to pay attention to Matthew 25?

Because according to my theology, I'm not going to be here. Well, lest you're in that camp, and perhaps I am too, a good chance, you may not be around for those events related to end-time eschatology, but every one of us have to reckon with our own personal eschatology in that we need to be prepared for the meeting we will have with the Lord Jesus.

And it's safe to say that in a group this size, that could happen for some of us this year, next year, in five years, in ten years, because our physical death may be the thing.

Save the rapture, it may be that which moves us into the very presence of God. And so, this parable is highly applicable to all of us.

Amen? So let's read it in that spirit. Matthew 25, verses 14 to 30. We could even sneak in verse 13, which I'm going to do.

[12:22] Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. For it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who has received the five talents went at once and traded them and he made five talents more.

So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time, the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

And he who had received the five talents came forward bringing five talents more, saying, Master, you delivered to me five talents here. I have made five talents more.

His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will say you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. And he also, who had the two talents, came forward saying, Master, you delivered to me two talents here.

[13:32] I have made two talents more. His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will say you over much.

Enter into the joy of your master. He also, who had received the one talent, came forward saying, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.

So I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours. But the master said, you wicked and slothful servant.

You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed. Then why, then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers.

And at my coming, I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given.

[14:30] And he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Whew! It's pretty intense. This parable, first off, the context of the parable is the kingdom of God. Kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven. We know that because in the beginning of chapter 25, verse 1, before we have the parable of the ten versions, it says, hey, the kingdom of heaven.

And so this is about God's kingdom. And it's like this now, not yet sort of experience. It's this invisible kingdom, but it's a very real kingdom that we are a part of.

The church mediates the kingdom to an unbelieving world. An entrance into the kingdom is for anyone if you're willing to bow your knee to King Jesus.

[15:38] There's one door. Jesus. And so the central question is, will we be prepared to lock eyes with our king when he returns?

Will we hear him say to us, whether it's at his coming or our going, will we hear from him, well done, my good and faithful servant, in the way that you have lived out your days for my glory and the joy of those who have not heard?

And I would say there is nothing worse, church, than being unprepared for some important appointment. Amen? Amen? Men, if it's your wedding day, you look good.

Come prepared. You don't show up in your graphic tee because your bride may say, I don't want to marry that guy wearing a Jurassic Park Donkey Kong t-shirt.

You want to be prepared. Well, that doesn't compare to the meeting we will have with God Almighty someday. That occasion, that is the most important meeting that is on every one of our schedules.

[16:53] It will occur. And we have indicators in Scripture that in 1 Corinthians 3 talks about the Bema Seed Judgment, 2 Corinthians 5, the Judgment Seed of Christ, the same thing.

It's clear. Our lives will be tested by fire. Not for salvation. Salvation is accomplished by Jesus' completed, finished work of His death, burial, and His resurrection.

And when we place faith in that, that's enough. It's all grace. But the status, how we use the resources, the lives that God gave us, will be tested.

And I think we will be tested and it will then result in eternal reward.

And Scripture seems to indicate that how we do in this life will have a profound impact on then the next thousand years before the eternal state on what we're doing.

[17:59] There is this doctrine called the Millennium. I think it's biblical. You can read Revelation 20. It talks about this millennial reign of Christ for a thousand years. It happens after the tribulation.

It happens prior to the eternal state. But it's a time that's very different than today. If you want to read about some of the things that occur, go ahead and read through Isaiah 65. There are things in Isaiah 65 that make no sense in any other time than if there was a millennial reign.

So you can read Revelation 20, Isaiah 65. In that time, things are going to be, there's a renewal.

Jesus is reigning on planet Earth. If you die at 100 years old, you're considered a young man.

Talks about the wolf and the lamb. They're now best friends. It's cool. Read Isaiah 65. It'll get you excited. But what we do in this life, it will have profound impact in how the Lord will use us in that thousand years.

1 Corinthians 6 says, do you not know that the saints will judge the world? When is that going to happen? I believe that's going to happen during the thousand year period. That millennial kingdom.

[19:08] Luke 19.17, the parable of the 10 minus, very similar to this parable. And he said to them, well done, good servant. Because you've been faithful with very little, you shall have authority over 10 cities.

And I think that's the sense too of Matthew 25. That there is going to be responsibilities in the millennial kingdom. That in this life right now we serve the Lord and there's a day when we will reign with Him.

And how we are faithful to Him in this life will determine the responsibilities we have for that thousand years. Okay, this one's controversial.

But you're getting all of this for free. I'm not charging you this morning. I'm not the only pastor that has pondered this question on staff. In Revelation 21, verse 4, it talks about in the eternal state, right as it begins, there will be no more weeping.

Well, why is there weeping? We've already been with Christ for a thousand years. And you have to wonder, is there still a sobering lesson some of us are learning that wow, we could have done more for the Lord. We had a thousand years of like, I got to manage a park.

[20:23] And Scott's over here running, I don't know, Washington, D.C. He says no. But I think it's like, oh. And you just have to wonder, you know, what are those tears in relation to?

That one's free. It's a little controversial. It's just a question. Alright. Let's talk about this story. In the story, we have three servants.

They're given cash assets from a wealthy landowner. It's a parable. It's safe to say this landowner is who? You're at church? It's Jesus. That's easy, okay?

Yes. He's the one that has gone away. He's the king. He's going to return, right? John 14. I'm going away. I'm preparing a place. I'm going to return. Well, here we have this parable.

The landowner is leaving, but he's going to come back. And he's given these servants these resources, right? He's given them what's called a talent. Now, this is not a skill.

[21 : 24] This is not an ability. This is a sum of money. It's actually a talent in Scripture. It's actually a weight of money. And it would have been akin to about 75 pounds.

And typically, it would have been silver. And if you would have had 75 pounds of silver in this day, that's probably equivalent to about 20 years of wages for an individual. This is...

There's massive revenue power with this resource, okay? In fact, it's the highest measure of currency in this culture. And so the master entrusts these three servants different amounts intended for them to grow the family business while he is away.

Or we could say to advance his kingdom while he is away. And then on his return, he will evaluate what the servants did with that which was entrusted to them.

And it's interesting because he gives them differing amounts according to their ability, skill. Verse 15, to each according to his ability. The first two get to work immediately.

[22 : 34] It says that in verse 16. They went at once. So these two, they get it. They have a great concept of time. They understand what they've been entrusted with.

And they're like, we're going to get after it. And they do. They leverage that capital to grow the business. And in the end, their hard work, their willingness to risk, it bears fruit.

Both of them double their money. The guy that had five, now he has 10. The guy who had two, now he has four. And what I love about the story is, is the master, is he happier about the guy that has 10?

Not at all. He's equally thrilled. He's equally happy with both of them.

Even though there is a difference in actual fruit produced from their work. And actually, both of them receive the same commendation. And you can look at it, verse 21 and 23.

[23 : 44] It reads the same. His master said to them, well done. You've been good and faithful as a servant. You've been faithful over little? I'm going to say you over much.

Enter into the joy of your master. Don't we long to hear that, church, someday? Yes, I want to hear that from the Lord. Well done.

Well done. You finished well. And I don't want us to compare ourselves to others.

Because both of these individuals were faithful with the Lord and trusted, and they both got the same commendation. So don't measure yourself against some, I don't know, famous Christian influencer.

Which is very problematic, the whole concept of Christian influencers on a number of levels. First off, namely, we're all to be Christian influencers.

[24 : 42] But, I will not digress. I've already talked about the constellations. I'm going to stay focused, people. I get it. I love that they received this same commendation.

So don't compare yourself to, oh, well, Scott and Jay, man, they're studying God's Word all week. I'm studying how to sell baubles, or repair, you know, pipes. And they're like in the Word, and they're preaching all these sermons, and they're going to get the best Word from Jesus.

Jesus, no. Faithful with what the Lord's entrusted. Like, if I was comparing myself to my wife, Julie, she's like, I'm not going to preach all those sermons.

I'm like, I mean, there's a lot of sermons that get preached to me, you guys never hear, but it's a whole other thing. But she's been faithful to, like, point and raise seven children to love and serve the Lord.

And she's going to hear the same thing from the Lord. Well done. Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your master. Like, Christian moms don't minimize that high calling.

[25 : 54] If you're a mom, a grandma, you're just a mom person that influences young people. Like, we've got discipleship for children. Join. Use what you have.

They both received the same commendation. The third servant, not so much. What does he do with his talent?

Well, the story tells us. He digs a hole. He buries it in the ground. And he does nothing. And I think we recognize later in this parable, because you get to the very end, and we find out this guy's actually not a genuine believer.

He's thrown into the outer darkness. His talent's taken from him. And some of you guys maybe, I don't want you to go too far with this parable of like, well, is salvation by works?

No. But works are certainly an indication of faith. And maybe some of you are like, but Jay, he was given a talent. He was a believer. Maybe you need to think of this parable in this way of like, the gospel could be akin to the talent.

[27 : 09] Right? And what does this individual do? They're offered it. What do they do with it? I don't want it. I'm going to bury this thing. God, I don't want the gospel.

You can have the gospel back. Thanks, but no thanks. And perhaps this is simply an image of rejecting the gospel for this third individual. But according to the story, he receives this gift, this resource, and he does nothing with it.

Why? Well, it tells us in verse 24 and 25. It says, He also who had received the one talent came forward saying, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.

So I was afraid. And I wouldn't hit your talent in the ground. You'd have what's yours. So this third servant saw the master as what?

Unkind. Harsh. A hard man. In fact, he called him a thief. You reap where you didn't sow.

[28 : 21] God, that's not your field. God, that's not your life. It's my life. Any of you have a wrong view of the master?

In some area? Because when we do, it affects how we live. And it did for this individual. Maybe you have this view about God that he's really, he's really more just apart from all of this.

He kind of started things, wound up the world, but his hands are pretty much off. And so you're just like, he doesn't hear prayers. He doesn't answer prayers. And then what happens? We don't pray.

As a result of having a wrong view of the master. And for this individual, his wrong estimation of the master translated into then a posture of fear.

The safe thing for this guy to do was just to bury the goods. Because he was afraid. In fact, we could say this individual was cowardly.

[29 : 34] Instead of a man of genuine courage. And I believe this story of the talents, the fourth mark of a disciple, is that we would be a people that walk in courage.

That we would be a people that walk in courage. And what is courage? Are you just creating a word, Jay? No, that's faith. In action. In action. We have been given each of us resources to steward for God's glory and the joy of others to see God's kingdom increase.

What are we doing with them? And we have different categories of resources. Certainly it's money. It's monetary. Yeah. But we all have different, like here's a resource. Influence.

What do you do with your influence? Do you point people to the Lord with the influence that you have?

Skills and abilities. We have some great teachers at 4th. I think we may even have some great teachers that we don't even know exist at 4th.

[30 : 57] Possessions. But all of these things require courage to steward them well. Yeah. There are safer ways to live.

But friends, they are not compelling ways to live. Isn't it striking that for our book club, we read that story about Ernest Shackleton.

The endurance. And he's going down to the Antarctic and he's going to, you know, take a cross country, you know, trek across that icy, like desert of nothingness.

And did he have a problem, like, getting a crew? No. He was turning folks away. Because they're like, we want to be part of the adventure.

Even perhaps of the cost of our life. There was something about it that was compelling. And I would say, God doesn't save us to then cloister us off, you know, in a museum, behind glass.

[32 : 04] To be sanctified, to be set apart, is set apart unto ministry. We've been called to live in this world, to redeem this world, to point people to Jesus.

Because in the end, that's the only thing that matters. If you have the Son, you have life. If you don't have Christ, you're eternally separated.

Period. 1 John 5.12. It's in the Bible. And it's compelling.

And there's joy when we share. I got to talk with a young gal, college-age gal, last night. Picked her up near her university, drove her downtown.

Muslim. I got to share the gospel. I got to talk about Jesus. And she's like, well, I believe He's a prophet. But I said, well, He got up on a cross and died. I believe He's God.

[33 : 04] But I'm with you. If He's not God, let's dismiss Him. But I believe He got up on that cross and died for you. Am I allowed to say that? And I was a little afraid.

But I'm telling you what. I wasn't bored. It's a compelling way to live, friends. And it requires courage. And you know what?

Fear is not always a bad thing. When you experience a bit of fear, it reminds you you're actually still alive. Okay? Okay? So how do we increase in courage?

I think foremost, foremost, we abide. It goes back to the first parable. We abide. We abide with Christ. We get into God's Word.

That's how we grow in courage. Where did the servant's fear stem from? From a wrong view of the Master. How do we correct our view of the Master? You get into the book that He's given us.

[34 : 09] As He tells us secret things about Himself. So read 1 Peter this week. Let's just like do it. Let's do it.

Is there a cheer we can do, Scott? Like, I don't know. Like, I don't know what the summer has been like for you. Some of you guys have been up. Up and down, you've been all over. I mean, this is the first time I've seen you in like three months.

So welcome back, some of you. But it's like, it's hard when you're out of rhythm. But like, what do we need for our soul, for our joy, for our courage?

I encourage you to draw near. Draw near. It's the best thing that any pastor can do for his people is to just encourage them. Draw near to the Lord on your own.

And it's the best when you get to hear from Him and He speaks to you through His Word. And it's not through, you know, a muddled voice of a preacher. It's just directly you and the Word.

[35 : 02] It's the best. It's how we grow in courage. And as we abide, we rub shoulders with people who walked in great courage, right? Though dead, they still speak.

Because the people in the book, many of them did not begin as courageous followers of God or Christ. Moses didn't start strong. I need some friends. Peter, he had a, he had a, he did not a great, great evening.

John Mark, bailed. Timothy, even Paul in 2 Timothy 1.6 says, Timothy, stir up the gift. Like, have courage.

I know you're young. Come on. One of my favorites is Gideon, the judge. I love this story. Because I feel like this guy often.

You recall Israel's history 400, you know, years. And they were living under judges in this pattern of like disobeying God. Then God spans them. They repent. And then they obey. And they just do it all over again.

[36 : 04] Multiple times. But this story of Gideon is fascinating. Judges 6, verses 11-16 says, Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Oprah, which belonged to Joash, the Abzerite, while his son Gideon was beating out the wheat in the winepress to hide from the Midianites.

I love that. You're in a winepress beating out the wheat. Like, why are you in a winepress that is like down, not up in the wind, right?

It's not on a threshing floor where you can thresh it and the shaft can blow away. You're down. You're not very effective. You're accomplishing nothing. And it's so counterintuitive.

But that's what he's doing because he's hiding. Verse 12, And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor. Really?

I mean, Gideon's like, he's hiding down in the winepress. And he's like popping his head up, right? Okay. Threshing the wheat. Threshing the wheat. Threshing the wheat. Oh man, any Midianites?

[37 : 12] Okay. Okay, good. I'm safe. And then an angel. Hey, mighty man of valor. Just like, that's the worst. Oh man.

Verse 13, Gideon said to him, Please sir, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all of his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us? Saying, did not the Lord bring us from Egypt?

Did not the Lord bring us from Egypt? But now the Lord has forsaken us. Wrong view of the master. Wrong story. And given us into the hand of Midian.

And the Lord turned to him and said, Go in the might of yours. Save Israel from the hand of Midian. Do I not send you? And he said to him, Please Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is weakest in Manasseh.

And I am the least in my father's house. I.e., I am a wimp. Send somebody else to the city. I'm afraid. Verse 16, And the Lord said to him, But I will be with you.

[38 : 10] And you shall strike Midian as one man. I love that scene. Just skulking down in the wine press. Right? He's probably down there grumbling to himself. I hate the Midianites.

I hate them. I hate them so bad. Can you just see them? Like, and I think some of us, we do life in the wine press. Like, we're just, we're just afraid.

Like Gideon, skulking down. And God says, wait a second, mighty man of valor. I'm with you. Like, who's in the wine press this morning?

Who's living in a posture of safety and fear? We need people to be courageous and serve the Lord at this church.

We need people courageous enough to say, you know what, I'll work with some kids. They scare me to death. They're going to think I'm boring. Just step out.

[39 : 13] Believe the Lord is with you and step out. We actually have some really very skilled people to help train you. Okay? Hannah and Emily are great with our kids.

They will help. They would love to help train. We're all going to grow together as disciples, as instructors. We need folks to work with our youth. Oh, they're going to think I'm boring.

You know what? The best youth leader I ever knew was a 75-year-old retired doctor over in Seattle that worked with the youth. He was just monotone.

It was like nothing flashy. He wore his pants up to here. I'm kidding. Sherb Heath. He was a remarkable guy.

In fact, Multnomah named a wing of their school when it was there after him. He was just this remarkable, but he loved young people. And he was not flashy. I mean, pants, not flashy.

[40 : 13] But every young teenage guy wanted to be around Sherb because he saw them, he knew them, he loved them, and he spoke God's Word to them. And it was just like, man, that guy's real. I'll listen to him.

Man, let's not hide in the wine press. Jay, what if I'm courageous with my faith and I fail?

You know, courage is only necessary if failure is a possibility. And that's where I think we can turn and look to Esther, right? She gets it. She had a task to do.

She was going to go in and speak to the king. It could have been her life. And in Esther 4, verse 16, she says, I and my young women will also fast as you do.

Then I will go to the king. Though it is against the law, she had courage, I'm going to go bring this, you know, be merciful on the Jewish people. And then she says, hey, if I perish, I perish. I don't know what's going to happen.

[41 : 16] I love that. If I fail, I fail. But to live in the wine press is not an option. That's not a compelling life for the Lord. And we borrow courage.

We borrow courage from others. I had a good friend, still a good friend, he now serves at a church in Nashville, Steve Allen. Years ago, he decided he was going to move his family to Zambia.

Trained pastors. He did that for five years. Steve had a family and he had four young daughters.

And he had so many people coming to him saying, why are you taking your daughters, your young daughters, that's not a country for young daughters.

And he said, you know, I'm going to Zambia because I want to model for them courage. We learn it from one another. We need one another in this. I think that's why Melissa is such a gift to us most of the time.

That was just, you know. Like I think, I think Melissa probably on staff is probably the least afraid to fail. Not because she fails a lot.

[42 : 18] She just has this indomitable belief, like Lord, you're with me. And whatever I do, you're going to bless and use whoever's here. And like that inspires. That's 11. That's for the rest of us.

And that's what the church does. As you see people walk in courage, you're like, if Jay can talk to somebody in Uber, I could talk to somebody at Trader Joe's or wherever, you know, at my Little League, you know, like I could do that.

My neighborhood group. Do you guys know, this church, do you guys know, you have a homeowners association president in your midst? Do you know that?

I mean, he serves as your senior pastor? This guy has no influence. He gets to like, he gets to organize, which he loves. I'm like, really, Scott? Yeah, I love a meeting.

I love a good meeting. So he's like, he's like organizing them and then he's just being God's presence to them. Like, and he's got, that's why he's doing it. So that he can, he can influence for the gospel.

[43 : 18] And we learn courage as we watch one another. I love that Witt's back with, I don't know where Witt's at. He's, Witt's in here somewhere. But like, I don't, like, you get employed in his company, you're, you're going to love Jesus.

It just, I don't know. It just, it's a matter of time. You're going to hear the gospel. I just love that. It should inspire one another. You know, except for two men, Israel spent 40 years wandering the desert primarily because they were afraid.

Those who lived, spent 40 years wandering and they died in fear. But you know who did not? There was two of them. One of them has a great name.

Caleb, good name. It's not copywritten. You can use it too. This is the posture of a disciple.

He says, I am in Joshua 14.10. I am this day 85 years old. I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me.

[44 : 23] My strength now is as my strength was then. For war and for going and coming. So now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that day.

For you heard on that day how the Anakim were there with great fortified cities. It may be that the Lord will be with me and I shall drive them out just as the Lord said.

Man, 85 years old. Caleb says, give me the hill country, the toughest place to settle the land, the place where the giants dwell. I'll take it.

Why? Because I'm great? No, because I believe God's with me. Amen, church? That's where the courage comes from. And I love that this individual, his greatest days lied ahead.

Retirement is unto ministry. Friends, how can the Lord use my life today? I love George who's 93.

[45 : 25] three. And Joanne's a little younger. By 10 years. It's like Caleb. These guys are like missionaries at the retirement complex.

That's how they see themselves. There's not a harder, like, land to conquer. That's hard soil.

People that have rejected Christ their entire life, they're all in at that point.

And they see their role there is we're missionaries. And we want to give the gospel to people.

Praise God. George, you are a blessing and an encouragement to me and Scott first and then to everybody else second.

But first to us. So. So. Spokane is our hill country.

Fourth. Maybe for some of you, like, man, what's the hill country? I don't know. Maybe it's teaching kids. Maybe it's discipling your family. That can be very fear-inducing for a father to know how do I do this.

[46 : 32] Scott has given you a great pattern because he has shared. I'm just calling everybody out this morning. Maybe I'll be back. Maybe not. I don't know. But. You know.

Modeled by his dad. Came to faith. I don't know what to do. Let's read a chapter of the Bible together. Guys, men, we could do that with our families. What's the hill country for you? Well, you know what?

The Lord is actually with us. Let me end with a promise. Isaiah 41.10. Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 28.

20. I will be with you as you carry out my mission to the world. I will be with you to the end of the age. Amen? Amen? So while the king is away, let's be about his business.

[47 : 34] Father, thank you for this story. Lord, we want to be those who are faithful, but live out faith that we walk in courage, and I know it comes in many different colors and ways.

Sometimes it's courage to make hard decisions that we know will honor you. Sometimes it costs us relationships. Father, we don't want to be a people that make decisions based upon fear.

Thank you for the gift of a body of believers. Thank you for examples in our body who model this. Model faith in action. Risky faith.

Courage. May you encourage them today. Maybe they're feeling discouraged in some way.

Encourage them today that their example is ministry to many.

And Lord, we want to be a people that ultimately see others come to know you as their Savior. We know that that is what it's about. That at the end of time, the only thing will matter is do we know Jesus as our Savior.

[48 : 45] And so Lord, we want to stay on mission, stay on focus, stay on point. We commit this day to you. We commit this semester to you. We commit this year to you. Lord, we ask for you to use us to see people come to know you and to walk closer.

And Lord, I pray in the midst of all that, we would experience your joy. It's in your name we pray, Jesus. Amen. Amen.