

MORAL COURAGE

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INTRODUCTION

1. COURAGE – brave, fearless
2. I want us to study the subject “Moral Courage” because I think it is needed today.
3. Many elders, preachers, and members LACK moral courage.
4. Being a Christian demands backbone and courage – strong moral fiber and a willingness to stand up and be counted – Eph. 6: 11, 13 – 14.
5. John, in Revelation, said “*The Fearful*” . . . “*shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*” – Rev. 21:8.
6. Peter said we are to add VIRTUE or COURAGE – 2 Pet. 1:5.
7. When Joshua took the leadership after Moses died, God told him, “*Be strong and of a good courage*” – Joshua 1:6.
8. God’s people must not fear and be dismayed (disheartened) – Deut. 31:8.
9. COURAGE is “*The quality of being fearless or brave*” – the opposite of courage is cowardly conduct – Deut. 20: 1, 8.

I. EXAMPLES OF AN ABSENCE OF MORAL COURAGE

- a. Rahab described the LOSS OF COURAGE in the hearts of the Canaanites as Israel moved to invade the Promised land – Josh. 2 :10 – 11.
- b. Pilate displayed an ABSENCE OF MORAL COURAGE when Jesus was brought before him.
 - i. Pilate said, “*I find no fault in this man*” – Luke 23:4.
 - ii. His responsibility at this point was to protect Jesus from the Sanhedrin and the mob.
 - iii. Pilate lacked the courage of his convictions:
 1. He sent Him to Herod – Lk. 23:7.
 2. Herod sent Him back – Lk. 23:15.
 3. Pilate wanted to scourge Him and let Him go – Lk. 23: 16.
 4. The Jews wanted Jesus dead – Lk. 23: 17 – 18.
 5. Pilate gave in to their will, trying to release himself from the guilt of his sin by washing his hands of the matter – Matt. 27:24.
 6. His display did not excuse his sin or his lack of moral courage to do what was right.
- c. Peter displayed an ABSENCE OF MORAL COURAGE on two occasions:
 - i. When Jesus was being tried, he denied Him three times because he lacked moral courage – Matt. 26: 69 – 75.
 - ii. At Antioch Peter did not stand up for right – Gal. 2: 11 – 12.

II. WHAT GIVES A MAN COURAGE?

- a. One can have courage because of the Lord’s promise never to leave or forsake him.
 - i. The Lord promised this to Joshua – Josh. 1: 5 – 9.
 - ii. The Lord has made the same promise to us – Heb. 13: 5 – 6.

- b. The knowledge that our enemies are the Lord's enemies gives us courage.
 - i. When young David went out to fight Goliath, he took courage from the knowledge that Goliath was the Lord's enemy – I Sam. 17:47, 50 – 51.
 - ii. We can take courage so long as our enemies are the enemies of the Lord.
 - iii. The Lord will not fail us in the battle for truth and right.
- c. A wholesome fear of God inspires courage – Matt. 10:28.
- d. A confidence that God hears and answers prayer inspires courage:
 - i. David prayed that the Lord would deliver him from the evil man – Psa. 140: 1.
 - ii. I Pet. 3:12; I Pet. 5:7; I John 5: 14 – 15
- e. A confidence based on past deliverance inspires courage:
 - i. When David found courage based on the Lord's having delivered him from the paw of the lion and the bear – I Sam. 17:37.
 - ii. As we reflect on the difficult circumstances from which the Lord has already delivered us, we can find assurance that He will deliver us from present problems and face them with courage.

III. THE NEED FOR MORAL COURAGE TODAY

- a. Christians need courage to PRACTICE MORAL PURITY.
 - i. Christians are tempted to be conformed to this world – Rom. 12: 2.
 - ii. The world ostracizes the Christian because he does not drink, curse, dance, engage in mixed swimming, commit fornication, use drugs, wear immodest clothing, and talk filthy – I Pet. 4:4.
- b. We need COURAGEOUS YOUNG PEOPLE.
 - i. They face the temptations of sensuality, pornography, petting, fornication, and dancing.
 - ii. They face the temptation to conform to the world in speech, dress, rebellion, and music.
 - iii. They are tempted to conceal their faith and give up their faith altogether.
 - iv. We need young people with the courage to stand in the hour of temptation.
- c. We need COURAGEOUS PARENTS.
 - i. We need courageous women who will stand in their God-given place in society and the church.
 - 1. Women who will not minimize their role as mothers – I Tim. 5:14; Tit. 2: 4 – 5.
 - 2. Women who will be submissive to their husbands – I Pet. 3:1.
 - 3. Women who know it is not their business to run the business of the church – I Tim. 2: 11 -14.
 - ii. We need parents who will not allow the devil to determine the agenda for their children.
 - 1. Too much extra-curricular activities.
 - iii. We need husbands that are strong and will show themselves men.
 - 1. I Kings 2:2 – David said to Solomon, *“Be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man”*.

iv. We need COURAGEOUS EVANGELISTS.

1. Sometimes Preachers need to display more backbone.
2. Some churches are at peace because sin is tolerated.
3. Some members don't want the preacher to expose their sins of worldliness and sinful attitudes.
4. They don't want the preacher to condemn them for allowing their children to be worldly.
5. They do not want the preacher to rebuke them for putting other things ahead of God when they miss worship for social activities.
6. They don't want the preacher to preach against unscriptural divorce and remarriage.
7. They don't want the preacher to expose false brethren.

v. We need COURAGEOUS ELDERS.

1. We need men who have the courage to lead the congregation to obedience to God's word in all things.
2. We need elders who will stand behind the preaching of the Word, even though the message may offend some prominent members.
3. We need men willing to withdraw from the ungodly, regardless of how influential the family is in the congregation.

CONCLUSION

- Moral courage is needed in each of our lives.
- Like Peter, many of us stumble and fall from time to time because we fail to display moral courage.
- Like Peter, we need to repent of these sinful failures and begin anew to display the moral virtues which Christ manifested.
- Are you here and out of Christ? You need to obey the gospel . . .

Preached at River Bend 1996; Hebron Lane 1990