

3-10-2024, COTR Texarkana

Title: Courageous

Purpose: Provoke people to have courage to do the right thing in a secular world even when it's difficult or potentially costly.

Truth for Today: It takes courage to do the right thing when there may be a price to pay.

Text: John 7:10-13

Topic: Courage, Right & Wrong, Character

Courageous

- I. Introduction (The Bible says to give honor where honor is due)
 - A. **Honor:** COTR members involved in civil government. COTR group, Christians Engaged: Joe Crews, JP Welsh, Marilyn Funderburk, Dave and Richie grant, church staff. Michael Rayburn JP Miller County runoff; Kathy Carter, precinct chair.
 - B. Context: Feast of Tabernacles celebrating the harvest of crops and God's provision. Jesus' enemies wanted to kill Him, but it wasn't time for Him to face the cross. **[John 7:10–13 (NLT)]** But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view. ¹¹ The Jewish leaders tried to find him...and kept asking if anyone had seen him...¹³ **But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders.]** They didn't have the courage to speak because they were afraid.
 1. Def. courage: The ability to do something that frightens you. To have the strength of your convictions and act on your beliefs despite danger or disapproval.¹ The opposite of courage is being a coward.
 2. Today we'll talk about having courage to do the right thing in a world that's doing wrong, even when it's difficult or potentially costly.
 - C. Title: Courageous
- II. **It takes courage to do what's right but it's worth it.**
 - A. **[Daniel 3 (NLT)]** King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall...in... Babylon...⁴ Then a herald shouted out, "People of all...nations...listen to the king's command! ⁵ When you hear the sound of the...musical instruments, **bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue.]** **[Pic statue]**
 1. For Jews, this violated the 1st and 2nd of the 10 cmdts. **[Exodus 20:3–5 (NLT)]** You must not have **any other god** but me. ⁴ **"You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind...⁵ You must not bow down to them or worship them...]**
 - B. **[Vs 6]** **Anyone who refuses to obey will...be thrown into a blazing furnace."** ...¹² But there are some Jews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon... They refuse to serve your gods and **do not worship the gold statue...** ¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage...¹⁵ **I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue...** But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace.] **[Pic furnace]**

1. Life App #1: God's ways are often in conflict with the ways of the world. Secular culture wants to keep Bible believing Christians in church on Sunday, but Jesus said we're to be salt and light in a dark, confused and sometimes evil culture.
 2. Life App #2: There are sometimes consequences for doing the right thing. It takes courage to do what's right. The fiery furnace wasn't a minor problem but death.
 3. Life App #3: The coward's way out was easy, just bow down. What's the big deal; just ask for forgiveness and stay safe. They chose to act courageously, held onto their convictions and were willing to sacrifice their life.
- C. [Vs 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied...¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, **the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty.** ¹⁸ **But even if he doesn't...we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue...**]
1. Life App #4: Their faith in God was greater than the power of the flames, but their faith was not contingent on a favorable outcome, "even if he doesn't".
 2. Life App #5: Courage makes us stand for what's right even if it costs us.
- D. [Vs 23 So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, **securely tied**, fell into the roaring flames...²⁵ "Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "**I see four men, unbound**, walking around in the fire unharmed! And **the fourth looks like a god!**" **Pic furnace 4th man**²⁶...Nebuchadnezzar shouted: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego...come out..."²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "**Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego... They defied the king's command and were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.** ²⁹... **There is no other god who can rescue like this!**" ³⁰ **Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions...**]
1. The 4th man in the fire was either an angel or could have been Jesus. An appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ² is called a Christophany (Christ appears).
 2. Life App # 6: Jesus promised to always be with us in whatever situation we face. Jesus to disciples before Ascension, [Matthew 28:20 (NLT) ...**be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**"]
 3. Life App #7: Our courage to stand for Christ advances the gospel. [Vs. 29, There is no other god who can rescue like this!] e.g. **Peter and John** before the Sanhedrin
 4. Life App #8: God can promote people who have the courage to do right in a world that's doing wrong. [Vs 30 Then the king promoted SMA to even higher positions
- III. Sometimes doing the right thing means paying a price, but it'll be worth it. Sometimes Christians don't have a Cinderella story like SMA and live happily ever after. Sometimes courage to do what's right takes us down a path of sacrifice and suffering.
- A. Context persecution in early church. [Hebrews 10:32–39 (NLT) Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how **you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering.** ³³ Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten...³⁴...**when all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy.**
1. How is it possible to suffer and lose all your possessions yet have joy?

- B. [Vs 34 You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever. ³⁵ So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! ³⁶ Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. ³⁷ "For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay.]
1. SMA's ordeal was quick, and a blessing came immediately. Sometimes deliverance doesn't come quickly. Sometimes courage to do what's right means suffering or struggling with difficulty for a long time. It takes courage to remain faithful to Christ.
 2. Life App #10: Courageous Christians focus on (1) eternity, (2) rewards (on earth, heaven or both), and (3) the 2nd Coming of Christ. [vs 34 You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever... Remember the great reward it brings you...³⁷ "For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay.]
- C. Our goal is not a trouble-free life. Our goal is to live a courageous life of Biblical conviction, motivated to please the Lord. Doing right may be costly now, but in the future it will be worth it.

IV. Conclusion:

- A. Video, Movie: Courageous, Courage to do right in everyday life decisions.
- B. SMA had courage, Christians in the Book of Hebrews had courage and Javier in the video had courage. So can we. Doing the right thing in a world that's doing wrong can be difficult or potentially costly, but it will be worth it.

V. Response

- A. Prayer: May God give us the courage to do what's right, even if it may be costly or difficult.
- B. Souls

VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Soanes, C., & Stevenson, A., eds. (2004). In *Concise Oxford English dictionary* (11th ed.). Oxford University Press.
2. Pentecost, J. D. (1985). *Daniel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1340). Victor Books.

VII. Supplemental Material

A. Doing the right thing can cost us everything, John Baptist

1. Matthew 14:3–10 (NLT) For Herod had arrested and imprisoned John as a favor to his wife Herodias (the former wife of Herod's brother Philip). ⁴ John had been telling Herod, "It is against God's law for you to marry her." ⁵ Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of a riot, because all the people believed John was a prophet. ⁶ But at a birthday party for Herod, Herodias's daughter performed a dance that greatly pleased him, ⁷ so he promised with a vow to give her anything she wanted. ⁸ At her mother's urging, the girl said, "I want the head of John the

Baptist on a tray!”⁹ Then the king regretted what he had said; but because of the vow he had made in front of his guests, he issued the necessary orders.¹⁰ So John was beheaded in the prison,

- B. Daniel 6 (NLT) Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each province.² The king also chose Daniel and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king’s interests.³ Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel’s great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire.⁴ Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn’t find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy.⁵ So they concluded, “Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion.”⁶ So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, “Long live King Darius!⁷ We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions.⁸ And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.”⁹ So King Darius signed the law.¹⁰ But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.¹¹ Then the officials went together to Daniel’s house and found him praying and asking for God’s help.¹² So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. “Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?” “Yes,” the king replied, “that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.”¹³ Then they told the king, “That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day.”¹⁴ Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.¹⁵ In the evening the men went together to the king and said, “Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed.”¹⁶ So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, “May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you.”¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel.¹⁸ Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn’t sleep at all that night.¹⁹ Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions’ den.²⁰ When he got there, he called out in anguish, “Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so

faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?”²¹ Daniel answered, “Long live the king! ²² My God sent his angel to shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.”²³ The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God. ²⁴ Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions’ den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den. ²⁵ Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: “Peace and prosperity to you! ²⁶ “I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God, and he will endure forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his rule will never end. ²⁷ He rescues and saves his people; he performs miraculous signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”²⁸ So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

C. [1 Thessalonians 2:2 (NLT) You know how badly we had been treated at Philippi... Yet our **God gave us the courage to declare his Good News to you boldly, in spite of great opposition.**]