

4-9-2016, COTR Texarkana

Title: Courage and Conviction

Purpose: Provoke people to have courage and do what's right when everyone else is doing wrong

Spiritual Truth: Courage is doing what's right when everyone else is doing wrong.

Text: Daniel chapter 1 and 3

Topic: Courage, Convictions, Culture, Daniel

Series: Heroes

Series Purpose: Provoke people to follow the example of Biblical heroes.

Courage and Conviction

I. Introduction

A. Review Series: Heroes

A.1. Listen to messages @ChurchOnTheRock.org or on the COTR iPhone/ Android app

A.2. Def. Hero: someone we admire for their achievements or character; someone we want to be like.

B. Video: Kris Jenkins, the hero from Villanova game winning shot for Natl. Title.

C. Today we'll talk about 3 real life heroes from the Bible, SMA, examples that inspire us to have courage. Def. Courage: Doing what's right when everyone else is doing wrong.

C.1. It takes courage to say no like Tim Tebow or Olympian Lolo Jones and keep your virginity until you marry; Courage says no to the joint at a party (better yet leave and go home and you may miss jail when your friends are busted). Courage respects the police and teachers when everyone else is being disrespectful or refusing to overbill Medicare when your partners pressure you to do it.

C.2. Jesus expects us to have courage to stand for our convictions in a world that is turning its back on God and the Bible.

D. Title: Courage and Convictions

E. Purpose: Provoke people to have courage and do what's right when everyone else is doing wrong.

F. Spiritual Truth: Courage is doing what's right when everyone else is doing wrong.

II. Godly people in an ungodly world

A. Daniel 1:1-7 (NLT) ...King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and **besieged it**...3 Then the king ordered...his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of

the young men...who had been brought to Babylon as captives...5...They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service. 6 Daniel...7... Shadrach...Meshach...and Abednego.

- A.1. These godly young men became slaves when the nation was judged for her repeated sin. Like Joseph in Egypt they managed to hold on to their faith in a pagan land.
- A.2. Their new names signified that they were to be subject to Babylon's gods and their education replaced God's laws with human tradition.
- B. They were young believers in a world of unbelievers. Their Biblical convictions and allegiance to God would be tested. //s to Christianity in America. Franklin Graham warns America, "I fear our end will be near unless we turn back to God." There is a growing, open hostility against Christians in America. (1) If you pray in public an atheist groups may sue you. (2) If you post on FB you may be ridiculed, e.g. supervisor for a Michigan town posted a prayer for the victims of the ISIS terrorist bombings in Brussels, Belgium. (3) If you stand for the Biblical marriage you're called a bigot/ homophobe and may be attacked. When Christians were collecting petitions to repeal M-130 on St. Line they were cursed to their face because they want to protect children from being exposed to a male who feels like a female in a bathroom or locker room and religious liberty.

III. Facing the pressure to conform with conviction and courage

- A. Dan 3 (NLT) King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide ...4 Then a herald shouted...listen to the king's command! 5 When you hear the sound of...musical instruments, **bow to the ground** to worship...*the* gold statue. 6 **Anyone who refuses** to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."
- A.1. Now a cost is attached to living by convictions. C.S. Lewis said, "Only a real risk tests the reality of a belief."
- A.2. What does the Bible say about bowing to an idol? (This is a great question to ask ourselves in any situation we're in.) Exodus 20:3-5 (NIV) "**You shall have no other gods before me.** 4 "You shall not make for yourself an image...5 **You shall not bow down to them or worship them...**
- A.3. A Christian's convictions should be based on the Word of God. For SMA, Biblical concepts had shaped their consciences and became a conviction. A conflict between the KOG and the world is unfolding, e.g. The Pope recently affirmed traditional marriage and family in a major paper and was met with hostility by unbelievers.
- A.4. The choice for SMA and us is a simple but costly choice: follow God or follow the crowd. Most people bowed, e.g. Video: *God's Not Dead*.

- B. Verse 7 So at the sound of the musical instruments, **all the people...bowed** to the ground and worshiped the gold statue...
- B.1. The crowd is headed in the wrong direction. Matthew 7:13–14 (NLT) “You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the **many** who choose that way. 14 But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a **few** ever find it.
- C. Verse 8...the astrologers went to the king and informed on the Jews...12... Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego...pay no attention to you... They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up.” 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him....
- C.1. Not everyone will applaud our courageous stand for Christ. We’re being told by the media, universities, government and employers to stop acting like a Christian. The question we must ask is, who are we going to bow to, God or King Nebuchadnezzar.
- C.2. Everything SMA have due to their position is at stake. If they follow God they could lose it all and their families would suffer loss, too. There’s no guarantee God will rescue them or us. Many suffer for courageous conviction in the Bible.
- D. Verse 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 want to make it clear to you... that **we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue** you have set up.”
- D.1. Faith and sovereignty meet. “God is able; He will rescue us”, but were willing to stand by their convictions even if He didn’t.
- D.2. They had respect for secular authority, Majesty. 2 Tim. 2:24–26 (NLT) A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone...and be patient with difficult people. 25 Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will learn the truth. (We shouldn’t try to start a fight or win an argument but win lost souls as our main priority.)
- D.3. What price am I willing to pay for my convictions? Heb.10:32–34 (NLT)Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ...33 Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten...34 You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail, and when all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever.
- E. Verse19 Nebuchadnezzar was so furious...20...throw them into the blazing furnace... 24 But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement...25...“**I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed!** And the fourth looks like a god!”

26...“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the **Most High God**, come out! ...
27...Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched...

E.1. It was a miracle! God honored their courageous faith and suspended the power of fire. He can do the same for us when we do right when everyone else does wrong.

IV. Conclusion: God blesses the courageous who hold fast their convictions

A. Verse 28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue his servants...**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...

A.1. Their faith had been tested; they passed the test and now God promoted them.

A.2. Imagine if they had given in and bowed; (1) they’d miss God’s promotion, (2) they’d feel ashamed for violating their convictions (3) Babylon would have missed a witness for God and a demonstration of God’s power.

v. Response

A. Prayer: Are you being persecuted for your faith? Are you being pressured to violate your convictions? Can we pray for your faith to be strong and for God to manifest His power?

B. Souls

C. *** *Logos Bible Software and library, The Bible Knowledge Commentary were used to prepare this message.*