

Courage

I am sure we can all think of different ways courage has been displayed. Perhaps you think of the brave soldiers that serve our nation and sadly, have often laid down their own lives so that we can have freedom. Perhaps you think of a police officer or fireman that runs into danger to protect us from peril. You might think of a teacher that goes to work everyday in horrible conditions so that the children in their class can get an education. In all of these cases, and many more you can think of, you would be correct these are all brave people. In this lesson, we will look at courage how it is found in the Bible.

Courage is expected of God's people

Deuteronomy 31:7-8 “And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.” God expected Joshua to have the courage to lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan. This was not going to be easy. Many battles would be ahead for the children of Israel and Joshua had big shoes to fill taking over as leader for Moses. However, Joshua knew that God would be with him as long as he was faithful and was willing to do what God asked of him. God expects His faithful to step up even when it is hard. Joshua did a fantastic job leading the children of Israel as God had commanded.

Psalms 27:14 “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.” God knows it takes courage to live life the way He wants us to. It is easy to just go out and do whatever best pleases us, and not take God's word into account. However, to put God and His will first takes courage. God will be with us if we are willing to live for Him.

1 Corinthians 16:13 “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” God wants us to be strong and courageous and be faithful to Him. If we are not, we will not be in Heaven with Him.

Philippians 1:27 “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;” Having courage in Christ will mean working with other Christians to further the cause of Christ. It is being a servant of Christ that is known to be one, others are aware of your stand for the Word of God, not in arrogance but in love.

2 Timothy 1:7-10 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” Christians can not be ashamed to

be Christians. They must be willing to spread the Word of God so that others might have the opportunity to become Christians.

Courage in the Bible

Numbers 13:30 “And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” Joshua and Caleb had the courage to believe that the children of Israel could conquer the land of Canaan even when it looked like other nations were stronger and more powerful than them. They stood up and tried to convince their fellow Israelites that because God was with them, they would be victorious. These two men God rewarded for their faithful courage.

Judges 7:7-23 “And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley. And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together

out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.” Gideon showed courage in being willing to lead a small force of Israelites against the powerful Midianite army. Gideon did this even though the odds were very stacked against Israel. Gideon simply believed God would do what he said and had the courage to do God’s will.

1 Samuel 17: 32-51 “And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee. And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.” David showed courage by being willing to take on Goliath. Even though Goliath was a giant man and a fearsome warrior, and David was only a young shepherd, David knew He would win with God on his side. David knew that size and physical power are nothing to God. David had the courage to do God’s will even when it was dangerous.

Esther 4: 8, 16 “Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.” and “Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.” Esther had the courage to go before the King of Persia knowing she might die, in order to save her people the Israelites.

Daniel 6:10 “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” Daniel had the courage to worship God even though he knew he would get thrown into a lion’s den if people reported what he was doing.

Luke 22:41-44 “And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Jesus had the courage to go to the cross and face a horrible death at the hands of man, so that all people can obtain salvation if they are obedient.

Acts 4:19 and 5:29 “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.” and “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.” Peter, John, and the other Apostles had the courage to teach others about Jesus even when the authorities had told them to stop doing so.

Acts 20: 22-24 “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Paul was willing to preach about Jesus even if it cost him his life.

Today Christians can demonstrate courage

Matthew 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Seeking God first above all takes courage. God expects Christians to have courage. A reward in Heaven waits for all those that have enough courage to do as God has commanded.

Matthew 10:22 “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” Being a Christian will take courage because sometimes others will not like what God’s people stand for. However, the Christian that endures to the end has a Heavenly reward.

2 Timothy 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” God never promised Christians would not suffer persecution and adversity, only that all of His faithful will go to Heaven, and all the unfaithful will sadly go to Hell. There is no middle ground.

1 Peter 1:5-7 “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” There will be trials and temptations in the life of every Christian, but Heaven is waiting for all the obedient.

Conclusion

Courage is found many times in the Bible. There might not ever be a time we are going to face the same level of persecution that many heroes of the Bible did. If that day, however, does come will we be ready to be brave? All Christians that have been obedient to God can have comfort to know that no matter how difficult a situation they might face, if they are courageous and stand with God, they will have a home in Heaven.