

Fear Factor

(Series: Reimagining Church; Message Fifteen)

Acts 5:12 - 42

A. What are you afraid of?

“Deep within we imagine ourselves a mixture of Patrick Henry, Davey Crockett, John Wayne and the prophet Daniel. But the truth of the matter is, rather than rugged individualists, we are more like Gulliver of old – tied down and immobilized by tiny strands of a thing called fear” (Robert Blood)

B. Our life grows in direct proportion to the amount of courage we have

“Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events” (Acts 5:11)

C. When you long more for the applause of heaven than for the applause of men, you’ll find the courage to follow Jesus and go where he sends

1. Courage comes from living life with God
2. The fear of God is the only fear that can dispel all other fears

COURAGE BEGINS WITH FIGHTING THE BATTLES WITHIN

A. The basic issue in dealing with fear is always an internal one

B. The disciples’ felt afraid, inadequate, alone, confused, and insecure

“God, you’re after the truth from the inside out” (cf. Psalm 51)

1. The first step of every recovery program is recognizing we’re powerless
2. We need to admit our fears and inadequacies, confess our sins and iniquities

“Have I not commanded you. Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified. Do not be discouraged. For the Lord, your God, will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9)

“But when I’m afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust. I will not be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?” (Psalm 56:3-4)

C. Courage begins by fighting (and winning) those battles within

COURAGE GROWS WHEN WE’RE ABLE TO LET GO OF THE COMFORTABLE

A. It’s hard to pick the fruit unless you’re out on a limb

“Our flesh encourages us to live life in the comfort zone. But Jesus calls us out of the boat and into the courageous zone.” (John Ortberg)

B. We like predictable, mundane lives; but that is not what God is calling us to

1. We need to move from indifference to making an eternal difference
2. God will be with you. Walk toward him. He will not let you sink

C. What would you do with your life right now if you weren’t afraid?

“God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7)

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a all-knowing God” (Corrie ten Boom)

COURAGE COMES WHEN GOD’S VISION AND OUR PASSION INTERSECT

“I have always said the Lord has a purpose for me, as he has for everyone. As I suspend my campaign, I have renewed faith, deeper faith, that the Lord will show me the way forward and fulfill the purpose of my life.” (John Kasich)

“Judge for yourselves whether it’s right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we’ve seen and what we’ve heard.” (Acts 4:19-20)

A. God’s vision for them (and us) is to be history makers, world changers

B. Vision ignites passion. Passion ignites a dream. Dreams ignite courage

C. Do you have any dreams for this church?

COURAGE RISES WHEN OUR CAUSE IS GREATER THAN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

A. Are we focused on our call/cause or on the circumstances around us?

“On the contrary, everything happening to me in this jail only serves to make Christ more accurately known regardless of whether I live or die. They didn’t shut me up. They gave me a pulpit. Alive I’m Christ’s messenger. Dead I’m his bounty. Life versus even more life. I can’t lose.” (Phil. 1:21; msg)

“For me to live as Christ, for me to die, it’s gain” (Phil. 1:21, NIV)

B. We have a mission/call/cause. Circumstances are often unfair

1. If there is a cause you’re willing to live for...and die for your courage rises
2. If there are circumstances you’re focused on, you’ll be discouraged

“They never stopped teaching and proclaiming Jesus!” (Acts 5:42)

C. What gets us up when we’re down?

1. Knowing the resurrected Jesus who says: “I love you
2. Courage is powerful. It only comes from living life in Jesus by his Spirit