

Courageous 5.24.2020

Today we begin a new series titled "Courageous". The scriptural basis for this series is found in [2 Timothy 1:7](#) which says, "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline*".

In just a few minutes we are going to look at the Book of Joshua chapter 1. But before we do, I think it's important to understand some of the backstory leading up to the book of Joshua.

The Book of Exodus chapters 1-12 tells the story of God delivering the Israelites from years of slavery and bondage by Pharaoh and the Egyptian people. It was God's plan to not only deliver the Israelites, but to see them enter the promised land. This was the land that God had promised to give to Israel as their own. A promise passed down from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

As the Israelites neared the promised land, they sent out 12 spies to investigate the land. The spies returned forty days later. Ten of the spies gave a report based on fear: "*We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are...All the people we saw were HUGE...We look like little tiny grasshoppers compared to them*".

Only Joshua and Caleb gave a report that demonstrated they had faith that God would indeed give them the land and that they should move forward with taking possession of it. Unfortunately, the Israelites chose to believe the report of the ten spies that gave a report based on fear rather than faith. The Israelites "*raised their voices and wept aloud,*" grumbling against Moses and Aaron, saying, "*If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword?*"

Because the Israelites doubted God, God punished them by making them wander in the dessert for forty years. One year for each of the forty days the spies were away... A time long enough for the doubting generation of Israelites to die, and for the next generation to poses the land. At the end of the forty years, only Joshua and Caleb, the two spies who had faith, survived from the first generation of Israelites.

God had promised them victory! The land He commanded them to go in and take was already theirs for the taking!

If only they had trusted that God would do what He said He would do... if only they had acted in faith rather than fear... if only they had been courageous...

The Israelites had seen the powerful hand of God at work during the plagues and miracles of the Exodus. Yet, like many us, they chose to live in fear rather than live by faith.

Webster's dictionary defines **Courage** as the strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

Joshua was a man of courage. And what made him a man of courage, what made him so courageous, didn't come from within... The source of his courage came from above! Joshua trusted God 110%, which is why he was only one of two men from the original group of Israelites that were freed from Egypt to enter the promised land.

Joshua 1:1-11

After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ²“Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

¹⁰ So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: ¹¹ “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.’”

¹² But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, ¹³ “Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you after he said, ‘The Lord your God will give you rest by giving you this land.’ ¹⁴ Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, ready for battle, must cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites. You are to help them ¹⁵ until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

¹⁶ Then they answered Joshua, “Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. ¹⁷ Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses. ¹⁸ Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!”

Let me let you in on a little secret... You know what’s really contagious, but in a good way? **COURAGE!** I’m sure you’ve heard someone say, “You jump, I’ll jump” or “If you can do it, I can do it”!

People follow courageous people. People look up to courageous people. If you want to influence your friends, your family, your coworkers, or anyone else in a positive way, live courageously!

I’d like to share a story with you about a man you may have heard of...

He was born the son of a minister in Hamilton Missouri in 1875. By the age of eight he had a job at a mercantile store and made enough money to purchase his own clothes.

In 1899, at age 24, he moved to Wyoming and opened his own store, a butcher shop. However, his business never took off and eventually failed. One of the biggest reasons it failed was due to the fact that he refused to provide a bottle of whiskey to a hotel chef who worked for his largest client.

You see, he did not believe that a person should drink alcohol, therefore he would rather his business fail than to compromise his beliefs.

In 1902 he took another stab at starting his own business, a dry goods store called "The Golden Rule Store". By 1920 the store had changed its name and had blossomed into 200 stores, and 10 years after that he had 1400 stores and was making \$1.5 million a year which in today's world would be about \$150 million. However, during the Great Depression of the 1930 he lost much of what he had gained.

This was not the first time he had faced tragedy. In 1910 his wife Bertha, of whom he had been married to for 10 years, died of pneumonia leaving him to raise their 2 boys on his own. He eventually remarried and had another son. However, tragedy struck once again in 1924 when his 2nd wife Mary Kimball, fell ill and died very suddenly. And now here he was, having lost 2 wives, most of his fortune, having to raise 3 boys on his own, his business teetering on the brink of bankruptcy... and now added to all of this he himself had become ill and was nearing death's door.

If there was one thing that remained constant in JC's life it was his faith. He never compromised his principles and through both good and bad he put his trust in God. So, as he lay in bed literally waiting to die it was the words of a church hymn that would spring him back to life. (sing)

"Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you"

"Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you; When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you"

"All you may need He will provide, God will take care of you; Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you"

"No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you."

As the truth of this hymn penetrated his mind and heart, he rose from his bed determined to rise above his circumstances trusting and believing that God would provide! Taking some of the little money he had, he wrote out a check for \$10,000 to a local church taking the first step in what would become a life-long practice of giving. He began a charitable foundation in his second wife Mary's memory. The Foundation aided such groups as adoption agencies, homeless shelters, youth clubs, vocational schools,

libraries, family guidance centers, missionary projects, peace organizations, and health clinics.

With his company still on the brink of bankruptcy, he continued to give to those in need, and worked tirelessly through years of financial hardship to keep his company and life afloat. His health continued to suffer, yet he continued to press on. However, during a speech in Battle Creek Michigan, he became noticeably ill, and shortly thereafter was back in a hospital bed knocking on death's door.

Nurses and doctors surrounded him 24/7. He was not only physically sick, but he now was deeply depressed. Before he fell asleep at night he would write letters to those he loved, believing he would die before daybreak.

The next morning as he awoke, he heard a familiar tune coming from the hospital chapel. (everyone sings)

"Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you"

" God will take care of you, through every day, over all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you."

In his own words he writes:

"Suddenly—something happened. I can't explain it. I can only call it a miracle. I felt as if I had been instantly lifted out of the darkness of a dungeon into warm, brilliant sunlight. I felt as if I had been transported from hell to paradise. I felt the power of God as I had never felt it before..."

Those brief moments completely transformed his life. "A weight lifted from my spirit, he said. I came away a different man—renewed."

That day **James Cash Penny (JC Penny)** dedicated his life to saving his company, and thus the welfare of the thousands of workers who depended upon his business skills, and to rebuilding his fortune so that he might improve the lives of many thousands more.

In the years that followed, Mr. Penny re-established his charitable trust which to this day continues to offer assistance to the needy. God did take care of Mr. Penny, as the words of the hymn promised, and through Mr. Penny, God has cared for thousands and thousands of others.

Mr. Penny died in 1971 at the age of 96. In spite of the difficulties and tragedies that he faced; JC Penny did not give up. You see, at a very young age JC Penny made a choice. He made a choice to put His trust in God through good times and bad times. He made a choice to not compromise his beliefs. He made a choice to not give up when his world around him was literally falling apart. He made a choice to not only look to his own needs but to the needs of others.

He made a choice to live a life that mattered – a life more about what he could give than what he could get – a life that left those around him better for having been in it – a life that made more of a difference for God’s kingdom than for the kingdom of man

JC Penney went from a living a life of depression, fear, and dread, to a life of courage. How? By trusting God completely.

Psalms 20:7

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

- **Invitation - PCW**
- **Prayer**
- **Response Song**
- **Announcements...**
 - **Giving/Offering**
 - **Yard Signs...**
 - **Youth Group is back! Wednesday evenings @ 6:00!**
 - **Next Sunday, May 31 – We will continue in our “Courageous” series with a message titled, “Facing Your Fears”.**
 - **Stay tuned to your email and text messages any and all updates regarding future events and activities at LCCT.**

Stay in the loop regarding all things happening at Life Change Tullahoma by downloading LCCT’S CHURCH CENTER APP! Download the app today via the iPhone App Store or Google Play.

- **LCCT Food Pantry & Benevolence Ministry. Days and Hours – Tuesday & Thursday from 4:00-6:00.**
- **RightNow Media - Text “RightNow LCCT” to 41411 to join.**
- **LCCT APP via CHURCH CENTER APP! Download the app today for iPhone or Android.**
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