

## MORAL COURAGE

### Introduction

- A. Text: **Josh. 1:9**.
- B. The most interesting stories in *Reader's Digest* are those of the heroism of "average" people in life-threatening situations.
- C. Most people have more *physical courage* than they realize.
- D. But the man who wouldn't hesitate to risk bodily harm to save someone's life will often be unwilling to risk ridicule to save someone's soul.
- E. *Moral courage* is more rare than physical courage — but it is much more important.

### I. DOING RIGHT SOMETIMES REQUIRES PHYSICAL COURAGE

- A. True commitment to God has never been without its physical dangers. Cf. **Hb. 11:32-38**.
- B. Our very lives may be required: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (**Rev. 12:11**).
- C. Paul's attitude serves as a good example - **Ac. 21:10-14**. Cf. **20:22-24**.
- D. It is not impossible that such courage might be required of us today.

### II. MORE OFTEN, HOWEVER, THE DANGERS ARE NOT PHYSICAL

- A. Peter, the physically courageous, shows that it is possible for a person to have considerable physical courage and still lack moral courage. Cf. **Mt. 26:33**; **Jn. 18:10**.
  - 1. Peter denied the Lord three times - **Jn. 18:15-18,25-27**.
  - 2. And years later, he showed a similar lack of courage in the Gentile controversy - **Gal. 2:11-14**.
- B. Satan knows very well the kinds of things we are most afraid of:
  - 1. Embarrassment.
  - 2. Being "labeled."
  - 3. Unfriendliness.
  - 4. Minority status.
  - 5. Loss of social esteem.
  - 6. Rejection and hostility.
- C. Knowing our personal fears, Satan threatens us at those points, knowing that we will do nearly anything he says to avoid suffering those things.
- D. If we give in to such pressure and deny Christ, we place ourselves among those who confess Christ only when little is at stake.
  - 1. But Christ asks us to lead a life, in word and deed, which openly acknowledges Him regardless of the danger: "Whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God" (**Lk. 12:8,9**).

2. We are not to hide the truth about our identity any more than He did. Cf. **Jn. 18:3-9**.
3. To be ashamed of Christ is to be lost: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (**Mk. 8:38**).

### III. THE COURAGE WE CAN HAVE IS GROUNDED IN GOD'S TRIUMPH OVER EVERY EVIL

- A. It is through Christ — and only through Him — that we can "do all things" (**Phil. 4:13**).
  1. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (**Jn. 14:27**).
  2. "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (**Jn. 16:33**).
- B. There is no need for *fear*: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (**2 Tim. 1:7**). Cf. **Mt. 10:28**; **1 Cor. 16:13**; **Eph. 3:16**; **6:10,11**; **2 Tim. 2:1**; etc.
- C. It is a victorious Savior whom we follow - **Rev. 19:11-16**.

#### Conclusion

- A. It is the *overcomer* through Christ who will reach heaven - **Rev. 21:1-7**.
- B. But *cowardice* can damn our very souls: "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (**Rev. 21:8**).
- C. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (**Rom. 8:31**).
- D. We are "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (**Rom. 8:35-39**).
- E. There is more joy in one moment of *integrity* and *moral courage* than there is in a lifetime of bowing to the pressure of evil.
- F. The softest pillow upon which we may rest our heads at night is that of *a courageous conscience*.
- G. What is there in your life today that requires courage?