



## Courage: *For Such A Time As This!*

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### - This Not-So-Brave World We Live In

- There are real challenges to living in a **post-christian** culture (over the past 30 years - since Evangel started!).
  - Followers of Jesus used to be at the **center**, now they find themselves on the **fringe**.
  - Followers of Jesus used to be considered **influential**, now they are considered **irrelevant**.
  - Followers of Jesus and the Christian perspective used to be **welcomed**, now they are considered **intrusive** and **intolerant**.
  - In most cases, where followers of Jesus have been seen as **friends** of the culture in the past, they are now considered **adversaries**, even **enemies** of the culture!
- In response, the church tends to gravitate toward one of these **extremes**:
  - **Separatism**...getting away...surround yourself with all-things-Christian.
  - **Syncretism**...giving in...go with the flow and hoping for the best.
- But, there is a third choice. We could become what historian **Arnold Toynbee** calls a “**creative minority**.”
  - **Creative Minority**...a people who choose to neither *get away* or *give in*! These are Christ followers who “**hold true to their beliefs while blessing the surrounding culture.**”
    - Much like Daniel, we are like exiles in this land. As the Lord commanded the people of Israel who He sent as exiles into Babylon, to “work for the **peace** and **prosperity** of the city where I sent you.” (Jer 29:7)
  - **Rabbi Jonathan Sacks** described a **creative minority** this way: “To become a creative minority... is not easy, because it involves **maintaining strong links with the outside world while staying true to your faith**, seeking not merely to keep the sacred flame burning but also to transform the larger society of which you are a part.”

- “If you remain silent at this time, protection and deliverance for the Jews will be ordained from some other place, but you and your father’s house shall be destroyed. And who knows if **you may have attained royal position for such a time as this?**” Esther 4:14 (MEV)
- **FEAR**...Today, fear is a major driving force behind the choices people in our society are making every day.
  - People will make choices today that will be significantly influenced by **fear**, mostly because they are desperate to recover some semblance of **control** in their lives.
  - **What, exactly, are we so afraid of?**
    - No wonder **our hearts have melted in fear!** No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. (**Josh 2:11 NLT-SE**)
    - “Fear is our most deadly enemy. It will fight us the whole way. **Courage is not the absence of fear, but it is the resolve to not let fear dictate what we do.** If we let fear dictate our course, we will not reach our goal. The path to success is marked for those who see with the eyes of courage.” **Leadership: The Power of a Creative Life**, by Rick Joyner
    - We are afraid to be **wrong**
      - For troubles surround me—too many to count! My sins pile up so high I can’t see my way out. They outnumber the hairs on my head. **I have lost all courage.** (Psa 40:12 NLT-SE)
    - We are afraid of being **rejected**
      - “There is hardly a man or woman who dares to be just what he or she is without doctoring up the impression. The fear of being found out gnaws like rodents within their hearts. The man of culture is **haunted by the fear** that he will some day come upon a man more cultured than himself. The learned man **fears** to meet a man more learned than he. The rich man sweats under the **fear** that his clothes or his car or his house will sometime be made to look cheap by comparison with those of another rich man. So-called "society" runs by a motivation not higher than this...” **The Pursuit of God**, by A.W. Tozer
    - We’re not just afraid of failing, but **becoming a “failure.”** (shame)
  - Within the last two generations our **local culture** has seen major changes. In Longview’s last 50 years, our local residents have experienced...
    - The Wood Products **industry** fade.
    - Crippling **debt** overwhelm our local residents.
    - **Economic weakness** and **radical social changes** that followed have caused us to **lower our expectations** for recovery and to develop a, “Let’s all just hunker down and hold on!” expectation for the future.

- In spite of all this, our local church has walked in increasing demonstrations of **unity** between congregations and continues to have **hope** that a breakthrough is coming!

## - There is a Wonderful Gift Coming to Evangel

### • COURAGE + RESILIENCE

- This will be our great **“two-edged sword”**...in a very good sense, it will cut both ways!
- What the Lord is about to release is the **courage** to do the impossible, and the **resilience** to not be taken out by the obstacles we encounter.
- God is going to equip us to do things we have previously considered out-of-the-question, too risky, or even **impossible**. We are about to be given the grace, wisdom, and faith to begin to pursue the **impossible dreams** and **promises** like never before.
  - “This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: All this may seem impossible to you now, a small remnant of God’s people. **But is it impossible for me?** says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. (Zech 8:6 NLT-SE)
  - <sup>35</sup> The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> **For nothing is impossible with God.**” (Luke 1:35–37 NLT-SE)
- **COURAGE:** We are going to begin to see unprecedented **COURAGE** released to followers of Jesus who have been prepared for **extraordinary exploits**!
  - **“Courage is the quality (strength, ability) of mind and heart that makes us resist the temptation to stop or retreat in the face of opposition, danger, or hardship.** This implies the summoning of all our powers to reach the goal. **Courage is the firmness of spirit and moral backbone** that, while appreciating and properly measuring the risks involved, makes us press on until success is accomplished.” Leadership: The Power of a Creative Life, by Rick Joyner
  - The coming **release of courage** in the hearts of believers will manifest in a variety of ways:
    - **Let go...**Courage to help us **let go** of all that has convinced us that our promises are impossible.
      - The Levites will assist you in making sure that justice is served. **Take courage as you fulfill your duties**, and may the LORD be with those who do what is right.” (2 Chr 19:11 NLT-SE)

- <sup>5</sup> I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. <sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, <sup>7</sup> for **God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.** (2 Tim 1:5–7 ESV)
- **Start new**...It will take courage to **start something new** when the odds are against it and the cost to move forward is daunting.
  - The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: “I live in the high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. **I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.** (Is 57:15 NLT-SE)
- **Leap over**...We will begin to see the kind of courage released that allows us to **leap over** things, overcoming obstacles, not just enduring them.
- **Innovate**...“We’ve never see anything like this!” Until now, when God begins to give courage that will **birth innovation**.
  - “Most people today spend their lives going in circles, never fulfilling their potential nor reaching their promised land because they listen more to the fearful than to those who are faithful. Faithful means “full of faith.” **If you are going to fulfill your destiny, it will take courage.**” Leadership: The Power of a Creative Life, by Rick Joyner
  - And He said: “Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people **I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth**, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD. For it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. (Ex 34:10 NKJV)
- **RESILIENCE**: At the same time unprecedented **courage** begins to rise up in His people, God will release **RESILIENCE** that will enable His people to **never give up** and to **overcome**.
  - <sup>24</sup> Let us **think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.** <sup>25</sup> And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near...<sup>32</sup> Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering. <sup>33</sup> Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> So do not throw away this **confident trust** (Courage!) in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! <sup>36</sup> **Patient endurance is what you need now**, so that you will continue to do God’s will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. (Heb 10:24–25, 32–36 NLT-SE)

- “The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.” The **deep roots and foundations** in Christ of creative minorities will ensure resilience.” **Celebration of Discipline: The Path To Spiritual Growth**, by Richard Foster
  - <sup>7</sup> “But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. <sup>8</sup> They are like trees planted along a riverbank, **with roots that reach deep** into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and **they never stop producing fruit.** (Jer 17:7–8 NLT-SE)
- **Resilience** causes us to bounce back.
- **Resilience** calls and equips us to persevere.
  - **fortitude** - strength of mind that enables one to endure adversity with courage
  - “If we had true patience, we would be less passive and intimidated. We would have more courage to be above-board with God and with people, and more active resiliency in the face of opposition. Our waiting upon the Lord would be not flat and lifeless, but dynamic and passionate, full of salt and fire.” **The Gospel According to Job: An Honest Look at Pain and Doubt from the Life of One Who Lost Everything**, by Mike Mason
- **Resilience** strengthens us to bounce back when we encounter obstacles.
- **Resilience** gives us hope for breakthrough, even in the face of evidence to the contrary.
- **Resilience** positions us to push hindrances out of the way, purify our motives, and finish well.
  - “To be shaped by grace in a culture of self, the most countercultural act one can commit in the third culture is to break its only taboo: **to commit self-disobedience**. To acknowledge that authority does not lie with us, that we ultimately have no autonomy. To admit that we are broken, that we are rebellious against God and His rule. To admit that Christ is ruler. To abandon our rule and to collapse into His arms of grace. **To dig deep roots into His love.** We don’t just need resilience; we need gospel resilience. We need relevance and clear communication, but in communicating and living out the gospel in the third culture of the West, **we need resilience, the kind that can only come from a life rooted in Jesus’ sacrificial gift of grace.**” *Disappearing Church: From Cultural Relevance to Gospel Resilience*, by Mark Sayers

## - “Where Do I Sign Up?”

- Creating fertile soil for what’s coming
- "Apostolic leaders prize the relationship that believers have with the Holy Spirit. **They train people to be dependent on the Holy Spirit** because, ultimately, He is the one responsible for

their maturity in Christ." Heavy Rain: How To Flood Your World With God's Transforming Power, by Kris Vallaton

- And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that **when he returns, you will be full of courage** and not shrink back from him in shame. (1 John 2:28 NLT-SE)
- These gifts, **courage** and **resilience**, will be given individually, yet will be manifested in power corporately. Leaders will surely rise in this next season. Followers of Jesus will be trained and released from this **courageous community** and we will begin shaping culture together, saying to each other...

**And who knows if you may have attained royal position  
for such a time as this?**