

County-Wide Chaplaincy

Thanks you!

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Bravery

Recently I have had some extra opportunities to think about being brave. This focus has got me considering what the Word says about bravery. I have learned that it actually says a lot! It also reminds me that bravery is not something I need to muster within myself, but I can be brave because I have the Lord. Isaiah 41:13 in The Message version of the Bible says, *“Because I, your God, have a firm grip on you and I’m not letting go. I’m telling you, ‘Don’t panic, I’m right here to help you.’”*

Wow, that really speaks to me!

As I ponder being brave I am also struck that being brave really includes trust. I think that holds true in many instances; being brave for a surgery involves trusting your surgeon, being brave in sharing your heart involves trusting the hearer with your words, even being brave to set out on an adventure involves trusting various sources.

But for us who believe and have the Lord, the trust really boils down to trusting Him. Can I trust Him with the outcome, can I trust Him with the journey, can I trust Him with my fears, my doubts, even my worry?

In this season when we give more attention to the birth of Christ, my thoughts always turn to Mary and Joseph. I try to imagine what it would have been like to be them. Talk about being brave, they are a perfect example! Even right after the angel told Mary the news that she would become pregnant and carry the Savior, she replied, “I am the Lord’s maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me just as you say.” Incredible! She had to have so many thoughts racing through her head, yet her response was one of trust.

And Joseph, he was equally brave and trusting. What is a guy to think when he learns his fiancé is pregnant and he knows it is not by him? He had every right to respectfully end the marriage arrangement, but he trusted what the angel told him in a dream. I can only imagine the jeers and humiliation the two of them faced, even from their own families, as they did the right thing by being courageous and trusting God. What an example to us!

I love the following quote our pastor gave us after a message where he talked about our response to the craziness of this world. It gives me a peace and comfort and new found bravery to face whatever lies ahead.

"I am one in whom Christ dwells and delights.
I live in the strong and unshakable Kingdom of God.
The Kingdom is not in trouble and neither am I"

May your Christmas season be filled with joy and wonder, trust and bravery!!
Jan Richards

Courage is the "mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty." Webster's Dictionary

Courage is taking the right action despite risks of negative consequences. These risks may be physical harm, public criticism, social rejection, failure, loss of wealth, or even death.

It takes courage to lay aside our fears of negative consequences and do what we know we should do. As Jan pointed out, Mary and Joseph certainly trusted God and took the right actions despite the risks, once they knew what God wanted them to do. Also the Magi demonstrated courage by leaving their comfortable homes and traveling a long (perhaps 900 miles) and dangerous journey from the east to worship the newborn King.

God's word to Joshua after He told Joshua to take the promised land:

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." ^{NAU} Joshua 1:9

As we look forward to Christmas in this month of December, let us not worry about the affairs of this life, but direct our attention to Christ Jesus, Ruler of the kings of the earth. Let us bravely obey Him and trust Him; He is the Prince of Peace, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Wonderful Counselor. His Kingdom endures forever.

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us)." ^{ESV} Matthew 1:23

"...Remember! I am with you all the days, to the end of the age."
^{ALW} Matthew 28:20b

May the Lord be with you,
Al Walter

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