

Courage to Change

In times of stress, depending upon God requires complete commitment.

David - *Psalm 31:24* NIV - **Be strong** and take heart (*KJV* - **Be of good courage**), all you who hope in the LORD. - - - (***Letting Him believe God's promises.***)

Courage is...

- Feeling Fear Yet ***Choosing to Act – encouraging us as believers!!!***
- Following Your Heart ***for God – Strength and courage in our faith!!!***
- Persevering in ***the Face of Adversity – Trusting God in difficulties!!!***
- Standing Up for ***What Is Right – He will strengthen our hearts!!!***
- Expanding Your Horizons; ***Letting Go of the Familiar!!!***
- Facing Suffering with ***Dignity or Faith...***

Change!!! - No body likes change.....

- Some things ***have taken a long time*** to get them where they are.
- There was a certain ***cost involved***.
- The way things are ***is comfortable***.
- The way things are ***is normal***.
- The way things are is ***the way most people like it***.

“The World hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress.”

Most people ***don't like change***. They are used to things ***just like they are***.

What if how things are is not how God wants them to be?

- ***What if*** He is not pleased by ***what it is right now?***
- ***What if*** it would please Him if ***some Change could happen?***

Matthew 5: 14-16 - “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and ***it gives light*** to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, ***let your light shine*** before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Jesus compares His followers to light, saying ***“we are the light of the world,”*** ***unable to be hidden.*** ***This reinforces the idea that our faith and actions should be visible and impactful, like a city that cannot be concealed.***

If we live for Christ, we will glow like lights, showing others what Christ is like!

We hide our light by

- ***Being quiet*** when we should speak...
- ***Going along with*** the crowd...
- ***Denying*** the light...
- ***Letting*** sin dim our light...
- ***Not expanding our*** lights to others...
- ***Ignoring*** the needs of others...

Be a beacon of truth – don't shut your light off from the rest of the world...

In the absence of light darkness prevails. Before there was light there was darkness.

Gen.1 – establishes the foundational truth that God, the creator, brought forth the heavens and the earth from a “formless and empty” state, covering it with darkness, and then called forth light, separating it from darkness, marking the beginning of the first day.

Gen 1:1-5 NIV - The Beginning - 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

⁵ God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

You and I have a choice to make.

Are we going to ***allow darkness to prevail*** in our lives and in the lives of those around us????

Or are we going to ***let His light shine***???

When darkness surrounds you, it is sometimes scary to pull out your light.

When I think of change, I think of the effect that light has in dark place.

A place or condition that is ***dark and void***,

- ***Completely changes when light comes into the situation.***
- Light has ***courage***.
- It ***doesn't*** take much.
- ***Just a small flame can light up a deep and dark canyon that has *never seen light*.***

The Light, God's truth and Life, shines even in the darkness of sin and ignorance, but the darkness cannot extinguish or overcome it!

John 1:5 NIV - The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

It's interesting to me that ***light has the ability to overcome darkness***, but that ***darkness has no comprehension of the work that Light is doing***.

The rest of the world may not comprehend or understand the change that God is making in your life.

- They may say, "***We liked it better when everything was dark***."
- We liked you better ***when you were a partier***.
- We liked you better ***when you told dirty jokes***.
- We liked you better ***when we could act the way we wanted*** to around you.
- ***We liked it better when there was darkness in your life***.

When I think of courage, I think of...

- ***William Tyndale*** Who in the early 1500's translated the Bible into English, which at the time was forbidden and punishable by execution. For his controversial views and belief that everyone should be able to read the Bible in their native tongue, ***he was later arrested and executed***.
- ***Winston Churchill***. When in 1940, Britain stood, alone against Nazi Germany. Some in Britain wanted to seek a deal with Hitler, ***but Churchill wanted to fight on***, and ***he inspired his country and the rest of the world through their darkest hour***.

- **Rosa Parks** who On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to obey bus driver James F. Blake's order that she give up her seat in the colored section to a white passenger.
- **Her act of defiance** became an important symbol of the modern Civil Rights Movement.
She became an international icon of **resistance to racial segregation**.
- **The Unknown Rebel at the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests** who faced off with the tanks of the People's Liberation Army on June 5. Stuart Franklin's famous photo of the stand-off went on to become one of Life's Magazine's "**100 Photos that Changed the World**" and TIME listed the obscure and Unknown Rebel as one of the **100 most influential people of the 20th century**.
- **Malala Yousafzai (1997)** - Pakistani schoolgirl who defied threats of the Taliban to campaign for the right to education. She survived being shot in the head by the Taliban and **has become a global advocate for human rights, women's rights and the right to education**.
- **Jesus Christ** who in spite of the shame suffered the death of the cross **for you and for me**.

The thing that limits so many people to a common, normal, ordinary life is fear.

- Fear of an undesired outcome
- Fear of other people's opinion
- Fear of failure

But to understand something, **these are all natural fears**.

- We all have these fears.
- The difference between someone being fearful and someone being courageous.....
- Is the fact **that in the face of their fears,**
- **They attempted and even accomplished what they were afraid of!!!!**

Courage.....

- **It takes courage** to stand up for what is right.
- **It takes courage** to make a difference.

It takes courage to live a life that is pleasing to God when the rest of the world would condemn you for it.

Change does not come easy.

- Most people **do not like change.**
- **Change exposes some things**
- **Change reveals some things**
- **Change** means that **what we had before was not enough.**
- **Change** means **something better has come.**

Nicodemus visits Jesus at night

Jesus says to Nicodemus - John 3:19-21 - This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

²⁰ **Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.**

²¹ But **whoever lives by the truth comes into the light,** so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Many people don't want their lives exposed to God's light because they are afraid of what may be revealed.

- People **who love their evil deeds avoid the light.** (They Don't want change)
- **Don't be surprised** when **the same people are threatened by your desire to obey God and do what is right...**

They are afraid that the light in you may expose some of their darkness.

I found out the day I accepted Christ that **not everybody was going to understand my decision.**

- My friends **laughed at me.**
- My family **didn't believe in me.**
- My co-workers **mocked me.**

No one else in my entire circle went to church or lived for God at that time.

- I **stood alone** in a dark place.
- Just **my little light** and me.

But change was needed.

- Those who act in truth and righteousness seek the light!
- My life couldn't continue in the direction it was going in any longer.

I couldn't allow my soul to be destroyed by what was going on in my life.

Change had to happen!!!

Repentance had to happen!!!!

- Regardless of what other people thought
- Regardless of how it would affect their thinking
- Regardless of the family traditions
- Regardless of how they were brought up
- Regardless of who their God was or what their religion was

I needed Change in my life!!!

My world was a dark place, and I needed God to shine some light into my life.

It takes courage to say yes to God when everyone around you is laughing and pointing their fingers.

- It takes courage to do what is right not only for yourself,
- But for the people you love even when they don't understand your actions.

People here today who will make a decision to be saved are heroes in my book.

- Some of them are facing ridicule from their family and friends.
- Some of them are facing the generational curses of their life and saying, "It stops here."
- It takes courage to step out of the crowd and say, "I want change".
- It takes courage to admit that you need His help!
- It takes courage to face your demons -
- And say I choose Jesus Christ.

It takes Courage to Change!!!

