



Fully Human A Biblical Pursuit of Virtue Session II: Courage

Opening Prayer Psalm 27

To be Courageous

A firefighter puts on bunker gear and enters a smoke-filled building, looking for those who need rescue. A community leader takes an unpopular stand on an issue, knowing it will bring him an avalanche of criticism, because he believes it's the right thing to do. A patient takes her first difficult steps in therapy, even after the doctors said there was little hope of ever walking again. The virtue of courage can take many expressions.

How would you define the virtue of courage?

Share a story of someone you believe exhibits this virtue and why you believe them to be courageous.

Luther On Courage

Whether it was his posting of the 95 Theses, or his “Here I stand, I can do no other” statement at the Diet of Worms, or his return to Wittenberg while being condemned as an outlaw and heretic, Martin Luther did not lack in the virtue of courage. Read how Luther writes of this virtue:

“A precious realm is the kingdom of Christ. The man who believes that God is gracious to him and is his Father, that Christ, the Son of God, has abolished death, sin, hell, and the devil – ought he not to rejoice and exult? Indeed, he should break through mountains of iron and all sorts of adversities with a fearless and invincible heart, and be convinced that everything is flowing with honey, milk, and wine. And he should moreover praise God with the highest joy and gratitude, because he is no longer mortal but alive forever...” (What Luther Says, CPH #1034)



- According to Luther here, how does courage help shape a person’s view of their world?
- To what does Luther tie courage in this statement? How does Christ’s gift of eternal life become a foundation for a courageous life?

The Courage of Three

Read Daniel 3:8-28

- In what difficult situation did “certain Chaldeans” place Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego through the hubris of King Nebuchadnezzar?
- How did King Nebuchadnezzar overstep his authority in this matter? (Romans 13:3-4a; Acts 4:17-20) How did his confrontation of the three men makes things worse?
- How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego demonstrate the virtue of courage? Why did they rise courageously to this occasion? (Daniel 3:16-18)
- What was the outcome of their courage for them? And for the glory of the Lord? (Daniel 3:24-30)

The Courage of One

Read Galatians 2:11-16

- How might Paul’s actions in this text be understood to be courageous?
- What was at stake if Peter’s behavior had not been confronted by Paul?
- What was the source of Paul’s strength to be courageous in this situation? (Galatians 2:20)



The Courage of Christ

Read Matthew 26:36–45; Hebrews 12:2-3

- As you recall the details of Jesus’ passion, as represented here by His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, what are some ways that Jesus demonstrates courage?
- According to Hebrews 12:2-3, what was Jesus’ focus, which contributed to His courage in the face of such suffering, shame, and death?
- What is the blessing of Jesus’ courageous ways? (John 3:16)

Having Courage Today

- What are some challenges in your life today in which you struggle to be courageous?
- What are some situations in our world in which you may be called on as a follower of Jesus to be courageous?
- How does the gift of salvation and our Lord’s abiding presence for you in His Word and Sacraments strengthen this virtue in you?
- How might others benefit from your courage as a follower of Jesus?
- When this virtue is not as forthcoming in your life, what comfort does our Lord give us in I John 2:1-2?

Closing Prayer