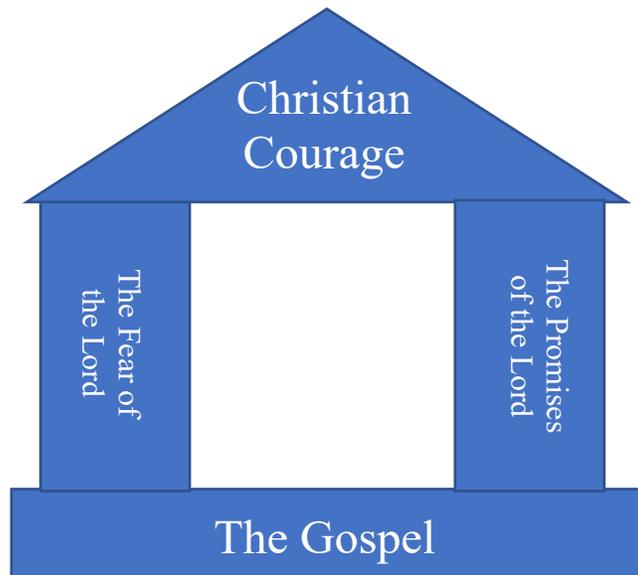


Josh Pannell

SESSION 2 | COURAGE DESCRIBED: HOW THE GOSPEL MOTIVATES AND SUSTAINS CHRISTIAN COURAGE

I. INTRODUCTION

- **Christian Courage Defined (Review!):**
 - *Short Version:* Christian courage is confident obedience to the Lord in the face of fearsome circumstances.
 - *Long Version:* Christian courage is the virtue of confident obedience to the Lord, with conviction and discernment, in the face of adversity, risk, or sacrifice required by fearsome circumstances.
- **Christian Courage Described:**
 - The Foundation of Christian Courage: The Gospel
 - The Two Pillars of Christian Courage:
 - Living in The Fear of the Lord – Living life believing that God’s opinion is the only one that matters ultimately.
 - Trusting in The Promises of the Lord – Living life believing that God’s words always prove true.



II. LAYING THE RIGHT FOUNDATION: THE GOSPEL AS THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN COURAGE

- **What happens if we forget the Gospel?**
 - Courage as self-expression
 - Courage for courage's sake
 - Courage as an unattainable ideal
- **Scriptural Support**
 - The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)
 - Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, (2 Corinthians 3:12)

- The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion. (Proverbs 28:1)

- Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven. (Matthew 9:2)

- Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. (Isaiah 43:1)

- So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6)

- **Courage from the Outside In: How the Gospel Gives Us Courage**
 - The Gospel Conquers Our Greatest Fears
 - The Gospel gives us bold access to the most terrifying place. (Ephesians 3:11-12; Hebrews 10:19)
 - “Courage before men begins with courage before God.” – Douglas Wilson

 - The Gospel has conquered our most terrifying enemy. (Hebrews 2:14–15; cf. John 8:51)

 - The Gospel removes our fear of the future (1 John 4:17-18; Revelation 21:1-6)

 - The Gospel Secures Us in The Midst of Fears
 - We are eternally loved, no matter what happens (Romans 8:31-39)

 - We are completely understood, no matter who misunderstands us (Psalm 139:1-6)

- We are completely accepted, no matter who rejects us (John 6:37)
- We have a steadfast Hope, no matter what change come (1 Timothy 1:1b)
- We have a constant Companion, no matter who or what we lose (Matthew 1:23)
- The Gospel Provides the Greatest Example of Courage
 - Jesus Christ faced rejection from others (Luke 9:51-53; John 6:60-66)
 - Jesus Christ faced demons (Luke 4:31-37)
 - Jesus Christ faced opposition in evangelism (Luke 4:16-30)
 - Jesus Christ faced political opposition (John 18:28–38)
 - Jesus Christ faced embarrassment (Hebrews 12:2)
 - Jesus Christ faced loss (Philippians 2:6-7)
 - Jesus Christ faced death (Hebrews 2:14)
 - Jesus Christ faced the judgment of God (Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 27:46)

III. THE PILLARS OF CHRISTIAN COURAGE: THE FEAR OF THE LORD AND THE PROMISES OF THE LORD

- **Pillar 1: Living in the Fear of the Lord – Living life believing that God’s opinion is the only one that ultimately matters**

- Scriptural Support:
 - In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge. (Proverbs 14:26)
 - Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the Lord of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. (Isaiah 8:12–13)
 - And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)
 - Is not your fear of God your confidence? (Job 4:6)
 - You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. (Psalm 115:11)
- Fighting Fear with Fear: How the Fear of the Lord Produces Courage
 - The Fear of the Lord reminds us to live for the glory of God and not for the praise of men (Colossians 3:22; cf. 1 Samuel 15:24).
 - The Fear of the Lord produces whole-hearted devotion to God, even in the midst of pressure to conform to an ungodly culture (Deuteronomy 6:13-15; Joshua 24:14; 2 Kings 17:7).
 - The Fear of the Lord produces loving obedience to God, even when obedience is difficult, unpopular, or dangerous (Hebrews 11:7; cf. Job 1:8; Psalm 86:11; Proverbs 23:17).
 - The Fear of the Lord produces trust in his sovereign plan over our lives (Ephesians 1:11; cf. Romans 8:31-39).
 - “My religious beliefs teach me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time of my death. I do not concern myself with that, but to be always ready

whenever it may overtake me. That is the way all men should live, and all men would be equally brave.

— Stonewall Jackson

- Biblical Examples:
 - Positive: The Egyptian Midwives (Exodus 1:17-20)
 - Negative: Saul (1 Samuel 15:24)
- **Pillar Two: Trusting in the Promises of the Lord – Living life believing that God’s words always prove true**
 - Scriptural Support:
 - When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:3–4)
 - But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” (Mark 5:36)
 - “The less faith, still the more fear. Fear is generated by unbelief. All of the skill in the world cannot cure us of our fear until God should cure us of our unbelief.” John Flavel
 - Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” (Isaiah 35:4)
 - Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)
 - Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your

God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

- Standing on the Promises: How Trusting the Promises of the Lord Produces Courage
 - The Promises of the Lord prompt us to trust in our Sovereign Lord’s kind intentions and purposes, even in even the most fearful of times (James 1:2-4; Revelation 2:10; cf. Luke 12:32; Romans 8:31-39).
 - The Promises of the Lord encourage confidence in God’s strength, even when fearful situations cause us to feel weak (Psalm 46:1-3; Luke 22:31-32; Ephesians 6:10).
 - The Promises of the Lord console us, even when fearful circumstances might overwhelm us (Joshua 1:9; John 11:23-24).
 - The Promises of the Lord remind us that Jesus will win, despite strong opposition (Psalm 2:1-4; Habakkuk 2:14; Matthew 24:14).

- Biblical Examples:
 - Positive: Joshua (Joshua 1:1-9)
 - Negative/Positive: Gideon (Judges 6-7)

IV. EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN COURAGE: WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

V. CULTIVATING CHRISTIAN COURAGE: WHERE DOES COURAGE COME FROM, AND HOW CAN I GET IT?

- Cultivating Courage by Preaching the Gospel to Ourselves (Ephesians 3:12; cf. Matthew 17:6-8; Acts 4:13)

- Cultivating Courage Through Prayer
 - Praying for ourselves (Acts 4:29)

 - Having others pray for us (Ephesians 6:19)

- Cultivating Courage Through Fellowship (Ecclesiastes 4:12; Philippians 1:14)

- Cultivating Courage by seeking the Holy Spirit (Haggai 2:5; Acts 4:31; Romans 8:15; 2 Timothy 1:7)
 - “The reason we’re not courageous is because we’re not filled with the Spirit.” – John Piper

- Cultivating Courage Through Small, Daily Acts of Courage (Romans 6:19)