

Chad Hester  
**SESSION 3 | COURAGE IN THE LIFE OF  
PAUL**

*Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. --2 Corinthians 11:22-28*

*As it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. --Philippians 1:20-21*

**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.*

**I. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: THE MODEL OF PAUL**

- Glimpse of Paul pre-conversion (Acts 7:58; 8:1,3; 22:20)
  - “But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.” (Acts 8:3)

- His upbringing and background
  
- Paul's immediate boldness and courage post-conversion (9:22; 9:31)
  - And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." (Acts 9:20)
  
  - "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied." (Acts 9:31)
  
- Paul's persistent courage shown in trips and writings

## II. THEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW: THE WRITINGS OF PAUL

- Courage as trust in the Lord / means action
  - "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39)
  
  - "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)
  
  - "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:12-14)
  
- Courage builds up the church
  - "as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which

I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.” (Philippians 1:20-26)

- Ephesians 6 - Armor of God
- Courage is needed for gospel fidelity
  - “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel...As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:6,9)
  - “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, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” (2 Timothy 1:6-7)
  - “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)
- Courage is evangelistic in nature
  - “I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” (Philippians 1:12-14)
  - “Since we have such a hope, we are very bold” (2 Corinthians 3:12)
- Courage is necessary because suffering is expected
  - “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Romans 8:18)

- “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:17)
  
- “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:1–5)

### III. APPLICATION TO TODAY: WHAT DO WE DO?

- Observe and learn from examples
  - “You can observe a lot by just watching.” --Yogi Berra
  
- Study and learn from trusted sources
  - “Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.” --G.K. Chesterton
  
- Pray and learn from the Spirit and others
  - “Most people’s understanding of Paul is limited either to Paul the missionary or to Paul the theologian. But what is clear from Paul’s letters is that he was a *pray-er* before he was a missionary or a thinker...Whatever else life in the Spirit meant for Paul, it meant a life devoted to prayer, accompanied by joy and thanksgiving.” --Gordon Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*; 147,149.