



A Quiet Courage

AIMEE JOSEPH

When I think of courage, images of Navy SEALs on covert missions come immediately to mind; however, the Apostle Paul wrote about a much broader and more encompassing scope of courage.

The Biblical concept of courage includes unsung humans doing ordinary things out of an extraordinary longing and hope. Thinking through this lens, rather than the Hollywood version, I am beginning to see faces and places of quiet courage all around me. My dear friend raising her four children alone while her husband is deployed and my widowed friends facing life without their lifelong partners live in quiet courage. Likewise, my mom friends who are letting their hard-earned diplomas serve as coasters for a series of sippy cups and my husband's friends who come home from hard days at work and choose to invest in the lives of their children and youngest men are deeply courageous.

Allow me to unpack and explain.

In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul writes about living in burdened, bruised bodies in a broken world as exiles. In this particular part of his second letter to the Corinthian church, he juxtaposes temporary residence in a tent with permanent and secure residence in a home to remind the fledgling Church of their ultimate end. We were made for glorified bodies in the presence of our Glorious Lord, not the tattered bodies and lives we inhabit while we await Christ's second coming.

Because they were made for more than this earth, Paul reminds them that their longings will betray them every time they attempt to make the raw-hide tent anything more than that. Paul, who kept up tent-making as a side hustle when ministry support ran low, knew much about tents and had blistered his hands in their production. He, more than anyone, knew of their weaknesses and limitations as compared to a strong edifice that could not be loosened or torn.

As such, Paul draws a picture of stability and security in the Lord's presence in bodies meant to keep, pulling the heads of the Corinthian believers back up from the grind of life on earth to their glorious inheritance as saints.

Having fixed their longings and gaze back upon the life to come, Paul ushers in the word and concept of courage.

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him. 2 Corinthians 5:6-9. NAS.

Paul's context for courage is not limited to the battlefield or sky-diving, but extends to the everyday life of the common Christian. He told the Church then and still tells the Church now that living by faith rather than sight takes great courage. The Christians mode of operation and motto, faith over form, runs counter to that of the world in which we live.

The Greek word *tharseo*, translated courage, used twice above comes from a root word meaning "bolstered because warmed up," "strengthened from within."

The image embedded in this word, being warmed up, softened and stirred to courage, helps me understand how to stay courageous in my common life. I will not be able to courageously live by faith, choosing to forego instant gratification and creature comforts in light of eternal satisfaction with the Lord of all comforts, unless my heart stays warm and bolstered by the fires of His great love.

The more I sit by the warming love of the Cross, the most obvious representation of His life and promises, the more my heart will be bolstered for the battle that is daily and consistently fighting to walk by faith rather than sight.

It will take a life of settled security in the love of Christ to live the life of quiet courage required of Christians while they live in torn tents, awaiting an eternal edifice.

May we warm ourselves early and often at the hearth of the heart of Christ; may we invite others and even go so far as to labor to bring others to the hearth. May we bolster each other to continue to live lives of quiet courage until we are at home with the Lord.