

The Courage of Ananias

Introduction

1. Courage has always been an essential characteristic of God's people.
 - A. Courage: "mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty" (Webster)
2. Before his death, Moses challenged the children of Israel to have courage.

Deuteronomy 31:6 **Be strong and of good courage**, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.

3. Likewise, God reminded Joshua to have courage:

Joshua 1:6-7 **Be strong and of good courage**, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.

4. In this morning's lesson I want us to notice Ananias, a somewhat quiet man and the courage that he had.

Acts 9:10-22

His Courage Caused Him to Be Ready

Acts 9:10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

1. Notice his answer when the Lord called: "Here I am, Lord."

A. This is an answer that sounds like others of long ago:

Samuel

1 Samuel 3:10 Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."

Isaiah

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

Abraham

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

2. As God's people today, our courage must cause us to be ready to serve God at all times – to be ready!
 - A. We need to be ready to preach the gospel as Paul was ready.

Romans 1:15 So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

- B. We need to be ready to answer any man at any time.
1 Peter 3:15
- C. We need to be ready to do good to all men.
Galatians 6:10

Courage Caused Him to Ponder Going Where He Normally Would Not Have Gone

Acts 9:11-12 So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

1. Have you ever wanted to talk to a loved one, but you were afraid of what they might think?
2. Have you ever thought about talking to that fellow employee, but you were afraid that he might get upset at you?
3. Have you ever been talking to your next door neighbor, but you could not muster up enough courage to talk to him or her about the gospel?
4. All of these facts just prove that we are human. However, we need to strive to develop the kind of courage that God would have us have.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Courage Caused Him to Be Realistic

Acts 9:13-14 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

1. It is true that brethren need to be informed and know what is going on in the world and our in the brotherhood.
2. We need to know who is destroying the cause of Christ, whether members or non-members.
3. Ananias was not trying to forsake his work. He was just making sure he was following the right course of action in accomplishing his work.
 - A. Paul was the man persecuting and allowing Christians to be killed.
 - B. Naturally, Ananias feared for his life and wanted to be certain of the situation that he was being put in.
4. There was a time when men of God fled.
 - A. 1 Kings 19: Elijah fled for his life after killing the prophets of Baal.
 - B. Jesus himself fled on occasions:

John 8:59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

5. We need to be realistic with our courage today. Study the situation and then make righteous judgments concerning it.
 - A. Willing to do whatever is needed, following the right course.

Caused Him to Be Receptive to God's Word

Acts 9:15-17 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

1. He was ready to do what was needed, but he was realistic to the situation. When he realized (through the word of the Lord) that God meant what He said, he was receptive to what God said.
2. The Lord often has a higher purpose than our finite minds can grasp.
Isaiah 55:8-11
3. We must study the word so that when opportunities arise we will be grounded and settled to the point of making righteous judgments, and then be ready to do what God has said.
4. Think of the courage it took to go to Saul like God commanded:

Acts 9:17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Courage Helped Cause Great Results

Acts 9:18-22

1. What if Ananias had been afraid to say what Paul needed to hear?
 - A. What if he had only spoken of the existence of God?
 - B. What if he had preached "unity-in-diversity?"
 - C. What if he had told Paul he had the right to agree or disagree?
 - D. What if he had said you need to love Jesus – to just accept Him as his personal Savior and then walked off?
2. We never know whom the person we convert will convert.
3. Ananias did not realize that Paul would go on three missionary journeys that would convert hundreds if not thousands.
4. He did not realize when he went to Paul that he was assisting the man who would write thirteen books of the New Testament (14 if Hebrews is his).
5. All we can do is obey Matthew 13 and sow the seed of the kingdom.
6. There is no telling what one of your converts might accomplish!

Conclusion

1. By studying the life of this great man, we can see the kind of courage that pleases God.
2. We need patience and tact, but we also need courage in this day.
3. Elders, along with all the members, need the courage to take stands and contend for the truth.
4. Preachers need courage to open their mouths and preach the gospel of Christ in all things.
5. Members need courage to support the preaching and teaching of the gospel of Christ. Don't be afraid to stand up for Jesus and the truth!
6. It takes courage to break away from whatever it is that is keeping us from living for, and serving Christ!

