

Comfort vs Courage, Which Wins

Guest Speaker
April 20 & 21, 2024

Key Bible Verses for Series:

- Key Verse #1- In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15 ESV
- Key Verse #2- For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 ESV

Bible Reading:

- Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV: "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."
- Matthew 6:26 NIV: "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

Observation Questions:

1. What does the imagery of making "a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland" suggest about the nature of the new things God is doing according to Isaiah 43:18-19?
2. In Matthew 6:26, what is the significance of Jesus pointing out the birds of the air in relation to God's care?

Interpretation Questions:

1. How might the promise of God doing a "new thing" provide comfort or challenge to someone experiencing uncertainty or waiting for a change?
2. Considering the context of Matthew 6:26, what does this verse imply about God's provision in times when resources seem scarce or the future uncertain?

Application Questions:

1. Reflect on a recent situation where you felt like you were in a "wilderness" or a "wasteland." How can Isaiah 43:18-19 encourage you to look for the new pathways God might be creating in your life?
2. Identify a specific instance this coming week where you can trust in God's provision like the birds, especially in a scenario where you might typically worry. What practical step will you take to remind yourself of God's care in this situation?
3. Think of a decision you are hesitating to make because it feels risky or unclear. How does the message of Isaiah 43:18-19 about God doing a new thing influence your decision-making process?
4. Can you name a person in your life who is currently facing financial or personal uncertainty? How might you use Matthew 6:26 to offer them encouragement this week?
5. When you next experience fear or hesitation about a new direction or calling, how can you use these scriptures to bolster your faith and take the next step?

Bonus Content for Daily Devotions: "Comfort vs Courage, Which Wins"

Day 1: Courage to Embrace God's Call

Stepping into God's plan requires a bold leap beyond our comfort zones. It is in these moments of courage that we witness the profound unfolding of His divine purpose. This leap not only tests our faith but also strengthens it, as we rely not on our understanding but on His omnipotent guidance.

Joshua 1:9 - "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Reflection: What is one area in your life where God is calling you to step out in faith? How can you show courage in this situation today?

Day 2: Valuing the Silence of Preparation

Silence and waiting periods can often feel like times of inaction, but in God's economy, they are rich with purpose. These moments are not of abandonment but of meticulous preparation by God for the next steps in our journey. Embracing these quiet times helps us to deepen our trust and readiness for what is to come.

Lamentations 3:25-26 - "The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

Reflection: Reflect on a recent period of silence or waiting in your life. How might God be using this time to prepare you for what's next?

Day 3: Witnessing God's Unexpected Provisions

When God calls us to a mission, His provision for our needs can come in unexpected forms. These moments are a testament to His creativity and care, ensuring we have everything necessary to fulfill His calling. Recognizing and trusting in these provisions encourages a deeper dependence on Him.

Genesis 22:13-14 - "Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide."

Reflection: Can you identify a time when God provided for you in an unexpected way? How did this experience affect your faith?

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Day 4: Scripture as Our Guide and Comfort

In times of uncertainty, scripture serves as a steadfast source of reassurance and guidance. The words of the Bible are not just historical records; they are living, breathing promises that speak directly into our circumstances, encouraging and directing us in God's will.

Habakkuk 2:2-3 - "Then the Lord replied: 'Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it lingers, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.'"

Reflection: What scripture has God used to guide or reassure you in a difficult time? How can you apply this scripture more deeply in your life?

Day 5: Activating Faith Through Action

Taking steps of faith activates God's promises in our lives. Each act of obedience, no matter how small, is a powerful catalyst for divine intervention. These steps not only bring us closer to fulfilling God's plan but also allow us to witness His faithfulness and power firsthand.

James 2:22 - "You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did."

Reflection: What is one step of faith you can take today that you have been hesitating to take? How can this step bring you closer to experiencing God's promises?