

Ananias

TEXT: Acts 9:10-22

THESIS: We must have courage if we are to follow after God and please him.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Courage has always been an essential characteristic of God's people.
2. Courage is defined as: "Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty" (Webster).
3. Before the death of Moses, he challenged the children of Israel to have courage
 - a. He said, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." (Deut. 31:6)
4. Likewise, Joshua reminded the children of Israel of the words of Moses when he said, "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. 7Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." (Josh. 1:6-7)
5. We want to notice a somewhat quiet man and courageous man, Ananias.
6. Let us take a look at Acts 9:10-22.
 - a. His courage caused him to be ready
 - b. His courage caused him to reflect going where he normally would not have gone.
 - c. His courage caused him to be realistic
 - d. His courage caused him to be receptive to God's Word
 - e. His courage helped to cause great results

DISCUSSION:

- I. HIS COURAGE CAUSED HIM TO BE READY
 - A. "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord." (Acts 9:10)
 1. Ananias was a disciple respected both by Jews and Christians (Acts 22:12)
 - a. However, he is still just introduced as a disciple.
 2. Yet, notice this disciples answer when the Lord called: "Behold, I am here, Lord."
 3. This sounds like those mentioned in the old days of the prophets:
 - a. Samuel wrote, "And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. 3:10)
 - b. Isaiah penned, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." (Isa. 6:8)
 - c. The Hebrew writer recorded, "By faith Abraham, when he was

called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” (Heb. 11:8)

- B. Ananias did not necessarily care what the Lord was asking him to do.
 - 1. He was ready to do whatever he was able to do.
 - 2. And as God's people today, our courage must cause us to be ready to serve God.
 - 3. For example, we need to be ready to preach the Gospel as Paul was ready.
 - a. For he said, “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.” (Rom. 1:15)
 - 4. We need to be ready to answer any man.
 - a. Peter reminded us to, “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” (1 Pet. 3:15)
 - 5. We need to be ready to do good unto all men.
 - a. For, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” (Gal. 6:10)
- C. Therefore, we need to be ready and prepared to speak to people about the Bible.

II. HIS COURAGE CAUSED HIM TO REFLECT GOING WHERE HE NORMALLY WOULD NOT HAVE GONE

- A. Luke wrote, “And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.” (Acts 9:11-12)
 - 1. Have you ever wanted to talk to a loved one about God, but you were afraid of what they might think?
 - 2. Have you ever thought about talking to that fellow employee about Jesus, but you were afraid that he might get mad 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/her about the gospel?
- B. All that the foregoing facts prove is that we are human.
- C. However, Ananias was about to go to a man who was known for persecuting the church enough that it scattered the brethren throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria.
 - 1. Saul had, “. . . made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison” (Acts 8:3)
 - 2. He sent out threats and slaughtered or murdered the disciples of the Lord. (Acts 9:1)
 - 3. And, here is Ananias about to be face to face with Saul.
- D. What courage this must have taken.

1. Likewise, Christians need to develop the kind of courage that Ananias displayed just as God would have us do.
2. Paul said, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7)
3. Therefore, we ought to have the courage where we normally would not go.

III. COURAGE CAUSED HIM TO BE REALISTIC

- A. "Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name." (Acts 9:13-14)
 1. Ananias had some doubts about approaching Saul for he knew about this man's reason for being in Damascus.
 2. Reports about the evil Saul had brought against the saints at Jerusalem were already broadcast.
 3. Ananias stated that it was for the purpose of arresting the followers of Christ that Saul had come to Damascus.
 4. Observe that those who are obedient to Christ are described as those "that call on thy name."
 - a. "Calling on the name of the Lord" is simply a way of saying that they "obey Christ."
- B. Just like these brethren, we need to be informed and know what is going on in the world and in the brotherhood.
 1. We need to know who is destroying the cause of Christ, be they members or non-members.
 2. Ananias was not trying to forsake his work.
 3. He was just making sure he was following the right course.
 - a. Paul was the man persecuting and killing Christians.
 - b. Naturally, Ananias feared for his life and wanted to be certain of the situation.
- C. You may not be aware that there was a time when men of God fled.
 1. Under the Old Covenant days, we read how Elijah fled for his life after killing the prophets of Baal. (1 Kgs. 19)
 2. Even Jesus himself fled on occasions. For, "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." (Jn. 8:59)
- D. We need to be realistic with our courage today.
 1. We need to study the situation.
 2. We need to make righteous judgments.
 3. And, we need to be willing to do whatever is needed, but make sure that we are following the right course which is the Bible.

IV. COURAGE CAUSED HIM TO BE RECEPTIVE TO GOD'S WORD

- A. Continuing on, Luke said, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a

chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 9:15-17)

1. Ananias was ready to do what was needed, but he was realistic to the situation.
 2. When he realized (through the word of the Lord) that God meant what he said, he was receptive to what God said.
- B. The Lord often has a higher purpose than our finite minds can grasp.
1. He once said, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isa. 55:8-11)
 2. Christ assured Ananias that Saul had been chosen for a special, great work.
 3. Saul was going to fulfill Isa. 62:2, “And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.”
 - a. The name Christian was given to saints after Paul began his work.
 - b. And Paul’s work brought him before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel.
 - c. And in doing this, he endured many hardships for the Lord (2 Cor. 11:24-28)
- C. Now, imagine if Ananias told the Lord, no, I am not going to be open to your words.
1. Then, all that would be left of the New Testament would be 12-13 books and a fraction of Acts.
- D. Therefore, we must be open to studying the Word of God so that when we do have opportunities that arise, we will be grounded and settled to the point of making righteous judgments, and then be ready to do what God said.
1. Think of the courage it took to go to Saul like God commanded.
 2. “And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 9:17)
 3. The first thing that the persecuting Saul saw, was a Christian.

V. COURAGE HELPED TO CAUSE GREAT RESULTS

- A. “And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.” (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 to disagree?
 - d. What if he had said you need to love Jesus and walked off?
 - e. What if Ananias had told Paul how great the Law of Moses was?
 2. We never know whom the person we convert will convert.
- B. Ananias and others saw a completely changed man.
1. For Saul, began to preach the faith which he once sought to destroy.
 - a. At first, Saul was the strongest opponent of the church. But now, he was about to be one of the most ardent proclaimers and defenders Christianity has ever had.
 2. Ananias did not realize that Paul would go on three missionary trips that would convert hundreds if not thousands of souls.
 3. He did not realize when he went to Paul that he was assisting the man who would write fourteen books of the New Testament (if Hebrews also be his).
- C. All we can do is obey Matthew 13 and sow the seed of the kingdom.
1. It is not for us to say if the seed will fall by the wayside.
 2. It is not for us to determine if the seed will fall among stony places.
 3. It is not for us to be so cautious that we refuse to sow among the thorns.
 4. Nor, is it for us to only be seeking the good ground while neglecting the rest.
- D. We are to sow the seed wherever and whenever we can because there is no telling what one of your converts might accomplish.
1. One man, one seed, and one opportunity is all it takes to begin to sow.
 2. One man, by the name of Marshall Keeble did this very thing and the Lord added to the church over 50,000 because of his efforts.
 3. But, through another man, the Lord added to the church just one man, Jeff Dahmer who was a well know killer.
- E. We need not worry were the seed goes, just so long as it does go.

CONCLUSION:

1. By studying the life of this great man Ananias, we can see the kind of courage that pleases God.
 - a. We need the courage to be ready by studying and showing ourselves approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15).
 - b. We need the courage to go and speak for the sake of the Gospel when we normally would not go.
 - c. We need the courage to be realistic in our goals for God and to be open to God's word so that we receive his words in our hearts.
2. We may never know all the great results that are accomplished as a result of our work.
 - a. The apostle Paul told the church at Corinth, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58)
 - b. We need to keep working because nothing we do for the Lord is in vain.
3. But, while we may need patience and tact to approach others, we cannot forget about courage.
 - a. Elders need the courage to take stands and contend for the truth.
 - b. Preachers need courage to open their mouths and preach the Gospel.
 - c. Members need courage to support elders and preachers in the proclamation of the truth.
4. Courage is what is needed to fulfill the function and purpose of the church in Washington Indiana and everywhere else in the world.
5. It takes courage to break away from whatever it is that is keeping us from Christ.