

## **A Courageous Christian**

**By T. Sean Sullivan**

There are many fears that can restrict our full expression of faith. There are fears outside: Like the fear of what others might think of us, or the fears from those who do not respect faith. There are also fears from the inside like being overwhelmed or intimidated by the idea of “righteous” living; or maybe even creeping doubts.

In the scriptures, there was a young Christian who was struggling with fears and Paul encouraged him. Paul told him, “...God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2Tim. 1:7). This same courageous attitude is encouraged by God’s word for all those who would dedicate themselves to living it.

We can become courageous Christians. Our confidence and courage comes from the knowledge of who God is (Acts 17:24-27 our Creator); of His love for us (1John 3:1-3); and of the truth of His way (John 17:17). It is the knowledge that God supplies that allows us to face each day as a courageous Christians. To know what this means to our life, let’s consider what it means, in real life, to be a courageous Christian.

***A Courageous Christian is: One who Confesses Christ.*** There will be times when we are called upon to confess Christ and we must not fail to do so. There are simple times, like when someone asks if you are a Christian, or if you believe in God. Then there are also more difficult times, like those faced by our early-century brethren when, as a matter of life or death, they were being compelled to deny the Lord (Acts 26:9-11; Rev. 2:10)—many lost their life, for faith.

Confessing Christ -- is something we say. With our voice we state our belief in Jesus (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37) or we speak to others about our faith (1Peter 3:13-17). These important words, fitly spoken, are part of our confession of Christ.

Confessing Christ is also our action of continually living “in Christ” (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:3-10) -- maintaining the newness of life, everyday (Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1-10). Confessing Christ is living “for Christ” (2Cor. 5:13-15) as dedicated servants of God (Gal. 2:20). Confessing Christ is living “as Christ” (1Cor. 11:1; Eph. 4:13). In all things we must seek to be comparable to our Lord (1Peter 1:13-15). A courageous Christian confesses their faith.

***A Courageous Christian is: One Who Denies the World.*** There is a constant battle of choices in this life. There are some times when our choices are easier, than other times. We must always be determined to seek what is best for our souls. God provides what is best and when we appreciate that fact we will not allow anything to distract us from His way.

God has given us a better way to live. His ways are not worldly ways, but His successes are far better than any offer of the world (Eph. 5:8-17). Christians are not to think the same way as the world; we are not self-interested, materially-minded, or gain-greedy. God’s instructions change the way we approach life (Rom. 12:1-2). God’s way is one of denying one’s self (Matt. 16:24) and humbly seeking God (James 4:6-10). We are on a course determined by God’s direction (1Peter 2:1-2; 2Peter 1:3). Christians are purposely walking the narrow way (Matt. 7:13-14; 1John 2:15-17).

God’s instructions allow us to look beyond this world. We become like the “pilgrims” in Hebrews 11:14-16, who looked for a better place. We are seeking our prepared place (John 14:1-6); our better place (Rev. 21:1-4); and our everlasting place (Matt. 25:46; 1Thes. 4:17). A courageous Christian denies the world and sets their mind on the goal of Heaven.

***A Courageous Christian is: One who remains faithful.*** When the pressure is on: from the world (1John 5:1-5); or family (Matt. 10:32-39); or from general stress and distress (Rom. 8:31-39); it is at these times that we are called to strength, valiant effort, and steadfastness (Eph. 6:10-18). we are called to strength, valiant effort, and steadfastness (Eph. 6:10-18).

But, what about when there is no pressure? We cannot set aside the armor of God. We must continue to build up our expectations of Heaven (2Peter 3:9-13); not just drift away (Heb. 2:1-4); or fall asleep (1Thes. 5:1-11). Peter told us to always watch and be ready because the enemy is looking for his opportunity (1Peter 5:8-10). A courageous Christian remains a Christian.

Courage is our confidence in God, gained through His word. We can be what God expects, we can succeed as a strong and faithful servant. The ability is within each of us to gain the victory. We cannot do it without humble submission to God, through Jesus Christ. The courage rendering hope of Heaven will be realized by those who: confess Christ, deny the world, and remain faithful. Do you want the hope of Heaven? It can be yours, if you will obey, today.

### **What Day Is It?!**

(The following, by Michael Hewlett, is reported to be a true story regarding Berkeley, CA.) In 1990, the Berkeley City Council passed a law changing the name of Columbus Day to Native American Day because Columbus wasn't nice to the Indians. Of course, no Indians were asked if they wanted the holiday's name changed or even if they wanted to be called Native Americans.

In 1991, a group of the Politically Correct argued that Indians are not native to America but to Asia, so calling them Native Americans might be insulting to Asians. So the Berkeley City Council changed the name again, to "Indigenous People Day." Of course, neither the Indian nor the Asian communities were consulted about this.

In 1992, the Italian American Anti-Defamation League gave the City of Berkeley their Insensitivity Award. The Italian-American group said that they agreed that Indians haven't been treated well, but that the Italians weren't the ones who did it, so why take away their holiday? Nobody asked the Italian-American community at large how they felt about renaming Columbus Day.

In 1994, the Berkeley City Council finally changed the holiday back to "Columbus Day."

In 1995, representatives of the Winnamucca Indian Tribe protested at City Council meetings. They argued that Indians had never asked that Columbus Day be renamed to honor Indians, but since it had been, the City Council couldn't take it back, lest they become "indigenous-people-givers."

In 1996, the City Council again changed the name to "Indigenous Peoples/Columbus Day." It was felt that this name was a compromise which would end any and all protests from the diverse, interested parties. Currently, the Berkeley City Council is besieged by a group lobbying to rename the holiday "Animal Rights Day." It seems they feel that animals are being excluded from the holiday.

You can't please everyone, can you? In fact, trying to do so will only frustrate you. I'm not saying we shouldn't give consideration to the desires of others, because we should. But, ultimately, in our Christian lives, we should seek to please only one Being. Take comfort in knowing that even Jesus Christ didn't please everyone throughout His life. Galatians 1:10 - "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."

### **A Moments Wisdom**

- When we were children we were grateful to those who filled our stockings at Christmas time. Why are we not grateful to God for filling our stockings with legs?
- I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.

- Grace isn't a little prayer you chant before receiving a meal. It's a way to live.
- He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.
- Not merely what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving.