



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## A TIME FOR COURAGE

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:2-9 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 31:23-29 | Joshua 1:2-9  
1 Samuel 17:37, 45-47 | Psalm 27:14 | Isaiah 55:9 | Matthew 10:26-28; 14:23-27 | John 16:32-33 | Acts 18:9-10  
2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Hebrews 13:5

### ► SUMMARY

#### Fear is a powerful emotion that can grip the heart of an individual and even a nation.

Since we live in an unstable world filled with uncertainty, there are many reasons to become anxious and fearful. And for those who don't know Christ as Savior, their fears are justified because they have no assurance in this life or after death. But believers don't have to live in continual fear because Christ lives within them and has overcome the world.

### ► SERMON POINTS

#### Nehemiah knew how to stand tall and strong on his knees.

God doesn't want His children to be ruled by fear. That's why He so often tells us in Scripture to fear not. Fear in itself is not a sin. There are times when circumstances warrant it, yet God doesn't want us to live in perpetual dread, but with courage, faith, and trust in Him.

Joshua 1:2-9 is a good example of a passage in which God advocates a courageous response. After the death of Moses, Joshua was appointed to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. It was a daunting task so Joshua needed courage.

#### Definition of Courage

Courage isn't the absence of fear but a response to it. It can be simply defined as that attitude of mind and

heart that enables us to face danger, obstacles, and the challenges of life fearlessly, firmly, and calmly.

#### Specific Situations Requiring Courage

- **Waiting for the Lord.** "Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD" (Ps. 27:14). We like everything to work out according to our timetable, but there are occasions when we must wait for the Lord, even if it means an opportunity is lost. But God wants us to trust Him to work things out in His way according to His timing.
- **Imminent Danger.** During a storm, when Jesus came walking on the water, the disciples were terrified, but Jesus said, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid" (Matt. 14:27). We all experience moments like this when we're suddenly overwhelmed with fear. These emotions are natural, but we don't have to stay in this state if we'll turn to the Lord for help and peace.
- **Uncertainty.** There are countless possible scenarios that cause us dread because we don't know what will happen and have no control. Jesus addressed these fears in John 16:33 when He said, "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." Once again, the right response is to trust Jesus and rest in the peace He provides.
- **Human Frailty and Death.** Illness, aging, and death can be terrifying experiences to consider, but for believers there is hope. Though we groan in these early bodies, we're promised a glorified body. The Holy Spirit is given to us as a pledge of our resurrection. That's why Paul said, "Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by

sight—we are of good courage ... and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:6-8).

■ **An Overwhelming Task.** God gives us spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities to use as He desires, and sometimes we feel fearful and inadequate. That was probably how Joshua felt when God commanded him to lead the nation of Israel. That’s why the Lord admonished him three times to be courageous (Josh. 1:6-7, 9).

## Developing Courage

When the Lord commanded Joshua to be courageous, He also gave him instructions on how to do so (Josh. 1:2-9).

**1. Meditate on God’s Word.** “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night” (v. 8). Meditation involves reading Scripture, thinking deeply about it, and asking questions of God. As we program our minds with the Lord’s thoughts, they’ll guide us throughout the day so we can respond as He desires in every situation.

**2. Obey the Word of God.** “Be careful to do according to all the Law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left” (v. 7). The Bible is an instruction book for life, telling us how to handle various situations in a manner that pleases and honors the Lord. In the most trying situations of life, we can quote verses to sustain and strengthen us to respond with boldness, calmness, and tranquility. Feasting, meditating, and obeying God’s Word build courage and spiritual strength.

**3. Recall God’s Past Faithfulness.** The Lord challenged Joshua to remember His past faithfulness to Moses and the people. “Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses” (vv. 2-3). Keeping a journal is one way we can remind ourselves

of God’s faithfulness. The events we record encourage us to trust Him for the future as well.

**4. Observe the Courage of Other People.** “Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you nor forsake you” (v. 5). When the Lord called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, he was fearful and gave several excuses why he wasn’t the one for this job. Yet God empowered him to complete the task. Moses’ trust in the Lord and courageous obedience was an example for Joshua to follow.

**5. Understand What’s at Stake.** The Lord had promised Abraham that He’d make him a great nation, give him the land of Canaan, and bless all the nations through him. What was at stake for Joshua was the fulfillment of God’s promise to give Israel the land as part of God’s plan of redemption through the Messiah, Jesus Christ (v. 3-4). Today what’s at stake for us is our bold stand for Christ in the face of criticism, ridicule, or rejection. We need courage to proclaim the gospel in a hostile world.

**6. Remember God’s Promises.** “I will be with you; I will not fail you nor forsake you (v. 5). We can have unwavering faith and courage because the Lord is with us every moment through every circumstance of life. And with His presence come His power, protection, and provision.

## ► RESPONSE

- What are you facing today that’s making you anxious or fearful? How would filtering the situation through God’s Word change your response? What particular verses do you find comforting?
- Are your fears based on the uncertainty of the future and dread of what could take place? What would happen if you shifted your focus to the one who holds the future and has promised to give you His presence, power, provision, and protection?

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