

# Courage is Required for Salvation

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In our Christian lives, as we try to live our lives in obedience to God, I think one of the greatest challenges we can have is adequately managing our emotions. When that happens, our behavior is often not what we want it to be. We don't always behave in the Godliest manner if we allow our emotions to take control of us. If we look at the emotions the Bible talks about the most, there are two and they are mentioned more than any other. One that is mentioned the most, you might say is love, the other is fear. Personally, I would argue that love has more to do with actions that we choose to do rather than emotions or something we feel. Fear, on the other hand, is definitely an emotion and something we feel and react to. If you look at it like that, fear is the most mentioned emotion in the Bible. If you look at the word "fear" in the New King James translation of the Bible, it is mentioned 354 times. You will also notice that the words, "Do not fear" show up fifty-one times and the phrase "fear not" appears eleven times. It is very much an emotion that God warns us we have to get under control. If we allow fear to rule us and take over our minds and we become fearful individuals, the Bible tells us that could cost us our salvation. It's a very serious matter and we could end up in the lake of fire as a result.

What we are going to do today is to look at this particular subject to understand how fear can affect us and why God takes it so seriously? Why is it something that He would put on the list of those He is going to throw into the lake of fire. Also, we will look at what we can do as Christians, to overcome our fears and adequately manage them. If you would like a title for the sermon, it's:

## Courage is Required for Salvation

We don't necessarily look at it like that. We all know fear is something we would like to avoid and it's not something we should focus on. We all want to be courageous individuals, but we don't often think of courage as being an absolute requirement for salvation. But as we are going to see today, it absolutely is and it's something the Bible tells us is the case. As I mentioned, "fear" is something talked about more than any other emotion in the Bible. God constantly gives us reassurances throughout the Bible that we shouldn't fear, that He will take care of us, He will deliver us through all of our trials. We will start off by looking at several examples in this regard. Keep in mind as we go through these, that we often look at them as being more of a pep talk and reassuring words. We don't look at "not fearing" and having the courage "to face our fears" in terms of being a requirement for salvation.

To begin, we will go to Deuteronomy 31 and we'll look at an example towards the end of Moses' life; advice that he gave to all the people of Israel and to Joshua specifically.

**Deuteronomy 31:1** *Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel.*

- 2) *And he said to them: "I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the LORD has said to me, You shall not cross over this Jordan."*
- 3) *The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said.*
- 4) *And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them.*
- 5) *The LORD will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you.*
- 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."*
- 7) *Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it.*
- 8) *And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."* (NKJV)

As I mentioned, we see throughout the Bible again and again, God saying,

"Do not fear; trust in Me, I've got your back, I'll take care of this, you don't need to be afraid of anything".

This is a theme all throughout the Bible; it's stated again and again. Let's look at some more examples in Isaiah.

**Isaiah 35:3** *Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees.*

4) *Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."* (NKJV)

In other words, you don't need to be afraid, your Father has it all taken care of. He's going to take care of you and deliver you through whatever comes at you—you don't need to fear. In Isaiah 51 and we see another similar example.

**Isaiah 51:7** *Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law: Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults.*

8) *For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool; But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation from generation to generation."* (NKJV)

The Bible is full of reassuring words like this. God is continually telling His people and all of us that we don't need to fear.

” I’m a loving Father, I’m there for you, you trust in Me, I will take care of you, you have nothing to be afraid of.”

You’ll see this again and again all throughout the Bible, it’s a very common theme. We sometimes look at this as comforting words or a motivational speech to give us the courage to face these fears and we don’t often look at it as an absolute requirement. “This is something I have to do; I have to be willing to face my fears and to take them on”. Because if we don’t, we could literally lose out on salvation and wind up in the lake of fire. We don’t look at it quite so seriously, but that is exactly how the Bible speaks of the subject. Look at Revelation 21 and you will notice why I say that.

**Revelation 21:6** *And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

*7) He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (NKJV)*

Notice the list in verse 8.

*8) But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (NKJV)*

Here we have a list of character traits and it is saying that those who have these and allow these to rule their lives, are going to wind up in the lake of fire. They are going to lose out on the Kingdom of God and lose their salvation and be burned up for eternity. What is the first thing on the list? The *cowardly*. What we are referring to here is the *fearful*. To explain that, let me share with you the Greek word that is translated as *cowardly*. It’s transliterated into English as *deilos*, Strong’s #1169 and according to the Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zohiates it’s defined as, “to fear, timid, fearful”. It’s saying that the *fearful* will wind up in the lake of fire. We don’t often think of it like that. I’m sure we have all experienced fear in our lives. We all have those things that scare us, that get under our skin or we’re facing a difficult trial and are uncertain of our future. We experience fear. It’s a very natural thing as human beings, but as the Bible tells us, if we are not able to get on top of that and face our fears, we could lose our salvation over it. We don’t always think of it in those serious terms.

To get a clearer idea of what this is getting at, we need to look at this Greek word—it’s only used four times in the New Testament. Obviously, Revelation 21 is one of those times. Another is in the book of Hebrews and it’s used to refer to the “fear of God”, which we know is a good thing. However, the other two times give us a little more insight and they are in the gospels in the same account. There is a parallel account of the same event, in Matthew and Mark. We see where this word is used again in Mark 4. What we want to see as we go through this is, why does God make such a big deal about fear? Why is it something that could exclude us from the Kingdom of God? None

of us like fear, we don't like to experience it. We like to avoid it, but we don't think of it as something which is going to exclude us from the Kingdom of God if we don't overcome it. Look at Mark 4:35.

**Mark 4:35** *On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."*

*36) Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.*

*37) And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. (NKJV)*

In other words, what was happening here is what we refer to today as "taking on water". If you're in a boat out on the lake or the ocean and have a storm like this coming and it's blowing so hard that water is actually coming into the boat, it could sink. Anyone who is familiar with boating knows that if you take enough water into the boat it will sink. As we're going to see, that is what these guys were concerned about. They were all fishermen and familiar with how this works and they're in a severe storm where it's blowing so hard, it's not only tossing the boat around, the boat is taking on water.

*38) But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" (NKJV)*

They are all panicked—"We're about to die, are You not paying attention? Do You not see that we're all about to perish here?"

*39) Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.*

*40) But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" (NKJV)*

The word for *fearful* is *deilos*, the same word we saw in Revelation 21. Notice how he correlates *being fearful* with a "lack of faith". As we go through this you are going to see this correlation throughout the Bible. There are plenty of scriptures that address this, but we aren't going to look at them today. You are going to see that *being fearful* and *unbelief in God* always correlate. *Courage* and *faith* and *belief in God* also correlate. That is a common theme throughout the Bible.

*41) And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" (NKJV)*

They are looking at this saying, "Wow, who is this guy"? Obviously, they were not grasping Who He was. It has gone right over their heads that this isn't just a teacher, this is the Son of God here. This is the God Being that was born as a human—they're obviously not getting that. Now He is making a point of this.

“You are not seeing Who I am and having faith in that. If you did you wouldn’t be so scared.”

If we put ourselves in their shoes, being in a boat and you have a severe storm coming on. The wind is blowing and you are taking in water, I think we could sympathize with that being a scary situation. We can understand why you would feel fear. Why is it that God would look at fear and say, “This is something that if you don’t overcome this, I’m going to throw you in the lake of fire.”? The key to this is to look at it in the way I like to phrase it, “How does the movie end?” I’m sure you’ve heard that before in my sermons. I use this question a lot. It’s looking at a situation and projecting forward and saying, how does this ultimately end? What does this lead to? What is the end result of this? That’s the key to understanding why God takes such a strong stance against fear. Realizing what happens to individuals when their minds are consumed with fear and how that leads to disaster. To understand this let’s look at Proverbs 29 and we’ll see here a strong warning in regards to fear.

**Proverbs 29:25** *The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.* (NKJV)

Notice that again, trusting in God leads to not being fearful and not overcome, and notice that it’s the fear of man. We know the fear of God is a good thing, but fearing man is a *snare*. To fully understand what this means we need to look at what the Hebrew is saying when it refers to this as a snare. This gives us a lot of insight as to why fear is such a bad thing. The Hebrew word *moqesh* is translated into English as a “trap” or a “snare” and is [Strong’s #4170](#) and according to [The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament](#) by Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, here’s how it’s defined:

*A masculine noun meaning a snare, a trap, bait. The proper understanding of this Hebrew word is the lure or bait placed in a hunter’s trap. From this sense comes the primary use of the term to mean the snare itself. It is used to signify a trap by which birds or beast are captured. A moral pitfall and anything that leads one to ruin and disaster.*

Notice it is saying is that fear leads *to ruin and disaster*. That’s why God looks at this and says that you have to overcome this or I can’t have you in the Kingdom of God. We have all experienced fear in our lives, whether it’s as children or adults. We all have situations that rattle us and times in which we feel fear. But we don’t often think of it in terms of something that would exclude us from the Kingdom of God. We just think of it as something unpleasant that we would like to avoid. But we have to realize, what happens to our thinking and how does the movie end? How does that affect our minds and the decisions that we make? As individuals or even as large groups, what can this result in? It results in *ruin and disaster*, and that is one of the reasons He takes such a strong stance with this.

To look at some examples, let's read Exodus 14. What we are going to see today is what happens to the human mind when it gets consumed with fear. What kind of a negative affect that has upon our thinking and decision making and the *ruin and disaster* that it ultimately results in. What we are about to read is an event that took place as Israel was right at the edge of the Red Sea—they hadn't crossed it yet—but they found themselves in a situation where they were getting up to the beach of the Red Sea. They have mountains on both sides of them, water in front of them and now they see Pharaoh's army advancing behind them. To fully appreciate the example here as we go through this, we see—they are trapped. Physically speaking, there is nowhere to go because there is not an escape route and we can understand how this would invoke fear. Let's notice the thinking that takes place here.

**Exodus 14:10** *And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.*

11) *Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt?"*

12) *Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."* (NKJV)

Notice fear has overcome them and what a fatalistic attitude they have. It's also important to keep in mind what these people have witnessed to get to this point. They were slaves in Egypt all of their lives, but they have witnessed a lot of miracles along the way. Moses shows up and tells them God wants to deliver them out of this, take them out of slavery and deliver them to the Promised Land. They've seen a lot of things to validate this story. They witnessed all the plagues in Egypt; things that were obviously miraculous events and how they were protected and did get released from slavery. They walked out with riches—they had seen a lot of things to cause them to start taking God seriously and to think He is for real, maybe we should trust in Him to take care of us. That thought never crosses their mind. When fear overcomes them, they basically get a fatalistic attitude and roll up in a fetal position, give up saying, "We'll just go back to being slaves." They were also not considering, whether there was any other option here? This God just brought us to this point. maybe He will intervene and protect us? That thought isn't there; it's very fatalistic, we have no other options we might as well go back to being a slave. They know how bad that is—they've lived their whole lives in slavery. What is dominating their minds is the immediate thought of immediate pain coming upon them. They see the army coming at them and think they are coming to kill us—that's a rational thought—but they are overcome with fear.

In this previous situation, they were trapped between the mountains, there was water in front of them and there was an army coming at them. They can look and see the army coming. It's a rational thought to think, they are coming to kill us and we're all going to die. So, you can understand the fear there. To really appreciate how this affects the mind, let's also look at another example of Israel where it's not quite so imminent. Let's

look at another example where they respond similarly, but the threat is not so imminent. Turn to Numbers 13. Let me summarize some context to lead up to this situation because I think this is important. Not only at this point have they witnessed all the plagues in Egypt, all that took place there to get them even into freedom, but by the time we're reading the story in Numbers 13, they've already been through the Red Sea, they have watched a sea be parted, they have walked through it with walls of water on both sides of them. This catches your attention as it is outside the realm of normal. They have watched Pharaoh's army be drowned by the waters coming back together. Then after this, God starts feeding them with Manna. Food falls from the sky six days a week on a regular clockwise basis, but nothing shows up on the seventh day just like God had said. But He gave them twice as much on the sixth day, so the miracles that are taking place are a daily part of their lives. They have also been to Mount Sinai where they made the covenant and saw the fire on the top of the mountain, they heard the booming voice. So much so it scared them and they said to Moses,

“God is scary, you just talk to Him and tell us what He says because we are afraid of Him.”

They have every reason to believe that God is real. This isn't just a fairytale or some wild story that Moses has told them and they don't know if it is really true or not. They have witnessed some incredible things at this point. This is the context that leads up to this. Now they get up to the edge of the Promised Land and decide to scout out the land before they marched in there—in other words, let's get some reconnaissance in there and some intelligence of what's going on in this area by sending out the spies. Let's pick up the story in verse 26.

**Numbers 13:26** *Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.*

*27) Then they told him, and said: “We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.*

*28) Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.*

*29) The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.”*

*30) Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.”*

*31) But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.”*

*32) And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land... (NKJV)*

Notice that phrase “bad report” we're going to come back to that later and dissect what this is talking about.

*32 continued) ... which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.*

*33) There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*  
(NKJV)

Notice they just gave a report to the people that they were too strong for them and they wouldn't be able to deal with it. They were all going to die. Notice how the people responded.

**Numbers 14:1** *So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.*

*2) And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!*

*3) Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"*

*4) So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."*  
(NKJV)

Notice they just immediately, you might say psychologically, just rolled up into the fetal position as defeated and just wanted to say, "I'll just go back to being a slave again." But they were not sitting in this situation now with mountains on both sides and water in front of them and an army barreling down upon them. They were camped outside the Promised Land and the giants they have gotten reports of are not barreling down and ready to kill them. They are this afraid because someone told them to be afraid. Notice the tunnel vision thinking that is taking place here. "We're all afraid, let's run back to Egypt and be slaves". Could there be a third option or a fourth option or fifth option? Obviously, the best option is trusting in God and taking the Promised Land. But obviously, there was at least a third option, because we know how the story ends. They wound up wandering in the wilderness for forty years. But that was another option that didn't just include going back to Egypt and being slaves.

This is what happens to the mind when one is overcome with fear—we get irrational and sometimes experience tunnel vision thinking and we don't think situations through. We don't analyze the situation and try to come to a logical decision and weigh out our options. They were presented with another side of the story. Joshua and Caleb told them, they can take this, God is with us—we can go take the land right now. Same God who parted the Red Sea and drowned Pharaoh's army, He can take care of these guys too. But they're not thinking logically or rationally about any of this because they are consumed with fear. They're essentially curled up into the fetal position, ready to give up and saying, "I'll just go back to slavery". Rational thinking has left the building.



We are going to come back to this chapter and dissect this some more to notice how this affects our minds. But let's look at a similar account in Deuteronomy 1 where Moses is retelling this story.

**Deuteronomy 1:19** *“So we departed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorites, as the LORD our God had commanded us. Then we came to Kadesh Barnea.*

*20) And I said to you, ‘You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us.*

*21) Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.’*

*22) And every one of you came near to me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.’*

*23) The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe.*

*24) And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out.*

*25) They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, ‘It is a good land which the LORD our God is giving us.’*

*26) Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God;*

*27) and you complained in your tents, and said, ‘Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.*

*28) Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, ‘The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.’ ”*

*29) Then I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. (NKJV)*

You can see they were consumed with fear. I want you to see, when it talks about “discouraging their hearts”—their hearts were discouraged—what that is actually saying gives a lot of insight into how being consumed with fear affects the physical mind. The Hebrew word that is translated *discouraged* in English, is transliterated into English as *masas*, Strong's #4549 and according to The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament by Baker and Carpenter, it's defined as;

*A verb meaning to melt, to dissolve, it indicates something as breaking up or turning to water, it is used figuratively as person's wasting away in sickness, of mountains breaking down, of a person's heart melting, losing courage.*

Notice it refers to it as *melting* or *dissolving*—just going away to nothing. What is it referring to as *melting* or *dissolving*? If we look at the Hebrew word translated as *heart*

in the English language, it's transliterated as *lebab*, Strong's #3824 and I'll give you the definition from Baker and Carpenter.

*A masculine noun meaning heart, mind, inner person. It is also used to describe the place where the rational thinking process occurs that allows a person to know God's blessings, to plan for the future, to communicate and understand God's message.*

In other words, it's the part of the mind that does rational, logical thinking, that can plan for the future, that thinks through long consequences, asks how is this movie going to end? If I take this action, where does it lead to, where is it ultimately going to go? What happens to that part of the mind? It just *melts away*, because that's what happens when we panic. I'm sure all of us have been in situations in our lives where something happened that rattled our cage and we got scared or panicked. If you think about how you respond and act when that happens, it's typically not very logical, is it? It's often a time of irrational thought when we do downright stupid things because we're not thinking straight. We're rattled and trying to get away from the immediate danger we are perceiving and we don't make very logical choices. We don't think things through, we don't think—"Where is this going to lead to, what are my available options? what is the best way to handle this?"—Often that analytical approach to things just 'leaves the building' entirely. Out of panic and fear, we are immediately trying to respond to something that is taking place.

How did this affect Israel on a national level? This cost them the Promised Land. Panic went throughout the whole congregation; they were immediately looking to run back to Egypt and volunteer to be slaves again and the consequences were devastating. It was *ruin and disaster* because the Promised Land was right there in front of them but they couldn't see that they could go take that and God was going to take care of them. The way they responded to this was irrational, but it was devastating in terms of the consequences of their lives. They all would up dying in the wilderness. We can take these principles and apply them to our own lives. I'm sure we've all been in situations where something in our life overwhelmed us with fear. We look back at how we responded at the time and the decisions that we made and realize that it wasn't very logical, that it wasn't very smart. We weren't thinking very logically or smartly at the time. We were responding to fear. That's something that can, not only dominate the lives of individuals, it can dominate large groups of people. People who think with fear are easily manipulated because they don't think clearly or logically.

To give you an example of something that we see playing out in our world today—right now, not only in our nation but other places as well—if you think of it from a logical, analytical perspective, you can see red flags. The logic you hear today—particular in the last few months—kind of goes like this. "We have to protect the vaccinated from the unvaccinated by forcing the vaccine on the unvaccinated to protect the vaccinated." Regardless of what you think about vaccinations, just apply a little common sense and logic to this. You don't need to be a medical expert, just think logically. Either it works, or it doesn't. If it works—the definition of a vaccine that works is that it protects you from being infected, so if you've received it, you're protected. If you're protected, you don't

need to worry about the unprotected. That doesn't make sense. If you're still in danger of needing protection from that, that means you weren't protected. So what sense would it make to force the protection that didn't protect the vaccinated on everybody else? It doesn't even pass common sense; it's not even logical. Why do large groups of people fall into that kind of thinking? Two years of fear, two years of a message of "be afraid, you're all going to die". Not thinking, what are all the options? I need to look into the facts and evaluate this. If people are just responding with fear, no real logical thinking is taking place. It can take place on a large scale with people or with our individual lives. It's one of the reasons why *fear* is so dangerous. It's a *snare*, it sets people up for *ruin and disaster*, it can make us easily manipulated, particularly by Satan or other individuals who might want to manipulate us for nefarious purposes. It's one of the reasons why we can't let fear overcome our lives.

Another thing that can happen with fear. People's fears can be manipulated to not only take them to fear, but then to anger and hatred. In Numbers 14, we'll finish out some of the rest of the story. I want you to see that the same fear that dominated the people, also made them responded in another way. They weren't just being irrational and saying "Let's run back to Egypt and be slaves". Notice what else they did.

**Numbers 14:5** *Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.*

*6) But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;*

*7) and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.*

*8) If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey.'*

*9) Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them."* (NKJV)

Notice how the congregation responded to the two people who are telling them the truth, who are not only giving them a good report, but also telling them that they need to face their fears, get over these fears and go and do what God said.

*10) And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.* (NKJV)

Their fear went from...

"We're all afraid, let's run back to Egypt and be slaves."  
to...

"Let's just kill these two guys. They are telling us a message we don't want to hear. They are telling us to face our fears and take the Promised Land."

Then suddenly it turns into anger and hatred. This is how populations can be manipulated. Just to briefly address this, if you look back at some of the history of World War II, as Hitler was taking over and slowly coming into power, part of the propaganda that was used among the people was getting them to fear that the Jews were responsible for all of their problems. Those bad Jews are the source of all the trouble. You get them to fear one another and that fear turns to hatred and what happened on a national basis? People sat by and allowed absolute atrocities to take place. Fear was one of the tools of propaganda that manipulated them and what resulted in the end? Absolute disaster. This was a very ugly situation that took place. This is one of the reasons why God looks at “fear” and says that this is such a bad thing; if you’re dominated by fear I’m going to throw you into the lake of fire. One of the reasons why is because of the ugly things this can lead to. It’s not just an issue of us feeling some fear and trepidation in our personal lives, you have to look at it as, if you allow this to dominate, how does it end? What does it ultimately result in?

Back to Numbers 13:32. As I mentioned, we can look at what the bad report here is referring to. That’s kind of significant as well.

**Numbers 13:32** *And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out ... (NKJV)*

I’m reading from the New King James translation of the Bible, if you look at Young’s Literal Translation the way it translates that verse is,

*They bring out an evil account of the land which they have spied unto the sons of Israel. (YLT)*

To look at the meaning of the Hebrew word to see which one is correct—is it just a *bad* report or an *evil* report—the word could be translated as both. The Hebrew word is *dibbah*, [Strong’s #1681](#) and I’ll give you the definition from Baker and Carpenter.

*A feminine noun meaning slander, bad report, calumny (the making of false and defamatory statements about someone to damage their reputation; slander.)*

The definition here can encompass anything from what we would call bad news—bad news could be something we just don’t want to hear. It could be absolutely truthful, accurate information that’s communicated to us with no ill intent at all, but it’s just something we don’t want to hear. Something that was unpleasant and we don’t want to hear. That can be bad news, but notice it can mean slander. Slander is a totally different situation. Slander is typically false information that is given with more evil intent. The meaning of the intent is a spectrum; it can be anything from just negative news you didn’t want to hear all the way to slander.

To add a little more clarity to this, look at Numbers 14:36.

**Numbers 14:36** *Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land,  
37) those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. (NKJV)*

Even in the New King James, it has in verse 37, *evil report*, but there's a reason for that, because there is an extra word in verse 37. In verse 36 and 37, the word *dibbah* appears in both verses but there is an additional word in verse 37, it's the Hebrew word *ra* and it's Strong's #7451 and Baker and Carpenter define it as this:

*An adjective word meaning bad, evil; the basic meaning of this word displays ten or more various shades of the meaning of evil according to its contextual usage.*

It means bad in a moral and ethical sense and is used to describe along with good, an entire spectrum of good and evil, hence it depicts evil in an absolute negative sense as when it describes the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. If you look at it and add that extra word, realize it's correctly translated as an evil report.

Put all this into the context of the whole situation that took place. I contrasted the story in Numbers 13 and 14 with the story we read in Exodus. In Exodus, that was a situation where the people are trapped, mountains on both sides, water in front of them and they can see the army coming up from the rear and it's a very rational thought that they are coming to kill us; we have an imminent threat, it's coming right at us, I can see it coming. You can understand their response of fear. This is not exactly what happened in Numbers. They were not cornered like that, there wasn't an army coming at them. In fact, the people who were responding with so much panic hadn't even seen what was going on in the Promised Land. What had happened in their case was they had received a bad report from people coming back and telling them, to be afraid, because they were all going to die. Joshua and Caleb were there to give a more balanced approach, but the people listened to the message of fear. If you put in the modern-day terminology that we have heard particularly—in the last few years—I'll just use a term we have all heard a lot, "They got sucked into my fake news." The fake news and anti-God propaganda. You can't trust in God—no, we're all going to die, we need to go back to Egypt and they wouldn't listen to Joshua and Caleb who were giving them the accurate story. This is what can happen to large groups of people manipulated by fear. Notice the devastating consequences it had. For Israel, they literally lost out on the Promised Land because of fear. Because they were afraid and wouldn't trust in God, it cost them the reward of their covenant. It can do the same thing to us. As the Bible tells us, we can lose out on our Promised Land which is the Kingdom of God if we allow fear to dominate our lives.

Let's take the rest of the sermon to look at how this applies to us in our spiritual lives. Look at John 12:42.

**John 12:42** *Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;*

*43) for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. (NKJV)*

The “him” here is obviously Jesus Christ and it’s referring to a number of individuals who knew who Christ was and believed He was the Messiah. But they didn’t want to be unpopular in their society. They thought that if they professed that Christ was Who He said He was and they followed Him, the Pharisees would turn on them and kick them out. They would be socially ostracized and the peer pressure would be pretty negative. They didn’t want to face that and they allowed that fear of men to cause them to deny Christ. This can be a very devastating thing. Christ takes this very seriously. Matthew 10:32.

**Matthew 10:32** *Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.*

*33) But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. (NKJV)*

We know there is only one name under heaven by which we can be saved and that is Christ’s. If we are not willing to accept Him as our Savior and be proud about that, what does Christ say?

“I’ll deny you before the Father. If you’re afraid of men and not willing to face some pain, to show that you are My follower, that’s not going to work; I won’t accept that.”

That is exactly the situation that we all agreed to when we were baptized. In Luke 14 there is a common set of scriptures that all of us probably read when we were being counseled for baptism.

**Luke 14:25** *Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them,*

*26) “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. (NKJV)*

He is saying that if we are not willing to face pain and loss in our lives, to obtain the Kingdom of God, then we are not worthy of it.

*27) And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*

*28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—*

*29) lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,*

- 30) saying, *This man began to build and was not able to finish?*  
31) *Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?*  
32) *Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.*  
33) *So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (NKJV)*

He doesn't say that this is a suggestion, or, I really prefer you have courage and are willing to face these things, He says that if you're not willing to go through trials, to suffer loss, to give up everything in your life to pursue salvation, then you won't make it. The reason *courage* is a requirement for salvation is because we have to have courage to be able to do that. If we're afraid of men, if we're afraid of losing our lives, or losing our jobs or whatever it is, and we're not willing to give it up to pursue the Kingdom of God, it's a big problem. We all struggle and have our times we fall short and God is merciful in that. We have to be willing to face harsh trials and typically when we are baptized. When we read through these words, it's academic. I remember the minister who baptized me went over this with me and covered it in great detail, to make sure I remembered it. He looked me in the eyes and said,

"I know as you read this today, it's really just words, it's academic but I'm covering this like this, because when the trials come upon you—and it happens—I want you to remember this conversation and to remember what you agreed to."

I am so glad he did that because I cannot tell you how many times in my life, when a very painful trial has come upon me that conversation flashes back in my mind and I know I was warned. He told me this was going to happen and it did. We have to fear God more than we fear men.

Now Matthew 10:16.

**Matthew 10:16** *"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*

17) *But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.*

18) *You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.*

19) *But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;*

20) *for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.*

21) *"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.*

22) *And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.*

- 23) *When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*
- 24) *“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.*
- 25) *It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!*
- 26) *Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.*
- 27) *Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.*
- 28) *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
- 29) *Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will.*
- 30) *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*
- 31) *Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (NKJV)*

He repeatedly tells us we have to fear God more than we fear men. It’s natural for us as carnal human beings, to fear what we can see, what’s in front of us, the immediate threat we see coming at us. This is why we have to understand there’s a correlation between faith and God and courage. If our focus is on God and His ability to deliver us, that gives us courage. If we’re looking at just our physical lives—what’s physically around us—we tend to cower and fear, curl up into the fetal position, give up and be defeated. Let’s look briefly at a very good example in the Bible of having this kind of faith. Turn to Daniel 3, it’s a very common story and I’m sure we’re all familiar with it. This is where Nebuchadnezzar puts up an idol and commands everyone to worship it. He said that when you hear the music, then come on—everyone is commanded to bow down and worship this image and if you don’t,” I’m going to kill you; I’m going to throw you in a fiery furnace.” With Nebuchadnezzar’s reputation, he was serious about this and when Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego refused to comply, when their answer was, “I will not comply, I will not go along with this because you are directly violating God’s instructions” and they don’t do it, they know he’s for real and will really throw them in the fire—and he did. Let’s notice their response in verse 16.

**Daniel 3:16** *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. (NKJV)*

In other words, we fear God more than you.

- 17) *If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.*
- 18) *But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” (NKJV)*



They were not totally sure of exactly how this movie was going to end. They said, “Our God is able to deliver us, but even if He chooses to let us die, just let it be known that I will not comply. I will not go along with your order. You’re asking me to forsake my God and I fear Him more than I fear you”. Realistically we like to read these stories and cheer on the heroes and we like to believe that when the situation comes for us, that we will be as courageous as they were. Oftentimes we are not. I’ve seen this meme a number of times on Facebook recently and I think it would be relevant to this sermon. It’s a picture of Germany in the 1930’s and you see this crowd and everybody in the crowd is doing the sign for heil Hitler and you see this one guy standing in the crowd and he’s not saluting—he’s not going along with it—and you see there’s a circle drawn around him. It says, we would all like to believe that when the time comes, we’ll be this guy. In other words, we’ll be the guy who stands up and won’t do it. Oftentimes though we are not. When the pressure comes on, we start rationalizing in our minds that maybe I should give in because I don’t want to have to face the pain of whatever it is in life. Whatever is the trial that has got us befuddled. Sometimes we have to realize that we have to climb up out of that fetal position and remember that we don’t know how the story is going to end and tell ourselves that all we know is that the God Whom we serve is able to save us from Nebuchadnezzar. Sometimes you have to get up out of that fetal position and face it and have the faith in Him and realize He will strengthen you through it. The first step in that is asking for it. Notice Philippians 4:6.

**Philippians 4:6** *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;* (NKJV)

In other words, go to Him and ask. Notice what happens in verse 7.

*7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* (NKJV)

If we admit to Him that we are scared, we are frail and fear has overcome us and we just go and ask for help—give me courage to face this—He will give you peace and He will strengthen you. His spirit is not a spirit of fear, it’s a spirit of courage. Remember 2 Timothy 1:6.

**2 Timothy 1:6** *Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

*7) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.* (NKJV)

If we reach out to God and tell Him, “I’m frail, I’m weak, I’m a carnal human being and fear is overcoming me” and ask for help, He will give us a spirit of courage and take away our fear. He will enable us to be courageous enough to face our trials. We have to realize that just like faith, we have to take action. Sometimes even though you’re scared, you have to realize—I love how Winston Churchill put it—

*Fear is a reaction; courage is a decision.*

You decide, I'm just going to get up out of the fetal position. I'm not going to let this overcome my life, I'm going to fight back, I'm going to stand up and I'm going to remember that the God I serve is able to save me from Nebuchadnezzar because that's how it works. Take notice of James 2:14.

**James 2:14** *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?*

15) *If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,*

16) *and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?*

17) *Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

18) *But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

19) *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!*

20) *But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?*

21) *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?*

22) *Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?*

23) *And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.*

24) *You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*

25) *Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?*

26) *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (NKJV)*

It takes action. It's not just words that we say like "I believe" or "When the time comes, I'll do that". Sometimes we have to decide to take action. As Churchill said, *fear is a reaction, courage is a decision*. Sometimes we have to decide,

" I'm just going to have courage, even though I am feeling fear, I feel terrified, my future is uncertain; I'm going to decide to trust in God and pursue this."

If we make that decision and show that faith that we are making that decision and asking God for that help, He will strengthen us and give us courage. In Psalm 31 we'll see a couple of examples of this with David.

**Psalm 31:21** *Blessed be the LORD, For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!*

22) *For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; (NKJV)*

David is in the fetal position, feeling defeated here.

*22 continued) ... Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried out to You.*

*23) Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person.*

*24) Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the LORD. (NKJV)*

If we show some faith and decide to have some courage—saying,

“I’m going to face this even though it’s going to overwhelm me, I’m scared, my future is uncertain, I’m not sure what to do here but I’m going to trust in Him.”

He will strengthen you. David tells us this multiple times. Psalm 27:11.

**Psalm 27:11** *Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.*

*12) Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence.*

*13) I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. (NKJV)*

He’s saying,” I would have succumbed and given into my human weakness if I hadn’t been deciding to trust in God.”

*14) Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD! (NKJV)*

He’s saying that if we decide to have some courage and to stand up and do what God says and trust in Him to deliver us, through whatever trial it is that we are facing. Whatever challenge that we are having to overcome. If we make that decision that we are going to believe in Him and have courage and go to Him in prayer and ask for that help, He will give us the peace that surpasses all understanding, He will strengthen our heart and He’ll give us courage because that’s how we develop it. I mentioned from the onset of this sermon, there’s a strong correlation between *courage* and *belief* and *faith* in God. There’s also a strong correlation with *cowardice*, *fearfulness* and *lack of belief* in God. The key to courage is trusting in God. That starts with a decision; a decision when you’re not feeling really courageous, you’re not feeling like you’re on top of this—you’re scared and stressed out. If we make that decision and ask for that help, He will strengthen us. Whatever the trial that you’re facing, whatever is coming against your life and possibly overwhelming you and you’re not sure what to deal with, just remember these words:

*All I know is that the God that I serve is able to save me from Nebuchadnezzar.*