Courage to Face Your Demons July 29, 2018

*Judges 6:25-32 Series: Courage to Lead*

*“I never wanted to look inside me because I was afraid of what I'd find.”* – R. A. Dickey

Intro: R.A. Dickey’s quest for ‘truth, authenticity and the perfect knuckleball.’

1. God always starts with your heart.
2. It wasn’t enough for Gideon to worship at a private altar.

v. 25 *That night*

v. 24 *Then* *Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace.*

The private altar must become a public confession.

1. Gideon couldn’t have a public victory without a private battle.

v. 25 *pull down the altar of Baal*

v. 25 *cut down the Asherah*

v. 26 *build an altar to the LORD*

v. 26 *take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering*

1. The strongholds we need to pull down exist in our minds.

v. 27 *So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him.*

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*

* Even though he hated himself enough to consider suicide, for many years, R. A. Dickey refused to confront his issues. Why do we avoid dealing with the darkness in our hearts?
* Why wasn’t it good enough for Gideon to just make a private altar to God? Why did he need to tear down the false altars and put up a new altar in such a public way?
* How have you tried to tear down the false altars in your heart?

1. God doesn’t tolerate rivals.
2. The real problem wasn’t the Midianites.

Deuteronomy 4:25-26 *… if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.*

1. We can’t serve God with a divided heart.

Exodus 20:3 *You shall have no other gods before me.*

Matthew 6:24 *No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*

1. Have you given Jesus your exclusive allegiance?

1 Kings 18:21 *And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word.*

* Why didn’t God just save Israel from the Midianites without dealing with Israel’s idolatry?
* What are some ways that you’re tempted to “limp between opinions” instead of giving Jesus your exclusive allegiance?

1. God can transform your fear.
2. Courage confronts the fear of people.

v. 27 *he was too afraid of his family*

v. 27 *he was too afraid of … the men of the town*

Psalms 27:1 *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

1. Courage confronts secret faith.

v. 27 *he did it by night*

1. Courage gives way to impact.

v. 32 *Therefore on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, “Let Baal contend against him,” because he broke down his altar.*

David Howard Jr: With this name, Gideon became a living reminder of Baal's impotence.

1. Courage is found in Jesus’ victory.

Matthew 4:1 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

Matthew 4:11 *Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.*

* Why was Gideon so afraid to do what God told him?
* What does Psalm 27:1 teach about the solution to our fear? How could you use a Scripture like this to help you deal with situations where you’re tempted to fear people?
* How can Jesus’ victory over the devil help us confront our own demons?
* In pairs, share an area of your heart that you feel you need prayer in confronting.

Study ahead: Next time, we’ll look at Judges 6:33-7:8.

Notes