Courage From An Encounter With God July 8, 2018

*Judges 6:11-24 Series: Courage to Lead*

*“He found a way of viewing himself that would justify his saying*

*"no" to God's great call on his life—to the great adventure*

*for which he was born.” – John Ortberg*

Intro: Maya Angelou wasn’t born with courage.

1. Self-pity: Indulging in your weakness paralyzes you.
2. Self-pity hides when it should repent.

v. 11 *Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites*

1. Self-pity asks, “What has God done for me lately?”

v. 13 *Please, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us?*

v. 13 *where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted*

v. 13 *the LORD has forsaken us*

1. Self-pity focuses on I CAN’T and ignores I CAN.

v. 15 *Please, Lord, how can I save Israel?*

v. 15 *Behold, my clan is the weakest … I am the least*

Exodus 3:11 *Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”*

* In what sense is self-pity an alternative to repentance?
* Why does God so often choose the “weakest” and the “least” to accomplish His purposes? How should that change the way you see your weaknesses?
* Where are you tempted to self-pity in your life?

1. Faith: Acting on God’s strength mobilizes you.
2. God visits us to commission us.

v. 11 *the* *angel of the LORD came*

v. 12 *the angel of the LORD appeared to him*

1. God can rewrite your destiny.

v. 12 *The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.*

John 1:42 *Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas.”*

1. God’s presence enables His victory.

v. 14 *Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?*

v. 16 *But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.*

Romans 8:31 *If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Joshua 1:9 *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

Jeremiah 1:6-8 *Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD.”*

* We tend to think of God saving us, primarily for our benefit. But in what sense does God “visit us to commission us?”
* What kind of change should we believe is possible in our lives? What parts of ourselves should we just learn to accept?
* How does the fact that God sends us and God is with us change the seemingly impossible tasks that He asks of us?

1. Courage comes from worshipping the God who speaks peace into our fear.
2. Gideon cooked with doubt and fear.

v. 17 *show me a sign that it is you who speak with me*

v. 19 *Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour.*

v. 20 Gideon is willing to ruin a precious meal.

1. God reveals Himself in shock and awe.

v. 21 *fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes*

Leviticus 9:24 *fire came out from before the LORD … when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.*

v. 21 *the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight*

1. God meets our fear with His peace.

v. 22 *Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.*

v. 23 *Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.*

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

Romans 5:1 *since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*

John 20:21 *Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”*

* What is it that made people fear for their lives when they realized they had encountered God personally? What’s the closest you have come to experiencing this kind of fear of God?
* Why is Jesus necessary to experience true peace?
* Where do you most need God’s courage to lead?

Study ahead: Next time, we’ll look at Judges 6:25-32.

Notes