

May Life Groups

#3

**The Joy Of Becoming Courageous!**

(Daniel 3:13-25)

Compass of Salinas and Marina

With this study we begin a new series: The Joy of Being You. This is not piddly, for how can you experience the joy of the abundant life Jesus promises if joy about being you is absent? Yes, we are flawed. Yes, we make messes sometimes. But Jesus says though we are flawed, we are still beautiful in His eyes and precious.

This first message is about the courage of 3 believers in Babylonia. There is always more joy in being courageous than cowardly. Without courage, virtue is in jeopardy! Always.

1. Please read Daniel 3:13-25 several times. Speed reading does not lead to spiritual depth! Read slowly and absorb.

- Who are the main characters?
  
- Who is the bad guy and why?
  
- Who bowed down at the sound of the trumpet and who did not?
  
- In a couple of sentences what would you say the reason this event is in the Bible? What is the application today for us in America as Christians?

2. Consider the following quote in this message given after I interviewed Tass:

**The interview you've just heard is all about courage. Here is a terrorist and a sniper who killed many Jews. All his life he had hated Jews. In Palestinian culture killing Jews was considered right. It is payback for how Palestinians have suffered. Killing Jews. Every bullet feels righteous. His rifle is his justice.**

**Then his conscience speaks up. It tells him that those he kills have a wife and children and that his bullet has left them a widow and without a dad. They have families just like his own. His sense of justice killing evaporates. And he tells his terrorist group, "No. No more. I can't do this anymore." That took moral courage.**

**When everyone you know says something is right, but you say 'No, it is not right', that takes MORAL COURAGE. All morality depends on courage. And physical courage is far more common than moral courage!**

**This is not the end of the story. All his life he considered Christians unclean, infidels. But Jesus targets him with a supernatural experience that he cannot deny and he becomes a Christian. He knows without a doubt that Jesus has risen from the dead and that He is God and he is FORGIVEN.**

**It is impossible for any of us in America to understand how radical it was for a Muslim to become a Christian. It brings shame on the family.**

**And sure enough, his father cuts him out of the will. His older brother says come back to Allah or we will kill you.**

**But this former terrorist will not compromise. He has seen up close the risen Jesus. He says “No”. And his brother sends a series of assassins to America to kill him.**

**Being a Christian requires being rebellious against the world around us. Christians either compromise or become a Christian rebel! Courage. Everything worthwhile and good in life takes courage.**

**Pilate found no fault in Jesus and wanted to release Him.....until it became risky. It required courage for Pilate to do the right thing and release Jesus; instead he crucified Him.**

**Physical courage is much more common than moral courage.**

**I read last week that The opposite of courage is not cowardice; it’s compromise and conformity. Is that true?**

**The problem with being a people pleaser is that everyone likes you except you. The threat of rejection makes cowards of us.**

- Underline the most important sentence and say why.
- What is the most challenging sentence to you and why?
- The message said, “The opposite of courage is not cowardice; it’s compromise and conformity.” Is that true? Write some thoughts on what is not always easy with our friends or family or at work. What are the 2 biggest temptations to compromise and conform as you experience our world?
- What is your best advice to YOURSELF to be brave and be a rebel at times against conformity?
- How does this idea of courage and fear apply to marriage, to relationships perhaps with parents or extended family? It has been said that fear of making a mate or family member angry keeps us from raising issues and therefore things are not solved, and, more seriously, addictions to anger or whatever continue unsolved. So how does this section of the message apply to those relationships?

3. Consider the following:

**Let me share with you how to develop courage against fiery furnaces. First, you have to be willing to pay the price of the furnace. Often I’ve heard it said, “Everyone has their price.” No they don’t.**

**Wilberforce could have been Prime Minister of England but he spoke up against slavery and would not sit down even though it made him extremely unpopular and he lost his dream. He stayed standing...when most would have bowed down, and he was thrown into the furnace.**

**Martin Luther King Jr. was beaten and attacked by dogs and ultimately assassinated because he would not bow down to racism. He was thrown in the fiery furnace.**

**Some ordinary people at Enron blew the whistle on corruption. They would not bow down and into the furnace they were thrown.**

**And Jesus was crucified and Paul was executed because they did not have a price that someone could pay to shut them up.**

**NFL star Reggie White was invited to speak at the Wisconsin Legislature and he spoke out against same-sex marriages. Politicians walked out. The media called him a bigot, narrow-minded. CBS Sports canceled a 6 million dollar deal with him. You know what Reggie said? "Jesus owns me, not CBS." He did not have a price.**

**But if we have a price, you can be sure the devil will pay it. Yes he will. And if there is a fiery furnace you fear, you can be sure people will threaten you with it.**

**When Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego were threatened with the fiery furnace they answered this: "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, God is able to save us. But even if He does not, we will not bow down to the idol." (Daniel 3:17)**

**You see, they were willing to pay the price, if need be, for being a rebel against conformity**

- What sentence challenges you? Is it to be willing to pay a price for courage to not conform? Or?
- What is the price in groups you are around for not compromising and conforming, for refusing to bow down when plenty of others are? **Can you share a personal story where you had to pay a price for not conforming?**

4. Consider this:

**Hitler said he wanted to produce people who had no conscience at all. And in fact he succeeded.**

**If you go to Israel with me and to Yad Veshem, the Holocaust Museum, you will see pictures of cruelty done to people that could only be done by people with a dead conscience. Nazis who threw men and women and children into the ovens during the day listened to Bach at night. Intelligence and sophistication is no guarantee of a conscience alive.**

**In fact, God's Word speaks of what is called "a seared conscience." That means that it is no longer sensitive. It's like your hand being seared by something hot. The nerves are dead and no longer can feel. And when our conscience dies, we always conform and compromise.**

**Rod Dreker write about how when he was first married his wife challenged him about what programs he was watching on TV. She said to him, "You don't want to be like these people you are watching on these programs." She said, "You are de-sensitizing your conscience by what you are watching."**

**She was right so he changed his TV habits because he did not want his conscience seared. Over time what we watch and what we read on Facebook will sear our conscience. We'll start to think, "If so many people are doing it, it can't be so wrong." Our conscience is being seared.**

- What sentence stands out to you and why? What is the application for being a follower of Jesus?
- How would you describe a "seared conscience"?
- How does this apply to marriage and family relationships, or maybe at work with a supervisor? Give an example of a seared conscience that setting.
- Please summarize what each of these Scriptures teach about the conscience:
  - Hebrews 10:22

○ 1 Timothy 4:1-2

- So what is a seared conscience and an evil conscience? My gosh, have you ever thought about how our conscience can become an ‘evil conscience’? What does that mean, for our conscience to become evil?

5. So, how would you advise us to keep our conscience from becoming ‘seared and an evil conscience’? What is the application?

- Don’t think that Christians are immune. Many churchgoers have a seared and evil conscience. How can that be if they are in Bible studies and in worship?

6. (Private and not to share unless you wish, so be honest and take some time with the Lord) Where has your conscience become a bit seared and numb? Is there anything you read in the Bible or hear in messages that you simply ignore or make excuses for? A conscience seared takes time. About what could your conscience use a wake-up call and an alarm set?

Pray for each other.

“Their consciences have been seared as with a hot iron”. (1 Timothy 4:2)