

BIG IDEA: We need bigger weapons to have the courage to continue the call. What are those bigger weapons?

INTRODUCTION ---

- A) Being here with you feels like coming home—it really does.
1. So many of you have played such an important role in loving, supporting, and putting courage into me and to my family, and to our team in Boston.
 - b. Just last summer I was in the overflow room with some friends (Elders and Intercessors from this church) and asked for prayer for courage to return to Boston.
 - c. I struggled with the idea of returning to Boston.
 - i. I had moved from absolute and pure hatred of the city, to Apathy. But to return, I needed something more than Apathy.
 - ii. What has happened since that day really has been pretty amazing.
 - d. But while praying, one of the people praying over me grabbed my left arm (I am not left-handed and prayed), and She prayed, “Lord, I pray that he learns to fight in a whole new way.
 - i. What did that mean?
 - ii. I wanted to know and later would find out.
 - iii. I’ll share that with you in a moment.
 - e. That need for courage hasn’t left. In many ways it’s still as strong today as it was then—I just looks different.
 2. I wonder where you need courage today?
 - a. I wonder where you feel apathy? Or hatred? Or Fear? Or Some form of dark shadow looming over you? Or a question mark over your pain?
 - b. Or, I wonder where you need to put courage into someone else today? Or this week?
 - c. Where do we find such courage? Why do we need it?
 3. The Apostle Paul is closing up his letter to the Christ followers in Ephesus with a specific purpose—to put courage into them.
 - a. Or to EN-COURAGE them—that’s what it means to put courage into someone.

...the speaker is doing up the letter to the church here in Ephesus with a specific purpose—to put courage into them.

- a. Or to EN-COURAGE them—that’s what it means to put courage into someone.
- b. Like a Father would, or should with their children, he sacrifices his own companionship to send someone to them to give them courage.

I am sending him [Ty] to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts.

—Ephesians 6:22

- c. That is why Paul has been writing this letter, reminding them of their new identity as followers of Christ, and of their community as followers of Christ, and of their authority as followers of Christ,
- d. These verses show us (among other things), the kind of courage we need for the road ahead.

(v.19) THE NEED FOR COURAGE

(v.20-22) THE NATURE OF TRUE COURAGE

(v.22-24) THE POWER TO RELEASE IT

I. THE NEED FOR COURAGE (v.19)

A) PAUL KNOWS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE IN NEED OF COURAGE

1. Paul begins his benediction with a prayer request
 - b. He says, “I need prayer.” Lest you think of me as somehow arriving as some sort of, spiritual hero, you need to know, I’m in this thing with you.
 - c. After stressing the importance of continual prayer as a part of the authority that we have as followers of Jesus,
 - d. He simply says, “Please pray for me. I need it. I need Courage...I need boldness.”

Ephesians 6:19

“Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with **boldness** the mystery of the gospel.

- e. Paul needs courage for the same reason that you and I do:

WE NEED COURAGE TO FACE OUR CALLING

- f. He has just finished talking about the immense struggle with darkness that you and I face as Christ followers.
2. Paul isn’t the only one to Need Courage/Boldness to face his calling...
 - a. Over and over again, in the N.T you find this need of courage.
 - b. For instance, the disciples pray and the Spirit of God came over them and the place

- a. Over and over again, in the N.T you find this need of courage.
 - b. For instance, the disciples pray and the Spirit of God came over them and the place where they were was shaken and boldness came over them.
 - c. Why? They need courage to face their calling.
3. Martin Luther equated calling with your station in life.
- a. Son, daughter, mother, father, student, employer, leader or follower
 - i. We all have a calling
 - ii. Calvin came along in 18th Century and said that Calling is where your passion meets Compassion (needs of the world).
 - iii. Vocation & Occupation are not the same thing (can be but not always).
 - iv. Paul's unique calling was apostleship
 - b. Every one of us is given a calling
 - i. Genesis 1:26-2:4 God gives a cultural mandate to steward our story. Every one of us are Entrusted with something to steward (privilege, power or pain)
 - ii. Cultural Mandate & Great Commission
4. Because we live in modern western America, particularly in SB county live in the safest possible places, we feel as though we don't need courage.
- a. In his book, After Virtue, author/philosopher Alasdair Macintyre talks a lot about the fact that the curriculum for ancient education was courage.
 - i. There were pestilences, and plagues and a lack of the privileges that we are accustomed to in our modern culture.
 - i. Children were expected to live beyond the adult years
 - ii. We are more anxious, have more fear—where do you get courage?

B) PAUL IS IN PRISON—THAT'S THE LOCATION OF HIS CURRENT CALL

Ephesians 6:20

For this [calling] I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him. To speak as I should.

1. CHAINS REMIND US OF ONE THING:

- b. God will often take you places you never intended to go to make you into someone you never thought you could be.
2. Illustration: One Sunday afternoon after moving to Boston, I was reading Lord of the Rings.
- a. There is a place in LOTR where Gandolf [the Wizard] is expaining to Frodo the unlikely hero the need to take the ring to the fires of Mordor.

- a. There is a place in LOTR where Gandolf [the Wizard] is explaining to Frodo the unlikely hero the need to take the ring to the fires of Mordor.
- b. The journey seems like a sure failure and ultimate sacrifice.
- c. Frodo learns of the all-seeing eye the evil saurmon and the powers that he faces in attempt to save the shire and fulfill his call.
- d. Frodo says...

Frodo: "I am not made for perilous quests," I wish I had never seen the Ring! Why did it come to me? Why was I chosen?"

Gandolf: And so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us...Such questions cannot be answered..."You may be sure that it was not for any merit that others do not possess: not for power or wisdom, at any rate. But you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and wits as you have.

Gandolf: Behind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of [evil]. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, and not by it's maker. In which case you also were meant to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought.

Frodo: 'It is not...'

3. That night, this phrase moved me to a place of worship.

- e. I wrote in my journal...
 - i. It struck me that maybe the burden of moving to Boston and starting a church is one that I've been meant to carry with my family and with these guys. It made God seem close, like he cares about me.
 - ii. Like what if God would have that conversation with me? I was moved to thank him for the fruit that we don't deserve.
 - iii. I shared this with the guys on Sunday admin meeting. We were all moved to a place of worship and thanksgiving.

4. What calling...what station in life are you facing?

- a. Whatever it may be, Like Frodo, and like Paul, you and I need courage to face our call.

II. THE NATURE OF COURAGE (v.20)

A) WHAT DO YOU TEND TO THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT COURAGE?

1. Men racing toward the battle line with swords, or machine guns?
 - b. I saw a documentary of a decorated soldier that faced battles and brutalities that would cause many of us to retreat.
 - i. But away from those battles he was a coward when it came to love, and relationships and using power correctly.
 - c. I heard a story recently of a man that lost entire family in accident and did their

- i. But away from those battles he was a coward when it came to love, and relationships and using power correctly.
- c. I heard a story recently of a man that lost entire family in accident and did their funeral—a hero. But later after remarrying and wrestling with his addictions and lust he couldn't get a grip on it and took his life
 - i. He was unable to carry that same courage into his own failures.

2. What is the TRUE nature of Courage

- a. When the world around us would like us to believe that the real way to courage is to remove the negative thoughts and actualize victory.
- b. Picture ourselves on the podium

B) BUT ACCORDING TO PAUL, TRUE COURAGE CAN'T COME FROM DENIAL, IT COMES THROUGH ACCEPTANCE

1. Couldn't loose face and had to lie to

Ephesians 6:20

For this [calling] I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him. To speak as I should.

- b. TRUE COURAGE IS BEING ABLE TO DO THE RIGHT THING REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES.

2. I read one author this week who quoted psychologist Alfred Adler.

- a. Adler says, "If you want to know what is really driving you, look at your nightmares—Look at your greatest fears."
 - i. All of our fears are different
 - 1. Some people are more afraid of facing physical pain.
 - 2. Think of the soldiers that faced death so they committed suicide.
 - a. They were more afraid of the physical punishment, or of the shame.
 - b. In book Problem of pain, C.S. Lewis describes two kinds of fear
 - ii. Fear Proper
 - iii. Numinous Fear

B) When we think of courage, we think of physically strong people, or people who have performed great acts of strength.

- 1. Courage is facing your hearts greatest nightmare, and doing the right thing anyway.
 - b. Once you do that, once you begin to do that, you'll begin to see that our cowardice is wreaking havoc all over.
 - c. As a youth pastor, I got first hand look at How many kids' lives are warped by parents who are cowards?
 - i. Some parents are so afraid of not being successful that they overwork.

parents who are cowards?

- i. Some parents are so afraid of not being successful that they overwork.
- ii. Other parents are very different (they sneer at the others), but they never say “no”
 1. Because their cowardice is a lack of love.
 2. We are cowards—our cowardice is all over the place.
 3. If you are doing something that is self absorbed and holding back from giving to others that’s cowardice.
 4. Self-Absorption is the result of fear.
 5. Fear is the opposite of love—perfect love casts out fear.

B) FOR PAUL, THIS KIND OF COURAGE MUST COME FROM OUTSIDE HIMSELF.

Ephesians 6:20

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1. Because it will involve loss (v.20)
 - b. Life doesn’t look like he thought it would, or like his culture says it should.
 - c. John the Baptizer experienced this as well.
2. Frodo must endure a stripping if he is to complete his mission. It seems almost unbearable; yet still, he presses on.
 - a. Through all of confusion, His mind is fixed on his calling. He needs Courage to pull him through.
 - i. At the very end of the epic, Frodo comes to the realization that those who suffer and sacrifice often reap no direct reward, at least in this life, for their labors:

“I tried to save the Shire, and it has been saved, but not for me. It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger: some one has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them.”—Frodo, LOTR
 - ii. In other words, Frodo comes to the realization that true courage is not so much about **finding yourself** as it is about **losing yourself**
 - iii. Being willing to be the bridge over which others may cross to safety.

C) THE NATURE OF TRUE COURAGE IS BEING ABLE TO DO THE RIGHT THING REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES.

1. That means trusting God in the mist of our chains
 - b.
 - c. Loss of health
 - d. Loss of work
 - e. In our singleness
 - f. In your marriage
 - g. With your children

- e. In our singleness
- f. In your marriage
- g. With your children
- h. With your childlessness
- i. With your sexuality
- j. With your money
- k. With your calling
- l. Stewarding your privilege
- m. Stewarding your pain

III. THE KEY TO RELEASE COURAGE (v.19, 21-24)

A) GOD SIZED WEAPON (v.19)

1. So what did it mean that I would need to learn to fight a whole new way?
 - b. After I was prayed over, one of my friends there approached me and said, I believe that worship will be your weapon.
 - c. I believe that prayer is one of the most valuable worship weapons that we have.
 - d. In prayer we submit our vision of 'the good life' to God's vision for real life.
 - e. It's fascinating to me what Paul DID NOT ask prayer for.
 - f. Daniel praying for 21 days.

"Daniel, your prayer was heard when you began to pray three weeks ago." ([Daniel 10:12](#)).

An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God—that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying—the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on—the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers.—C.S Lewis, Mere Christianity

2. The prayer of others has been so integral to the development of the church and to my personal sanity.
 - a. Two weeks ago I was facing a moment and I called an intercessor from Reality Carp. We hadn't spoken in months.
 - b. Last Winter, around February we experienced faintness of heart.
 - i. The Marathon Bombings happened. We had a prayer meeting with 5 other churches.
 - ii. WE HAVE MOVED FROM APATHY TO AUTHORITY

"There is no power like that of prevailing prayer - of Abraham pleading for Sodom, Jacob wrestling in the stillness of the night, Moses standing in the breach, Hannah intoxicated with sorrow, David heartbroken with remorse and grief, Jesus in sweat and blood. Add to this list from the records of the church your personal observation and experience, and always there is cost of passion unto blood. Such prayer reveals. It turns ordinary moments into scenes of power. It

wrestling in the stillness of the night, Moses standing in the breach, Hannah intoxicated with sorrow, David heartbroken with remorse and grief, Jesus in sweat and blood. Add to this list from the records of the church your personal observation and experience, and always there is cost of passion unto blood. Such prayer prevails. It turns ordinary mortals into men of power. It brings power. It brings fire. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings God.”

— [Samuel Chadwick](#)

“The one concern of the Devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayer-less studies, prayer-less work, prayer-less religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.”

— [Samuel Chadwick](#)

3. Jesus said to his disciples that they were to pray always and not faint.

4. What do we do when prayer is not heard?

- a. Many times, you INSIST more
- b. There are times to DESIST (Paul and thorn)

B) GOD SIZED WONDER (v.21-24)

1. WHY IS THE GOSPEL A MYSTERY? (v.21)

b. News Rather Than Instruction

- i. Religion says that we need to muster up the courage to carry out good deeds.
- ii. Paul says, I need courage outside myself because the gospel is a mystery, it's different from what people normally assume.
- iii. Religion often assumes that God sends a savior to the morally courageous.
- iv. But Paul says, this is a mystery because God saves those that confess they are God Cowards.
- v. He saves those that lack courage.

c. Jesus doesn't save by being a good example of courage.

- i. Jesus saves by being the perfect substitute.
- ii. He doesn't save the cowards by example.
- iii. He saves them by substitution.

Ephesians 6:22

Tychicus, our dearly loved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me so that you may be informed. 22 I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts.

d. He is sent in Paul's place as his substitute in order to bring courage and love, and peace and grace to them.

e. He comes because he is Paul's substitute

f. He is called the faithful servant/minister (diakonos).

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- f. He is called the faithful servant/minister (diakonos).
- g. Jesus is the

2. GRACE RATHER THAN MERRIT

- a. That is the mystery of the gospel...GRACE
- b. C.S Lewis was asked what set Xanity apart and he said, 'that's simple...grace.'
 - i. Our understanding of grace is so limited.
 - ii. We often confuse grace and mercy.
 - iii. Mercy is getting let off.
 - iv. Grace is getting pulled over by an officer and him trading places with you.

3. REVERSAL OF THE WEAK AND THE STRONG

- a. In his book "Orthodoxy," G.K. Chesterton asserts that
 - a. "Of all creeds, Christianity [alone] has added courage to the virtues of the Creator. For the only courage worth calling courage must necessarily mean that the soul passes a breaking point—and does not break."—G.K. Chesterton
 - b. Christ, Chesterton adds, was willing to do what no god had ever done before: allow His back to be pressed against a wall.
- 2. During the [Battle of the Pelennor Fields](#), she fought in Théoden's escort; when he and his company were attacked by the [Witch-king of Angmar](#), lord of the [Nazgûl](#), she and Merry were the only riders who did not flee.
 - a. As Théoden lay mortally wounded, she challenged the Witch-King, who boasted that "no living man may hinder me."
 - b. In answer, she removed her helmet, exposing her long blond hair, and declared, "*No living man am I! You look upon a woman! Éowyn I am, Éomund's daughter. Begone if you be not deathless! For living or dark undead, I will smite you, if you touch him!*" In a rage, the Witch-King attacked her, but she cleaved the head off his [Fell Beast](#).
 - c. The Witch-King shattered her shield with a blow of his mace, breaking her arm,
- 3. Pity filled his heart and great wonder, and suddenly the slow-kindled courage of his race awoke. He clenched his hand. She should not die, so fair, so desperate! At least she should not die alone, unaided. **The Return of the King:** "The Battle of the Pelennor Fields," p. 116
- 4. Hebrews 12:2-3 (FOR THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM)
 - a. No matter what happens...

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, **2** keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne.

C) FINDING TRUE COURAGE MEANS ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS: {SAME SLIDE}

WHERE IS YOUR WONDER?

hand of God's throne.

C) FINDING TRUE COURAGE MEANS ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS: {SAME SLIDE}
WHERE IS YOUR WONDER?

WHAT WEAPONS ARE YOU FIGHTING WITH?

Hebrews 7:24-25

But because He remains forever, He holds His priesthood permanently. **25** Therefore, He is always able to save[a] those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.

4. Tolkien suggests in the LOTR that the single greatest act of courage performed by Aragorn is not displayed on the battlefield or in the Mines of Moria or before the Black Gates of Mordor.
 - a. Above and beyond all his other noble deeds, Aragorn shows the greatest fortitude, the greatest endurance when he rides willingly the Paths of the Dead and calls upon the cursed spirits of those who had betrayed his great ancestor, Isildur, at the end of the Second Age.
 - b. Though the spirits for the Oathbreakers cannot harm Aragorn in any physical sense, they threaten to unbalance his mind with dread and prostrate his spirit with terror.
 - c. All that is within Aragorn dissuades him from treading this fearful path; yet he takes it nonetheless, for it is his appointed path, and "no other road will serve."

1. While reading Aslan dying I was brought to tears.

D) Take the key and unlock courage. What will our communities look like? What will our churches look like?