

“LET US BE COURAGEOUS”

(Men's Retreat, Covenant Christian Church, September 28, 2013)

Before Israel entered into battle with the Ammonites and Syrians, surrounded and outnumbered, Joab said to his brother Abishai, *“Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, and may the Lord do what seems good to Him.”* While we have not been called to subdue pagan nations by the sword, we have been called to lay our lives down for the sake of the Gospel and our Lord Jesus Christ. Many of our brothers and sisters around the world are indeed paying the ultimate cost as they endeavor to further this Gospel Mandate and fulfill the Great Commission. With those suffering for their faith in mind, may we not diminish any sense of urgency in order to give cover to what may amount to complacency. May we as brothers--fight shoulder to shoulder courageously--the good fight, finish our course, and keep the faith, for the glory of our Lord.

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

2 Samuel 10:1-14 (ESV)

1 After this the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. **2** And David said, “I will deal loyally with Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father dealt loyally with me.” So David sent by his servants to console him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the Ammonites. **3** But the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, “Do you think, because David has sent comforters to you, that he is honoring your father? Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city and to spy it out and to overthrow it?” **4** So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half the beard of each and cut off their garments in the middle, at their hips, and sent them away. **5** When it was told David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, “Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return.” **6** When the Ammonites saw that they had become a stench to David, the Ammonites sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob, 12,000 men. **7** And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men. **8** And the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the gate, and the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the open country. **9** When Joab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear, he chose some of the best men of Israel and arrayed them against the Syrians. **10** The rest of his men he put in the charge of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. **11** And he said, “If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. **12** Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, and may the Lord do what seems good to him.” **13** So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. **14** And when the Ammonites saw that the Syrians fled, they likewise fled before Abishai and entered the city. Then Joab returned from fighting against the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 23:13-19 (NIV)

13 During harvest time, three of the thirty chief warriors came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. **14** At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. **15** David longed for water and said, “Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!” **16** So the three mighty warriors broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the Lord. **17** “Far be it from me, Lord, to do this!” he said. “Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?” And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty warriors. **18** Abishai the brother of Joab son of Zeruiah was chief of the Three. He raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed, and so he became as famous as the Three. **19** Was he not held in greater honor than the Three? He became their commander, even though he was not included among them.

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV)

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.”

Excerpt from David Platt's Book, *Follow Me: A Call To Die, A Call To Live*

Ayan is part of a people who pride themselves on being 100 percent Muslim. To belong to Ayan's tribe is to be Muslim. Ayan's personal identity, familial honor, relational standing, and social status are all inextricably intertwined with Islam. Simply put, if Ayan ever leaves her faith, she will immediately lose her life. If Ayan's family ever finds out that she's no longer Muslim, they will slit her throat without question or hesitation.

Now imagine having a conversation with Ayan about Jesus. You start telling her how God loves her so much that He sent His only Son to die on the cross for her sins as her Savior. As you speak, you can sense her heart softening toward what you are saying. At the same time, though, you can feel her spirit trembling as she contemplates what it would cost for her to follow Christ. With fear in her eyes and faith in her heart, she asks, "How do I become a Christian?"

You have two options in your response to Ayan. You can tell her how easy it is to become a Christian. If Ayan will simply assent to certain truths and repeat a particular prayer, she can be saved. That's all it takes.

Your second option is to tell Ayan the truth. You can tell Ayan that in the Gospel, God is calling her to die.

Literally.

To die to her life.

To die to her family.

To die to her friends.

To die to her future.

And in dying, to live. To live in Jesus. To live as a part of a global family that includes every tribe. To live with friends who span every age. To live in a future where joy will last forever.

Ayan is not imaginary. She is a real woman I met who made a real choice to become a Christian--to die to herself and to live in Christ, no matter what it cost her. Because of her decision, she was forced to flee her family and become isolated from her friends. Yet she is now working strategically and sacrificially for the spread of the Gospel among her people. The risk is high as every day she dies to herself all over again in order to live in Christ.

- David Platt, *Follow Me: A Call To Die, A Call To Live*, Tyndale, © 2013, pp 1-2.

2 Timothy 2:1-13 (NIV)

1 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. **2** And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. **3** Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. **4** No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. **5** Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. **6** The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. **7** Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. **8** Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, **9** for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. **10** Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. **11** Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; **12** if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; **13** if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

2 Timothy 4:1-8 (NIV)

1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: **2** Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. **3** For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. **4** They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. **5** But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. **6** For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. **7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. **8** Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Some Powerful Video Clips

Henry V - Band of Brothers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAvmLDkAgAM>

The Patriot - Final Battle (Based on the Battle of Cowpens)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Te9PsiATrKE>

Gettysburg - Chamberlain's Charge at Little Round Top

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqT8PMBtIKI>

Glory - Prayers of the 54th

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrMoki4-weM>

The Last Samurai - Let Me Tell You How He Lived

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWf6KvoGgAI>

HBO - Band of Brothers - German General's Speech

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcMk85ZsBh0>

"We Were Soldiers"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPr9g3EVz-o>

Where Are The Faithful Men? - John Piper

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INmZzfoPqVQ>

"I Need Thee O I Need Thee" - One A Capella

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3wSbLa2uGg>

Bonus Stuff

Billy Long's Blog--Out of the Box

"The Fierce Society" Part 4

<http://blongoutofthebox.blogspot.com/>

"But The Rooster Was Fierce" by Billy Long

"...I have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus." - 1 Corinthians 15:32

Paul Law's Message at the African Pastors' Conference

The Kenyan pastors sat enthralled as Paul Law told them of the time he was surprised by the fierce growl of a lion crouching in the bushes in front of him near his missions ranch in the Congo.

He had been told that the creature had left the area, and so he considered it safe to look for the remains of a cow the lion had previously killed and dragged into the bushes. But now the threatening roar announced the presence of the beast.

Paul stopped in his tracks, and without turning his head was about to quietly give instructions to the three companions following behind him. They, however, were not there. They had already fled to the truck leaving him alone with the lion. He carefully and slowly walked backwards keeping his eyes in the direction of a possible attack. He made it safely back to the vehicle to find that the two men who reached the truck first, had jumped in, shut the doors, and locked out the third fellow who was now lying in the back of the truck in the fetal position.

The conference pastors sat on the edge of their seat as Paul proceeded to tell how he and his brother David returned later and killed the lion that had become a threat to their children and livestock. Contrasting his faithful brother with the men who had fled in fear, Paul spoke of the strength drawn from friends who stand with us in the battle and in our times of trial. It was a moving and powerful message.

When Paul finished his message, after a short break it was my turn to speak.

I looked at the group of pastors and said, *"Paul Law has told you of the time he was face to face with the lion. I am going to tell you about the time I was attacked..."* At this point they leaned forward to hear what harrowing tale I was about to tell. I proceeded, *"I am going to tell you about the time I was attacked... by a rooster!"* The audience began to mumble asking each other, *"Did he say 'rooster'?"* And then the whole place "cracked up" as these African pastors all began to laugh. To them a rooster is nothing to fear. A rooster is food, not a predator. It was only a rooster, but it was fierce to me.

I was an eight or nine year old boy at the time, and to me the event was very traumatic. My Aunt Maggie's old "flogging" rooster came charging at me jumping up trying to claw me with those sharp talons. He was not one of those little bantam roosters, but a full-grown, combative, big barnyard boss, almost as big as me. I picked up my cousin's old rusty B B gun and used it as a bat. Every time that rooster jumped up I would swing that rifle down on his back and knock him back to the ground. I should have swung sideways and hit him up side the head, but I was too afraid to think of that. I struggled for a few minutes until Mrs Grace Gore, an elderly lady passing by, saw my plight and

saved me. It was not much to brag about. I was attacked by a chicken, and rescued by an old lady, but the battle was real to me, and she was a beautiful woman on that day.

"...For if they fall, one will lift up his companion." - Ecclesiastes 4:10

Both of the above stories illustrate our need to have brothers and sisters to stand with us as we face the issues and trials of life. But even more importantly they remind us that we should be vigilant in our walk with the Lord so that we are "there" spiritually for those who depend on us and who may need us in their hour of need. Often I have prayed, "Lord, I want to stay in that place where the heavens are open to me, and I can call upon you in faith as I pray for my wife, my children, my friends and all those for whom I am to stand in the gap. I want to be among those who pray 'Thy kingdom come,' and it represent a real force in bringing your kingdom, rather than just the prayer of rote that so many simply recite." I want to cry out to God in faith for those who are searching, serving, or suffering, and to actually encourage and strengthen them rather than locking myself in the safety of the vehicle while others are left outside to fight or die alone. We need to stand with those who face the "lion," but we should not despise the struggle of those who face the "rooster."

"But we don't want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf..." - 2 Corinthians 1: 8-11

Suggested reading: Ecclesiastes 4:8-12; Luke 22:28; Ezekiel 22:30; 2 Timothy 4:9-18; 4:16-18...

Ephesians 6:10-20 (NIV)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **14** Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, **15** and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. **16** In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **18** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. **19** Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.