

Sermon Manuscript for “Get Courage – Part 1”



One stormy morning Ray Blankenship was preparing his breakfast. He looked out the window, and saw a small girl being swept along in a flooded drainage ditch beside his home. Ray knew that farther downstream, the ditch disappeared with a roar as it emptied into the main culvert. Ray dashed out the door and raced along the ditch, trying to get ahead of the struggling child. Then he hurled himself into the deep, churning water. Ray surfaced and was able to grab the child's arm. They tumbled end over end. Within about three feet of the yawning culvert, Ray's free hand felt a rock protruding from one bank. He clung desperately, but the force of the water tried to tear him and the child apart. "If I can just hang on until help comes," he thought. By the time fire-department rescuers arrived, Ray had pulled the girl to safety. Both of them were treated for shock but were otherwise unharmed. For his courage, Ray was awarded the Coast Guard's Lifesaving Medal. The award is fitting, for Ray was at even greater risk to himself than most people knew. **Ray Blankenship couldn't swim.** So imagine the courage it took for him to leap into action in spite of being terrified of the rushing water below.

Sometimes in life, courage is in the action of stepping out or speaking up, even if we don't feel courageous.

Did Ray Blankenship have time to go get swimming lessons or grab a life preserver that day? Of course, not – courage compelled him to act, in spite of his fear.

If you wait around until you feel "courageous enough", you likely will never face down that thing you need to do.

You may not always have all the resources you think you need.

You may not have all the information you think you need.

It takes courage to act and make a move, you sometimes life requires us to act promptly, even if we do not feel courageous.

Nelson Mandela said, "I learned that courage was **not the absence** of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." — Nelson Mandela.

Over the next couple weeks, I want to share with you how to “Get Courage.”
So, the first way we get courage is to practice courage (even if you don't feel it).

The story of Esther in the Old Testament shows us what it looks like to conquer your fear and act on behalf of a cause bigger than yourself.

Sermon Manuscript for “Get Courage – Part 1”



Esther was a young Jewish girl who became queen to King Xerxes, the king of Persia.

In the Persian court there was an Amalekite governor named Haman who hated the Jewish people.

He flattered the king, cast the Jews in a negative light, and convinced the king to let Haman pillage the Jewish communities around them.

Haman's plot was spurred on by a racist intolerance for the Jews, and he in particular hated Esther's uncle, Mordecai.

Mordecai was a righteous man who also served in a high place in the government, and Haman, in his jealousy, was looking for a way to destroy him and remove him.

Haman was willing to commit genocide to get his way and win favor with the king.

Mordecai approaches Queen Esther and persuades her to act to help save her people. But for her to act means she has to approach King Xerxes uninvited, which could cost her life.

Mordecai reminds Esther that she should not assume that because of her high office that her and her family would be spared.

He also reminds her that God made her have placed her in her position of privilege for exactly such a time as this.

So, Esther musters her courage, approaches the King uninvited.

The king welcomes her in despite not being invited.

Esther ultimately manages to expose Haman's plot and plans for the destruction of the Jews.

King Xerxes has Haman executed and elevates Mordecai into his position.

Imagine the courage it took for Esther to walk up to the throne room alone, open the doors and walk in to approach the king.

She probably didn't sleep very much the night before, but she knew she couldn't sit around for a month in the off chance the king would call for her.

If she waited, Mordecai and her people would be put to the sword.

Esther practiced courage, even though she did not feel particularly courageous.

Esther stepped in and acted in spite of feeling afraid.

She conquered her fear and triumphed over it with courageous action.

Courage is a habit that you already practice more than you think.

Whenever you decide to act in life, you need courage.

Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong.

Whatever big decision you face, you can expect there to be a mountain or a bump in the way.

There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe that you do not have enough to win this battle.

Sermon Manuscript for “Get Courage – Part 1”



Stepping away from a toxic relationship, laying down a destructive habit, having that difficult conversation that needs to happen with someone, refusing to settle for anything less than God's will for your life.

These are all times where we are going to face fear.

Just because you are afraid, it does not mean that you are doing God's will.

Fear is the ticket price for doing something new, taking a big step of faith or launching out into the unknown.

You are going to have to practice courage, act in spite of fear, to get courage.

Courage Means Being Afraid but acting anyways.

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. -Joshua 1.9