

Courage for the Conflict

Kalispell, Montana—May 28-30, 2010

*“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.
Let all that you do be done with love.” 1Co 16:13–14*

I. Life on the Battlefield: Num 13:1–33; Num 14:1–45

In the story of the spies sent out by Moses, we find eight principles of spiritual conflict. These truths relate to each one of us, wherever we find ourselves in life.

All conflict is based in the spiritual realm, Num 13:1–2, 6–8, 17–20

“And war broke out in heaven ... so the great dragon was cast out,” Rev 12:7-9.

“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” 2Ti 2:3.

- The promises of God call each one of us to a point of decision.
- Every decision is either for or against God, therefore of the greater conflict.
- The decision of Joshua and Caleb for God pits them against the majority.

Conflict is inevitable/unavoidable in life, Num 13:21–24

“Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward,” Job 5:7.

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” 2Ti 3:12.

- Every goal worth reaching will of necessity involve a struggle.
- The greater the prize, the greater the “giants” standing in the way.
- “Hebron” means “united/fellowship.” “Zoan” is the traditional site of the wonders of Moses. Thus God provides for fellowship before He does His work of deliverance. *“We who have believed do enter that rest ... although the works were finished from the foundation of the world” Heb 4:3.*

Impossible odds are always a call to faith, Num 13:26–29

“Fear not, those who are with us are more than those who are with them” 2Ki 6:16.

“Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” 1Jo 4:4.

- It has been well said, “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.”
- *“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” Mat 19:26.*
- Three things are clear: God promised the land to Israel, the land is as He said it would be, there are giants in the land—what will Israel choose?

Faith is the foundation of true courage, Num 13:30

“The Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome One,” Jer 20:11.

“The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” Heb 13:6.

- Faith possesses conviction and has a quieting affect.
- Faith sees the obstacles in light of Almighty God, and His sure Word.
- Faith sees every test/trial/obstacle as an opportunity for victory.

Absence of faith dooms us to fear, Num 13:31–33

“But the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it”
Heb 4:2.

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” 2Ti 1:7.

- Note the contrast, *“we are well able,”* v. 30; *“we are not able,”* v. 31.
- Fear forfeits divine resources, leaving you with your own inadequacy.
- See the five phrases where their fear feeds and grows on itself.

Fear brings the external conflict within, Num 14:1–4

“There’s no defeat in life, save from within

Until you’re beaten there, you’re bound to win.”—Anonymous

“Fear not, for I am with you” Gen 26:24; Isa 41:10 (used over 10 times from Isa 41:1–54:17).

This is the most often repeated command in Scripture, often coupled with the command to fear the Lord, which is the solution to fear.

- Now in addition to real enemies, they must fight the goblins of their minds.
- Cowards would rather die than fight, which explains modern pacifism.
- Cowards want leaders who are just as frightened as they are.

Only faith has the power to drive out fear, Num 14:6–9

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in you” Psa 56:3.

“Fear knocked, faith answered, no one was there.”

—found written on the door of a pub in Britain after the evacuation of Dunkirk.

- Nothing is more vexing to men of courage than defeat without a fight.
- In their minds, victory is dependent on pleasing God. Heb 11:6
- They understand, *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* Rom 8:31

Giving in to fear is the beginning of defeat, Num 14:10–12

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him ...” Heb 11:6.

“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation ...?” Heb 2:3.

- The wrath of God is inevitable against sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3).
- Moses’ intercession did not stop the discipline—it prolonged for 40 years.

II. The Nature of the Conflict

“There were young knights among them who had never been present at a stricken field. Some could not look upon it and some could not speak, and they held themselves apart from the others who were cutting down the prisoners at My Lord’s orders, for the prisoners were a body too numerous to be guarded by those of us who were left.

“Then Jean de Rye, an aged knight of Burgundy who had been sore wounded in the battle, rode up to the group of young knights and said: ‘Are ye maidens with your downcast eyes? Look well upon it. See all of it. Close your eyes to nothing. For a battle is fought to be won, and it is this that happens if you lose.’”

—from a Medieval Chronicle by Froissart, 14th century

“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass ...”

—Jesus, Mat 24:6

“If your bayonet breaks, strike with the stock; if the stock gives way, hit with your fists; if your fists are hurt, bite with your teeth.”

—Gen. Mikhail I. Dragomirov

1. The battle without, Eph 6:10–13
2. The battle within, 1Jo 2:15–17
3. The battle plan, 1Jo 5:4–5; Rev 12:11

III. The Nature of Fear

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”

—David, Psa 27:1

“He who is afraid is half beaten.”

—Field Marshal Aleksandr V. Suvurov

“The real hero is the man who fights even though he is scared ... the real man never lets the fear of death over-power his honor (or) his duty.”

—Gen. George S. Patton

“Never take counsel of your fears.”

—Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson

1. The source of fear, Heb 2:14–18
2. The effects of fear, Luk 21:26
3. The victory over fear, 2Tim 1:6–7

IV. The Nature of Courage

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials ...”

—James, Jam 1:2

“The best measure of courage is the fear that is overcome.”

—Norman F. Dixon

“Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality.”

—Gandhi

“The more comfort the less courage there is.”

—Field Marshall Prince Aleksandr V. Suvurov

“One man with courage makes a majority.”

—Andrew Jackson

“Keep your fears to yourself, but share your courage.”

—Robert Louis Stevenson

1. Courage is grounded on conviction, Jos 1:9, Heb 13:5–6
2. Courage works in the face of fear, 2Co 1:3–5, 8–11
3. Courage is the outward face of faith, Neh 6:9, 11, 13–14, Rev 2:10–11

V. Summary:

1. Every battle you face is but an extension of a far greater cosmic struggle.
2. The issue at the outset of every battle is the choice of faith or unbelief.
3. This is why every trial is a test of our volition; whether we will choose to trust God or reject His Word and promises.
4. The courage of true faith is grounded in a rock-solid confidence in God.
5. Faith is its own victory, fear its own defeat. They are greater than any outcome of the battle. They are in essence, life or death (Deu 30:19)!