

## Radical Series #1 Radical Courage

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Why radical? In planning for this series of sermons, there was one sermon called radical hospitality and one called radical evangelism and we figured out that everything is radical when you follow Jesus: in fact, Jesus said you have to deny yourself and take up your cross. We connect ourselves with crosses today but in the days of Jesus, the Roman empire kept people in line with crosses. People didn't talk about this. It's extreme and intense; likewise, it's these when we follow Jesus.

Today we will talk about radical courage: most know what courage is: we want more than we have and we want to give each other more courage. I want to look at this more closely: my question to you today: ***what or who are you avoiding?*** Is that too deep of a question? Some avoid everything! We all avoid things...but how do we begin this analysis? This is a key way to begin this analysis; in fact, we should be asking this question all the time.

Categories of personal avoidance:

1. You: Are you avoiding being healthy, eating well, and exercising? Emotions? I don't want to feel or experience emotions. Thoughts: I want to be numb and don't want to hear anything.
2. Family: What are you avoiding there? Teens have secrets that they keep from their parents. Maybe there are things going on in your family that you don't know how to talk about so you avoid these conversations. Parenting young kids can be avoided because you have to teach kids all the time how to have boundaries in public. You might be judged when your child screams at the grocery store so you avoid this situation. Maybe you need to talk to your spouse about decisions but you are afraid you may go down a rabbit hole and never come out.
3. Job: If I talk about something, bad things might happen. Maybe you need to quit your job and you are avoiding doing this. Maybe you don't want to be friends with someone at work.
4. Church: Are you avoiding tithing, getting involved, connecting with others? Maybe you are avoiding someone who needs a friend; you pray that person would have a friend and that person is you?
5. Neighborhood: are you avoiding conversations with people close by you, either where you live or maybe where you go to school? Do you not really not want to know what is happening because then you would be obligated?

We all use avoidance because we have engaged in something in the past and it didn't work out well. We are averse to avoidance: if we are going to do something good in life, we don't want it to feel weird. But calling and purpose always come with adversity. I Peter 2 says we are a royal priesthood: this means you are a really important pastor. This is your calling and it comes with adversity: binding wounds and pointing people to Jesus. All of you are called to do this: Pastor Philip, Pastor Trizia, etc. That is who you are which means you are going to have to get messy with the kids and the things you're avoiding in life. This is your calling and when you do this, you will find the peace of Christ.

### Eph 2:10

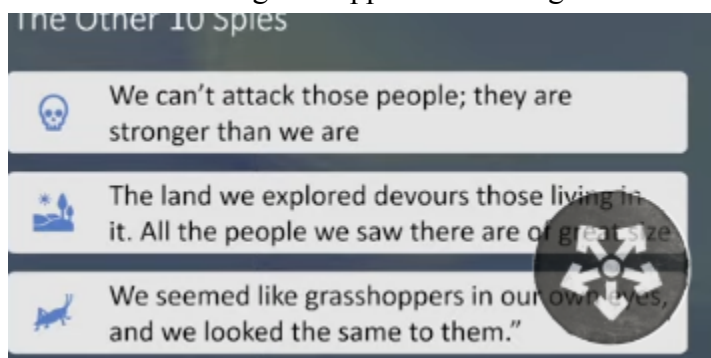
For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Every one of you is the tinkering of God. You have a unique image of God that can't be found anywhere else. This is also why we look at the world and feel called to save the unborn, etc. This passage is about how to be a really important pastor. This means that Jesus is working in everyone's life at your work, family, church, etc. We are called to join Jesus's work in each other's life. This is our calling and then healing happens even when it's uncomfortable to deal with.

In the OT, there is a story of Moses calling the Israelites out of Egypt and they wander around in the desert as they head to the Promised Land. They arrive and when they're on the edge, they send in spies who find really big fruit, lots of milk and honey along with giant people. They tell the people this report. Caleb quiets the people and announces they CAN take the land: he doesn't say that it wasn't already done: he says WE should take it and WE can do it. This is courage! How can Caleb stand up and say this when everyone else says they can't?

Reasons why they shouldn't go:

1. We cannot attack, they are stronger
2. The people are great in size
3. We are like grasshoppers in their sight.



Do any of the things you are avoiding sound like this? I'm not attacking anyone but my problems often seem bigger than I am. I think they will consume me and take me over.

The enemy will give you similar reasons not to have courage but to avoid.

We end up like the ones who decide they would not go into the Promised Land. How can we become like Caleb who says we can do this hard thing? I CAN train my 5 year old to keep his hands to himself.

**Numb 14:24**

**But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.**

He had a different spirit and followed God wholeheartedly. Did he never feel anxiety? I suspect that he was human and experienced much anxiety and fear...so how did he have this courage? "Caleb had a confidence in God that was greater than his fear." -Pastor Eric

He had a confidence in God's reality over his own understanding of reality. Because he had confidence that when God's truth is given to you, it trumps your own experience of life. I feel that I will die if what God says is true.

How do we get there?

1. Caleb made friends with his negative emotions. All of us have adverse feelings and anxiety about hard conversations: things I would rather avoid. I have a choice: can I be friends with this or not? No good genuine experience will happen unless we do this. First, you name the feeling: Mr. Ugly. I need to move past this.

**Joshua 1:1-9**

**1** After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: **2** "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. **3** I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. **4** Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. **5** No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Moses has died and everyone is ready to go into the promised land.

**6** Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

God says he has given Joshua something: You must understand that you have been given stuff: Jesus gives you peace not like the world gives. He gives peace that comes from the king of the universe! God gives Joshua the land.

**7 “Be strong and very courageous.**

Have radical courage!

Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

One of the ways you find this courage is to obey! It’s simple. Don’t turn right nor left: when you do this, the anxiety mounts. Follow Jesus and don’t take your eyes off him. Don’t covet your neighbor's wife, don't steal: the medication for anxiety.

**8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.**

The second thing is constant study and conversation about Jesus. This is where the radical discipleship comes in: I will talk about Jesus when I’m in Christian activities with Christian people. But if you want to deal with anxiety, then everything has to be about me! You have to obey and be about me to be prosperous and successful.

**9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”**

God is commanding him! Do we have courage to engage in the things he is leading us into, knowing that God will be with us? Do we ask, “where is God?” He seems absent! But Joshua says that if you obey, you will see God everywhere. You will be able to identify Him. This is the diagnostic to your questions: If you don't see Him, you are probably focused on yourself.

How do we get this courage?

Be friends with your negative emotions and attach yourself to Jesus. He will be with us!

Also, we must embrace the signs and not the symptoms: We do this all the time. We are looking at the symptoms in life: this bad thing is happening, my spouse reacted this way when I said this: I look like a grasshopper to these people. The church worldwide tries to disciple you in this: Christmas is an amazing sign, the cross is the hopeful sign of a resurrection. We must rehearse the signs, not the symptoms because they will move us forward. Each year at the Village, we have a thankfulness service here so we remember that God gave us \$300,000 for this building: a sign that God is a part of us!

In Israel, they took 12 stones and left up the gate of Jeircho as signs: these reminded them that God intervened. They rehearsed these signs when they went by them. The more you meditate on these, the more God shows up and you will see him miraculously in ways that you can tell others about.

**Matthew 14:27** But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

Jesus walks on the water but the disciples think it’s a ghost: Jesus says “Take courage, it’s I! Don’t be afraid.” We have to embrace the signs and look for them!

Look for simple signs in your own life. For example, I like board games. Recently, in the mail came a game called Plunder: a Pirate’s Life. I don’t know who gave it to me: I took it as a sign to me that I’m loved. This is an ordinary thing where God says “I love you” and you hold onto it and rehearse it. It’s a sign.

The other connection is remembering and rehearsing the stories. In Joshua, there are altars: the gate, the stones, etc. that the people remembered and rehearsed. We also have these:

**Hebrews 2:1-4**

**1** Therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. **2** For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, **3** how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. **4** God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

We are to hear the gospel but even more than that, it’s *your* story of *your* encounter with Jesus. If you want to be a really important pastor, you get there by simply telling everyone your story of salvation! We should all know each other’s story! These keep up from drifting away from a life of avoidance and have radical courage.

My invitation to you is risky: Make it your goal to tell everyone here your salvation story this year! These are different for all of us: maybe your story was about a lightning strike or maybe this happened to you as a 3-year-old.

Go back to what you are avoiding: be courageous and step into what you are avoiding!