

## *A word of encouragement for Courage*

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There is no need for courage when all is at peace and all is calm. **But this is not our world.** There is no need for courage when comfort sits on the throne. There is no call for courage when safety, reputation and dignity are the advisers to King Comfort. **But he is not your king.**

The Patriarchs, the Kings, the Prophets and the Apostles knew fear. They knew what it was to be afraid. Afraid of the power of their enemies; afraid of fighting; afraid of suffering; afraid of dying; afraid of failing; afraid of speaking; afraid of building; afraid of risking and afraid of losing.

We share the same weaknesses, we share the same fears. Our hearts tremble and fail. We are the same people.

Yet into the fears, into the night, into our trembling hearts a voice speaks. A voice that the Patriarchs, the Kings, the Prophets and the Apostles all heard. A voice that brings light into the darkness, that brings strength to the weak and courage to those who are afraid.

And when we were vulnerable; when we were strangers in a strange land, when we were cast out but looking for a love to save us, we hear as Ruth heard, "Do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, **it is true that I am a redeemer**" (Ruth 3:11).

When we are fighting the strong winds and the heavy waves of an opposing culture, just as the disciples did we hear a voice that says "**Don't be afraid. Take courage. I am here!**" (Matthew 14:24-27).

There is no need for courage when all is at peace and all is calm. **But this is not our world.** There is a need for courage and this is a call to have the courage to leave safety, reputation, dignity and comfort behind because **we have a different king.**

When we have a message that brings life to the lifeless, hope to the hopeless, power to the weak, salvation to the condemned even though it brings us accusation, and the world is not our friend; just as Jeremiah did we hear a voice that says: "**Go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you**" (Jeremiah 1:7-8).

And even when following that voice leads us through shipwrecks, and we are in jail, when people plot to silence us forever; we hear as Paul heard a voice that says, "**Take courage, and testify**" (Acts 23:11).

**And so we testify.**

Healing is coming to the world. The lame will dance for joy.

**We testify.**

Justice is coming to the world. The poor will be lifted up.

**We testify.**

Resurrection is coming. We will live in His presence.

**We testify.**

There is a new day coming. Heaven will come to earth.

**We testify.**

There is no other hope. Just Jesus.

**We testify.**

There is no other name. Just Jesus.

**We testify.**

There is no other Lord. Just Jesus.

**We testify.**

There is no other salvation. Just Jesus.

**We testify.**

And when we face death and destruction we hear as John heard the voice of the brilliant one who says to us, "**Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades**" (Revelation 1:17-18).

And we reply to the voice that has given us hope, that has given us strength, that has rescued, ransomed, redeemed us, to the one who has given us His courage and say: "It is my hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that **with full courage now as always Christ will be honoured in my body**, whether by life or by death" (Philippians 1:20).

**And so we testify.**

Jesus is the way.

**And we testify.**

Jesus is the truth.

**And we testify.**

Jesus is the Life.

**And we testify.**