

Message: Faith & Courage

Hello and welcome to JesusFamilies.org's audio messages!

The title of this message is, "Faith & Courage"

As I look at the landscape of the U.S. at this time, there are only two things that can account for the lack of little flocks. No, dear listener, I am not talking about the four legged variety of sheep grouped together! Listen to this saying of the only Good Shepherd:

"Do not worry my little flock, for my Father has seen fit to give you the Kingdom. Therefore sell your possessions and give to the poor, and come, follow me."

Does Joshua mean what he says here, or are you going to listen to the religious leaders who will tell you some form of, "Oh, well, what he really means is...", thus nullifying his teaching?

Where are the little flocks? Where are the small groups of people who have the faith and courage to say, "the primary purpose of my life will truly be about following Joshua or Jesus of Nazareth". I do understand that the vast majority of people who are involved in the Christian religious system cannot understand the difference between following Joshua and being a christian, and I understand that that is a big part of the problem. But surely there are some people out there that can see the gaping inconsistencies between what Joshua actually teaches a person's life is supposed to be about, versus the Christian system and what its leaders teach? Just read my web site to have a clear understanding about the differences between what Joshua actually teaches versus what the bible religious system teaches.

So, for the few of you who can see that the christian religious system is actually against a person following Joshua – or at least can see that it is a substitute for actually doing what Joshua says – what are you doing with the days you are given? How is our life different than those of the average American or average Christian? If it is not different, then we ought not to deceive ourselves that we are actually following this fellow named Jesus of Nazareth.

There is one teaching of Joshua's that is particularly important in terms of what will make his followers different than non-followers. Did you know that this command requires other people to fulfill? Do you understand the implications of the new command? Let's listen carefully to it:

"A new command that I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you. For this is how the people of the earth will know that you are my followers IF you love one another".

And so, the question must be asked dear listener, are you a follower of Joshua? If so, what exactly are you doing to live out the new command? Please do remember that Joshua also says:

"If you love me, you will do what I say." That is only reasonable if he is our Master and since he knows what is best, right?

So, I ask again, what are you and I doing to obey – out of our love for Joshua – his new command that his people live in such a way to be the light to a dark world?

Many people's eyes start to glaze over at that question. The problem is that the love that Joshua lived and taught is difficult to do because it goes against what we naturally think is right and good. The love that we understand still has a selfish aspect to it and we guard ourselves being heavily influenced by fear. We must overcome our fear and selfishness in order to live out the new command...in order to truly love other followers of Joshua. We must live by Joshua's principles, and not by what we are comfortable with.

Back to the question. What are we doing to obey the new command?

Dear listener, if we are not diligently seeking to find other disciples and doing whatever we have to do in order to share our lives with each other so we may be empowered by each other to fulfill loving our neighbor, then we are not living out the new command. And Joshua plainly says that living out the new command is the only way anyone will know that this 'jesus' guy is real.

So, if you have made it far enough to leave the religious system and start seriously listening to Joshua, you are at a place of needing to make an important decision...whether you will actually try to obey the new command OR not. It is that easy to understand...the choice is that simple. Please don't deceive yourself saying you can somehow obey this important command of Joshua while living by yourself or with those who are not followers of Joshua. Worse yet is to pretend that those you are willing to share your life with are disciples of Joshua when they are not.

Let's review the normal process of a person who does enter into faith in this person Joshua of Nazareth.

There you are, living your life in this cold world. You encounter christian religion, a Christian person, or some writings from the new testament, perhaps even Joshua's.

You hear enough truth to come to the conclusion that the life of darkness and sin that you are living is empty and a dead end road. At the same time, you come to understand there is a way out of that dead end life. You see a choice before you...come into faith in the God you are hearing about, or remain in the dark, empty, hopeless life. So you see the state of your soul and life, and you do feel terrible remorse for the people you have hurt and the foolish and selfish things you have done, and you turn and place your faith in Joshua and his Father. Joshua puts it this way:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word, and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

You enter life. You have been born from above as Joshua says here:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born from above he cannot see, nor can he enter, the kingdom of God".

Life in Joshua began. You saw everything important in a completely new light...new understandings of many things began to creep into your mind...you were heading in one direction, and then were turned around in another.

So, you decided to get involved with Christian or bible religion thinking that is what God wants.

You spend time in the darkness and confusion of Christian or bible based religion with its many lesser proclaimed truths but greater lived-out falsehoods. You, unlike the countless others, start to use the mind God gave you to question some of the things you see going on in the sect you are a part of. After more time, you get the courage up to believe what Joshua says more than all the other people who say your conclusions and insights are wrong, and you leave organized religion.

You have successfully left the great trap...the great snare. Congratulations dear listener!!! That is great news and you are to be commended for having enough faith and love for truth to make that step! Good job!

But I would be remiss if I did not say more was required by Joshua.

So, there you are. You find yourself outside of Christian or bible religion, but you then turn to the back up...natural or legal relatives.

You have left the frying pan and landed in the fire, and sadly, not many make it out of that fire.

You convince yourself that your relatives are Christians or whatever and so you are fine. You will just live your life like the rest of the people you see around you.

If you do this, or have done this, or are doing this, dear listener, then you are in the other great trap...the other great snare. You made it out of the mud only to step into the quick sand.

Joshua warned against it many times. Please listen to him:

"Therefore everyone who speaks of me to people, I will also speak favorably about him before my Father who is in heaven. (33) "But whoever ignores me before men, I will also ignore him before my Father who is in heaven. (34) "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword (divide people). (35) "For I came to Set A Man Against His Father, And A Daughter Against Her Mother, And A Daughter-In-Law Against Her Mother-In-Law; (36) And A Man's Enemies Will Be The Members Of His Household. (37) "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) "And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me."

These words can be found in Matthew chapter 10. Are we willing to receive these truths? Or are we going to deceive ourselves with some version of, "well, he doesn't really mean that....", or "he doesn't mean MY family because yada yada...". Or the clever approach is, 'well, we are not supposed to judge and my family members have faith'. Yes, ignore Joshua, his teachings and his way...but have faith...obviously faith in someone or something other than Joshua. Please stop deceiving yourself.

Did you listen carefully to the first two sentences of that passage? Here they are again:

"Therefore everyone who speaks of me to people, I will also speak favorably about him before my Father who is in heaven. (33) "But whoever ignores me before men, I will also ignore him before my Father who is in heaven."

What are you doing, dear listener with these words. Are you comfortably living with people with whom you are ignoring the one that is supposed to be your Master? Have you deceived yourself into thinking that to tell then you believe a few things **about** Jesus every once in a while is what it is to have Joshua as your Master? When you share your meals with those who are your natural family or friends, what are you talking about? If Joshua is your passion and he is not other people's passion then you will not be able to ignore him and talk about the news, weather, politics, religion and all the other topics we can fill the empty chatter with...how can we do that when so many are living in hopeless darkness...when so many need the person and truth's we possess? Truly, we cannot...we will speak about our Master as well as his Father whom we love with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. More importantly, we will DO what he says!

Dear listener, to have Joshua as our Master means we see ourselves and the world through HIS EYES, and thus speak what he spoke to those we encounter. No, it doesn't mean we do the normal Christian thing of repeating the saying of Joshua that fit into the positive thinking...never say anything negative belief that

rules the land at this time. To repeat John 3:16 without continuing through 3:19 at this time and place in history is to have the same Jesus that Christianity creates...the one who only says nice and positive things.

You *should* know John 3:16 for it contains a precious truth, but you need not to cut off what you don't want to hear from the real Joshua in verses 18 and 19...here they are:

"He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only spiritually birthed Son of God. (19) "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

It takes courage to repeat his words in verses 18 & 19. Are we displaying that courage, or are we playing the coward and only sharing verse 16? Are we willing to embrace the real Joshua of Nazareth, or are we going to continue to seek to save our life in this world in contradiction to this important saying of his:

"Those who seek to lose their lives in this world will find Life; while those who seek to keep their lives in this world, will lose Life everlasting."

Don't try and keep the people around you who don't love your Father and Master, for if you do, you are in fact seeking to keep your life in this world, and thus you will miss Life everlasting.

So, dear listener, where are you at? Have you done well with leaving the corrupt religious system only to refuse to go any further? The life of faith that the disciple of Joshua is called to is not primarily a life of rejecting that which is false, wrong, bad or evil – although following him requires that. Rather and in contrast, it is a life that seeks first to love others, and that requires more courage than rejecting evil. In order to love others, we must put away fear and selfishness and instead walk by faith and courage. We must continue to extend ourselves and continue to reach out even after being rejected 1,000 times.

How can we do that? The answer is simple to understand if we have ears to hear.

We need the faith to see our Father and our Master and to hear our Master's voice, and we need the courage to do what he says. Please, let me repeat that important truth – for it is the heart of this message.

To have faith in our Father will mean we come to understand his love, and we come to understand that to live both a life of love and righteousness, we must have courage, because we will be rejected by the vast majority who are not interested in living according to the Light's Way. Please listen to him...

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

Is that saying not fitting into the 'positive thinking' falsehood you have believed? Or do you hold up another Jesus that is politically correct and palatable to those you refuse to stand up to?

So dear listener, will you take the next step? Will you speak your Master's words and truths to those around you as easily and freely as you would speak of anyone you said you loved with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? After all, is it true that we speak about that which we love most. So, if we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, then we will speak about him and his Son more than anything else in our lives. If, however, we love ourselves or the things of this world more, then that will come out of our mouths the majority of the time...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks...it is that simple, please don't deceive yourself.

Will you speak to people's unbelief, their un-faith, their compromises and wrong thinking regarding how the world works? Please listen to Joshua again:

"If the world – that is the people of the earth who don't have faith - hate you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. (19) "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you."

Those people who you share your life with – those you live with or call your family or friends – do they have Joshua of Nazareth as their Master and leader and teacher? Really?

Dear listener, who exactly hates you because you speak and live Joshua's teachings? No, not people who hate us for our faults or mistakes or sins, but rather those who hate us because of the way we live or the things that we say that are of Joshua? Have we truly been chosen out of the world by the real Joshua of Nazareth, or are we still believing in another Jesus who is politically correct and thus does not ask us to offend anyone and who tells us to stay out of conflict at all costs? This is the way of the coward – of the politician whose #1 rule is to make sure he says what people want to hear so that he may be popular, accepted by all and thus elected. The opposite is the man of principle who will be more concerned about living according to his principles than he will be concerned about what people think of him. As a follower of Joshua, we must be men and women of principle and the principles by which we live are clearly stated by our Master. If we do that, we will offend...we will cause conflict...it is truly un-avoidable.

These truths are what are necessary to take the next step. Dear listener, if you are not moved by these truths to speak and live Joshua's teachings with and to those around you, then you are indeed caught in the main trap of loving your life in this world more than you love your Father and His appointed leader.

Again, I hope you will come to terms with this and instead press onto the next step.

The next step is that you speak and live Joshua's teachings – especially with those who you would normally call friends or family. If you do this well, and they do not want to be followers of Joshua, then what Joshua says will happen, will happen. You will be rejected by them. You will be rejected first by the people who think they know you the best, that is your natural and legal family. Please read Joshua's words again in Matthew chapter 10 to verify this truth...don't explain it away due to cowardice or to justify a life with no real faith.

What is required to speak Joshua's teachings to those you sense are not open to them? It will take courage. What will it take to say to a mom, 'mom, that religious ritual you do is not pleasing God...you should know that Joshua says...?'

What will it take to say to your friend, 'you know, friend, I have been ignoring the one I claim to love more than any other, and I can't do that anymore'. It will take courage.

What will it take to say to a dad, "dad, you know I love you, but I love my heavenly Father more, and this thing you are doing is wrong in His sight". It will take courage.

What will it take to say to your co-worker, 'you know, I have ignored the one I say I love in our social setting, so please listen a moment...'

Let's speak a moment about courage.

Courage in the US culture usually means a person willing to die or be hurt in some violent situation against some perceived enemy. People's courage is most often portrayed in military, battle, war or law enforcement situations where there is a 'bad person' hurting innocent people and the person with courage must do

something to stop them – usually through violence – that will probably cause harm or death to themselves. While I would say this takes some degree of courage, I would also say that the means used in the act that requires courage are not the best.

I ask the listener, where do you see courage exhibited in daily life? Moreover, what courage have you shown? It is not easy to go through what Joshua says his followers will go through...rejection from those who know you, and persecution from religious people who will hate you for rebuking their religion. But, dear listener, if you don't have courage, you cannot follow Joshua. That is one of the costs of the narrow and difficult way...rejection, misunderstanding, and persecution. You have a simple choice...keep the self-created or borrowed 'jesus', or get some courage and follow the real Light of the world!

I would say courage for righteousness is FAR better than courage using violence as the mean to help others. For example, if a man refuses to join a nation's military because he believes it is wrong to purposely try and kill others on the basis of a government saying he must, he will often be chided by the patriots as a coward. However, I would suggest that a man faced with hostile, aggressive men (or government) who are threatening to harm you or your family if you don't join their nation's military, displays quite a bit more courage – and a courage of a higher quality – than the men who just take a rifle and shoot – or drop bombs on - people they don't even know. In other words, courage to go into a situation where we **might** die for a good motivation to help others, is a courage of a lesser quality than courage required to be rejected by people who you care about or whom you think you need to live your life...the latter is what Joshua requires...courage enabled by faith and love, not fear or aggression.

Stated another way, if you have the courage to live and speak the Light's words of righteousness – believing you will be rejected by people you care about – then you have the necessary courage to follow Joshua. None of us wants to be alone...none of us wants to be rejected by others, especially by others we care about...but dear listener, this is a fundamental part of what the Light calls the narrow and difficult Way...a Way that requires courage.

So, dear listener, do you think you have courage? The heavenly Father needs men and women of courage – it is what is required at this time to fight the cold and darkness which we find ourselves in. If you will speak the Light's words – all of them, not just the ones you know will not offend others – then you will demonstrate that you have some courage. If you are threatened in some way for doing what the Light says or for speaking his words that reveal some darkness in someone's life – then you will have displayed some courage. If you don't then you are abiding in cowardice.

If you do what the Light says or speak the Light's words even when you will lose something very valuable to you – perhaps even life or limb – then you will demonstrate the courage that is required at this time in history. It take more than faith to fight the dreadful comfortable material life that captures Americans at this time...it takes courage to venture out in true faith.

If, on the other hand, we stay silent in order to preserve our comfort, then we are acting like a coward. If we ignore our Father and Master because we are ashamed or embarrassed of them or their words, then we act like a coward. If we choose silence or we ignore the ones we claim to love and we claim have the solutions mankind needs to escape its madness, then we play the coward.

The Light of the world says, "You are either for me or against me". If we claim to be for him, what do we have to show for that? Merely some beliefs we have in our minds? Merely some emotional feeling we have when singing a song? Something he does not want like 'church attendance'? Or do we have what matters...deeds and words that manifest obedience to him and his teachings.

"A new command that I give to you...that you love one another as I have loved you, for this is how the people of the earth will know that you are my followers only IF you love one another this way".

I ask again, how is this crucial new command coming to pass in your life? Don't deceive yourself that love mean's convenient acts of kindness or considering another person your 'brother' or 'sister' even while those words are plain lies in terms of actually treating them like a beloved brother or sister you grew up with and whom you shared all your dad's stuff with.

Sadly, the bible person's version of "brothers and sisters" would mean that the children of the dad and mom in the natural family would live in separate dwellings and only meet for a few hours a few times a week and would ignore the pleading of their dad and mom. Please think about that for it is a revealing truth.

If we are silent about his truths; if we ignore him with our words; if we struggle and strive and work and fight to preserve our comfort in this world, then we are cowards and he will be ashamed of us when we stand before the Son of Man.

This does not have to be your destiny, but you must choose who or what you are living for and you must act upon it. This message could be a final warning, which, if you turn away from it, you will harden your heart to the place where it will never recover. Please don't do that.

Instead, find the courage to follow the Light of the world, and make a difference in the lives of the millions of people who are dying in the darkness of a faithless and loveless life.

Peace to you.