

## “Take Courage”<sup>1</sup>

Matthew 9:2

### Introduction:

The Greek word *tharseo* (θαρσέω thar-say-O) means “take courage” or “have courage.” Depending on the translation you are looking at, the term will be translated by phrases like “take courage,” “be of good cheer,” “be of good comfort,” or “take heart.” Jesus used this word in different situations that can help us take courage.

### I. The paralytic at Capernaum was told to take courage (Matthew 9:1-8).

Jesus had crossed over the Sea of Galilee, to Capernaum (Mark 2:1).

He was teaching in a house where a crowd was gathered leaving no room “even near the door.”

Four men brought a paralytic to Jesus.

The man was helpless; he had to be carried on his bed by friends.

They also had to dig an opening, removing some of the roof, and lower the man on his bed into the presence of Jesus.

“Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, ‘Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven’” (Matthew 9:2).

When sins have been forgiven it is time to take courage.

Continue reading in the passage of Matthew 9, verses 3-8.

By the authority of God, given to the Son of Man, sins are forgiven.

It was the blood of Jesus that was “poured out for many for forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28).

Standing before His apostles in one of four post-resurrection appearances in Luke 24, Jesus said “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (vv. 46-48).

Peter instructed the crowd in Acts 2:38, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...”

Jesus has authority to forgive sins; He poured out His blood for forgiveness of sins, and He instructed that repentance for forgiveness of sins be proclaimed or preached.

When Peter preached repentance, he told the people to “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins” and “those who had received his word were baptized” (Acts 2:41).

Another apostle wrote to baptized believers, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Our sins can be forgiven today, in this we can take courage.

### II. The woman with the issue of blood was told to take courage (Matthew 9:20–22).

She had been afflicted for twelve years.

Believing that Jesus would heal her, she touched His outer garment.

Jesus commended her faith and healed her.

“Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well.”

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<sup>1</sup> P. H. Welshimer, *Sermon Outlines: Soul Winning! Church Building!*, ed. Mildred Welshimer Phillips, Sermon Outline Series (Cincinnati, OH: Standard, n.d.), 12–13.

“At once the woman was made well” (Matthew 9:22).

Our faith can be commendable today.

Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Verse 2 says, “For by it (by faith) the men of old gained approval (that is commendation).”

Near the end of the chapter, as the text is divided, we are told “And all these (people listed as examples), having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect” (v. 39).

The heavenly and eternal approval of God does not come until the end of time.

Everyone who is approved of God through their faith whether under the old covenant or now under the new covenant will be commended and receive the promise, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-24), the dwelling place of God or “Jerusalem above” (Galatians 4:26).

If we are living by faith, we can take courage that we are healed of sin and the promise of heaven is ours.

### **III. The disciples caught in a storm were told to take courage (Matthew 14:22–27).**

Preceding this storm, Jesus instructed His disciples to cross to the other side of the lake.

“He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray” (v. 23).

A violent storm suddenly threatens the disciples’ boat, “and in the fourth watch of the night [Jesus] came to them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid’” (Matthew 14:25-27).

Take note of the word directly before the term “fear” at the end of verse twenty-six.

The word is translated “in” or “for” in English translations.

The Greek word is ἀπό apo.

Although apo can be translated differently based on context, such as: of, by, since, on, with, because of, or at.

The overwhelming majority of the time, apo is translated “from.”

From fear, the disciples caught in a storm, cried out.

“But immediately Jesus” reassured the disciples (v. 27).

“Take courage, it is I.”

Anytime the Lord is near, it is a time to take courage.

“Do not be afraid.”

When we are afraid, we need to be reminded of the Lord’s words, “Do not be afraid.”

Jesus comes to us in the storms of life.

Financial reverses, terminal illness, chronic disability or sickness, even death.

When we are disappointed, hurt in the heart, Jesus says, “Take courage,” I am with you, “Do not be afraid.”

Our Savior is near today.

James 4:8 instructs, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

James wrote these words because the human heart has a pollution problem.

From the polluted heart comes the pursuit of pleasures which result in constant fighting and quarreling, killings, a breakdown in prayer where spiritual things are not sought but sinful things are requested, friendship with the world that makes man an enemy of God, grieving the Holy Spirit, slandering, and boasting about the future.

The solution to a polluted heart as James gives is to humble ourselves because God will give grace and lift us up, submit to God, resist the devil, repent, and depend on God for the future.

Draw near to God and He will protect you in these storms and others like them.

Hebrews 10:22 “Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...”

Christ’s sacrifice allows us to boldly petition God’s throne.

God said, as recorded in Hebrews 10:38, “MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.”

Our hearts need to trust God, lean on Him, and live by faith.

So, in full assurance of faith, take courage that He is with us during the storms.

#### **IV. Jesus told His disciples, preparing for His departure, to take courage (John 13-17).**

Trials and sorrows rob us of courage as seen in three rounds of conversation between Jesus and His disciples when He was preparing them for His departure from them.

For the first round (John 16:1-15): Jesus warned that persecution would come to them because their persecutors do not know or love the Father or the Son.

But Jesus tells them the Helper (the Holy Spirit) will come to them convicting sinners, condemning Satan, counseling saints, and championing the Savior.

For the second round (vv. 16-28): The disciples did not understand what Jesus said, “A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.”

Jesus explained His death would bring about great grief, His resurrection would bring about great joy!

For the third round (vv. 29-33): The disciples said, “...Now You are speaking plainly...we believe that You came from God.”

Jesus informed them that because they believed He came from God they would have many trials and sorrows.

Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

In a time when sorrow had filled their hearts, there were more things for Jesus to say but they could not bear them.

At the same time, they were needing to learn how to ask the Father for things in the name of Jesus and how to navigate without Jesus being among them.

The disciples were confused.

They lacked understanding.

Jesus sought to reassure them.

He told of His coming departure (John 16:32).

He gave them reassurance: “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace.”

He instructed them: “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage.”

He gave them the reason: “I have overcome the world.”

Jesus brings us the same reassurance.

The world's problems and temptations seem to overwhelm us.

Jesus' word informs us that He knows we have afflictions ("In the world you have tribulation"), He knows what we need ("But take courage"), and He can meet our need ("I have overcome the world").

Our Savior has overcome the world, so that we can overcome the world.

1 John 5:4 and 5 state, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Revelation 21:7 shows that those who continue to believe in spite of persecution will inherit all the promises made to the overcomers (chapters 2 and 3), including the blessings named in chapter twenty-one, verses one through six.

Take courage knowing that Jesus has overcome the world.

#### **V. Paul, though under arrest, was told to take courage (Acts 22:27-28:31).**

At a time when Paul was on trial for his life, he was before a hostile court, known as the Jewish Sanhedrin, and stood almost alone.

He was stuck on the mouth by order of the high priest (Acts 23:2).

Lashing out, Paul said, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck" (v. 3)?

Bystanders questioned Paul about reviling God's high priest; upon learning it was initiated by the high priest, Paul apologized for not being aware his tormentor was high priest knowing the Scriptures "YOU SHALL NOT SPEAK EVIL OF A RULER OF YOUR PEOPLE" (v.5).

Paul turned attention away from himself by referring to the resurrection, which caused a dispute between the Sadducees and Pharisees who were present.

The argument became so violent that Paul was removed from the court for his protection.

The Lord stood by Paul in the night, and said, "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also" (Acts 23:11).

Our Lord is with us when we are at work in His service.

"Lo (behold, look), I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Take courage that the Lord is with us in fulfilling the mission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

#### **Conclusion:**

Jesus brought a word of hope and cheer to many who were in dire straits.

Jesus brings a similar word of cheer to us today.

But to receive confidence and assurance we must come to Him in faith and be actively engaged in His service.

Is your faith in Him? Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Have you come to Him?

Do you believe that He exists and is a rewarder of those who seek Him?

Take courage and declare your faith to the world by your obedience to God, then you too will gain approval.