

PRAYER of Good Courage

Small Group Curriculum

WEEK 4: October 13-20

OPENING PRAYER:

(from our hymnal) Almighty God, our only source of health and healing, who alone can bring calmness and peace: Grant to us, your children, a consciousness of your presence and a strong confidence in you. In our pain, our weariness, and our anxiety, surround us with your care, protect us by your loving might, and permit us once more to enjoy health and strength and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WARM-UP QUESTION:

Share your name, and briefly name one step you took in the past few years that took A LOT of "good courage"...one thing, big or small, where you had to take a risk and muster up some good faith and good courage.

BIBLE REFLECTION:

Mark was the 1st Gospel written, so the 1st account of Jesus' life and ministry. It is the shortest Gospel, and it has a sense of "breathless excitement" about it! Mark just wants us to hear that God has come to us in Jesus, and is actively seeking to help us and to make us whole...to give us the kind of lives that God desires for us!

Mark 5:25-34 - The Message translation

²⁵⁻²⁹ A woman who had suffered a condition of hemorrhaging for twelve years—a long succession of physicians had treated her, and treated her badly, taking all her money and leaving her worse off than before—had heard about Jesus. She slipped in from behind and touched his robe. She was thinking to herself, "If I can put a finger on his robe, I can get well." The moment she did it, the flow of blood dried up. She could feel the change and knew her plague was over and done with.

³⁰ At the same moment, Jesus felt energy discharging from him. He turned around to the crowd and asked, "Who touched my robe?"

³¹ His disciples said, "What are you talking about? With this crowd pushing and jostling you, you're asking, 'Who touched me?' Dozens have touched you!"

³²⁻³³ But he went on asking, looking around to see who had done it. The woman, knowing what had happened, knowing she was the one, stepped up in fear and trembling, knelt before him, and gave him the whole story.

³⁴ Jesus said to her, "Daughter, you took a risk of faith, and now you're healed and whole. Live well, live blessed! Be healed of your plague."

Discuss: The word for 'health', 'wholeness' and 'salvation' are, interestingly, all the same word in scripture (in Greek). One can be cured of a disease, but that doesn't mean truly healed or made whole. In this story, the woman who was considered unclean because of her disease, pushed her way through the crowd to simply touch the hem of Jesus' robe, and in this courageous and faith-filled act, Jesus (unknowingly, but simply because he is God!) not only cured her of the disease, but tells her that she is now made whole (which also means 'saved'). She can live well and live blessed!

Is it possible that a courageous act, stepping out in faith in even a small way, might actually heal US, make us a whole person, in fact "save" us or rescue us? Do any of you have an example of a risk you took that brought you new life...spiritually, physically, emotionally, or in a relationship?

Good Courage in Our Lives

1. Author, Brene Brown, offers us a definition of courage that might be a bit different than what we normally think. She writes: "Courage is a heart word. The root of the word courage is cor - the Latin word for heart. In one of its earliest forms, the word courage meant "To speak one's mind by telling all one's heart." Over time, this definition has changed, and today, we typically associate courage with heroic and brave deeds. But in my opinion, this definition fails to recognize the inner strength and level of commitment required for us to actually speak honestly and openly about who we are and about our experiences -- good and bad. Speaking from our hearts is what I think of as "ordinary courage."

Had you ever connected being courageous and being able and willing to speak honestly from your heart? How is being vulnerable being courageous? Give examples. What kind of courage did Jesus model? What did that look like?

The South African Bishop Desmond Tutu says we are each made for goodness, and that kindness and goodness are the marks of a courageous life. And in the "Wizard of Oz" the cowardly lion asks for courage, but then displays great courage by setting his fears aside so that he can care for Dorothy. Where is Westwood being courageous? And where would you like our church to step out with greater courage? What could that look like?

As we continue to engage in conversations around race, what might it look like for us to engage in a heartfelt way (a courageous way) with people with people different than ourselves? What fears would we need to set aside in order to do that?

2. <https://www.today.com/video/inside-a-father-daughter-business-bringing-neighbors-together-70251589661>

This is the 3 minute video that was shown during the sermon. If you weren't there, please view it yourself and/or watch it as a group.

The young woman says that 2,000 years ago we received an invitation to love our neighbor. How does that invitation, to love your neighbor, take courage? How might you see your dining room table, or picnic table, or neighborhood coffee shop, as a "table with a mission" or as a "great equalizer" as the woman spoke of it? With upcoming holidays, how might a table in your life be a good place to listen? To whom? What would you be willing to try around your table with some guests?

PRAYER OF GOOD COURAGE

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Community Meal starts this Wednesday, Oct. 16!

We give thanks for the service of Janet Johnson, Financial Coordinator, between services this Sunday, with a brief program a little after 10:00 AM.