

Exercising Moral Courage

Do you have the moral courage to stand up for what is right, at the right moment?

When Jehovah spoke to Israel, He said, “Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am Jehovah” (Leviticus 19:16). The matter of standing “against the blood of thy neighbor” is interpreted by Jewish writers that a man by this law is bound to do all he can to preserve the life of his neighbor when it is by any means in danger, by drowning or by thieves and wild beasts” (Jarchi). As such, a man would be guilty of violating the laws of God if he did not exercise moral courage for the benefit of his neighbor.

One man of note, who failed to exercise moral courage, was Pilate. In the gospel of Mark, we are told that Pilate “perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up” (15:10). Even though Pilate knew such to be the case, and had said of his own tongue, “I find no fault in this man,” (Lk. 23:4) yet, “wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified” (Mark 15:15). Pilate did attempt to appease the crowd, to get them to see the foolishness of their actions, but ultimately, he caved.

Each day we are required to exercise moral courage: to stand up for what is right, at the right moment. When Paul wrote to Titus, he described the conditions prevalent in Crete, and said, “For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (Titus 1:10-11). These men, whose talk did not lead to good, but to the deceiving of the mind of the hearers, were not allowed to proceed, thus Paul said, “For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith...” (Titus 1:13). In so doing, Titus would not only save those who were being overthrown by such teaching, but also, bring these unruly men to a soundness of faith.

What does the Lord find when his seeking eye passes over our lives? “And I sought for a man among them, that should build up the wall, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none” (Ezekiel 22:30). Ross Triplett, Sr.