**Courage as a Biblical Concept.**

1. Welcome and Introduction.

* Tonight, all around the world millions are waiting for midnight.
* It is often a time when we reflect on the year gone by.
* And we celebrate the start of a brand-new year.
* A year ofopportunities and challenges.
* Each one has their own expectations of what the new year will bring.
* I would like to bring our New Year’s thought into a biblical context.

**Lamentations 3:22-23**

22.*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;his mercies never come to an end;23.they are new every morning:great is your faithfulness.*

* In this context God does not promise a “Happy New Year”.
* But he does promise his daily love, his mercy and his faithfulness.
* Some of what we will be facing in 2019 will stretch usand require faith and courage.
* In the Bible there are hundreds of illustrations of courage.
* To illustrate this, I will give a few examples.
* **1 Chronicles 28:20.**

David, speaking to his son Solomon says,

*“Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the LORD God, even my God, is with you.”*

* + **Deuteronomy 31:6.**

Moses, speaking to the Israelites said,

*“Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”*

* + **In the New Testament**, Paul writing to the Church in Corinth, said:

“*Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord.”***(1Cor. 15:58).**

* + **And to the church in Ephesus**, Paul writes:

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and his mighty power.”***(Eph. 6:10).**

* We may therefore conclude that God **commands** us to have courage.
* This evening I would like to look at a definition of courage given in the “New Bible Dictionary”.

*“Courage is a Christian duty but also a constant possibility for one who places himself in the hands of almighty God. It shows itself in patient endurance, moral steadfastness and spiritual fidelity.”*

* + From this definition we see that biblical courage differs from secular courage.Secular courage relies on self-effort, whilst biblical courage is our reliance on God.
  + This distinction is vital,and I would like to examine it more carefully
* **Courage as a Christian duty**: If we understand Christian duty as our response to God’s love and unmerited favour in Christ then our love for God supersedes our own wellbeing.
* **Courage as a constant possibility**: If you have been called by God,He has a purpose, and this will require courage as you obey the Holy Spirit.
* **Courage as patient endurance**: This may mean waiting on God patiently. It is often difficult when you know you are called but we need to learn how to wait on God.
* **Courage as moral steadfastness**: Our moral standards need to be constant, this often requires courage as we let go of carnal pleasures.
* **Courage as spiritual fidelity**: This takes time and restraint as we learn to trust God, even when the outcome seems unlikely.

Of course, none of this is possible without God having regenerated our spirit and having taken up residence in us.

Dear friends, there is only one way of knowing God at this level, and that is by putting my faith in The Lord Jesus Christ.

Let’s pray.