



DATE	July 24, 2016
SPEAKER	David Smith
TITLE	300 Rise of Courage
SERIES	The book of Judges contains some of the strangest stories you'll ever hear. These unusual stories are entertaining, confusing, dramatic and even a bit crazy. But they also contain deep spiritual insights and truths. You can't make this stuff up!

Icebreaker

Pastor David started with the question: Where do you need courage in your life now? Take a few minutes to answer and discuss.

According to our culture, what kind of people have the most courage?

What area of people's lives usually require courage to act?

What is the difference between personal courage where we depend on our experience, skills, talents, and resources VERSUS courage coming from personal weakness where we depend totally on God?

What personal experience do you have with the Sin-Rescue-Worship-Victory (or sin again) cycle?

Why is it so hard to find or maintain courage in difficult or uncertain circumstances?

In Depth – Searching the Scriptures

Gideon was described as a mighty warrior, but was found “taking batting practice in the dugout.” Is this the type of warrior the Bible describes elsewhere as “mighty?” What other warriors do you know from Scriptures, and what characteristics and actions identify them as mighty? Do they have anything in common with Gideon? What contrasts are there between them and Gideon?

Pastor David used the formula, Courage = You + knowing God wants you to do it + God with you in it. From your experience, what is the most challenging part of the formula?

In Judges 6, Israel had repeated trouble staying in God's will or seeking Him in their daily efforts to follow His will. Why did the people of Israel have so much difficulty following God consistently?

God demonstrates through scripture His goodness and the peace of the Holy Spirit. What are some other examples of ordinary people in the Bible demonstrating courage?

Pastor David identified four sources of evil and suffering, and emphasized that most of them are not God's response to our failings. What is your reaction to that? Is this teaching consistent with lessons on personal suffering you grew up with? Can you find scripture supporting this?

Pastor David referred to 2 Corinthians 7:10 “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to Salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” What is the difference between repentance and death? Why is the weight of regret unfortunately “easier” than repentance even for believers?

Application

To break the sin cycle we must repent, not just regret.

Do you agree it takes a big dose of courage to go from sorrow over consequences (regret) to sorrow over sin (repentance)?

Why are people so afraid of true repentance?

Do we try to hide from God our worldly motivations...often more about us, our families and our security than about His purposes in our lives and those of others?

Can you identify any idols in your life by asking; what area is a struggle to trust God with, what’s most important to me, what do I think and worry about most?

Do you agree that we (like the people of Israel), sometimes mix worship of God with forms of idolatry?

How can we have courage that God is with us and His will is for our good?

What deliberate steps can you take to overcome sin with courage, knowing God is with you?
Pastor David finished with the question: With courage, what do you need to chase out of your life?

How can the cycle of sin, rescue, worship lead to Victory?