

Pastors Perspective February 2022

Courage for Today

By Pastor Tim White,
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Gig Harbor is a picturesque destination in the southern part of the Puget Sound where, during my high school years, our family would take the half-day trip there by sailboat from Lake Washington and anchor in the harbor overnight. Recently, my wife and I visited our younger daughter and family in that area. So, we all went to the Harbor History Museum (I highly recommend it). There are multiple displays, artifacts, and short videos that have something for all ages. And then, quite unexpectedly, one video caught my attention.

The video explained how commercial fishermen use their large nets to catch fish (i.e., gillnet fishing). According to the video, the large nets have a series of floats along one side and weights along the other side. Therefore, when the net is stretched out in the water, it forms an underwater wall in which any fish in the area are caught as the fishing vessel slowly moves the net.

However, what caught my attention was the narrator's statement: "The fish that get caught are the ones who are swimming with the current." Consequently, the fish swimming against the current were the only ones not swept up in the clutches of their nets. I think you know where I am going with this.

Idioms like "going against the tide" refer to people who are willing to hold to their standards even though society's "current" expectations demand otherwise. In honor of February being "Black History Month," we can think of people like Rosa Parks who refused to comply with the unjust demands that blacks sit in the back of the bus. Other blacks in the south followed suit by sitting at tables in local diners reserved only for white people. They suffered greatly at the time for "going against the tide" of racism. We honor them today for their courage.

Most notably, is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who lived by the words he spoke in his famous sermon on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial; namely, "people will be judged not by the color of their skin, by the content of their character." Dr. King and many others (including many whites) believed that one's quantity of melanin (the pigment that gives skin its dark color) did not determine a person's value or ability to access their God-given rights. Dr. King had such a passionate commitment to this truth that he was willing to stake his life on it – which he eventually gave.

Courage is a virtue greatly needed today. It is courage driven by one's commitment to the truth that enables one to swim against the tide of lies, injustice, and corruption despite the consequences. Those brave blacks from the sixties would not allow themselves to travel the easy

road of compliance and conformity. Instead, they were willing to suffer personally for the sake of standing for what they knew was right, moral, and true.

Today, concerned parents display this virtue or courage all across America. They have a commitment to the truth and are rising up against the flood of lies and distorted history being taught in our public schools. For example, the teaching that feelings matter more than the truth so that a biological boy who feels that he is a girl is, in fact, a girl, and if anyone says otherwise, they are shouted down and “canceled.” Or that the color of one’s skin determines who has value and who should be vilified. And then there is the erasing of our nation’s Judeo-Christian heritage and values, and then falsely condemning America as being founded on racism and slavery through the 1619 Project curriculum.

Additionally, millions of Americans in healthcare, the military, and law enforcement have shown courage by being willing to get fired instead of violating their commitment to the truth that neither the government nor their employer owns their bodies. However, the high level of intolerance and exclusion from places of business and denying healthcare benefits for those who do not follow the “current” demands of those in power is even more disturbing.

What price are we willing to pay for the things we hold to be true? This question will be answered one person at a time – and by actions, not just words. The philosophy that says, “go along to get along,” never created role models for the next generation. There are no memorials to people who just “kept their head down,” hoping things would work out somehow (and without impacting their current comfort level). But then, those things of greatest value (like the integrity of heart and mind and being a person of honor) are also the costliest.

Courage is contagious. What challenges are you or those near you facing today? Your courage to stand upon your commitment to the Truth will inspire others like Rosa Parks and Dr. M.L. King Jr.’s courage did for their generation. One final note is that courage without a humble heart can degenerate into arrogance and intolerance toward those who think differently. Ms. Parks and Dr. King walked in a bold humility that made their courage even more powerful. This kind of courage is being modeled by more and more people today, and so let’s join them and give our children’s generation something to be thankful for.

Note about Dr. Erwin Lutzer’s book study, “We Will Not Be Silenced” (see the calendar on page one) – the book and workbook can be ordered together for \$16.99 online at: www.christianbook.com. We want to help equip believers to “Respond courageously to our culture’s assault on Christianity.” Beginning Feb 15, Tuesdays – either at 10:00-11:30 am, or 6:30-8:00 pm at our church facilities. Maybe you could do this in your church too?