

Challenge to Courage

by John Ridley

The sermon challenges listeners to face challenges with courage and not be ashamed of Christ and his words.

Duration: 45:39

Scripture: Mark 8:38, Luke 7:23, Luke 9:23, Luke 13:3, John 3:16, John 8:11, 1 Corinthians 11:24-25

Topics: "Courage In Faith", "Shame And Redemption"

Description

In this sermon, Reverend John G. Ridley focuses on the scripture verse from Mark 8:38, where Jesus warns about the consequences of being ashamed of him and his word. Ridley emphasizes the importance of courage and how it inspires the best in humanity. He gives examples of courage, such as David facing Goliath and Jesus enduring the cross. Ridley also shares a story of a lighthouse keeper who bravely rescued seven people from a shipwreck. He encourages the congregation to not be ashamed of Christ and to boldly live out their faith. The sermon concludes with a call to prayer for those who need God's power and grace to be unashamed of Christ.

Transcript

The Reverend John G. Ridley was given at the Central Baptist Church in Toowoomba. My final message is based on the last verse of that brief scripture that I read. I'm going to read the scripture in a moment.

I'm going to tell you what I encourage with the message. Christ's challenge to courage and his warning of the cost of cowardice. Now you've got the scripture, 38th verse of the 8th chapter of Mark, and remember these words fell from sinless lips.

These words came from the ones who never sinned. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the Holy Angels. Courage, wherever it is displayed, excites the praise and the admiration of the best of the human race.

The soldiers of Saul's army could never forget that remarkable sight. A little shepherd boy with a staff and a sling and a few stones, running up into the valley of Elah, to face that heavily miled giant Goliath and to overthrow him. Wonderful courage.

They were to talk of it and to sing of it right down the centuries in Israel. Not only the shepherd boy, but many of you all have shown courage too. I'd like to remind you of a fearful storm that burst upon the coast

of Old England, right up on the coast of Northumberland, in 1838.

Royal, terrific night. Flares went up from the ship in distress. Nothing could be done.

The first thing in the brave Greek morning was the billows gassing the shore. The old lighthouse keeper looked out and saw, on the distant rugged rock, part of a ship's mast driven into the rock and seven poor half-frozen people clinging to it. I can't possibly go, he said to his wife, I couldn't handle the lifeboat alone in such a sea.

No dad, you mustn't go, she said. It's impossible. And suddenly his daughter, a girl of about 19, said father, I'll go with you and handle the lifeboat.

Wait, said the mother, if your father is down today, I'll hold you responsible for it. Father, she said, we must go then. I'll go with you and handle the lifeboat.

And William Darling was as great a hero as his girl was a heroine. And they pushed the heavy lifeboat down the strip of sand, and in a few moments they were in the boiling billows, handling it, over wave after wave, as they plowed and plowed out towards those broken rocks. And when they got near the rocks, Grace took charge of the boat.

And as the wave came, she swung it round with the oars and drew it up alongside of the rock, and William Darling jumped out onto the rock. And then time and again, she swung that lifeboat round to the rock, heading for those frozen people into the lifeboat. And they brought the cabin back, and the whole of the English speaking world rang with the praise of Grace Darling.

Things that poorly adorned her. She was feasted and feasted on every time. But she died shortly afterwards.

But when I was a boy at school at the beginning of this century, I used to sing in my class, Grace has an English heart, meaning a brave heart. Oh, it was courage. And you're a poor type of person if you can't admire courage.

I'll never forget it. Crouched down on my first day of terrific fighting in France, when we were to go over the breastworks against the hail of death. I'll never forget the sight of that young officer who picked up a trench coat and threw it over his shoulder, and looked along our line and said to me, I was like a sergeant, I'll lead the line over his wing.

And then he turned right and left, and lifted the cigarette and touched the cigarette a moment, and amidst the thunder of battle he said, come on boys, and walked straight over into that falling fire and fell. I swore to cross on the very top of the breastworks, but I never forgot the courage of Lieutenant Briggs as we dashed on. Remember this down the year.

Courage is no right thing, my friend. And the Lord Jesus Christ, who inspires courage, who calls it a virtue, who claims that we could face up to the challenge of courage, I love to think that. Our blessed Savior was ever in demand.

He had to face the hardest of fighting himself, and he faced it unflinchingly. I like courage, don't you? I admire it. Courage, brother, do not stumble, though thy path be dark at night.

There is far to guide the humble. Trust in God, and do the right. And here he brings us the challenge of courage.

Prince, however, the circumference of the challenge. Me and my words, the cause of the challenge. Ashamed in this adulterous sinful generation.

Ashamed when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the Holy Angel. And that's the very center of the challenge, the very core of it. Think for a moment of the circumference of the challenge.

Whosoever, that's a beautiful word, that includes you, includes me, everyone here, that means anyone. But wait a moment, does God ever use that word? Frequently. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever, believing in him, would not perish, but hath everlasting life.

For whosoever has everlasting life, go on to Luke 7, and you'll find that whosoever of faith Jesus said to some of those that came from John the Baptist, Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. I've met a number of people that got offended in God, and said to me only a few days ago, I, I, I, I'm not right, I'm not right with God. I, I've got an injury, and the way that I had to go through my youth, and put up with so much, ah, offending in Christ.

Here, tonight we read, for whosoever of discipleship, whosoever will come after me, you're not forced to. You can go down to death without Christ if you're determined to, and Christ went after them. But whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

Whosoever of discipleship, and then the whosoever of courage for charity. What does it mean, gracious? Well, it means lads in their lightheartedness, and girls in their gaiety, young men in their strength, and young women in their beauty. It means middle-aged men in their prime and parenthood, middle-aged women in their motherhood and maturity.

Why, it means old men in their supposed wisdom, old women in their supposed weakness, whosoever. It means the Queen, Wanda, in Buckingham Palace, and every member of the far-flung Commonwealth that she offends this Queen of. It means the Governor General of this land of Australia, and every citizen in Australia, whosoever.

It means the manager of Wanda Brisbane's farm in his beautiful office, and every member of his staff right down to the messenger boy. It means the captain in Wanda's ship on the bridge there, and every officer and member of the ship's company, and every passenger aboard. Whosoever.

Why, it means the headmaster of the school, and every member of the staff, every scholar in the school. It means the mate from the hospital, every nurse from the staff, every patient in the hospital. Whosoever.

Oh, I said, Wanda, I think you may have to excuse me from this creature. I'm not in a Jeshua state. Whether you're white, or black, or rich, or poor, or male, or female, or communist, or capitalist, or liberalite, or laborite, you're in it.

You're a whosoever. And the Lord Jesus Christ brings the great sparkle out that the conference beyond now came, and said, Whosoever. What? Thou be ashamed of me and my words.

The cause of the challenge. Can you imagine for a moment two pillars raised on this platform? Try if you can to imagine a pillar raised up there, and another one up here. Look at that right-hand pillar, to you it's

the left-hand one, and on that right-hand pillar, me, the man whose name is wonderful.

On that left-hand pillar, the word, thy testimonies are wonderful. Jesus Christ, who was in the bosom of the Father, who was with God, who was God with my flesh, and dwelt among us as a man. What manner of man is this? Does it say after he was, as though it doesn't count a clip of the finger? What manner of man is this? The sinless man answers God.

Look to that right-hand pillar, who did no sin? Look to that left-hand pillar, neither was Zion found in Israel. You've never had a person like that. Zion is just like the sin that comes out so often from us, when we say the thing that sins exactly sin.

The man, sinless, which of him convicted me of sin, said Jesus. Not a word came from him, not one of them cast a sin in his face. Then, if I say the truth, why do you not believe me? What do you say then? Turn to the left-hand pillar.

I am the way, the truth, the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me. Now don't you think you can climb up some other way, friend? That came from the guileless lips of the glorious Lord.

On that right-hand pillar, the sinless man. On that left-hand pillar, the guileless word. He's not deceiving you.

He's telling you he is the way to God. You are coming by him. He is the truth of God, do you believe him? And he's the life of God.

Have you got him? Or are you a servant of his sinless life and his sinless word? What manner of man is this? There's a curious world in the light of his miracles. The greatest man answers God. Look to that right-hand pillar for a moment.

He shall be delighted and shall be called the Son of the Highest. The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, so he will in the near future. The greatest man, the greatest word.

Never man quite like this man. He doeth all things well. The greatest man doing the greatest word speaking.

What a privilege to have the Bible open before you, to hear the greatest word ever uttered in this world's history, or ever will be uttered. Ah, let me say, did he ever challenge that greatest man? He was indeed. He was challenged by the elements.

In a little shift on Galilee, talks about wildly illiterate form, his disciples came to him and said, Master, we must tear this down not that we tear it. And Jesus arose out of his sleep and said, Peace, be still. And there was a great calm, an instant calm.

And they worshipped him. I never knew a form calmed on a split second. I've been in many, many storms of sea.

I feel myself a kind of a Jonah when I go to sea. I land into a storm almost invariably. And I've never known a form that calms on a split second.

It always drains itself out, something less and less. But this Master of the elements and powerful literacy said, Peace, be still. A great calm.

A fierce demon, out of a demonized person who was trying to uphold him, challenged him. Tell me fellow, what will you do with me, Jesus of Nazareth? How do you think he had come out of it? He came out the same way. And they were amazed, saying, even the uncreed spirits obeyed him.

We never saw him on this line. Ah, my dear friend, he is conqueror over the powers of hell, as well as the elements of the storm. Once, and the rest of those, that's the little girl, out of his grip, just before he came to heal her.

And when he arrived at the home of Jairus, they were all weeping and wailing and crying, because he was dead. Jesus put them all out of the womb, took the mother and the father and the three faithless disciples, and taking the cold hand of the little dead child, that little girl. And they were all astonished, with a great astonishment.

Haven't his great words ever astonished you? How they astonished that religious dinner, Nicodemus, who came along in a complimentary way, and said, we know that you are the teacher come from God, because you do these miracles. And Jesus said, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Oh, how, said Nicodemus, how did it appear to them? And he placed his head to the cross.

How those words startled the poor adulterers, who had been dragged before him, and they were saying, Master, Moses says he could be stoned. Jesus said, neither this without sin. And the woman was left alone without God, and he looked down and he said, hath no man condemned He said, no man, nor.

Mark that word, she called him Lord. Neither do I condemn thee. He said, go and sin no more.

Keep your eyes and mind on the message of God. Teacher James, how wonderfully those words startled the people of Jerusalem. When he said, do you suppose the 18 on whom the power of their own parents threw them were worse sinners than all men in Jerusalem? I tell you they would expect you, repent you, all likewise perish.

The greatest man, the greatest word, are you ashamed of them, my brother, my sister? Or are you courageously on a side of the greatest man, the greatest word? What manner of this, of man is this, that a wandering world at the foot of a cross, on good pride and, what manner of man is this? The saving man answers God, and lo, Pilate brought him forth, so that that like answerer, bound, bleeding, that is it, bombarded with abuse. Pilate brought him forth and said, behold the man. Look at him, poor fellow, bleeding, bound there before them.

Behold the man. Yes, but he's the saving man. Turn to the left hand to the saving word, and Pilate said to him, ask thou a kingdom, as thou sayest to this answer, I am a king.

To this end was I born, and to this cause came I into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth, feareth my word. You can be of the lie, you can be a friend to the great liar, you know.

Satan's sent to lie against the truth, every kind, but every one that is of the truth, heareth his word and his answer. Look to that right hand to the other day, see him lifted up upon that painful cross, have a good look at him with the eye of faith for a moment. You'll see that garland of cruel thorns pressed into his blessed brow, so that the blood is just slowly dropping down.

Guilty of faith, more and more than any man to the suffering of death. Can you see lips that have charred with thorns in the agony of crucifixion? Can you see hands and feet scarred by Roman swipes? And can you notice every bone is jarred out of joy? That's about the most awful agony you could conceive as starving. And when the darkness gathered round that blessed figure, there came another anguish.

My God, my God, why hath thou forsaken me? And God's judgment telephoned him, the law has to be fulfilled and described and striped. Guide for sinners and guide for us in the saving power of the Godhead. Look to that left hand stiller and think of the saving word, this is my body which is broken for you.

This is my blood of the new testament shed for you and for many for the remission. What's remission mean? It's taking a while to write it out. The remission of sins.

Man don't you want your sins covered? Don't you want your sins remitted? If I was in debt for ten thousand pounds and some benefactor said, I'll write it all off, John, I'll remit it. Oh, thankful I'd be. And you're in debt to God by being a sinner.

You've piled up your sins down the years. They are beyond number. Jesus said my blood will remit them all.

Oh, see from his head, his hand, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingle down. Do there such love and sorrow meet? Oh, thorn compose so rich a crown. Are you ashamed of the saving man and the saving word? Or are you courageously unashamed of the crucified one? What man is this by the sharpest word on Easter morning? The deathless man answered God.

The deathless man took to the right hand pillar, and he was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and showed himself alive by many infallible proofs. Proofs that you are infallible. He showed himself alive with all the rest of us.

There is more evidence that Jesus Christ rose from the dead to the great bodily creature than if Napoleon died at St. Helena, or George Washington was the first president of the United States. And the left hand pillar, the deathless word, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I'm alive forevermore, and have the keys of death and of hell. I hold the door keys of death and of hell.

I'd advise you to be friends with that. I'd advise you to be in good friendship with Jesus Christ. He's got the keys of the final place of banishment, and the keys of death.

Pardon my friend, heaven and earth shall pass away, said Jesus, because my word. You'll make them a day when the books are open, and you'll judge them, the things written in the book. They're deathless words.

Are you ashamed of the deathless man and the deathless word, or courageously unashamed of them? What manner of man is this, Christ of bloody world in 1962? What manner of man is this Christ? The coming man, answers God, and the coming word. This same Jesus, which is so taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as your feet and go into heaven. That's the hope of the world.

The coming words, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great glory. I once had the privilege of about an hour's conversation with Billy Graham in his own home in North Carolina, and I remember one of the questions I asked the great evangelist was this. I said concerning a certain great statesman, whose name I'll not mention, who was world famous then, I said, Is it true that he

asked you about the Lord's second coming? He said, Not exactly, Mr. Ridley.

He asked me, What is the hope of the world, Dr. Graham? And I said to him, The second coming of Christ. Then he said he sided me with about nine questions, one after the other. Because men are perplexed and worried and distressed, leaders are trying to find a way out.

What is the hope of the world? Why, this is the blessed hope of the world. Jesus is coming. He's coming again.

King of glad tidings on mountains and plains. Jesus is coming again, for with us is revealed people. So we meet him in the And then, look out, for there's the hour of reckoning for the world that's projected him.

Oh wondrous savior, sinless, righteous, saving, selfless, coming. Is it possible anyone can be ashamed of that blessed Lord? But it takes courage to confess him, all right. There was a man named Edward Perenade, and he was dying way back about in the end of the 19th century, the end of the 18th century, rather, and on his deathbed, Edward Perenade is heard to say, Glory to God in the height of his divinity.

Glory to God in the depth of his humanity. Glory to God in his all-proficiency. Into thy hands I commit my spirit.

Wonderful testimony in a deathbed. He didn't live until he died, though. About 13 years before his death he wrote, All hail the power of Jesus' name.

Let angels prostrate fall, ring forth the royal diadem, and crown him, crown him, Lord of all, we pray you, King tonight. He didn't wait for you to die to get right. He prayed his tribute of thousands of tongues down his ear and said, Ashamed of me and my word.

And we close in for a few moments at the end to the treasure of the challenge. Ashamed of me and my word. In an adulterous, what that means, unjust, immoral generation.

Ashamed. The poor people who behind the scenes are acting impurely often, and immorally. Ashamed to offend with some disowns.

Ashamed to offend the blokes at work, and the boys down yonder, and the girls in the scene. Ashamed. Indirect.

And sinful generation. And not one of us but a sinner. Alright, you mustn't hurt me, but don't, because I'm talking about Christ.

He's a good fellow in his own way. He's a sinner. And we all are.

Yet ashamed to kiss with more sinful adulterous people. I want to tell you, dear friend, there's no loophole here. You are either ashamed of Christ, or you're unashamed of him.

You are either a confessor of Christ before men, or you're a denier of Christ before men. You are either on his side, or you are not on his side. Whether you like to say you're right, whether you like to say you'll get there, I wouldn't be in your place with 10,000 pounds in it.

You're ashamed. Ashamed of God in his time. Maker, redeemer, suspender, and spreader.

Ashamed. When some was lifting back towards the end of Paul's life, he said, all they of Asa have turned away from me. And then he adds a word to his young son Timothy.

Timothy, he said, be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. That's it. Doesn't matter if other people turn away, don't you be ashamed of the testimony of Jesus Christ, in his singleness and his greatness, and his coping power, and his deathless power, and his coming from.

Don't you be ashamed of him, whatever the cost. I went and visited the battlefield of Gettysburg twice in America. I've seen the great monuments to decorate that field in all directions.

Travelled over, and I took a few friends with me to one monument erected on Semetery Hill. It was a misty day on this second visit, and I said to them, I want to show you one of your great American heroes that you might know much about. And they didn't really, and we came up to Semetery Hill, and there was the monument of a mounted officer, who had his right arm gone, and just the sleeve pinned up to his jacket, his left hand holding the reins of his horse.

And there was the great face of the monument, on which was inscribed, General Oliver Otis Howard, from the county of Maine. And I raised this monument on Semetery Hill, Gettysburg, and I said to the friends that were with me, you know there's a wonderful story behind Howard. He was the Christian general of the Northern Army in the Civil War, just a hundred years ago.

And about five or six years before the Civil War, he was just a lieutenant at a place called Tampa, in Florida. He was reading a book one night called The Memorials of Captain Henry Vickers. He came to Vickers' conversion, when Vickers read the text, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleansed us from all sin.

And he got down and he said, I shall live henceforth as a man should live, who's been washed in the blood of Christ. And young Howard got down by the side of his own table, and opened his heart, and received Christ, and claimed the cleansing blood of the Lamb over his feet. Next day in the garrison, he was met by a senior officer, who said to Howard, I hear you were consorted last night, old fellow.

Get thee dead, and I'm not ashamed. That's a good start, isn't it? Howard, he said, I will show you any amount of contradictions in your Bible. Perhaps you could, said Howard, but you couldn't show me that last night, I didn't surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ, and I've been so happy all night, I couldn't sleep to have it.

I leave God's time for the contradictions, and the whole thing's passed, as many things pass, and would have died a natural death only for something. About two weeks after that, in a little packed Methodist chapel at Tampa, old Mr. Lynn, the primitive Methodist preacher, was presenting the gospel. Howard in his uniform was dressed inside the door, crowds of people in the chapel.

Mr. Lynn closed up both sides, come right down to the front and meet with the penitent warriors. It will have humbled the penitent except Jesus Christ as your Savior. Come out and meet at the rail, and a few people started to break out, and amongst them was a poor woman that was suffering from hip disease, and she went down the aisle, wobbling, somewhat like a duck wobbling, and Howard looked across to a company of young fellows at the other side of the church, whom he'd known in days of wilderness, and he saw them laughing and sneering at the poor woman going down.

And God said to his foe, Howard, on which side do you want to be? The side of the prophets, or the side of those trying to do the will of God? And he broke himself up, stepped into the aisle, and in striking contrast to the poor wobbling woman, marched in his military stride down to the penitent's hall, and knelt near the woman. God blessed the young man, and Mr. Lynn, God blessed him with a great confession. The whole garrison shook with it, he'd gone crazy, some of them getting mad, others saying, he describes the uniform, others saying, that Howard found a lifelong love in Christ, and before he left Tampa, he fell witness to Jesus.

That's the type of conversion they want for others, that's the type of courage they want. At Gettysburg, he made a stand and played the game on Cemetery Hill, and was thanked by thousands of Congress, and they raised his monument there. Later, he helped G. L. Moody, the great evangelist, in his sweeping campaigns, and at the age of seventy-four, he wrote his last testimony, in Christ's name, of toil and trade and work.

My religion has been a great comfort to me. On the side of those trying to do the will of God. That is the will of God, dear friends, for any unshaved man or woman, or dead, dead in this place tonight.

I know anyone who must be washed in the blood of the Lamb, and have their sins remitted. A simplest day for Antipas, God, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. And the Lord Jesus said, I am the truth, to come to Jesus.

We will, but you all come to Jesus, and you'll know the truth, and the truth will set your end in shame. What's the will of God from the back, for the backslider, who once made a good profession, but lost out in the fight of life, picked up by the devil, picked? God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and he'll get forgiveness. What's the will of God for the Christian? God answers, this is the will of God, even your sanctification, or your holiness, or you might say, your full surrender to Christ, your giving yourself back to Christ.

What is the will of God for all men? I'll just take up that Bible, I could read it if I like to, open it to the praise. All men should honor the Son, said Jesus. Even as they honor the Father, we must honor not the Son.

Listen, you can talk all you like about saying, I believe in almighty God, I honor the great nation, so on, but I don't say Jesus Christ, no, he's out in the picture, then you've got to face up to the one who never lost. All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honors not the Son, I don't care who you honor, brother, you're not honoring God.

You're dishonoring God, who gave his son to be the Savior of the world. Understand, my help brought me to my feet in 1915, a man who had a right piece in my passion for the military life. It was that kind of noble challenge that William Lamb took over, and onto my feet for Christ.

Because I believed with all my heart, a man was a coward who could not stand his crucified Savior, and the Lord gave grace to make that stand. Oh, my dear men and women, some of us are badly ashamed of our dear Redeemer. We're not trying to do the will of God, you know.

The will of God is that we should be contesting followers of the Lamb. Do not be ashamed to own him, or obey the Lord's command. In your every word ask him, show the world just where you stand.

Show the world just where you stand. God will give you grace to do it tonight. And you may feel a little nervous about it, but he'll give you grace to confess him unashamed and come to him.

And as you bow and pray, and I'm going to ask in a moment's time, for those who need God's power and grace to be unashamed of Christ, as an unashamed man, as a back-sider, as a Christian, just ask me the prayer. Let us bow in God's presence, our eyes closed, our heads down. Courage is the most difficult thing in the Christian life, and unashamed confession of Christ is one of the hardest things to perform.

Some of us know that we need God's touch of power tonight. God answers prayer. Do you humble your heart enough to be prayed for? Just lift a hand for the moment and then put it down, and I'd be so glad to pray for you.

God bless you, my brother. Just lift a hand and let me pray for you. God bless you, my brother.

Someone else, could you do that? God bless you, brother. Thank you. Someone else, could you do that? Just lift a hand.

God bless you, my brother, in the center. Someone else, could you lift a hand? Don't wait, friend. Take it from any friend.

Hands lifted up. God bless you, brother. God bless you, my sister.

God bless you, another sister. Another brother, another sister. Thank you.

God bless you. How cowardly you are, even to get a hand up for Christ. And some of you know how fearful and ashamed you are, and you've got the faith, and at last, in the same way, you're unashamed.

Ah, the faith, it will help you tonight, while we're down. Just lift that hand up quietly.

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