

DAY 13

Advance Like Jesus: Courage

... keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:2

Leadership Affirmation

I joyfully press on despite adversity, discouragements, and impudent looks on the faces of those I lead.

Great leaders have courage. As we saw in yesterday's devotional, Jesus loved His disciples to the end. And He knew what the end entailed. He knew what suffering awaited him. And He chose to do it anyway.

The cross has become commonplace as a beautiful piece of jewelry or decorative art in Western Christianity. But it was an inconceivable terror to First Century Jews. We can't begin to understand the full horror of the cross. Beyond the physical torture of it, and it was an excruciating way to die, but beyond that, during His hours on the cross, Jesus became the primary object of God's wrath against sin.

Isaiah 53:5–6 says, *But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished him for the iniquity of us all.*

We can read those verses, and we can appreciate them, but we can't understand their full weight. God's wrath rests on sinful men. We have transgressed a holy God. We are guilty, and we deserve every drop of wrath that we have coming to us. Jesus had the courage to take God's wrath for you and for me. He understood the fullness of what that meant. And He took it anyway. This is majestic courage.

If you want to be a leader, you must have courage. You're not going to have all the answers. You're going to have to make difficult decisions that will be deeply unpopular. You will suffer. People may even hate you.

If you don't have courage, if you're weak-kneed, if you're a "get-along, go-along" person, beg God to change you. The mission is too important and the task is too large for anything but our best for our Lord.

Prayer for Protection

Lord, in obedience to Your word, even when misunderstood, I refuse to respond with vindictiveness or vengeance.