



Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Psalm 27:14

Play your best song, Lord, to give me courage

What makes a king out of a slave? Courage. What makes the flag on the mast to wave? Courage. What makes the elephant charge his tusk in the misty mist or the dusky dusk? What makes the muskrat guard his musk? Courage. What makes the Sphinx the 7th Wonder? Courage. What makes the dawn come up like thunder? Courage. What makes the hottentot so hot? What puts the "ape" in ape-ricot? Whatta they got that I ain't got? Courage. You can say that again!

– The Cowardly Lion, The Wizard of Oz

We aren't too young for this reference, are we? (Granted, the quote is from a movie that's now just over 80 years old, but still, it's a classic. If you aren't familiar with it, check out the Cowardly Lion's performance of "Courage" on YouTube, or better yet, watch the movie on Amazon Prime for a few bucks.)

How are you doing in the courage department these days? I suppose that depends on what you're up against. If we're older and vulnerable, immunocompromised especially, we may lack courage in facing the Coronavirus. (Even if we are perfectly healthy, there's always a chance it could be fatal. This demands courage from all of us!) Maybe you're facing peer pressure to join in some things you know aren't right. It takes courage to go against the crowd, doesn't it? Maybe you're facing some worries this school year with some project, some event, some challenge, some issue, and you wonder how you'll ever make it. This too demands courage. Pause for a moment and ask yourself, "What's my greatest fear?" Courage is required to stop running from it, stop putting it off, but to finally face it head on. Do you have courage? If so, could the strength of your courage fail and flee when you need it the most like what happened to the cowardly lion after encountering the wizard?

What alone gives you courage, courage which cannot fail? It's always the Lord, isn't it? This is precisely what the psalmist concluded in his song which would have helped the cowardly lion out immensely had that timid scaredy-cat learned it. The psalmist sang, "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."

Here's the beauty of that hymn. Are you fearful? Are you lacking courage? Is your greatest fear nothing short of sin, death, or the devil? The psalmist gives you courage. He says, "Wait for the Lord." That implies that the Lord knows your greatest challenges, your greatest threats, your greatest worries and fears, and he's already on the way to be your courage. You need only wait for him, and he will never let you down. He didn't let us down on the cross, did he? Certainly not, he rose after three days. He conquered our greatest fears there, and we can be sure he'll do it again, every time. And so the psalmist concludes, "Be strong and take heart."

There's your courage.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I love the playlist of Psalms, songs which give me a voice, songs which address all my needs with the good news of your love in Christ. Keep me in tune with the sweet music of your gospel, because I know that without your strength I can only fall into fear. Bless me with the very courage of Christ and teach me to face all things with all confidence. Amen.