

# COURAGE

## **He Was Faithful** (William H. Seward)

“. . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

In each of our lives there are moments of transition and temptation when it is not easy to be faithful.

For example, I think it is easier to be faithful in high school than it is in college. A great many are faithful until college.

It is easier for some to be faithful while single than it is when they get married. Lots of people are faithful until marriage.

Still others are faithful until sickness . . . or tragedy . . . or persecution . . . or adversity . . . or retirement . . . or prosperity . . . etc.

The crown of life, however, is for those who are faithful until death.

*Trial Magazine* (July, 1984) contains an interesting article by David S. Shrage. The article is about William H. Seward. Mr. Seward was the principle founder of the Republican Party. He became a distinguished Governor and Senator from New York,

and ultimately was the Secretary of State under President Abraham Lincoln.

William H. Seward achieved fame, or perhaps infamy, by engineering the purchase of Alaska from Russia. Backyard politicians chided him for his "ignorance" and called our 49th State "Seward's Folly" or "Seward's Icebox." History has been kinder to Mr. Seward than it has been to his critics.

Early in his career Seward revealed his courageous character by volunteering to defend a black named William Freeman who was accused of the vicious murder of four people. Freeman, despite repeated claims of innocence, had previously served five years for allegedly stealing a horse. In jail he had been beaten and flogged many times, once he had been hit over the head with a board with such force that he was left permanently deaf and possibly insane. At the time of his trial for murder he could not hear his accusers, nor utter an intelligible sentence.

Seward said, "I am not the prisoner's lawyer, I am indeed a volunteer on his behalf; I am a lawyer for society, for mankind. . . ." A position which certainly did not make him popular at the time. He said to the jury:

" . . . the color of a prisoner's skin . . . is not impressed upon the spiritual, immortal mind which works beneath. In spite of human pride he is still your brother and mine in form and color accepted and approved by his Father, and yours, and mine; and bears equally with us the proudest inheritance of our race — the image of our Maker. Hold him, then, to be a man . . . and make for him all the allowance, and deal with him with all the tenderness, which under the like circumstances you would expect for yourselves."

In his concluding remarks to the jury he made this impassioned plea,

" . . . in due time gentlemen of the jury . . . my remains will rest here in your midst. It is very possible they will be unhonored, neglected, spurned! But, perhaps, years hence, when the passion

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and excitement which now agitate this community shall have passed away, some wandering stranger, some lone exile, some Indian, some negro, may erect over them a humble stone, and thereon . . . 'He was faithful.' ”

William Freeman was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. That sentence was reversed, but Freeman died in chains in 1847.

The wishes of his early life have been fulfilled, however, and William H. Seward outlived his client by 25 years. On the tombstone which marks the presence of his earthly remains are engraved those last three words which he spoke to the jury those many years before, “He was faithful!”

When our last summons is received and we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, may we be found faithful. The Great Judge of the universe does not require that we attain to success or prominence, prestige or power. He does, however, demand our faithfulness. And, thus, may the blessed Savior step to our side and testify on our behalf in the words of William Seward, “He was faithful!”

# Breaking Barriers

## (Chuck Yeager)

The name of Chuck Yeager is famous for a number of reasons. He was a World War II flying ace who shot down five German planes on a single mission. He even bagged a Messerschmitt jet with a propeller driven P-51. A veteran of 61 combat missions he was once shot down over occupied territory, made his way to freedom, and by special order of General Eisenhower was permitted to remain in the war despite orders to send him home.

He will probably be most remembered, however, as the first man to break the sound barrier.

It happened in 1947 in a supersecret plane called the Bell X-1.

At sea level the speed of sound is 760 m.p.h. At 40,000 feet it is 660 m.p.h. Everyone has had the experience of opening the window of a speeding automobile and feeling the force of the onrushing wind. This "compressibility" of the air increases as your speed increases. Airplanes flying at 700 m.p.h. had actually experienced "shock waves" which led to the widely held belief in the existence of a "sound barrier." This was thought to be an invisible wall that would disintegrate any airplane that tried to fly through it.

Early in 1947 the famous British test pilot Geoffrey De Haviland, Jr. was blown to pieces trying to break the "barrier" in a tailless experimental plane called the "Swallow." It disintegrated at .94 Mach.

All indications were that breaking the barrier would be a complex and risky undertaking. Therefore, they determined to go at it by inches instead of steps.

The X-1 was strapped beneath a B-29 and carried aloft. First they glided it to earth with no fuel on board. Gradually they added fuel and fired the four rocket engines one at a time. As

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their speed inched higher they came closer and closer to that frightening "barrier."

Finally, on October 14, 1947, Yeager flew at 1.07 Mach, or a speed of 700 miles per hour at 42,000 feet and thus created the first sonic boom ever made by an airplane. The Machmeter only registered to 1.0 Mach.

Yeager wrote:

Suddenly the Mach needle began to fluctuate. It went up to .965 Mach — then tipped right off the scale. I thought I was seeing things! We were flying supersonic! And it was as smooth as a baby's bottom. Grandma could be sitting up there sipping lemonade. . . . And that was it. I sat up there feeling kind of numb, but elated. After all the anticipation to achieve this moment, it really was a letdown. It took a . . . instrument meter to tell me what I'd done. There should have been a bump on the road, something to let you know you had just punched a nice clean hole through that sonic barrier. The unknown was a poke through Jello. Later on, I realized that this mission had to end in a letdown, because the real barrier wasn't in the sky, but in our knowledge and experience of supersonic flight. . . .

The "sound barrier" was therefore much like other barriers. It was more of a mental barrier than a physical one.

The world is filled with haunting voices that speak with authoritative tones informing us that airplanes flying at 700 m.p.h. will disintegrate, that man will never run a four-minute mile, that Jews and Gentiles will never live in peace with one another, that a lion will never lie down with a lamb. Each time we hear such news another mental brick is placed in the barriers of our mind.

Not only have men broken the "sound barrier" with airplanes, but our astronauts have "walked" in space at 18,000 m.p.h. and not even worked up a sweat.

I don't know what barriers you face in your life but I believe that virtually all barriers can be broken . . . and when they are,

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we too may discover that they were a “poke through Jello.”

Adapted from Yeager — An Autobiography

by Gen. Chuck Yeager & Leo Janos

Bantam Books

## **A Different Drum**

**(Henry Thoreau)**

Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts in 1817 and died in 1862 before his 45th birthday. Though he possessed a marked literary ability only two of his works were published during his lifetime. The first (1849) he paid for himself and was only able to sell 200 of the 1,000 volumes he had published. His second, "Walden" (1854) did somewhat better.

Yet, Thoreau, lived and died in virtual obscurity. He devoted the major portion of his time to the study of nature; reading Greek, English, French, and Latin literature; meditating on philosophical problems; and in extended conversations with his neighbors.

He distinguished himself by his unique approach to life and is famous for these words: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

Thoreau was true to this philosophy. When he graduated from Harvard in 1837 he refused his diploma because he thought he had a better use for the \$5. From 1845-1847 he lived on the shores of Walden Pond in an unobtrusive little hut which he constructed for \$28. He was not actually an ascetic, though, for even at Walden Pond he went to town almost every day and welcomed many visitors to his crude and humble dwelling. A home, which incidentally was never locked. He disdained the world's mad rush for wealth and was content to walk in the woods and supply his meager needs by means of odd jobs. The originality of his thinking is reflected by the fact that he was scarcely on the popular side of any question. While there are areas of his life with which we are compelled to disagree, we must commend him for the courage of his convictions, and seek to imitate the inclination in his life to listen for a different drum.

In a day of lockstep fads and fetishes it is refreshing to read of a man like Thoreau. At a time when the masses react like rats in a maze for the bell ringers of Hollywood . . . when the prostitutes of Paris become pied pipers for the dress fashions of the civilized world . . . when a handful of unwashed and obscene "musicians" can reign like tyrants over the mental and moral values of millions everywhere . . . then my friends it is time to step out of the parade and listen for the sound of a different drum. Let the boobs and buffoons climb on the bandwagons of public approbation. Let the mindless and indolent ape the actions and parrot the creeds of conformity. The revolt of the thinking Christian is past due. It is time to shake off the shackles and be free from the social slavery that chains us to the grist mills of carnality.

The bones of many martyrs are strewn along the highways of human progress. The madmen and heretics of history have frequently emerged as heroes whose daring and courage have blazed new trails for the benefit of all mankind. But let us ever be mindful that heroes often walk alone.

The Saviour of the world sent out His disciples like "sheep in the midst of wolves." He warned them of the fickle public which would garnish the tombs of the prophets whom their fathers murdered in cold blood. He reminded them of His own cross and invited them to follow Him and die. He spoke of a narrow way which only a few would find. He looked down from Calvary with pity and forgiveness for those who drove the nails into His calloused and innocent hands. While nature was thrown into convulsions and while God Himself hid His face in amazement, the careless public passed by unconcerned and the soldiers gambled for His garments.

Each thinking man must inevitably come to the crossroads of conviction and conformity. With bugles blaring and banners waving in the breeze the parade throngs by and beckons to the well-paved thoroughfare of convenience and compliance. The broad way is strewn with the wreckage and debris of indolence and in-

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difference. Please stop and listen for the call of a different cadence. Before the mind is addled by the frenzy of the music . . . before the final plunge with Judas from the cliffs of Aeldama, before the screams of the damned are ringing in our ears . . . let us pause and listen for a different drum.

# **Patton's Principles**

## **(Gen. George Patton)**

Porter B. Williamson was a close friend and associate of the late General George Patton. His book *Patton's Principles* was published by Simon and Schuster in New York.

Williamson writes:

Many historians have written about General Patton's ability to move men into combat. It is my opinion a greater talent was his ability to change battle plans quickly. I remember General Patton's words at some of the briefing sessions: "We must be able to move around like a boxer. The faster we move the easier it will be to kill the enemy. If we cannot change battle plans, it's the same thing as digging a foxhole where the enemy will find us and put us in our graves. We have to be able to change or we will get the . . . shot out of us, and we would deserve it! When we are not moving we are losing. Nothing stays the same in war."

On another occasion he said:

"We have the speed to move behind enemy lines. It will be lonely behind the enemy lines, but that's where wars are won. The natives behind the lines will not shoot much because they will not have any heavy guns. If we get behind the enemy, they will not shell us because they would be hitting their own kinfolk. No soldier likes to fire into his hometown. We will go in and take whatever we have to take, but we will not waste time on taking any position we have to defend unless we will gain in killing the enemy. The quickest way to win a war is to cut the enemy away from supplies. We are self-contained! We have everything we need to last behind the enemy lines for days. We can capture any gasoline we might need. We will not mind being lonely because we know we can fight our way back to friendly troops. The best plan is to raise hell until the friendly troops can come to us. Nothing goes faster than success. When we have the enemy on the run, we'll keep him running. Night and day we will drive and never stop. We will never rest when we are winning . . . we will

keep driving whether we have rations or not. We can always eat our shoes, our belts, or each other. We will be like the horse cavalry. We will feed off of the land. We will capture food and gasoline from the enemy . . . they will think they have us surrounded. We will teach the . . . that to surround us is to make sure they will die. When we are surrounded we can fire in any direction and hit the enemy. . . .”

Some will recall that famous incident during the Battle of the Bulge when American troops were surrounded. When the Germans demanded that they surrender the reply was “Nuts!”

We may find some of General Patton’s language a bit salty and offensive. We, as Christian soldiers, have no personal desire to kill anyone. Yet, we surely can learn something from this legendary General whose genius has been recognized by friend and foe alike.

The church has never been more successful than when it was on the move. When we pause to dig our foxholes, or erect our fortresses, we inevitably lose some of the lustre and momentum of victory. Someone has said that Christianity is like riding a bicycle, you go forward or you get off.

Because the church of our blessed Lord is described in Scripture as a “body” we, too, possess the capacity to be flexible and to adapt to differing circumstances. When the door was closed to Bithynia Paul turned to Asia. When the door was closed to Asia he moved into Macedonia.

Moving deftly but with a great sense of direction Paul was able to evangelize from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum in only ten short years.

Fighting behind enemy lines, Patton learned the lesson of improvising from what was available so that he would not be tied down with cumbersome supply lines that would ultimately prove impractical in waging spiritual warfare.

We can always learn from one another . . . and sometimes the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of Light.

## **Never Quit** **(Glenn Cunningham)**

In January 1979 Glenn Cunningham was honored in Madison Square Garden as the outstanding track performer of the 20th century. Yet at the age of seven he had been told that he would never walk again.

Glenn was the victim of a school room fire that took his brother's life and nearly made him a permanent cripple.

It was February 1916 when Floyd Cunningham attempted to start a fire in the coal stove which heated their one room school house. Someone had filled the five gallon kerosene can with gasoline. There was an incredible explosion.

Glenn was standing nearby at the time and the force of the explosion threw him back against the wall. Both boys were on fire. They ran outside and rolled on the ground begging someone to throw sand on them. The ground was so frozen that nothing could be done.

Somehow these boys made it two miles to their home where Floyd died and Glenn lingered for many weeks near death. There was the ever present danger that even if Glenn lived his legs would have to be amputated. The agony and pain from the burns was compounded by boils and bed sores.

It was in August of that year when the doctor took his temperature and tried again unsuccessfully to bend his stiff legs . . . then turned to the patient and said . . . "Glenn, for six months you have been telling us that you are going to walk again, do you still believe it?"

"Yes sir" he said.

Then with the encouragement of his mother and doctor Glenn tried to walk again . . . but failed. Bracing himself upright in bed with one hand he used his other hand to inch his right leg off the edge of the bed. Slowly he did the same with the left leg.

Sweat broke out on his body as he tried to stand. If his mother

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and doctor had not been there to catch him he would have fallen. He wept bitter tears.

Though Glenn was now beyond the danger of amputation there was a serious question as to whether he would ever be able to use his legs again. In order to move across the room he would lie down on the floor and drag himself forward on his elbows, dragging his useless legs behind him.

Glenn was a boy, however, who never quit trying. They placed a chair by his bed and it became his exercise machine. Daily he would work by the hour learning to stand and ultimately to inch his way around the chair.

At night his mother would massage his legs and watch the tears glisten upon his cheek. One leg was shorter than the other and it seemed that he would never run again.

Glenn, however did learn to walk. At least once each day he would hobble up to the back of a cow and grab hold of her tail. As she dragged him along he learned to increase his speed.

Soon Glenn was joining his brothers hunting rabbits on foot. Even with a hippity hop gait he was developing speed.

Before the flesh had even grown back over some places on his legs he entered a mile race at the annual Farmer's Fair. Competing against eight high school boys who were much older and larger it seemed at first a comical contest. Everybody had on track shoes and trunks except Glenn. He wore homemade woolen shirt and pants and thick soled canvas sneakers with heavy socks. Even fully clothed he weighed but a scant 70 pounds.

Nevertheless Glenn outran them all. Since he had never run such a race before he ducked under the string at the finish line.

People began waving excitedly and a man called out: "Son, you gotta break the string to win."

Glenn rushed back just in time to win his first gold medal. When Glenn's father found out about the race he got a whipping for his father did not believe in racing.

When in the sixth grade Glenn earned some extra money corraling an escaped bull and was able to take his brothers and

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sisters to a movie in Elkhart. On the newsreel was the great Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi setting a new world's record. Glenn left the movie announcing: "Some day I'm going to break a record."

Even though his father disapproved of public displays of athletic ability Glenn was permitted to run in track in Jr. High School. In the seventh grade he broke the school record for the mile run by 18.9 seconds.

In 1929 at the age of 20 he ran the mile at Stagg Field in Chicago and set a new world record for the interscholastic mile.

In 1936 at the Olympic Games he was billed as "Mr. Clean" because he had promised his mother that he would never drink or smoke or bring embarrassment to his family.

When he was honored at Madison Square Garden the program read:

Glenn Cunningham, the dominant mile and 1500 meter of the 1930's, has been selected as the outstanding track performer of the century of Madison Square Garden history. . . . In that eight season span (1933-1940) Cunningham, a product of the University of Kansas, raced in 31 Garden Miles or 1500 meter races and won 21 of them. In these distances he established six world records. Cunningham is credited correctly with making the mile the glamour event in indoor track.

He never quit.

Adapted from *Never Quit* by George X. Sand