



Message **Transcript** Against the World

Justin Hart

Pastor Justin Hart:

Father God, thank you so much for your mercy and your grace and your goodness, Lord. I believe that when we come in here, Lord and we remove distractions and we focus our eyes on you, Lord Jesus, you do a work in our hearts and our minds and our families and our culture, Lord Jesus. And I'm asking you through your word, by your spirit today to bring a transformational miracle in every single one of our lives and an anointing so that we would leave this place ready to herald the gospel of Jesus Christ and ready to live out the gospel that you've said has happened in us when we place our faith in you. We love you and we thank you in Jesus name and everybody said. Amen, Amen. Well, let's get after it.

I am from Colorado, born and raised here. I'm like one of the 10 of us that are actually left. I don't know if you guys feel that way, but I'm like, "Where did they go?" They're gone. And so many people have come in from these different places and being here all my life, I got to tell you guys one thing that absolutely drives me like crazy is when people mispronounce words, okay? Like it's Arvada, not Arvada, all right? You wouldn't say Nevada, you would say Nevada. All right? One in particular that's near and dear to my heart, it's not Westminster, it's Westminster. A minster is a church, okay? So technically I am the Westminster minster minister, so that's for free, that's my unofficial title that you're allowed to call me if you so choose.

But here's what I wanted to share. Oftentimes people say things and we just kind of go along with it because we're like, "All right, they just don't know it's fine." Or, "I'll

be nice. It's not a big deal." In fact, I was at a small group years ago and we had this newer family that was coming in and we were talking about meals and sharing a meal, and he was like, "Man, this Qdoba is delicious." And listen, we have a deliverance team here at Brave Church, so if you say Qdoba, we can help you. We can get you taken care of. We'll cast that out of you, don't even worry about it. And I was sitting there, this person said, "This Qdoba is delicious," and everyone's kind of looking at each other, like "Is anybody going to say anything? Let this person know." And the conversation starts kicking off again. And I literally said, "Somebody's got to tell him. Before we go any farther, somebody has to let this person know because he cannot continue going on and saying Qdoba." I just felt disgusted on the inside and dirty. It was wrong. That's not what you say.

But what I've coined this, what I've started calling this is a courtesy trap. A courtesy trap is when you end up going along with something because in the moment, you're just trying to be kind, or you don't want to ruffle feathers or you don't want to make it awkward. And all over our culture today, we're seeing people get stuck in courtesy traps because they're going along with things that they shouldn't go along with. And my heart is like, "Somebody's got to say something, somebody's got to stand up and say something. Somebody needs to address this so it doesn't go any farther." And I go to this church, I'm a sermon, most of you go to this church because Pastor Jeff brings bold messages that are full of the Holy Ghost and he brings him with power and he's willing to say something in a culture that oftentimes doesn't want to say anything. Amen.

But what I want to share coming up for the internship, being part of this congregation is my heart, my desire, and I think the desire of Brave Church is actually to eliminate the distance between the pulpit and the pews. We don't just want Pastor Jeff to be bold. It would be weird if Pastor Jeff got up here and preached awesome messages and then all of us went and just lived normal lives, right? You guys realize there's no such thing as a normal Christian? That's not a thing. We stand out because we have the Holy Spirit burning inside of us. And the goal of coming together on a Sunday morning is to be equipped by the leaders of the church who pour into us so that we can then go do ministry the other six days of the week. This is just a bonfire church. We come together and we worship and we proclaim Christ so that we can take our torches and go out and burn hot to a world that desperately needs Jesus.

And there's this thing in our culture today that I think we need to address because a lot of people think they're being bold, but they're really only being bold in front of people that agree with them, which is to say they're not being bold, right? It's not boldness if you're just sitting around and clinking drinks and saying, "Yeah." No, there's a fake kind of boldness that's more along the lines of machismo and bravado that actually won't stand when there's actual pressure and real difficulty and real struggle going on. And so we need to know what real boldness is. We need to be able to grab onto that and say, "Okay, that's not real boldness, that's fake." This is spirit filled, Christ-centered, real boldness that's willing to stand when things get difficult or pressure starts happening.

And we have such a deep need for this, especially coming out of Pride Month.

I've just got to be honest. It is been crazy seeing how many companies have just caved and just bowed the knee. How many schools, man, breaks my heart. I'm so thankful what we're doing with Brave Academy because when I see that stuff, I'm like, "Man, somebody's got to say something. Somebody's got to do something about that." Amen, we can give God praise for that, I'm fired up about it. And then unfortunately, we're also seeing it in churches, are we not? All over the place, it breaks my heart when I see rainbow flags over churches and stuff and it's like, "Man, what is happening? Somebody's got to say something." And I feel like in so many ways our culture is losing its mind.

But one of the reasons that I wanted to touch on this topic today is because I wanted us to know as Christians that we have a deep heritage and legacy of boldness in the face of difficulty and struggle. Did you know that? That we have a deep heritage and lineage of people who are willing to stand against the dark and say something when nobody is say anything. We would see great heroes of the faith that are part of our spiritual bloodline who would stand against wickedness when the church was retreating and instead take steps forward and see revival. And I believe by faith, Brave Church, if we will be bold together, if we will link arms and take steps forward together in faith and boldness, we are going to see revival here again in Colorado like we've never seen before. Amen.

But so that we don't come off the top rope brash for no reason and thinking we're being bold, we need a lens by which we can actually understand what is happening. So today we're going to go to Second Chronicles Chapter 18. I hope you brought your

Bible, you brought some weird device or whatever, the Lord will forgive you, I will not. And I want to talk about a prophet, a particular prophet that maybe you don't know about. His name is Micaiah. Turn to your neighbor and say, "Micaiah." Remember, it's important that we pronounce words right. If somebody mispronounced it, don't let him off the hook. Don't let him off the hook.

And so we're going to start by reading Second Chronicles 18, and I want to read the first three verses to give us a backdrop a little bit for what's happening in the context in which we're entering into this story. Okay, here we go. "Now, Jehosaphat had great riches and honor, and he allied himself by marriage with Ahab," not Ahab, the man but his family. Strange times we're living in, you got to address things. "Some years later he went down to visit Ahab at Samaria and Ahab slaughtered many sheep and oxen for him and the people who were with him and induced him to go up against Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab, King of Israel said to Jehosaphat, King of Judah, "Will you go with me against Ramoth-Gilead?" And he said to him, "I am as you are and my people as your people, and we will be with you in the battle.""

Okay, here's what you need to know, Brave, Ahab is perhaps the worst king that Israel has ever had. He is oftentimes called the scourge of Israel. He was constantly bringing in demon worship and child sacrifice. He had a horrible wife named Jezebel, who you've probably heard of before. And together they were leading the hearts of the people of God away from him. And then you have Jehosaphat who's historically a good king who gets invited in, has set himself up in a relationship with this man, and is

getting buttered up in this particular situation. What I want you to see here is a courtesy trap. He is saying, "Sure, we'll do it. We'll go along with this." And can I just tell you right now, Brave Church, you're allowed to say no to wickedness. You do not have to ally yourself with sin and brokenness and messes, and in this moment, he doesn't want to deal with that so he just goes along with it. And what we need to say is "No, no, no, no, no. This is a trap, we're not going this direction, we're not doing this thing."

And so what I want you guys to see in this story, the backdrop is good Godly men end up allying themselves with wicked men. You have the capitulation of good men, people finding themselves in a wicked world with a bunch of people running the opposite direction and everyone in this moment seeming to bow down to this tyrant and go along with a battle that they should not be a part of. And then we have this guy enter this story, Micaiah, he's a prophet and he's actually going to teach us today what spirit-filled boldness looks like.

So today, Brave Church, I have for you four points about what real spirit-filled boldness looks like so that we don't end up coming up with some kind of counterfeit. We want to live in our relationship with Christ and live out the real thing. So to start, I want to take us through verses four through 13, and then we're going to get into the text a little bit. You ready? Okay, here we go.

Moreover, Jehoshaphat said to the King of Israel, "Please inquire first for the word of the Lord." Then the King of Israel assembled the prophets, 400 men, and said to them, "Shall we go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle or shall I refrain?" And they

said, "Go up for God. We'll give it into the Hand of the King." But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not yet a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire of him?" And the King of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him for he never prophesied good concerning me, but always evil. He is Micaiah, the son of Imlah." But Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the King say so." Then the King of Israel called an officer and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah, Imlah's son."

Now the King of Israel and Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, and they were sitting at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria and all the prophets were prophesying before them. And Zedekiah, one of the prophets, the Son of Chenaanah, made horns of iron for himself and said, "Thus says the Lord. With these you will gore the Arameans until they are consumed." And all the prophets were prophesying, thus saying, "Go up to Ramoth-Gilead and succeed, for the Lord will give it into the Hand of the King." Then the messengers went to summon Micaiah and spoke to them saying, "Behold, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the King. So please let your word be like one of them and speak favorably." But Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, what my God says, that I will speak." Real boldness knows the choice of ultimate authority. Real boldness knows the choice of ultimate authority.

And this is such a touchy topic and our world today, but it's one of really great importance. Brave Church, Jesus is our king. He's our king, he's our Lord, he is our God and we need to understand that today because sometimes we say the word Lord and I don't think we understand the fullness of what that actually meant in the first

entry. They would say things like, "Christos Kyrios, Jesus Christ is Lord." And what that meant to a society that spoke that language and understood those things is that it was actually kind of like treason.

See, I actually have a picture of a coin here. I want to put it up for you. There were all kinds of coins like this one that we'll see eventually, God willing. There we go, we did it. Holy Spirit is here, guys. It's working. We have coins like this that we find all throughout the first century and ancient Roman world that would say things like, "Caesar Nero, our only hope. Caesar Nero, our savior. Caesar Nero, the son of God," because he was known to be the son of Augustus, and Augustus believed himself to be deity. And so they would have coins that would have these inscriptions all over them.

In fact, in Rome there was something called the Pax Romana, which is just means the peace of Rome. And what it was was no big deal, basically just like a giant one world government that you could become a part of. And every time somebody joined the Pax Romana, they would nail these wooden boards to these places with the names of the people that joined the Pax Romana. And on the board it would say, "There is no other name by which we must be saved than Nero Caesar." They were literally called Evangelions or what we would say gospels.

And so when Peter says, "There's no other name on Heaven or earth by which we must be saved, Jesus Christ our Lord," he is making a very serious treasonous statement in that moment because the whole world had set themselves up against God, the true God, the real authority, the real person that they should be listening to and had

started caving to this idea of peace that they were getting from a world that was actually diametrically opposed to what Jesus wanted. And so in this moment when they would say, "Jesus Christ is my Lord," it might as well have been a death sentence. It might as well have been them saying, "Okay, I guess my life is forfeit because I can't go along with this." I have a king. I have a Lord.

And listen, as long as authorities are going along with the will of God and what he's wanting, those are good things, God has instituted them, but we have to know it is a choice in our heart when difficulty comes and if things set themselves up against who God is, our calling as Christians is to know who our ultimate authority is. I don't know if you guys know this, but we're coming up on the 4th of July here, and I don't know if you know this, but the Revolutionary War was originally called the Presbyterian Revolt. Yes, Presbyterians do stuff sometimes, okay? Yeah, send your emails to Jeff Schwarzentraub, that's what I would do. But they would literally fly a flag that said on the flag, "Appeal to heaven," because they were making an appeal to heaven as their greater authority in saying, "We have to serve our Lord Jesus."

John Knox, who my son is actually named after, said this. He said, "Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God." Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God. And when we read this passage, I love it because of Micaiah's boldness in the face of an incredibly difficult situation. Micaiah is clearly not in good standing with the current powers that be. Micaiah is an actual prophet who is part of the group of prophets who has been kicked out of the group of prophets because he wouldn't go along with what everyone else wanted him to say. Micaiah has been canceled, that's where we find

ourselves and he wouldn't stick around those people. Why? Because he wasn't confused about who his king was. He wasn't confused about who his authority was.

There's actually this huge problem in Israel, that originally we need to understand this, Israel was never supposed to have a king. They were supposed to serve Yahweh, they were supposed to serve God and they so desperately wanted to look like other nations and fit in with everything else that was going on that they finally pushed and pushed and pushed until God gave them a king and thus began a long, frustrating struggle with listening to the wrong voices and pleasing the wrong people. They wanted a political leader to save them and lead them instead of Jesus and I can't help but feel that in my guts today with so many people I talk to. Micaiah understood well what his contemporary Isaiah writes later on in Isaiah 33:22, "The Lord is our judge. The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king and he will save us."

See, I think all of us would agree that our God is our authority, but oftentimes I think we allow things to rule over us that should not. Listen, your authority is what you fear the most. You're being led by what you fear. Fear can start to make us take these decisions that instead of being bold faith and processing and running after God and standing firm, it begins to start making us erode and our backbone and our ability to stand against wickedness. Fear starts to have us say, "It's okay," and, "Did God really say?" And, "It's not that big of a deal and it's not that big of a problem if I just let this go, if I just stay in the courtesy trap," right?

Some people are fearful of losing their relationship and because of that, they're allowing sin and things to happen in their life. And I just want to tell you right now,

ladies, if you're in a relationship with a man and you're afraid of losing the relationship and it's going farther than you want it to go, be bold. Be bold, get out of there. Men, if you're in a relationship with a woman right now and it's not where it's actually supposed to be sitting, I want to encourage you right now, if you cannot stand up to your wife, you can't stand up for your wife and that starts way before you get married. Some people are worried because it's money and, "I'm struggling with this financially and that financially," and so now you're getting jammed up and you're full of anxiety and fear and all this stuff because you've forgotten that Jesus is actually your authority and your God.

Some of you have a heart for ministry. God's put a burden on your heart. You know you're called to more, you feel it bubbling up on you and you hear these messages, you hear what God's saying or you're praying, but you're afraid of what it looks like to actually step out and see God do that thing in your life because it might mean some things that you're afraid of. Some people are afraid of their bosses and are allowing shady things to happen at work that they know they should say something about, but they're afraid. So many churches shut down last couple years just watching so many people in the moment say, "We'll just go along with this." And I really feel like it was just a giant courtesy trap for a lot of people.

See, fear is a very serious thing because what you fear most will be what defines your life and your decisions going forward. This is why the Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom because you are not going to make wise decisions

if fear is your master. See, Micaiah knows his authority and is refusing to buckle. He understood that to hide the truth was actually to be ashamed of Jesus and he didn't want anything speaking louder than the voice of truth in that moment. And if he doesn't speak the truth in this moment, he's actually choosing a different authority.

What are you allowing to speak louder than the voice of God in your life?

Because if it's causing sin or, listen, silence in the face of sin that's not from God, that's a satanic fear. And the Bible tells us in first Timothy 1:7 that God hasn't given you a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind, why you need those things so that you would be bold and stand firm, so that you wouldn't cave under the pressure and fear that comes with difficulty in situations that we're going to face. The Bible tells us that perfect love casts out fear. Listen, Jesus is perfect love incarnate, and when we know his kingship and his rule and his reign and his power, it changes what we fear and who we follow when the time comes.

That's what was driving Micaiah and that's what I want to drive us. We need to know our authority and make that choice even when it's difficult and stop allowing things to speak louder than the voice of Jesus in your life, even if it costs you, which leads us to our next point here. So I want us to read verses 14 through 17 together. Here we go. When he came to the King, the King said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-Gilead to battle or shall I refrain?" And he said, "Go up and succeed for they'll be given into your hand," dripping with sarcasm. Then the King said to him, "How many times must I adjure you to speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?" And so he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep which have no

shepherd, and the Lord said, "These have no master. Let each of them return to his house in peace." Then the King of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would only prophesize bad concerning me?" Right? He's like, "I told you this is what he was going to say. This guy's only bad news for me all the time. Did we have to listen to this guy?"

Okay, here's the next thing that I want you to see, okay? Real boldness knows the value of speaking the truth. And I'm saying value here because there is a cost to speaking the truth, there is. It could cost you a relationship, it could cost you a great friendship. It could cost you a job if you're in the business world, it could cost you a lot of money telling the truth. There is a cost because there is a value that goes along with it. Things that don't cost us anything don't actually have value. Do you realize that?

See, what Micaiah is saying here is that he values what God says more than being liked, more than fitting in, more than keeping the peace and more than being perceived as loving by the world that he's around, and in his case more than being thrown into prison because that's exactly what happens to him after he actually tells the truth, right? To him, life lived as a lie was not life at all. To Micaiah, life lived in silence of what you believe is just living a lie, that's all that is. See, even if it meant everyone was set against him, even if it meant that he was going to have terrible things happen to him, he realized he had an obligation to the truth when everyone wanted him to shut up and just go along with it and don't create waves, don't make things awkward, just let it be.

And I feel like we're living in the middle of a culture that loves to cancel people

and loves to classify telling somebody the truth as hate. I mean, I feel like there's so many texts in this scripture right here that in the years to come are going to be banned. You're not going to be able to read them out loud anymore because they're too hateful. We're going to silence love because we're going to call it hate, right? And we had a couple of people, even I've watched as Jeff has read some texts from the Bible, Pastor Jeff brings the word and he speaks it and sometimes he's just reading it and I've watched people get up and leave because truth in the face of sin feels like pain and you'll tell other people they're haters.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon has such a great quote, he said this, "Bold men are always called mean-spirited by cowards." Isn't that the truth? If you're saying something that I don't like or it rubs me the wrong way, it's your fault. You gave him the old Adam. It's the woman that you put here, it's her fault or it's your fault, but I didn't do anything, you're being mean, right? When I make the mistake of watching the news and happens from time to time or it's on a reel or even a clip, I'm like, "It won't be a big deal. It's fine. Turn it on." And then I'm like, "The world is ending, right? What is happening out there?"

And I see videos of stuff that's happening in Canada where guys are just trying to hand out bibles and share the gospel, they're getting arrested. I was watching this video of this guy just trying to do baptisms and there was a mob of people going after and shouting all kinds of terrible stuff, and I'm like, "That is not that far away." And it oftentimes feels like the whole world is set against us and this is why I want to remind

you guys that's okay because we have a heritage of standing firm even in the midst of crazy.

There's this guy that I loved, his name is Saint Athanasius, and I don't know, you guys need to know, I'm a nerd, I like reading, I'm sorry, but this is cool. Some of the best stuff that we need to know is from history because it teaches us what we need to do going forward. Athanasius loved the deity of Jesus Christ, he loved the person of Jesus and he spent so much time writing about who Christ was and what it means for us to actually know him and our salvation and what truth was. And there was a whole group of people called the Aryans and the Aryans were coming in and they were trying to convince people that actually Jesus wasn't God. And so what they were doing is they were fighting in a way that we see similar to today.

They were telling priests, "If you use this kind of language, if you use these words, we're going to remove you from authority and we're going to place someone who agrees with us in your place." And they kicked Athanasius out of his own hometown five different times. He'd preach the truth, he'd be riding and they would kick him out and then eventually he'd come back and they'd try to kick him out again. 17 years he spent exiled away from his own people because he would just continue to speak the truth no matter what because he loved Jesus too much to let it go. He understood the cost and people came up to him.

And one of his famous quotes, people said, "Athanasius, quit. The whole world is set against you." And he said, "Then tell them Athanasius is contra mundum. Tell them Athanasius is against the world. Let them know," because he wasn't going to back

down about it. He understood the cost of Christ was too valuable to let people trample on it and silence it. Here's my question, do you live your life in such a way that it is obvious you champion the value of truth and the Lordship of Jesus even if it gets you in trouble? If the world continues to set itself against Christ, are you willing to set yourself against the world like Athanasius?

One of my favorite prophets in the Bible is this prophet named Jeremiah, he's frequently called the weeping prophet because he spent a lot of time grumbling and frustrated. He would do what God told him to do, say what God told him to say, and when he would do it, they would throw him in pits, they would beat him up, they'd tear up the work that he did. And there's this verse that a lot of young Christians like to quote from Jeremiah 20 verse nine, and it says, "If I say I won't speak anymore in his name, then his word is in my heart like a fire shut up in my bones. I'm weary of holding it in. Indeed, I cannot." And a lot of people are like, "Yes, that's how I feel. His word's like a fire." And really in that text what's happening is he's upset, he's frustrated, he's like, "God, every time I do what you tell me to do, it does not go well for me."

How many of you guys know that we can reinterpret what blessing is supposed to mean? God's like, "I'm going to bless you," and you're like, "Yes, jewels, cars, it's going to be," right? But actually, blessing is so much bigger than that. You see, he understood in that moment even if he didn't want what was happening to him, that the value of Christ was too important to stop speaking. It was like a fire inside of him. And today and through generations after that, thousands of years, people are being blessed by the words of Jeremiah who refused to back down and kept saying what

needed to be said, he wouldn't quit. Blessing is totally different when you understand it with Kingdom lenses, it goes a totally different direction.

See, ask yourself the question, are you looking to be faithful by our world standards or are you looking to be faithful by Christ's standards? See, Micaiah knows this is not going to go well for him when he tells the truth, but he isn't looking for a successful life as one of the King's prophets, he's looking to be faithful to truth incarnate. This man has the spirit of Jesus inside of him, and I love reading it because it just stands out and it fires me up, guys. Bold faith is a herald of the truth in a world that is opposed to it. Micaiah calls us to live to this example. Bold faith speaks God's word and it knows the cost.

Now, there's something interesting that happens in this chapter that I want to show you guys, so come with me to verses 18 and we're going to read through 27, this is pretty interesting. Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne and all the hosts of heaven standing on his right and on his left, and the Lord said, "Who will entice Ahab, King of Israel to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?" And one said this while another said that." Then the spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, "I will entice him." And the Lord said to him, "How?" He said, "I will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets." Then he said, "You are to entice him and prevail also. Go and do so now."

Therefore, behold the Lord has put a deceiving spirit and the mouth of these, your prophets, for the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you. Then Zedekiah, the

son of Chenaanah, came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, "How did the spirit of the Lord pass from me to speak to you?" And Micaiah said, "Behold, you'll see on that day when you enter an inner room to hide yourself because of the destruction that was coming." Then the King of Israel said, "Take Micaiah and return him to Amon, the governor of the city and to Joash, the King's son and say, "Thus says the King," put this man in prison and feed him sparingly with bread and water until I return safely." And Micaiah said, this man, bristling with words here, "If you indeed return safely, the Lord has not spoken by me."

And he said, "Listen, all you people..." Okay, real boldness, this is important with regard to truth and speaking and proclaiming truth incarnate, we need to understand that truth is spiritual warfare. Truth is spiritual warfare. It's not just what's happening in the physical and in the moment. There's something much bigger happening when the truth is actually proclaimed and brought up. Now, there's something very special that happens in this text that happens from time to time, and that is when the curtains kind of get pulled back and we get to see into the Heavens and understand some of what is actually happening behind the scenes.

And what we see in this text is that God is on his throne and his plan is to give Ahab over to his own wicked heart, okay? This is exactly what we see in Romans I when it talks about the wickedness of men who suppress the truth of God and unrighteousness and instead choose a lie. And what it says again and again is, "And God gave them over." And the picture here is that God is actually holding back evil. In his common grace, he's restraining evil and people from doing all the things that they

would actually like to do. But what we need to understand is that if you keep pushing God and saying, "This is what I want, this is what I want, this is what I want," eventually he will let you have your way, and that is what the Bible calls the wrath of God.

Now, listen, Christian, you don't want your way, you don't. Now listen, if your way and God's way are lined up, praise God, we want that. That's awesome, that's what we're shooting for is to align our hearts with who Christ is and what he wants in his will. But if your way and God's way are not the same thing and you keep pushing, you're actually going to find yourself fighting against God and under his wrath. You cannot say, "I love Jesus and I'm pursuing him and I want him," and continue running the opposite direction and expect things to go well for you. It doesn't happen that way. We see God sending a spirit into the mouths of these prophets to entice Ahab's heart to go up against Ramoth-Gilead. We see God giving a wicked spirit, the ability to have its way in this man's life and the life of the people who are set against him, picking the wrong fights, going along with things that he shouldn't and going into eminent destruction.

Now, have you guys ever had a friend that would cheer you on in doing things wrong? How many of you have been that friend? Okay, I have a history, all right? I wasn't born in glory and just floated up, "Yes, I love the Lord." It was messy, and I remember several times where I was a voice in somebody's ear that was not right. Now here's what I want you guys to see. When things go wrong or you're about to do something wrong, there's usually two people. One is the person that you want to call

who's going to tell you, "Yeah, you should do that. Absolutely, go for it." And there's another person that you should call and you're like, "I'm not calling him because he'll tell me the truth. Hate that," right? And we know what that feels like.

See, the voice of a wicked world in your life is a voice of a deceiving spirit. And if you bite, you'll be sitting under an aspect of the wrath of God. This is why it is so important that we speak the truth. This is why we see Jesus telling Peter, "Get behind me Satan, for you don't have in mind the things of God, but the things of man." What he was saying is we need to understand when something is opposing, what God is saying needs to happen, there is a spiritual perspective and fight happening in that moment, and you need to understand that so that you don't cave.

And this is why it's so important for us to speak the truth, because you're not just telling somebody something, you are speaking to spiritual realities that you can't even fully understand to try to hold back destruction that is trying to encroach on people. This is what John the Baptist was doing when he was standing outside of Herod's house saying, "You got to quit sinning. You're in sin, don't do this anymore." And some of you are like, "Are we allowed to tell non-Christians not to sin?" Yes, please. Why? Because there's something spiritual going on. There's a fight for this thing that's actually happening. Listen to me, telling the truth may be the difference between Heaven and Hell for someone.

There's this text that we love to quote from 2 Corinthians 10, and it talks about, "We don't fight like the world fights. We're not fighting against flesh and blood. Our

weapons are powerful, destroying strongholds and principalities," and all this stuff, and it says this, "That we're destroying speculations," what are those? Just lies. "And lofty thoughts," I love that, sounds great, not true. "That are setting themselves up against the knowledge of God, and we're taking every thought captive and making it subject to Christ." And what we tend to preach on in the church is the personal nature of that verse, which is totally true. We are taking every thought captive. The second is corporal. What we're talking about here is that actually what we're doing is proclaiming truth to lies all the way across everywhere. What's the point of preaching?

To speak truth to lies, to make those thoughts that are wicked and set against God subject to Christ. We're speaking truth and saying those things have to fall. And as Christians, we're called to do that because we're fighting for people, we're trying to keep them from destruction, we're trying to keep them from their own way because if they get their own way, it's not going to go well for them. Nothing is more sad to me than hearing sermons from woke pastors that don't talk about sin, they don't talk about judgment, they don't talk about Hell. They certainly don't talk about anything offensive. And what they don't see is that they're being offensive to God, the one person that they should care about, the one person that they should not want to offend.

Truth matters. Telling someone to lie to help them feel better about their current situation is actually not love, that's hatred. You're saying, "Go ahead, do your thing that." We don't want to do that we want to fight for them and listen to me, going along with somebody who's living in sin is just selfishness. What you're saying in that moment is I'm more interested in our relationship staying comfortable and fine and not making

things awkward so I'm just going to go ahead and let you do it.

Now, here's a slide I want to show you. See if we can get it up here. Look at that for a sec. It's funny, but it's also not funny, right? It's funny, but it's sad because I feel like our world is teaching us that's what love is, and that's not what love is. It's an offense to God when we espouse teachings and ideas like that. It's not godly at all, it's not loving, it's hateful to somebody. Micaiah speaks the truth and he knows when he hears a demonic voice out of somebody else's mouth, do you? Do you know when you're hearing something that is actually opposed to what God is trying to tell people? See, Jesus wasn't killed because of his miracles or his kindness to hurting people, you realize that, right? They killed him because he told the truth. They killed him because he wasn't willing to buckle in those areas.

See, church, truth is war. Truth is choosing a side. Truth is incarnate in Jesus. And what we're trying to do is place Jesus in front of people and say, "This is him." When you're telling somebody the truth, what you're doing is presenting Christ. And what sometimes we try to do as Christians is this awkward like, "Oh, hide Jesus, behind me and I'll kind of talk to you and at some point I'm going to try to show you like little bits of him." No, present Jesus. He's the one that saves, not us, not your awesome crafty argument. It's just truth. Amen. We want to present Christ to people. He's the one that actually saves not our ability to make people feel comfortable.

Do you see telling the truth is spiritual warfare? If you struggle being upfront with the truth in your life, I want to encourage you today, be bold in your faith. Be bold in your faith. Speaking the truth is one of the single most important things you can ever do

as a Christian. And it breaks my heart to see so many people taking scissors to the Bible or throwing it out wholesale because of comfort or because of what our world is calling love today.

I got to tell you this, listen, if you lose the fight for being vocal about the truth, it's just evidence that you've lost a spiritual fight in your heart. It's evidence of where you've already lost on the inside. If you're not willing to stand on the outside, it's because of what's happening inside of us. You've already been convinced on the inside of a different truth, and I want to call you to repentance and say, no, trust Jesus, present Jesus, proclaim Jesus. Don't be deceived like Ahab, who wanted to run his own way and surrounded himself with a bunch of people who just agreed with him so he could do what he wanted. And don't be like Jehosaphat, who gets caught up in a courtesy trap and just goes along with it because it's easier than making things awkward or weird. We want to be like Micaiah and stand against the wickedness.

Okay, last thing that we need to know today, and this one's really important. Real boldness knows the end of the story. Real boldness knows the end of the story. I want you guys to read with me 28 through 34, here we go. So the King of Israel and Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, went up to Ramoth-Gilead and the King of Israel said that Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you put on your robes." So the King of Israel described himself and they went into battle. Now, the King of Aram had commanded the captains of his chariot saying, "Do not fight with small or great, but with the King of Israel alone." So when the captains of the chariot saw Jehosaphat,

they said, "It is the King of Israel," and they turned aside to fight against him, but Jehoshaphat cried out and the Lord helped him and God diverted them from him. And when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the King of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him.

Listen to this, A certain man drew his bow at random. How many of you know God doesn't do random, okay? A certain man drew his bow at random and struck the King of Israel in a joint of the armor. And so he said to the driver of the chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the fight for I am severely wounded." The battle raged that day in the King of Israel propped himself up against his chariots in the front of the Arameans until the evening and at sunset he died.

Here's what I want to tell you about the end of the story. In this story here, and it's a prevalent story throughout all of scripture, here's the two big themes that you need to catch, okay? Judgment and salvation. Judgment of the wicked and salvation of the righteous. And what we see in this story is Ahab doing everything that he can to escape death to the point of having somebody dress up in his clothes so that he doesn't take the wrath and this idiot goes along with it. Can I just tell you right now, oftentimes if you're hanging out with wicked people you shouldn't, you become blind to basic traps that you shouldn't be a part of, okay?

He tries to escape. And what happens? A random arrow is just fired up into the air and magically hits him in a part of his armor that's not covered and he dies, okay? You cannot escape the wrath of God. You cannot escape God's plan for your life and what's going to happen. And likewise, here's the beautiful thing, and this gives me such

courage is Jehosaphat was really dumb, and God still saved him when he cried out to him and said, "Change me," yeah, come on man. Well, we need that truth, right? Because if you guys are like me, you've had moments where you've done some things that you should not do. This was a bad idea. And when we cry out, God is still so faithful to us and we need to know the end of the story. See?

And what happens here that I think is important is that Micaiah has total confidence in what God has said. If God says this is going to happen, we can be sure it is going to happen. Look at verse 27, I love this line. If indeed you return safely, the Lord hasn't spoken by me, listen up, right? What is he saying here? If you come back alive, then I didn't get God's word. Because God's word is never breaking, it's infallible. If he says this is going to happen, that's going to happen. And I got to tell you guys, Psalm 139 says, "Your days were numbered for you before there was one of them." That should put some steel in our spine as Christians. You realize how ferocious that should make us for the truth, knowing that my life is in the hands of the living God?

Christian, if you've placed your faith in Jesus and you're walking when unison with what he has told you to do, you are invincible until Christ calls you home. You can walk into whatever you need to with total faith and say, "I got this. Why? Because my God is really great and I'm resting in his hands and I know who fights for me." And here's a fun quote for you guys, Napoleon Bonaparte once said this, "I would rather fight an army of 10,000 well armed and well general troops than face one Calvinist who believed he was doing God's will." I love that quote, right? He's like, "It's one thing to fight people, it's another thing to fight people who just aren't afraid of everything,"

right? And all he means by this is someone who stands on the promise of God, can't be manipulated by fear, and tyrants hate that.

And so many Christians throughout the story have been proof of this, standing against wickedness and actually bringing revival instead of brokenness. One of my favorite stories is that of Saint Polycarp of Smyrna, he was actually a disciple of the Apostle John. And at 86 years old, he's been preaching the gospel, making disciples, getting after it. And they finally brought him before the Roman proconsul because he's becoming a bit of a problem, Amen, I hope we're all a little bit of a problem for a wicked world. He's standing before and they say to him, "You have got to stop preaching, and I want you to dismiss these atheists." And the Roman Empire called Christians atheists because they didn't believe that Caesar was God.

And so he looks to all the people that aren't Christians and says, "Yes, you're all dismissed, please go," right? Okay, okay. The Roman pro proconsul is like, "This guy's going to play ball." And so what happens is he looks at him and he says, "Do you not realize that I can take you outside and burn you at the stake right now?" And this 86 year old man looks back at him and says, "I will burn but for an hour, you will burn for eternity." Just the force of a lion, right? Speaking truth.

I got another one, I mean, I don't know if you guys know who St. Andrew is, but Peter's brother, right? And the story with him is that he's preaching the cross and he's sharing the glory of God and telling everybody about their salvation and their hope and he's standing before people saying, "Listen, if you keep doing this, we're going to

crucify you." And St. Andrew's words were, "I would not preach the glory of the cross if I feared death on a cross." Just bold, straightforward, no problem saying what needed to be said. And those are the people that we look back at to put steel on our spine and remind us we have so much more strength and hope and love and justice and truth to proclaim than we think we do. And if you have found yourself in the hands of Jesus Christ, Christian, you're exactly where you need to be. Amen. We can clap for that, praise God.

See, we have to ask ourself this question today. You don't have to answer me out loud, but I need to ask the question because I need us to be honestly thinking about this. Do you have the faith to stand against a wicked world like Polycarp? Do you have the faith to actually stand against wickedness like St. Andrew? See, because Pastor Jeff comes into this place and he brings bold messages. It can't stop here. His job is to come in here and actually bring a word that would transform us so that the other six days of the week we're going out and being bold.

It is a pleasure doing ministry with every single one of you. And this is something I have to ask myself all the time. Am I in here rooting for truth and then out there hiding it? And I don't want to do that. I want to be bold, I want to live the way that our spiritual heritage actually reveals to us even if it means things don't necessarily go well for us. You see, we don't ever hear from Micaiah again. And as far as we know, he never makes it out of prison, kind of like John the Baptist, he dies there in faithfulness. He dies and his legacy is truth and bold faith in the face of a false king and a godless society. Our legacy and heritage is Christians is that of bold faith and truth in the midst

of whatever is going on? Because we know who we are, we know who our God is, and we love Jesus too much to stop.

We live in kind of a strange time, guys, because I feel like we really haven't had to be that bold about our faith. We've grown up in Christian ground, that's a product of 2000 years of gospel preaching. And now we're starting to see some things drift this way. And I'm telling you, we need to know what actual boldness looks like. We don't need bravado, we need spirit-filled boldness that's willing to stand when things get really hard. Maybe you're saying in this moment, "Justin, I believe you. I do need great boldness. In all honesty, I'm not there. I feel like I've been letting other things keep me from being bold. How do I grow in boldness? How do I do that? I see the characteristics of it, I understand what you're saying, but how do I grow in boldness?"

And I want to close the message this way, we'll have the worship team come up and I want to share with you, there's this group of people in biblical times called the Galatians. There's a book in your Bible called the Galatians. And what was so interesting about them is that for 200 years, they held this patch of ground that is indefensible. I mean, the reality is there's no geographical things that would help defend them, they're on a plane, they're easy to sneak up on. And historians were like, "How did they do this?" And so they found out that they actually fought differently than other people. Most people would go out to battle, they'd go out to a fight and what would happen is they would leave their family behind them, kiss the wife and kids, and go out to the front line. And if they lose, maybe there's a chance that they get to escape or run off or something.

The Galatians didn't do this. They brought their family with them and put them directly behind the front line so that every time they went to war, they were staring their wife and their kids and their mothers and their fathers and their brothers and sisters in the eyes and saying, "If I lose, I lose you. If I don't stand, if I'm not bold, if I'm not courageous, I lose everything here." And here's what I need you guys to see. What makes us bold, what makes us stand firm is not hatred of wickedness, it's a love for Jesus. It's a love for things that matter. It's a love for his Kingdom and our families and our kids and what he's given to us.

And some of us can turn into Fox News Christians where we're like, "I'm a Christian because I love the church and they'll at least say true things," but that's not the same as falling in love with Jesus. And I want to tell you today, if you're struggling in your relationships and you're like, "Man, as a father, I have not been leading my family well. If I'm being honest, I've been going along with things that I shouldn't," or maybe you're a person right now and you're just acknowledging, "I've been riddled by fear and anxiety, I have not let Jesus leading and it's obvious in my life," or maybe you're in a relationship that you shouldn't be in. I don't know what it is today.

We're going to sing this song called I Speak Jesus Together. And what makes this song so powerful is it's this reminder to all of us that we embrace the fullness of who he is. And when we do that, there is nothing that can stand against the church. The gates of Hell will not prevail against it. And if you don't know Jesus today, I want to tell you right now, you have no ability to stand against darkness. You can't, you can't

stand against it without the love of the Lord Jesus pulsing and beating in your heart.

And so we're going to have the prayer team up front here this Sunday, and as we're playing this song, I speak Jesus. What I believe for many of you today is you need to come up and get some prayer because you don't need good counsel, you don't need more time thinking about it, you need a fresh touch from Jesus in your heart and a reminder that he loves you and how much you love him so that you can turn and face whatever it is that you're going through. You need a touch from Jesus this morning. And I believe if we do that, he's going to turn people in this room right now who think they're a mouse into a lion who is going to take ground for the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let me pray for us. And if that's you today, I want you to come forward and get some prayer. Father God, honor to be here, honor to be amongst my brothers and sisters in Christ who love you and want to proclaim your goodness and your mercy and your truth to a world that desperately needs it, God. Do work in our hearts today, Lord, turn our eyes upon you that we would be bold in the face of a dark world. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. You God, we praise.