

Make Your Life Big - Risk Great Things For The Sake Of Christ - At the end of every life lived dedicated to the pursuit of earthly security will come the heart-broken cry, *"I've wasted my life!"* Surely the Lord **does** call us to live life **wisely**. I'm not arguing against that Biblical command. But the wisdom we're called to is a wisdom that views all of life from the perspective of both the **will of God** and the **reality of eternity**.

There was nothing frugal, or planned, or cautious in a poor woman breaking a priceless container of perfumed ointment over the dusty feet of Jesus and drying them with her hair. The disciples mumbled among themselves about the obvious **waste**. They never realized that, in the mind of Jesus, to **not** pour out the perfume would have been the true waste. **Only in risking your life for Jesus Christ and His presently invisible, yet eternal kingdom can you make your life bigger, not just busier.**

1) **BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE WHO SEIZED THE MOMENT OF RISK RATHER THAN WASTE THE PURPOSE OF THEIR LIVES**

I don't know how many people understand just how foundational this idea is in the Scriptures. We read the Bible from the viewpoint of **seeing** how their stories turned out. But these blessed risk-takers had to make their choices at the **beginning** of the story, not knowing how their actions would turn out. Think of these familiar examples:

- a) **2 Samuel chapter 10 - Joab and his brother Abishai are surrounded by both the Amalekites and the Syrians.** The situation looks very bleak. Israel is in a desperate spot. Her very future and her existence is being threatened. Joab conducts himself like a brave leader of David's armies. His words are instructive for all of us: **2 Samuel 10:11-12 - "And he said, 'If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. [12] Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, and may the Lord do what seems good to him.'"**

What do those last words mean - *"...and may the LORD do what seems good to him."*? They mean Joab doesn't **know** for sure how this is all going to turn out. They mean he had absolutely no **special revelation** from the Lord about the outcome of his actions. They mean he isn't acting on some special prophetic word in his military instructions.

Here's what Joab knows. He knows he has to choose **something**. He can't just sit there. He knows he can either **fight** or he can **run**. He knows what is **right**. And he's risking everything on his experience and sanctified wisdom. He's set a course that **risks everything**. And that risk was holy and right.

- b) **Queen Esther is another example** - The Jews are captive under the rule of Persia about 5 centuries before Christ. Esther was the young orphaned cousin of a Jewish man named Mordecai. Esther grew up to eventually be taken by king Ahasuerus of Persia to be his queen. This infuriated the king's chief priest Haman, who conned King Ahasuerus to pass a law that all the Jewish refugees be exterminated. Ahasuerus didn't know that Esther, his queen, was Jewish.

Esther knew that not only her life, but the lives of her countrymen were all in terrible danger. Mordecai sent word to Esther to go before the king and plead the cause of the Jews, but Esther knew that an edict had been passed that anyone who approached the king without being **called** before the king would be put to death.

Esther sent her response to Mordecai: **Esther 4:15-16 - "Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, [16] 'Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.'"**

Again, underline those words in blood red - *"If I perish, I perish!"* Capture the heart behind them. What do they mean? They mean Esther doesn't **know** what's going to happen. This is **her** decision. She has absolutely no special word or revelation from the Lord on what she is to do. It may work out, and it may not. She lays it all on her best decision. She risks it all. And that risk is right and beautiful.

- c) **The Hebrew boys and the fiery furnace** - This wonderful story unfolds in **Daniel chapter 3**. The setting is Babylon. The Jews are again captive and in exile. The king is Nebuchadnezzar. We know the boys (and they really are just **boys**) as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

The king told them in no uncertain terms they were to bow before the image he had set up. They refused. Then the king told them if they **didn't** bow before the image they would be thrown into the furnace of fire alive. Their **risky** response is the stuff of history:

Daniel 3:16-18 - "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. [17] If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. [18] But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.'"

“But if not....”(18). Those words say it all. They didn’t **know** how this was all going to turn out. They had no **special revelation** from the Lord. Their young mouths speak like ours when confronted by pressure and uncertainty. Their words seem to **cover all the bases** - ***“God is able to deliver us....”*** - ***“God will deliver us....”*** - ***“Even if God doesn’t deliver us....”*** This was sheer, brave, beautiful, God-honoring risk. And it was right.

- d) ***The New Testament continues the same brave testimony to great risks of faith. The Apostle Paul is one obvious example - Acts 19 - 21*** tells of Paul’s commitment to go to Jerusalem with an offering for the poor. In ***Acts 19:21*** Paul pledges in the Holy Spirit that he’s Jerusalem bound on this mission, no matter what - ***“Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, ‘After I have been there, I must also see Rome’”***

But by the time Paul gets to Caesarea there are conflicting messages about Paul’s Jerusalem plan. A recognized prophet in the church symbolically binds his own feet and hands and tells Paul that this is what will happen to him if he continues on route to Jerusalem: ***Acts 21:11*** - ***“And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’ ”***

Now when the church hears this word from the Lord the pressure really mounts against Paul’s plans. They began to weep and cry out and beg Paul not to continue. Paul’s response is marvelous: ***Acts 21:13-14*** - ***“Then Paul answered, ‘What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’ [14] And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, ‘Let the will of the Lord be done.’”***

There is the same powerful devotion to risk - ***“Let the will of the Lord be done!”*** Paul means he isn’t sure how this is all going to turn out. The trip to Jerusalem was necessary for the cause of Christ. The results of the trip were in God’s hands. God would be glorified whatever happened. ***“Let the will of the Lord be done!”***

You can’t stay still in situations like these. They call for big decisions. You can’t know the future. God hasn’t ordained we live with that kind of complete knowledge. He has **designed** us to risk for His sake. But you can decide **not to live small**. Get out on the edge. Plant your flag on the mountaintop of God’s wonderful will and kingdom. Stake everything on Him.