Deuteronomy 1-3: Fear and Faith

By
Peter Martin
October 4th 2026

“These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain opposite Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. It is eleven days’ journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea. 3Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them, after he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei. On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying…”
-Deuteronomy 1:1-5

We are now beginning the book of Deuteronomy. We will go through this book relatively quickly, not because it is unimportant, but because we already studied much of the book when we were going through the book of Exodus. To put this book in simple terms, the word “deuteronomy” comes from a Greek word “deuteronomion” which roughly translates to “second law”. We have to remember that the first time Moses gave the Law to the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, recorded in the latter portions of Exodus and the book of Leviticus, it was given to the generation that refused to enter the land in the book of Numbers and subsequently died out in the wilderness over the course of forty years. After that generation failed, Moses has been retelling sections of the Law in the latter portions of Numbers, but now he is giving a full overview of the entire law.

This “second law” is being given to the new generation who are going to be faithful to the call of God and will establish the nation in accordance with His command. As such, there is a need for Moses to reiterate the Law to this new generation so that they can be properly oriented towards God before they found a nation that is truly under His authority. Also, Moses was forbidden from entering the land by God due to his sin in Numbers 20. Therefore, Moses will be incapable of guiding the nation spiritually once they enter the land. While Joshuah was Moses’ disciple as well as one of only two Jewish spies who entered the land in Canaan and didn’t rebel against God in fleeing from conflict, Moses still desires to offer up his final wisdom and exhortation to the people of Israel before he dies and before they enter the land of Canaan and begin to face the various fortified nations dwelling in the land.

This gives us our first insight into this book, it is not a lecture by a disinterested professor, regurgitating facts to his students. This is a series of impassioned speeches given by a man who wants desperately for his people to succeed where he has failed. This also means that it is the distilled wisdom of one of the greatest leaders in all of human history right before his death.

Knowledge and Wisdom

"To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding, To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity; To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion—A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction."

-Proverbs 1:2-7

For the ancient person, simple knowledge would have been a poor pursuit. The reason for this is because our ancestors understood something that we have forgotten, knowledge alone really only serves to puff up the individual, it doesn't actually prepare them to live their lives in a moral or honorable way:

"Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies."

-1 Corinthians 8:1

The nation of Israel *knew* the Law of God when they rebelled against Him, meaning that the cause of their rebellion was not a lack of information, but instead a lack of application. Herein lies a pretty good definition of wisdom, wisdom is the ability to competently apply knowledge. Knowing the principles of driving, sufficient to pass a written driving test, is important, but this alone doesn't make someone a good driver. In order to be a good driver, someone has to know how to apply those principles consistently and competently. In the same way, simply knowing what God requires of us doesn't actually lead us to become good people. We have to know how to apply the laws of God practically and consistently in order to grow in virtue and integrity.

This simple truth is something that many today have all but forgotten. With the rise of the internet, social media, and now AI, information is accessible to us at a scale that puts every generation prior to us to shame. But all this information has not made us a more moral or competent people. One could argue that we're more well-informed, but this has directly led to an increase in divisiveness, pride, and, ironically, confusion.

Why? Because although we have become more knowledgeable, we have forgotten the importance of wisdom and the source of wisdom.

Wisdom doesn't really emerge from a large IQ or an insane amount of knowledge, wisdom can only come from consistently applying knowledge over a period of time. Meaning that the price of wisdom has always been and will always be time, and no amount of knowledge will do away with this truth. And we can always tell how much a culture values wisdom based on how they treat their elderly. In more ancient cultures the older members of the community would become the "elders" of the tribe, leading the people through their increased wisdom and understanding. They no longer took up the roles of warriors or artisans in the culture, competing with the young, they became sages and guides for the next generation, imparting their valuable lessons to those in need of it.

In a culture that doesn't value wisdom, we condemn the elderly for being "out of touch" and try to live in contradiction from the inherited wisdom of the past. I want to make one quick point before we move on, while time and practice are necessary for gaining wisdom, they don't *guarantee* the growth of wisdom. For just as wisdom takes time to develop, true ignorance and foolishness also requires time to develop. So I am certainly not saying that we should listen to someone simply because they are older, but I am saying that we should show a certain reverence for age, and we should also try to learn more from wisdom than from bare facts.

Moses has now achieved this role of wise sage. He is no longer directly leading the people as he did as a, relatively, younger man, he is now leading the people through his accumulated wisdom and instruction before they enter the land. In the course of forty years in the wilderness Moses has learned from his journey, the rebellion of the people, and the practice of the law far more than mere meditation on these facts could have ever given to him. He has *experienced* the effects of the law and of rebellion, and he is now ready to share with the new generation more than a mere repeat of what he told them forty years prior, this is now the same fact wrapped in hard won wisdom and understanding, and it is this aspect of the book that we will be focusing on.

A quick sidenote, it is for this reason that Christ quotes from this book more than any other book in the Torah, and overall He quotes from it more than every other book of the Old Testament with the exception of the book of Psalms. Also, the founding fathers of our nation also quoted from this book more than any other book of the Bible. This is significant because when they were trying to figure out how to govern a new nation, they could think of no better book to learn from than this book of wisdom given to us by the inspiration of God and the accumulated wisdom of Moses.

That being said, this book is divided up into three basic sections. The first section, from chapters 1 to 11, has Moses reiterating to the people the journey from Egypt to their current location with insights into what went wrong in the journey and exhortations for them to succeed where their parents failed. Chapters 12-36 repeat the Law given in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and chapters 37-34 are a final exhortation from Moses before he dies at the end of the book. And for this paper we will go through the first three chapters of this book which details the overall journey of the Israelites, and we will focus on Moses' crucial insight for the new generation, the importance of fear and faith.

Fear and Faith

"Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. 'The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 'and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.' "Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, "who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day."

-Deuteronomy 1:29-33

When recounting Israel's journey thus far, the main thing that Moses focuses on is the failure of the Israelites to enter the land, and he primarily focuses on their fear. The relevant exhortations in this section are two-fold, to have courage because God is faithful. What this means is that Moses is not just giving the basic moral tenet, that they should be faithful to the commands of God no matter what, he is also acknowledging the frailty of the human spirit while simultaneously giving them a way of overcoming that human frailty.

This particular ethic is difficult for us to balance and it has something to do with the juxtaposition of fear and faith. Inherent in this articulation are two basic false approaches. The first would be that since faith is the antidote to fear the truly faithful Christian won't experience fear, and the second is failing to see the connection between faith and fear, to the point that we fail to recognize the importance of courage.

Fear Not

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

-Philippians 4:6-7

Commands like the one above can be confusing and off-putting for the common person because they seem to casually command us to do something that we all know is seemingly impossible. In fact, usually when we apply our will to not be afraid, this tends to elevate our fear and fix our attention *more* on the things that are making us nervous. But, to some Christians, verses like this express an ethic in which the Christian who truly has faith in God will not be plagued by any type of fear.

Such a belief ignores basic truths about reality, but it also simplifies elements of the Bible that ought not be simplified. Remember what we said before, knowledge of the law is not the same thing as wisdom in how to apply it. Verses like the one above can be called moral knowledge, we are commanded to be "anxious about nothing", just as Christ does command us not to worry:

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"
-Matthew 6:25-27

But there is an insufficiency to these moral commands because they don't actually teach us *how* to achieve them, they merely teach us *that* we should strive towards this type of moral wisdom, which is again why the book of Deuteronomy is so invaluable to us. I do need to mention something very quickly before I move on though. Just because moral knowledge is insufficient, this doesn't make it useless.

There are some today who perceive these passages as being a little useless, and so they interpret them in such a way that they lose all meaning. So for instance, some might say that it is impossible to command your emotions, so therefore God isn't really merely encouraging us to be more confident or something, He certainly isn't indicating that being afraid is a moral failing that we are accountable for.

This is not true. The Bible is very clear that we do have a level of accountability for our emotional world. The most obvious example is the fact that we are saved by our faith in God. While faith is shown by works, faith in and of itself originates in the soul, it is an internal *trust* in God and His promises. This means that God can and does command, not only our bodies, but our spirits to obey Him.

However, just as it is difficult to obey Christ in our bodies, so it is equally, if not more, difficult to glorify God in our spirits, but this is a great struggle for the Christian:

"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance."
-Psalm 42:5

The Psalmist is recognizing that his internal discouragement was not in keeping with God's command for him to trust and hope in God, and so he commands his soul to obey the commands of God. While I am certainly not suggesting, nor is the Bible, that it is as simple as commanding ourselves to feel a certain way in order for us to obey these commands, but I am insisting that these commands are real and they do mean as they say.

This leads to the next point, fear is unavoidable because it serves a necessary function. Just as the feeling of discouragement is the normal emotional response to experiencing loss or a reversal of fortune, so the experience of fear is a normal emotional response to something that is threatening to us. This fear is not only a normal response, but a necessary one, which is why Solomon tells us that it is "the fear of the Lord" that is the beginning of wisdom. The fact of the matter is that there are many things around us that are genuinely threatening to our safety and well-being, and if we don't recognize their potential danger to us, we won't treat them with the appropriate respect. And here is the correct usage of fear: fear when properly applied doesn't make us anxious or distraught, but it makes us reverent and appropriately cautious to the world around us.

Though God loves us, God is also awesome, perfectly good, all-powerful, and holy. These attributes mean that just as God has the power and desire to save us, He is also the same agent who will judge us and does have the power to condemn us for all eternity. It is only in recognizing that, that we can have the *wisdom* to treat God, and His creation, with the respect that they are owed. Even Christ, when facing His crucifixion experienced fear in the Garden of Gethsemane and sweated blood.

So when does fear become a sin? A simplistic answer would be that it becomes a sin when, instead of helping us move forward with the appropriate reverence, fear cripples us from acting altogether. The Israelites were right to be afraid of the Canaanites. They were a bunch of untrained slaves fighting against a group of highly trained militaries living in fortified cities. It would not have been a brave action for the people of Israel to run headlong into battle without any assurance by God that they would have victory. But their fear was not supposed to prevent them from fighting, or to be an excuse to run

away, which is what happened, it was supposed to be a cause for them to approach the Canaanites with the right respect, and to rely on God for the victory.

But this is what fear inevitably does to us. Without courage, fear will always motivate us to flee from the things that we are afraid of. We might use justifications like the Israelites to convince ourselves and others that we are acting “cautiously” or we are using “prudence”, but in reality our cowardice is wearing a mask to obfuscate our lack of courage or conviction.

This means that fear is the emotion that allows us to slow down and treat things with the proper respect, and courage is our ability to persevere and face our fears correctly. To understand this seeming paradox consider someone going down the road at a high speed and approaching a sharp curve. It would be reckless to not slow down at all and to approach the curve without caution, but it would be an act of cowardice to slam on the breaks and avoid the curve altogether. When fear and courage are working well together, fear causes us to slow down at the start of the curve, and courage gives us the ability to accelerate out of the curve, this is the right balance.

This even works when we consider things that we are afraid of that we feel we shouldn’t approach at all. Imagine there is someone who has a fear of heights and so they avoid things like amusement park rides. On one hand I would say that there is no real reason for them to overcome their fear of rides, since rides are not really an important facet of life, but on the other hand they do need to confront their fear of heights in general because high places exist and being held captive by fear is never a good thing. Even if there is an instance in which listening to our fears is a good thing, like we see that a particular ride is legitimately unsafe, this doesn’t mean that we should avoid heights altogether, just that particular height. And at the end of all things we must all confront the thing that all our fears are pointing towards, death. This is not a fun truth, but it is true, we will all have to confront death head on in one form or another.

Going back to Jesus in the Garden. It is right that Jesus pauses in the Garden of Gethsemane and reflects on the severity of His actions. Not only confronting death, but public humiliation, betrayal, and even having the penalties of sin born upon His shoulders, this isn’t one fear, it is the worst possible fears that we all face in their maximal form occurring all at once. It wouldn’t have been brave for Christ to confront the cross without pausing even once, it would have been a sign of recklessness and maybe even a disregard for the things He was preparing to lose. Instead, in that place of darkness it was only right that He experienced fear, but He also experienced the courage necessary to rise from that Garden and go through the sufferings that God had set before Him.

A quick note, when I was in Israel I was able to visit, what they believe, was the Garden of Gethsemane. We were told that this place is usually packed, but due to the war with Iran, when we went it was empty and so we had time to walk through the Garden and pray. We were encouraged to take that time to pray about the various hardships that confronted us, to take up our own crosses and follow Christ. While I was praying there, I noticed a piece of religious art carved into a piece of marble. In this image it showed Christ in the Garden praying for "the cup to pass" for Him, and it also showed the angel that came to comfort Him. But in this image, the way that the angel was comforting Christ was by pointing up towards the heavens with one hand, but offering the cup of suffering to Him with the other.

This is a pretty good depiction of what we are talking about. It was the cup that Jesus dreaded and therefore was the source of His fears, but it was His upward orientation, His confidence in His Father that was the basis of His courage that allowed Him to overcome His fear and to confront His death. This is what the commandment is all about. It isn't about an absence of fear, but it is about the right kind of fear and the proper cultivation of genuine courage. It reminds me of a conversation in the book "The Wizard of Oz" between the cowardly lion and the "wizard" of Oz, who he now knows to be a fraud:

"You have plenty of courage, I am sure," answered Oz. "All you need is confidence in yourself. There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The True courage is in facing danger when you are afraid, and that kind of courage you have in plenty."
"Perhaps I have, but I'm scared just the same," said the Lion. "I shall really be very unhappy unless you give me the sort of courage that makes one forget he is afraid."
-Frank L. Baum - "The Wizard of Oz"

The wisdom here is that most of us don't really want courage, we want to be free of our fears. But there is no way to do this in wisdom, the true path to virtue is by learning the proper place for fear and courage in our lives.

Faith in the Unseen

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. “And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”

-Deuteronomy 31:6-8

The other difficulty with courage is that it is almost entirely based on faith in the unseen realities around us. I think that innately we understand this, which is why Christians so often juxtapose faith with our fear, but we rarely think of the implications contained in this juxtaposition. When Moses exhorts his people to courage in the above passage, this courage is based on the invisible presence of God that goes with them in opposition to the visible enemy armies that are in front of them. To put this more simply, the while the source of their fears is visible and obvious, the source of their courage is invisible and only accessible by faith.

There is one sense in which this isn’t true and I want to address it before we delve deeper into the main point:

“And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. ‘You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.’

-Deuteronomy 3:21-22

In the above passage Moses points out that the source of their courage has visible elements to it. He tells his people that they did *physically* witness the power and faithfulness of God, and on the basis of that truth, they ought to courageously face their current opposition. Oftentimes this is the case, we can, and should, try to cultivate courage in ourselves by reminding ourselves of past trials. We can think back to how God has preserved us in the past and use this to encourage ourselves in the present. Moses does this for his people:

“But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as it is this day. “And the LORD said to me, ‘See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess it, that you may inherit his land.’ “Then Sihon and

all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. "And the LORD our God delivered him over to us; so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people."

-Deuteronomy 2:30-33

There is also a tangible source of courage that resides in the future. For the cost of faithfulness is known to the nation of Israel, they know that if they defeat the Canaanites they can possess the land God has promised to them and experience genuine peace and liberty. Moses also encourages them by reminding them of the price of failure:

"So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain. "And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do, and drove you back from Seir to Hormah. "Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you. "So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent there."

-Deuteronomy 1:43-46

Moses even uses himself as a way of driving this point home:

"Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying: 'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? 'I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.' "But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter."

-Deuteronomy 3:23-26

I will delve deeper into all these points in a minute, but for now I just want to make the point that all these sources of courage, whether in the future or the past, or only accessed by faith, whereas the source of fear is tangible in the present. C.S. Lewis makes this same point in his book "Mere Christianity" when he is explaining why faith is actually a virtue in Christianity:

"For example, my reason is perfectly convinced by good evidence that anaesthetics do not smother me and that properly trained surgeons do not start operating until I am unconscious. But that does not alter the fact that when they have me down on the table and clap their horrible mask over my face, a mere childish panic begins inside me. I start thinking I am going to choke, and I am afraid they will start cutting me up before I am properly under. In other words, I lose my faith in anaesthetics. It is not reason that is

taking away my faith: on the contrary, my faith is based on reason. It is my imagination and emotions. The battle is between faith and reason on one side and emotion and imagination on the other."

-C.S. Lewis - "Mere Christianity"

As he points out, his reason is already convinced with tangible evidence from his past that he will be ok, what makes fear overwhelm that reason is that his reason is based on past and future understanding, while his present is filled with terrifying prospects. It is the same reason why we find our fear getting larger and larger when we stand in line at an amusement park. It isn't the evidence that is shifting, it is our physical proximity towards the object of our fear. Even in Moses' speech exhorting his people towards courage, he isn't shy about adding in details of the giants that they have already faced, and will continue to face in the land:

"For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. (Is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit."

-Deuteronomy 3:11

But this is the truth with all temptations. The temptation is rooted in the present moment, attached to our current physical desires, whereas the virtue to overcome our temptation is only accessible through our faith. Take Christ in the wilderness as the best example. When He is wandering in the wilderness being tempted by Satan, He has just been baptised by John and is about to begin His earthly ministry which will lead Him to the cross and to His resurrection and re-ascension to heaven. But Satan is able to tempt Him based on His current physical appetites:

"And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

-Matthew 4:2-3

However, when Christ resists the temptation He appeals to His faith:

"But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

-Matthew 4:4

In order to resist His present temptation, He had to stay true to His belief that honoring the word of God is better than honoring the shifting desires of the flesh. Courage works

in much the same way. This means that when we exhort ourselves, or others, towards courage, we have to be realistic about the difficulty here. In order to “be courageous”, we have to be faithful to the things that aren’t presently seen.

This is ironic because although fear is spurred on by the present, its real power is when it starts moving our imaginations to fixate on possible future tragedies. Our fear wants to account for all the dangers in our future and so our imaginations can actually conjure up whole realities based upon our deepest fears. Once our imagination really gets going, we are completely unmoored from any rational thought and we are now moving on pure instinct to flee from our present difficulty.

Courage on the other hand, while similar, is fundamentally different. In order to “build” courage, we have to call to our minds the past in order to remind ourselves why we shouldn’t listen to our fears. For instance, if we are in the line at an amusement park and we begin to feel fear move in our hearts, we can remind ourselves that we have ridden this particular ride in the past and been fine, or that other people are obviously riding this ride and seem to be fine as well.

Another thing that we can do is to call to mind our future goal or ambition. In the amusement park we can think of the price of failure, IE the embarrassment of exiting the line because we are afraid, but this is an appeal to pride and has limited ability to help, the far more potent source of courage is to think of *why* we want to ride this ride in the first place, to focus on the fun and joy that this will bring us, or at the very least, the feeling of success at having faced our fears successfully.

For the Israelites, they were to think of God’s faithfulness in the past as well as the price of their parent’s rebellion, but also the joy that was set before them in the promised land. This is one of the reasons why Christians struggle to find any victory over their sins. They are too busy focusing on the consequences of their behavior, which is of limited importance, to remember the presence of God in their life, and the more abundant life that He is calling them towards. This is exactly what we are told moved Christ:

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

-Hebrews 12:1-2

What primarily moved Christ to endure the shame of the cross was not His fear of disappointing His Father, though we know that honoring His Father was firm in His mind. It was instead the joy of honoring His Father and redeeming His people that was set before Him. If we want to grow in courage, we won't do well in trying to motivate ourselves with fear of failure or shaming ourselves. While the Law does command us to be obedient, and we would do well to remember that, that "legal" motivation won't get us far in the moment of trial. We need an upward call to glory.

This is the strange dynamic that is present in God's promise to always be present with His people. While that is incredibly comforting in many senses, it is a little unnerving in many others. For God to never leave us means that there is never an action we can commit that is absent from accountability before God. Moses' sin, just as the Israelites sin, was not hidden, it was exposed and made plain to God who judged them in response. This is why Deuteronomy 31:6 is quoted in the book of Hebrews in this context of accountability:

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"
-Hebrews 13:5-6

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.
-Psalm 139:7-10

However, it is that same presence that would judge their sin that they were fighting to honor in their fidelity. And here is the primary key point. While we can motivate ourselves towards courage and virtue, we ultimately have to make the leap of faith with our will. We will never "build" enough courage to overcome the physical things that are causing us fear. In order to be faithful to God we have to make that leap of faith and trust God to preserve us. The Israelites couldn't stay put on this side of the Jordan, Moses' speech motivated them, but it was their personal will and devotion to God that brought them over that river to face the Canaanites. It is very reminiscent of when the Israelites had to cross the Red Sea at the beginning of their journey to escape from the Egyptians:

"And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see

today, you shall see again no more forever. “The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.” And the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.”

-Exodus 14:13-15

The Israelites needed the encouragement to move, but in the end there is no substitute for a simple action of faith. So whatever worries or concerns might be confronting us this week, we must remind ourselves of the past faithfulness of God and the future glory for honoring Him, but we must also act upon our faith, not listening to our fear that moving us to flee, but to boldly move forward and do what God is calling us to do.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

-Hebrews 11:1