

We're Counting on You

By Kimberly Sowell

"Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do what is good in His sight." (1 Chronicles 19:13 NKJV)

As I stood with my hand over my heart, I scanned across a stadium of 86,000 fans who were also standing still in silence out of respect for the families assembled on the football field: moms and dads who had recently lost sons on a very different field – a battlefield – protecting American freedoms. For a moment or two, 86,000 Americans were united with a common bond: our love for our country.

We're living in an era when the days require a measure of courage. As Christians, we're experiencing a growing distrust and intolerance of Christian beliefs in America, and our brothers and sisters in Christ are in chains as they suffer persecution in dark corners of the world. We are greatly outnumbered, and greatly misunderstood, but the very people who would harm us are the ones whom God has commissioned us to reach out to in Christian love.

In our modern-day context, what does it mean to be strong "for our people"? Our brothers and sisters in Christ are counting on us to stand for the Word of God and believe in the power of the cross. If our church members are feuding, the witness of surrounding churches is weakened. If our marriages crumble, other struggling Christian couples will be tempted to weaken their resolve. If we as parents do not provide strong moral guidelines and biblical teachings for our children, other Christian parents will have a more difficult ordeal in raising their children to live as Christ. If we don't raise our voices in the cultural and political arenas, generations of Christians who come behind us will be more oppressed and more restricted as they exercise their faiths. We are the people of God, a community of citizens of a land not of this world, and we are unified by our love for one another and for the Lord whom we represent. That same love compels us to be strong and of good courage in the face of growing opposition to our faith.

When Joab spoke these mighty words recorded in 1 Chronicles, his message was simple: let's be strong and courageous to defend our people and cities, and trust the outcome to God. You and I have no guaranteed results as we stand firmly for the principles of God, but we serve a God who is trustworthy. Let us be faithful in these trying days, honoring God above all, and trusting Him to move mightily among us. Be strong – your brothers and sisters in Christ are counting on you.

Prayer:

Father, I don't want to do what is easy; I want to do what is right. Please remind me throughout my day that other Christians are counting on me to be courageous, growing my influence today as well as my legacy tomorrow. In Jesus' name, amen.