

# A Time for “Uncommon Valor” Among Men

Scott Brown

"Be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go'. - Joshua 1:7

Recovering the Biblical order in the church and the home will require a measure of courage. To participate, churches must swim against the current of the priorities of the modern church. Fortunately, the Christian man has a roadmap. Christian, manhood is measured by its sacrifices as the Bible is replete with the language of sacrifice:

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost", Luke 19:10

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends, John 15:12-13

Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her". Ephesians 5:25

"And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord, Eph 6:4

"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up: Deut 6:7

Courage to sacrifice career, pleasure and reputation for a higher cause is the normal fare for the Christian man.

In WW II at the battle for Iwo Jima, we have an illustration of sacrifice that is a parable for our times. On this island of volcanic ash only two and a half miles wide and five miles long, 22,000 Japanese soldiers were dug into a vast matrix of tunnels going down three levels. They had hollowed out the inside of Mt. Suribachi into a honeycomb like killing machine of bunkers and artillery positions. The enemy was everywhere yet unseen. They knew they would all die, so they had orders to kill ten Americans before they died They were underground in the tunnels, popping up in hundreds concrete bunkers cleverly camouflaged as crags. They moved from bunker to bunker ever emerging in front or behind our troops. There were no fixed lines of battle. Above our soldiers heads from positions on Mt Suribachi the Japanese were firing relentlessly on every square yard of the unprotected beach. There were 30,000 Marines on the beach on D Day and the Japanese had a gun firing at every square yard. Iwo Jima was the bloodiest

Marine battle in military history. On that tiny island, The United States Marine Corps took a hellish beating for which they received more medals of honor than any other group in military history.

My father was on Iwo Jima as an Army Air Corps P51 Mustang pilot who protected B-29's on bombing raids on mainland Japan. On May 29, 1945, he was shot down in Tokyo Bay while participating in the largest air assault on the Japanese mainland.

My friend Bill Henderson, who is 80 years old, was also there. Bill is still going to work in his real estate development company every day and is pastoring a church. As a Marine Colonel, Bill led a group of soldiers on D Day across Iwo Jima, under a withering hail of enemy fire. He providentially lived to finish the battle and secured the island thirty six days later. On the way home he was appointed to write the official Marine history of the battle. On the morning of D Day, Bill started with 1175 men. By the end of the day, he had 75 men left in his outfit.

Admiral Nimitz, who was the commander of the Pacific theatre of the war remarked, that with these men, "uncommon valor was a common virtue"

We live in times that are begging for men of uncommon valor.

For the purposes of this writing, the uncommon valor for our times is taking the mantle of family shepherd, which goes a long way toward restoring Biblical order to the family and to the church.

To be a shepherd is a call to self sacrifice.

We are calling men to abandon their own plans and the plans our Christian culture has engraved on the landscape of our churches. We are calling for men to return to the Biblical order that the apostles prescribed for the church.

We are asking men too do something for someone else – for God's glory for the coming generations.

Men have abandoned their God given roles as leaders of their homes and churches and teachers of their children, and the fatherless go uncared for.

Fortunately, there is a new generation of men who are rising up. They are going back to the Bible for their roadmap. They are becoming teachers of the next generation. Many of you are reading these words.

On the last day of the Battle for Iwo Jima an unforgettable scene occurred. Bill writes:

"Finally, on March 26 we secured the island and they gave us orders to pick up our gear and that we were going to be evacuated and taken back to our base camp. As we did, we struggled down the road. We were a rag tag bunch, and a miserable looking outfit.

No other outfit ever seen combat for 37 days of intense direct conflict. In other long battles, the conflict would go on for a few days and then back off, but not on Iwo Jima. No other outfit was involved in this kind of combat for 37 days. No one had shaven for six weeks. Of course I was crusted with sweat and rain and volcanic ash dried on. We were a crummy looking outfit. Our eyes were sunken out from lack of sleep. They were blurred from the horrors we had seen. As we marched down the beach, we detoured around to go by the Fifth Marine Division's cemetery. At first we were stumbling along, but as we got closer, and closer to the cemetery I noticed something happening. The men started to march. They formed themselves up in order, and instead of stumbling on, they were marching. Those who were limping no longer were limping. When we got to the cemetery, everyone was standing ramrod straight. There was not one limping. Something had happened to them. There was a sense of awe and reverence. As I left I saw an epitaph which was written on an ammunition carton. It is engraved on my mind. It read:

"When you go home, tell them for us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today".

We stumbled off the beach and got on the boats. As we started to get on the boats, we had no docks. We had to go out in the small boats, but the ocean was surging up and down. When we got out there, we were too weak to climb up the sides. The sailors (you must remember that there is always a fight between the sailors and the Marine Corps). These sailors held us in their arms and carried us aboard.

To give you the magnitude of it, when my battalion landed on February 19, we had a total of 1688 men. When we came off the island, we had 86 men who were not killed in action or wounded. It took 22 ships to bring our division to Iwo Jima, but it only took eight to take them home."

Because we secured Iwo Jima, we waged a successful bombardment of Japan which led to her downfall.

But there was more. Just being there saved the lives of over 24,000 Army Air Corps Pilots and crewmen who were returning from battle with damaged airplanes, who would have plunged into the ocean if Iwo Jima was not secured by the Fifth Division of the United States Marines.

We are in a war. For me, the battle for Iwo Jima, is a parable for the battle for the family of our times. We must rise up. We must risk our lives. We must redirect our energy. We must use our time differently. We must use our money differently.

Our prayer is that uncommon valor would become a common virtue, and that you will give your today, for the tomorrow of the next generation. Lay down your life for your friends; Seek and save those who are lost; bring up your children in the training and admonition of the Lord; teach the Word diligently to them, and talk about it when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

"Rise up O men of God, have done with lesser things". "Be strong and very courageous".