TITLE: GUMPTION

TEXT: Josh. 1:6-7 & 24:14-15; Dan. 6:6-10 & 3:16-18;

Acts 2:22-24, 32, 36-38; Heb. 11:1; Job 23:10;

Acts 16:23-24; 1 Co. 16:13

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about gumption. I love the sound of that word—Gumption.

Gumption is an older word that is not used very much anymore. I don’t know that many in the current generation even know what it means. It is a word that my generation probably didn’t use all that much but it is more a product of my parents and grandparents generation.

As a young person I can remember older folks using it in their sentences, and even though at the time I didn’t really know what it meant, the way that it was used made me wish or hope that I had it…Gumption..

They would be talking about someone and say that person had gumption and you could tell that the way that they used the word that it was a quality to be admired.

So just what is gumption?

**gump·tion** **1**. Boldness of enterprise; initiative or aggressiveness. 2. Guts; spunk. 3. Common sense.

If you are going to be successful in business or in life in general, gumption is something that you better have.

Boldness of enterprise; initiative, aggressiveness, Guts; spunk.

Can’t you just see gumption as a whole new academic field in some college catalog ---Gumptionology 101..

I think that would be great but we will never see that happen because gumption is something that is better caught than taught..

When I think of gumption I think of a lady named Norma Greenfield.

Many of you Remember Norma. She used to attend our mid week Bible Studies several years ago.

Now for a little old lady she had gumption! She had spunk. Norma had boldness of enterprise especially when it came to her relationship with Christ. Her gumption really showed in a bible study setting.

When Norma entered the pearly gates of Heaven, I am sure her gumption impressed the angelic hosts.

There is a little story I read that reminded me of Norma.

There was a lady who was small, old, and frail. She had lost sight of her eye, and it had to be removed. When it was to be replaced with a false eye she said to the doctor, "Be sure and choose one with a twinkle in it."

I can just hear Norma say that to the Lord as she is receiving her new resurrection body. Lord, be sure you give me an eye with a twinkle in it. She had that kind of gumption…

The word gumption is not a word that you will find in the pages of Scripture but the concept of gumption you will find in every book if not every chapter of the bible.

Gumption is something that, I believe, every believer is called by God to have or manifest in their life.

Let’s look at some examples from Scripture this morning.

When Joshua had been passed the mantle of leadership from Moses and as God was preparing Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land God has these words of encouragement and instruction for Joshua….

**Josh. 1:6 -7 (NIV)  
6“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.**

**7Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.**

God here instructs Joshua to be strong and courageous --to be strong and very courageous!

**Strong= *khaw-zak'***

**to *fasten* upon; hence to *seize*, *be* *strong* -- *courageous*, *--conquer:—* be constant, - become mighty, prevail, - behave self valiantly.**

**Courageous= aw-mats'**

**to *be* *alert*, physically) or mentally (in courage):— be courageous, steadfastly minded, established.**

God commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous, to behave valiantly and be steadfastly minded.

God commanded Joshua to have gumption…

After leading the people into Canaan and possessing the Promised Land, Joshua shows real gumption when he addresses the people for the last time as their leader…

**Josh. 24:14-15 (NIV)  
14“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”**

**Serve whatever gods you have chosen to serve-- But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”**

Joshua had Gumption, Boldness of enterprise; initiative, Guts; spunk.

Daniel also had gumption.

**Dan. 6:6 -10 (NIV)  
6So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: “O King Darius, live forever! 7The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions’ den. 8Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” 9So King Darius put the decree in writing.**

**10Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.**

Even though maintaining his faithfulness to God in prayer would mean his being thrown into a den of hungry lions Daniel remained true and faithful to his God..

After learning of the Kings decree Daniel **went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times that day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.**

Remaining faithful to God even under the treat of death…That takes gumption.

Three young Hebrew salves in the time of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon,Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, had gumption!

The order had been issued to all the subjects of the kingdom to bow down and worship the image of the king or face death by being thrown alive into a fiery furnace.

These three young Hebrew men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down before the king and worship his image…

**Dan. 3:16 -18 (NIV)  
16Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. 18But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”**

That is gumption!

Peter was the disciple who had disowned his Lord three times the night that Jesus was arrested.

Jesus had told a boastful Peter who had just said that he would go to the mat for Jesus, even die for him, that before that night was over and the morning rooster crowed, Peter would deny even knowing who Jesus was three times. At this point Peter lacked gumption.

But after the resurrection, after an encouraging conversation with Jesus about “feeding His sheep”, after being filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, something very powerful happened to Peter..

Listen to the first sermon that Peter preaches after Jesus was crucified on a cross, rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven and sent back His Holy Spirit to indwell His followers.….

Peter is speaking to many of the same ones that he had earlier disowned even knowing Jesus to because of his fear of being associated with Him…

**Acts 2:22 -24, 32, 36-38 (NIV)  
22“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.**

**23This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.**

**……36“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”**

**37When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”**

**38Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

**23This man was handed over to you and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.**

**God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”**

What on earth happened here to Peter?

Where did this newfound boldness, this gumption, come from?

When Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost Peter got gumption…

This kind of boldness, the Gumption that Peter displayed that day as he boldly preached the gospel of Christ to many of the very ones who had been responsible for Christ being crucified was nothing short of a gift of the Holy Spirit..

This kind of gumption is a gift of God that can only be manifest in a heart of faith.

A heart that is filled with a Hebrews chapter 11 faith!

**Heb. 11:1 (NIV)  
1Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**

Many times, it takes gumption to stand up and be counted for Jesus.

There is a story of something that happened several years ago at USC.

There was a professor of philosophy there who was a deeply committed atheist. His primary goal for one required class was to spend the entire semester attempting to prove that God couldn't exist.

His students were always afraid to argue with him because of his impeccable logic. For twenty years, he had taught this class and no one had ever had the courage to go against him. Sure, some had argued in class at times, but no one had ever 'really’ gone against him.

Nobody would go against him because he had a reputation. At the end of every semester, on the last day, he would say to his class of 300 students, "If there is anyone here who still believes in Jesus, stand up!"

In twenty years, no one had ever stood up. They knew what he was going to do next. He would say, "because anyone who does believe in God is a fool. If God existed, he could stop this piece of chalk from hitting the ground and breaking. Such a simple task to prove that he is God, and yet he can't do it."

And every year, he would drop the chalk onto the tile floor of the classroom, and it would shatter into several pieces.

Many of the students were convinced that God couldn’t exist. Certainly, several Christians had slipped through, but for 20 years, they had been too afraid to stand up.

Well, one day there was a freshman who happened to get enrolled in the class. He was a Christian and had heard the stories about this professor. He had to take the class because it was one of the required classes for his major. And he was afraid. But for 3 months that semester, he prayed every morning that he would have the courage to stand up no matter what the professor said or what the class thought.

Nothing they said or did could ever shatter his faith, he hoped.

Finally, the day came. The professor said, "If there is anyone here who still believes in God, stand up!" The professor and the class of 300 people looked at him, shocked, as he stood up at the back of the classroom. The professor shouted, "You FOOL!! If God existed, he could keep this piece of chalk from breaking when it hit the ground!" He proceeded to drop the chalk, but as he did, it slipped out of his fingers, off his shirt cuff, onto the pleats of his pants, down his leg, and off his shoe. As it hit the ground, it simply rolled away, unbroken.

The professor's jaw dropped as he stared at the chalk.

It is said that the young man who had stood up proceeded to share his faith in Jesus. This young college freshman had gumption…

**Job 23:10"But He knows the way that I take. When He has tested me, I will come forth as gold."**

Gumption, Courage in people, is like a tea bag. You never know its strength until they're in hot water.

It is often through the trials and tribulations of life that gumption is revealed and displayed the most powerfully.

Paul and Silas had been arrested for preaching Jesus in the city of Philippi…

**Acts 16:23-34 (NIV)  
23After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.**

**25About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody’s chains came loose.**

**27The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”**

**29The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”**

**31They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” 32Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.**

**23After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison,**

**25About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God.**

In prison, in the inner part, the dungeon, backs lay open and raw from the lashes of the whip and what were Paul and Silas doing? Laying there whimpering in pain! Crying out to God why me! Saying I don’t deserve this!

No! It says that they were praying and singing hymns of praise to God. That takes gumption. That is boldness of enterprise, taking the initiative, being aggressive for the kingdom of God. That took Guts! They had spunk!

And gumption always has its rewards.

Because of the gumption of Paul and Silas a Roman jailer and his entire household where saved and came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I love the Motto of the French Foreign Legion. It shows real gumption.

*If I falter, push me on. If I stumble, pick me up. If I retreat, shoot me.*

Do we have this kind of gumption when it comes to our relationship with the Lord?

Lord, if I falter, push me on! If I stumble, Lord, pick me up! If I retreat, Lord, shoot me!

When Honorius was emperor of Rome, about the year A.D. 400, the great Coliseum of Rome was often filled to overflowing with spectators. They would come from far and near to view the state games. Part of the sport consisted in watching as human beings, gladiators, battled with wild beasts or against one another until one or the other was killed.

The assembled multitude made “Roman holiday” of such sport and found its highest delight in the death of a human being.

It was on such a day when the vast crowd was watching the gladiators battling in the coliseum that a Syrian monk by the name of Telemachus stood up in the vast arena. Telemachus was torn by the utter disregard for the value of human life and so he leaped into the arena in the midst of the gladiatorial show and cried out, "This thing is not right! This thing must stop!" Because he was interfering with their pleasure, the authorities gave the command for Telemachus to be run through with a sword, which was done.

Thus, he died, but dying he kindled a flame in the hearts and consciences of thinking persons.

History records that because of this within a few months the gladiatorial combat began to decline and very shortly they passed from history. Why? Because one man had the gumption to speak out for what he felt was right even though there was a potentially high price to be paid for doing so..

Scripture encourages us to have gumption in our relationship with the Lord…

**1 Cor. 16:13 (NIV)  
13Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.**

We have been called to stand firm in the faith! Stand up for what we believe in! Be men and women and children of courage! We have been called to have gumption…

God told Joshua how to obtain and maintain gumption…

**Josh. 1:7Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.**

Gumption is obtained by being strong and courageous…

As a Christian by being strong and courageous in the Lord.

Realizing that we can indeed do all things through Him who gives us strength. That if God be with us then who can be against us.

We maintain gumption by being **careful to obey all the law of God; to not turn from it to the right or to the left, that we may be successful wherever we go.**

Gumption is obtained by recognizing our position and potential as a child of God. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit to empower and equip the Church to do what the Church is called to do---witness Christ in our part of the world, helping lead others to Jesus.

Our gumption is maintained through our obedience and faithfulness to Gods Word.

The promise of gumption is that we may be successful wherever we go. Successful for the kingdom of God and successful in living lives that will be a light for Christ in our world and draw other unto Him.

Is gumption something that you have in your relationship with the Lord this morning?

Are you making a difference for Christ in the part of the world that God has placed you?