

Encourage Others In The Lord

Text : **I Thess. 5: 1-18**

INTRODUCTION :

A. In our previous lesson from I Samuel 30: 6, we observed that even David, faced trials that caused him to be discouraged.

1. God's prophet described David as a man's after God's own heart. (**I Sam. 13:14**)
2. He was a man of intense faith in God.
3. He followed God with devotion.
4. God did not prevent adversities from coming upon him.

B. We learned from David's life that adversity is a part of everyone's life.

1. It's a common experience to men of every era, every culture and every station in life.
2. Many people have been overwhelmed and destroyed by adversities.
3. However, other people have been made stronger by adversities. (**Plot in books**)
4. Why are some strengthened by the same things that destroy others ? **Attitude !**
 - a. **James 1: 2-3** **Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,**
3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
 - b. When adversities arose, David grieved, but put his trust in God and pressed on.

C. We learned from David that adversity is not always a judgment from God.

1. There is such a thing as judgment in time, i.e., God punishing evil deeds.
2. However, the evil that befalls one is not always a result of evil deeds.
3. Remember the lesson taught by the book of Job.
 - a. Job knew that he lived the most righteous life he could. (**theory of retribution**)
 - b. He was never told why such great evil had befallen him, but he trusted God.
4. When one trusts God he is victorious in this world or the next or both.

D. We learned from David that by looking within ourselves and holding fast to our faith in God we can encourage ourselves even in dark days.

1. David looked to God for deliverance rather than to his friends and family.
2. He sought the will of God for his circumstances and then complied with it.
3. Because of His faith, God delivered David from the evil that had beset him.
4. David's faith resulted in the deliverance of his men as well as his own deliverance.

I. What discourages you most ?

A. Satan knows exactly what it is. (*Different for all.*)

1. And, he does his worst to exploit it to your hurt.
2. He watches for the time when you are most vulnerable and weakest.

B. Frequently, he attacks shortly after you've enjoyed a mountain top moment.

1. While you're enjoying the view, your defenses are down.
2. The higher one reaches the greater his fall and the greater the damage.

C. One of the primary functions of the church is to protect each other.

1. Christians are tethered together like a party of mountain climbers.
2. Satan hunts like wolves.
 - a. He picks off the young and , the weak.
 - b. He attacks the lone individual that strays from the herd.

ILL. – Is this not the lesson of Amalek ?

- a. **Deut. 25: 17-19** Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. ¹⁹ Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.
- b. From this we learn how Satan works and he still uses the same tactic.
- c. Likewise, God's response is still the same ... His people utterly defeat the evil.

D. Thus, God has commanded us to band together as His kingdom, as His church.

1. He had a purpose for separating us out and for binding us together :
 - a. There is safety in numbers.
 - b. There is power in numbers.
2. God's church has been assigned to defeat ungodliness and expand the borders of the kingdom into every heart.
3. God's church has also been commanded to protect the weak and the stragglers.

I Thess. 5: 11 – Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

II. What does God mean for us to do when he instructs us to encourage & build up?

A. “To **encourage**” is to motivate to the desired end ... faithfulness, service, love, etc.

1. From the word “*parakaleo*” meaning “to call to one’s side” .. “to strengthen by consolation, to comfort.”
2. It calls to mind the concept of one soldier coming to the aide of another.
3. It’s one coming to stand with another as an attorney standing beside a defendant.
4. **Thus**, in Christ we should never have to face adversity alone.
 - a. **Rom. 12: 15** – Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
 - b. **I Cor. 12: 26** – And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

* **Application :** When a congregation is functioning as God intended, the lives of its members are inextricably linked together.

Therefore, God uses such figures as : a family, a body, and fellowship.

B. “To **build up**” is to reinforce those who are brought under stress by Satan.

1. It comes from the word “*oikodomeo*” meaning “to restore by building.”
2. The direct meaning of building up is twofold, to repair the damage done by Satan and to encourage spiritual growth.
 - a. **Eph. 4: 11-16** And He (*Jesus*) gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.
 - b. Satan will attack with windy doctrines, with trickery, and deceitful schemes.
 - c. Christians are to respond lovingly by advocating God’s truths. (“**speaking**”)
 - d. Christians are to respond as a group ... “**every joint**” of the “**body**.” (cf **-1: 22-23**)
 - e. The result is to be the whole body (*church*) is built up, strengthened, matured.
3. It’s clearly God’s will that every Christian minister to every other Christian.

C. Seven times this word for “build up” (*oikodomeo*) is also translated as “edify.”

1. We are commanded that our assemblies are to be designed to edify.
I Cor. 14: 26b – Let all things be done for edification.
2. Edification is why we are commanded not to be absent from the assembly.
 - a. **Heb. 10: 23-25** **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate (*motivate, instigate, incite*) one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together , as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**
 - b. These three verses comprise on one sentence .. i.e, .. one thought.
Topic .. don't waver from faith
Action .. mutually incite to action (*love & good deeds*)
Place .. in assembly of Christians
Method .. encourage each other
3. This reinforces the teaching of Jesus :
John 13: 34-35 **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**
³⁵ **By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (*This demands interaction.*)**
4. Christian love is more than just a warm fuzzy feeling.
 - a. It involves a commitment to the welfare of one's Christian family above his own.
 - b. This commitment especially to pursue the spiritual welfare of the brethren.

III. This ministry of encouragement, of love is NOT just for church leaders.

A. Yes, it is essential that all church leaders be skilled encouragers.

1. Elders are shepherds of God's flock, under-shepherds to the Good Shepherd.
2. Shepherding the flock includes :
 - a. Making sure all of the flock is fed
 - b. Protecting the flock from predators
 - c. Caring for the sickly and the injured
3. Preachers assist the elders in feeding the flock.

B. Encouragement is one of those “one another” commands that're for all Christians

1. We've seen it's one of the primary functions of our assemblies. (**I Cor 14 & Heb 10**)

2. Because encouragement is clearly such a good thing, we may not withhold it.
Prov. 3: 27 – Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.
3. Do you like to be encouraged when you're down ?
Matt. 7: 12 – In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

IV. Since encouragement is such a good thing, why don't we do more of it ?

A. Proud jealousy subverts encouragement.

1. Many people think in terms of their relationship to others.
 - a. They want to feel superior to others.
 - b. They think others compare and evaluate people like they do.
 - c. They fear that lifting others up, may lower them.
2. They have not learned to **“rejoice with those who rejoice.”**
 - a. What do you feel when your son is setting on the bench and the son of the brother next to you is the star of the game ?
 - b. Are you able to feel happiness for him or do you wish it was your son ?
3. Remember the example of Jonathan lifting up David ? (**I Sam 18**)
 - a. Jonathan was the crown prince, but he lifted David up before the people.
 - b. He gave David all the symbols of being a prince in Israel.

B. Fear of causing stagnation

1. *“If I praise him, it may cause him to stop trying.”*
 - a. A man feared, “If I praise my child for getting ‘B’s he may not try to get ‘A’s.”
 - b. If I praise him for being here every Sunday morning, he may not come on p.m.
2. Whatever is reinforced tends to be repeated.
 - a. If we are constantly pointing out negatives, negatives will be repeated.
 - b. **In 1994 Reader’s Digest** a comical piece appeared which read :
 One morning I opened the door to get the newspaper and was surprised to see a strange little dog with our newspaper in his mouth. Delighted with this unexpected “delivery service,” I fed him some treats. The following morning I was horrified to see the same little dog sitting in front of our door, wagging his tail, surrounded by eight newspapers. I spent the rest of the morning returning newspapers to the neighbors.
 - c. I had a similar experience on the mission field with cards from kids.

3. People great and small need encouragement ... need positive reinforcement.
 - a. None so clearly stated it as the little boy who asked his father to play darts.
“Daddy let’s play darts. I’ll throw and you say, ‘wonderful.’”
 - b. Abraham Lincoln is reported to have carried a newspaper article in his pocket in which he was described as a great leader.

C. The greatest obstacle to our encouraging others is self-preoccupation.

1. When a child brings his lunch into the cafeteria,
she looks for who she wants to set with.
 - a. She gives no thought to who looks lonely.
 - b. As we mature, we tend to go through life with that same attitude.
2. When we come into the assembly, we make sure to speak to our friends.
3. As we mature in Christ, we develop the mind of Christ.
 - a. He prayed for those who had crucified Him.
 - b. He encouraged the thief next to Him.
 - c. He committed His mother to the care of His best friend.

CONCLUSION :

A. We are often our own greatest obstacle to becoming an encourager.

1. We come into the world totally selfish.
2. Maturity teaches us to focus our vision outward.
3. Christ teaches us to love others above ourselves.

B. Jesus is the greatest encouragement in the history of the world.

1. Jesus loved you and valued you so highly He was willing to die for you.
2. In Him you don’t have to fear and center on yourself
because your brethren are all watching out for you.
3. No matter what this life is like, Jesus will make it better. (***Greatest be even better***)
 - a. If you die, He won’t leave your body in the grave.
 - b. One day He will take you to live in His house eternally.

INVITATION :

Jesus is waiting to welcome you into His family.

Lesson Text :**I Thess. 5: 1-18**

1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. **2** For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. **3** While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. **4** But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; **5** for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; **6** so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. **7** For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. **8** But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. **9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, **13** and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. **14** We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15** See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. **16** Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.