

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



Being an Encourager

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-14 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Matthew 6:14, 25-34; 7:7; 14:19-21
Mark 6:47-51; 10:46-52 | John 8:2-11; 11:38-44; 14:16-18; 16:1-7; 19:26-27 | Acts 14:19-20; 27:21-36
Romans 8:38-39 | 1 Corinthians 15:20-58 | Galatians 5:22-23 | Ephesians 1:4, 13-14 | Philippians 4:6, 19
Colossians 3:18-21 | 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

SUMMARY

We all experience times and situations when we need an encourager—someone who lifts us up if we're down, motivates us to keep going when we want to give up, and stands with us through every challenging circumstance.

What's more, each of us needs to be an encourager to someone else. There are people all around us who are discouraged and could use a word of comfort or an act of kindness. Whether friends, family members, acquaintances, or strangers, we could make a tremendous difference in someone's life and give them a glimpse of Christ as we follow His example of compassion and kindness.

SERMON POINTS

When Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica, he encouraged them with assurances of Christ's return and information about what to expect.

Then he said, "Therefore encourage one another and build up one another just as you also are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11). The Greek word for an encourager is "parakletos," which means "one who is called alongside." And that's exactly what we are to do for one another—come alongside to help.

The night before His crucifixion, Jesus told the disciples that although He was leaving, He would send them another Helper (John 14:16-18). This is the same Greek word, "parakletos." Up until that point, Jesus had walked beside them, but now someone like Him would come and actually live within them—the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity.

Jesus—Our primary example of an encourager

Christ's teachings were filled with words of encouragement on various subjects.

- **Prayer.** He taught His disciples to expect answers to prayer. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened" (Matt. 7:7).
- **Forgiveness.** Jesus showed them the importance and benefits of forgiving others (Matt. 6:14).
- **Anxiety.** Using the example of God's provision for flowers and birds as proof of His care for them, He told the people not to be anxious (Matt. 6:25-34).
- **Sin.** When the Pharisees and Sadducees brought Him a woman caught in adultery, He didn't condemn her but said, "Go [and] sin no more" (John 8:11).
- **The Spirit.** Christ's most encouraging message was given to His disciples the night before His death. He told them of the persecution they'd soon face but also assured them that He would send His Spirit to be with them forever (John 16:1-7).

Jesus encouraged people with His actions, providing whatever was needed.

- **Provision.** After teaching a large crowd, He felt compassion for them because they were in an isolated place and had nothing to eat. Taking five loaves and two fish, He multiplied them to feed a crowd of over five thousand people (Matt. 14:19-21).
- **Protection.** When His disciples were caught in a storm on the sea and in danger of sinking, Jesus came to them walking on the water saying, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid" (Mark 6:47-51).
- **Healing.** On His way to Jerusalem, Jesus was not

too busy to heal Bartimaeus, a poor, blind beggar who cried out to Him for mercy (Mark 10:46-52).

- **Life.** When Mary and Martha were grieving over the death of their brother, Jesus demonstrated His power by raising him to life (John 11:38-44).
- **Care.** Even in the midst of His suffering on the cross, Jesus was concerned for His mother and told John to take care of her (John 19:26-27).

Paul—Another example of an encourager

Christ transformed the apostle Paul from a persecutor of the church into His chosen messenger of the gospel. Wherever he went, he proclaimed Christ and encouraged believers. His life is an example of one who never gave up but kept trusting God and persevering despite opposition and affliction.

- **Persecution.** Although Paul was stoned and left for dead in Lystra, this didn't stop him. Amazingly, he got up and went to another town the next day to proclaim the gospel there (Acts. 14:19-20).
- **Imprisonment.** Paul was repeatedly jailed for preaching about Jesus, yet he never felt sorry for himself. The Spirit within him was his Comforter.
- **Shipwreck.** As Paul was being transported to Rome for imprisonment, the ship was in danger of sinking because of a storm. When everyone was discouraged and losing hope, Paul encouraged them not to give up (Acts 27:21-36).

One of the ways Paul still encourages us today is through the letters he wrote to the churches.

- **Romans.** Nothing can “separate us from the love of God ... in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39).
- **Galatians.** The Holy Spirit manifests through us qualities we could never produce ourselves—“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23).
- **Corinthians.** We are assured of our future resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-58).
- **Ephesians.** God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world and sealed us as His

children with His Spirit (Eph. 1:4, 13-14).

- **Philippians.** He promises to supply all our needs “according to His riches in glory” (Phil. 4:19).
- **Colossians.** We have God's instructions regarding our relationships with each other (Col. 3:18-21).
- **Thessalonians.** We are given hope for our loved ones' resurrection and our ultimate reunion with Christ (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

How to become an encourager with our speech:

- Give a sincere compliment.
- Speak the truth with love. Agree when appropriate.
- Pass on helpful information.
- Encourage with Scripture and pray for them.
- Correct them when it's appropriate.
- Let them know you love them.
- Comfort and assure them when they need it.
- Say thank you.

With our actions:

- Offer a smile or give a gift.
- Don't interrupt but listen quietly.
- Hug them. Forgive them. Serve them.
- Point out their accomplishments and reward them.
- Be honest and patient.
- Accept them as they are.
- Point them in the right direction.
- Motivate them to be and do their best.

RESPONSE

- Do you know someone who is an encourager? How has their encouragement affected your life?
- Have you encouraged lately? What words or actions did you use?

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