

What does biblical encouragement look like?

Text: Hebrews 10:24-25

Introduction

- A. An act of encouragement saved a young Woman's soul. She came to a preacher for counseling one day and revealed that she had lived with so much sin in her life that she decided to quit going to worship services. But she went one more time on a Sunday evening. Arriving late to avoid people, she walked into the lobby and an elder saw her. He said, "Mary, I am so glad you are here". Seeing her looking for a seat, he said, "Come, sit with my wife and me." She did. In the counseling session she revealed that during that service she decided to try again because somebody really did care about her. Today she is faithful and active along with her husband. For Mary the sermon that Sunday night was delivered not by the minister, but by a man and woman who cared enough to spot her need and minister to it. Church that is what Biblical encouragement looks like.
- B. The Hebrew writer said, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works;. . . exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh. (Hebrews 10:24, 25).
- C. We all have heard the need for encouragement the past three weeks and it maybe be many are say I know need to encourage but how do I encourage someone one? What does it look like? In order to know what encouragement looks like we must know:

Body

- I. How Jesus showed encouragement?
 - A. One person that express encouragement to others like no one else is Jesus Christ.
 - 1. He was tempted in every way and has suffered. So He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:18)
 - 2. He is dependable. "Christ Jesus is He who died , Yes rather who raised, who is at the right hand of God. Who also intercedes for us" (Romans 8:34). "He always lives to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25)
 - 3. Jesus is the greatest encourager, because he knows our pains, our disappointments and our trials. He provides encouragement for our spiritual needs.
 - B. Not only does Jesus give us spiritual encouragement but He also show us how to encourage on another.
 - 1. For example Jesus' initial encounter with Peter in John 1:41-42. Andrew, Peter's brother, tells him he has found the Messiah and brings him to Jesus. John doesn't use the normal verb for "look" here. He uses a word that means "gaze intently into." Jesus peered into Peter's soul, sized him up—and then said: "You are Simon son of John; you shall be called Peter."
 - 2. In those days, names meant more than they do today. They summarized a key feature of the person—like nicknames often do today. "Simon" was associated with one who hesitate—and if you know anything about Peter, you know how accurate this was. Jesus

knew that Peter was like his name—but he viewed him in terms of what he would become as one of his followers: “You will be called ‘the Rock.’” This was how Jesus won Peter's heart, and this is how he won my heart, too.

3. We all want a relationship with someone who knows our worst flaws and weaknesses—but who still loves us and relates to us in terms of our potential. No one else does this like Jesus Christ (GOSPEL).
- C. Another example is the women at the well in John 4. Friendless, lonely, No husband, no children, her parents probably did not want her, Because of her life style she had no job, no life what so ever. Her days are reduced to hiding form people who would make fun of her. This is not my idea of a happy life. This woman needed a relationship, she need a place to belong.
1. Kind of hard to build relationships when you have not had no one to teach you.
 2. But with God nothing is impossible. God sent a person not a principle to save us. When Jesus came to this woman, who was excluded, from society. He crossed huge cultural and social boundaries to purse a relationship with this hopeless woman living in fear and reticule. He risk something that no other person would do, he got involved.
 3. Christ wants to encourage our life. Christ wants you and I to have meaning, to have relationship with Him and one another, and to realize that life is important.
 4. Jesus can give us encouragement, if we will only listen to Him.
 5. This encouraging attitude continued on as the church maintained Jesus attitude of encouragement.

II. How the early church showed encouragement?

- A. Acts 2:2:42-47 in order to stay together they understood they need to be together and there were certain things they need to do to stay faith to God, so they encouraged each other to stay faithful by:
1. Worshiping (Heb. 10:24-25)
 2. Continuing fellowshiping together.
 3. Eating together.
 4. Praying.
 5. Praising God
 6. Having favor with one another. “Commending themselves by their lovely demeanor to the admiration of all who observed them.”
- B. Encouragement was part of strengthening the first disciples in the faith.
1. Act 11:23-24, “When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.
 2. Acts 14:22, “strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”
 3. Act 20:1, “After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia.”

4. Act 20:31, "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."
 5. Jude encourage Christian to build their Faith, Jude 20, "But you, dear friends, must continue to build your lives on the foundation of your holy faith. And continue to pray as you are directed by the Holy Spirit."
 6. Built up with encouragement, 1 Thes. 5:11, "So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." Heb. 3:13.
 7. Build one another up, Rom. 15:2-3, "We should please others. If we do what helps them, we will build them up in the Lord. For even Christ didn't please himself. As the Scriptures say, "Those who insult you are also insulting me."
- C. These Christians understood that the making of a child of God is not just in the budding but in the blooming. The process is not complete until life itself is complete. That is why the church is so badly in need of men and woman who make it their ministry to encourage others.

III. How is the church of today going to show encouragement?

- A. If we as the church are going to be biblical then we need to encourage the way Jesus taught and the early church modeled Jesus' teaching and example.
1. Maybe you remember the story of Elijah, who fled from Jezebel and was ready for God to take his life, for he believed that he was alone and defeated: .And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (1 Kings 19:10).
 2. God spoke to him and among other words of encouragement, told him that seven thousand were left in Israel who had not bowed to Baal (1 Kings 19:18).
 3. God knows how difficult it is to remain enthusiastic about His work and how easy it is to become discouraged. Throughout the Bible, He has given example after example to help us lift up our hearts and to be encouraged when we are down. It is so important that we study the Word because in it we have the encouragement we may be unable to find anywhere else. Not all have access to a friend like Barnabas, but we do have the Word.
- B. If we want to be encouraged and be effective encouragers, we need to know and use God's Word.
1. It is God's Word, not our personality, cleverness, intelligence, etc. that has the power to lift people up and give them hope (Romans 15:4).
 2. Isaiah describes the Messiah's effect on his followers, and the reason why he had that effect read Isaiah 50:4. He could sustain the weary with a word because he has been instructed by God through his Word.
 3. It's great to learn a passage that lifts you up. It's even more fulfilling to use that same passage to life someone else up.
 - a. This is the most basic (yet one of the most powerful) ways to use scripture to encourage others.
 - b. Sometimes as we read together in Hebrews 10:25 it is reading

scripture together.

- c. Sometimes this means showing or sharing a passage.
 - d. Sometimes it means using scripture as we talk with one another.
 - e. Sometimes it means sharing how this truth has encouraged you in a similar situation.
 - f. Sometime this means writing it down and passing verses on to others. In this regard, realize that emails, notes, phone calls can be very powerful media for encouragement.
 - i. This is why I have given everyone a card this morning. This is one way we can encourage one another.
 - ii. I want to challenge each of you encourage someone. Pick someone who is doing a good job, someone who is discouraged, or anyone you think needs encouraged.
 - iii. Write their name down, with a short message, or a Bible verse, sign it.
 - iv. You can hand it to someone, mail it, or put in the green box back and it will be delivered.
 - v. There will be extra's in the back so you can encourage someone.
- C. Don't wait until it feels "natural"—you'll wait forever! So many times we see the need but wait until it is too late and the moment of encouragement might be gone. Make it a goal to encourage someone every single day (Heb. 3:13)! Open your eyes to see the many arenas in which you can do this: family; work; neighbors; friends; etc.
1. Look for opportunities to encourage others:
 - a. When someone does something good in your eyes, simply tell them. It will make a world of difference to that individual.
 - b. If you enjoyed someone's prayer, tell them (Especially the young guys).
 - c. If someone becomes a Christian, encourage him or her in their faith. Send them a card, and get to know them.
 - d. If someone at your work does a good job, give them a pat on the back.
 - e. If your children do something good, give them praise. Children constantly need encouragement because it builds up their self-worth and importance.
 - f. Pick one or more the ideas of how to show someone encouragement that is listed in the bulletin today.

Conclusion

- A. I would like to share with you what encouragement looks like. True Story:
- B. In the fall of 2000 Xenia, Ohio was hit by a tornado. I was part of a group of men from the South Point Church of Christ when we went to the area to help clean up and lend a hand to the people there. One homeowner we helped was Larry Oliver. He is a member of the Xenia Church of Christ whose home at 1932 Laddie Court suffered major storm damage, said the folks from South Point came to see if he needed any

help. When he turned them away because he had nothing for them to do, Oliver said, the church people found one of his neighbors to help. Oliver said he thanked God for bringing him into fellowship with his friends at the Church of Christ less than two years ago. "I'm 52 years old, and I just thought I needed to go to church," said Oliver, who along with his wife Teresa was recently baptized. "I don't think we could have made it through that without these people." "They've always taken care of everybody," said Teresa. "They're constantly doing things for other people," Larry said. "This changed our life, being here. We're starting to think about other people besides ourselves." Oliver said despite the destructive power of the storm, he sensed God's presence in the people who helped his family. "The Godsend was the people," he said. "Thank God, God's alive in people."

1. Church that is what encouragement looks like, God working through His people, showing we care, showing God is alive, and active.
 2. If we don't encourage, if we don't act out in kindness, how will the world know of the true and living God?
 3. I challenge each of you today to do or say something encouraging to someone. Lets show the world we care, because Jesus first cared for us.
- C. The best encouragement any will receive is to become a child of God. Let me encourage you to become a child of God today as Peter encourage in Acts 2:40-41, "And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!. So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls (Acts 2:40, 41).
- D. If you are a Christian who has become unfaithful, I want to encourage you to return to the fold of God. You are needed, and you need the brethren. The Bible says, "Repent . . . and pray (Acts 8:22). If you are drifting and are discouraged, take heart in the fact that a reward awaits in a little while! If you need to respond to the invitation do so as we stand and sing.

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