

# Encouragement:

As I prayed about what to study with you this evening, I heard one word:

“Encouragement.” We just “Resurrection Day” this past weekend – some people call it Easter. There is no more encouraging picture or message than Jesus rising from the dead and leaving the tomb, never to die again; and having died and been raised according to the Father’s promise, He lives in each of us today. The Holy Spirit which said He would ask the Father to send:

John 14:16-17

16 "And I shall be asking the Father, and He will be giving you another **consoler**, that it, indeed, may be with you for the eon --

17 the spirit of truth, which the world can not get, for it is not beholding it, neither is knowing it. Yet you know it, for it is remaining **with** you and will be **in** you.

John 15:26

26 "Now, whenever the consoler which I shall be sending you from the Father may be coming, the spirit of truth which is going out from the Father, that will be testifying concerning Me.

What is **consoler**? In our dictionaries, it means to alleviate or lessen grief, sorrow, or disappointment. Synonyms include soothe or comfort. In GREEK, however, it has a much richer meaning:

Literally, “Beside-Call” – it’s the same word as “entreater”... summoned, called to one’s side, esp. called to one’s aid

a) one who pleads another’s cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate; an intercessor

c) in the widest sense, a helper, succourer, aider, assistant

In John 16:13-15, Jesus explains the role of the consoler – the “**spirit of [the] truth**”

13 Yet whenever that may be coming -- **the spirit of [the] truth** --it will be guiding you [ it will “lead you in the way”] into all the truth, for it will not be speaking from itself, but whatsoever it should be hearing will it be speaking, and of what is coming will it be **informing** you.

14 That will be glorifying Me, seeing that of Mine will it be getting, and **informing** you.

15 All, whatever the Father has, is Mine. Therefore I said to you that of Mine is it getting, and will be **informing** you.

“inform” is used 3 times:

Literally, “Up-Message”... to announce, make known; to report, bring back tidings,

John 14:18: "I will not leave you **bereaved**; I am coming to you."

**Bereaved** is orphan-on in Greek... "I will not leave you orphaned!"

## **2 Cor. 13:11**

11 Furthermore, brethren, rejoice, adjust\*, be **entreated** [consoled – called to one's side – see **definition again**], be mutually disposed, be at peace, and the God of love and of peace will be with you.

**Adjust** = change to conform to a purpose, attune, adapt.

Where may we find encouragement, adjustment, entreaty or consoling?

Holy Spirit – he is "the consoler." The life of our spirit is the single greatest source of encouragement...consolation. Without it, we are bereaved, we are like "orphans!"

## **Psalms 51:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

David wrote some of the most encouraging words, and the Daily Bible in Chronological Order puts psalms and proverbs in categories, rather than by number. Here's one from "***Psalms of the troubled soul***"...concerning "*refuge and strength in the God Who rules over nations*":

## **Psalms 46 (NIV):**

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

<sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

<sup>6</sup> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

<sup>8</sup> Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

<sup>10</sup> He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."

<sup>11</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

### **Psalm 91 (NIV): the personal protection of one who trusts in God**

- <sup>1</sup> Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.  
<sup>2</sup> I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."  
<sup>3</sup> Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.  
<sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.  
<sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,  
<sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.  
<sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.  
<sup>8</sup> You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.  
<sup>9</sup> If you say, "The LORD is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling,  
<sup>10</sup> no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.  
<sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;  
<sup>12</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.  
<sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.  
<sup>14</sup> "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name."  
<sup>15</sup> He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.  
<sup>16</sup> With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

### **Psalm 95 (NIV), 1-7a: The God of Creation as a personal Shepherd**

- <sup>1</sup> Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.  
<sup>2</sup> Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.  
<sup>3</sup> For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.  
<sup>4</sup> In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.  
<sup>5</sup> The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.  
<sup>6</sup> Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;  
<sup>7</sup> for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

***The rest of the psalm is a picture of what happens in the absence of grace.***

- Today, if only you would hear his voice,  
<sup>8</sup> "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness,  
<sup>9</sup> where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did.  
<sup>10</sup> For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.'  
<sup>11</sup> So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"

***Thank God for grace.***

### **Psalm 121 (NIV), 1-7a: The Lord watches over His people**

- <sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from?  
<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

- <sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber;  
<sup>4</sup> indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.  
<sup>5</sup> The LORD watches over you— the LORD is your shade at your right hand;  
<sup>6</sup> the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.  
<sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life;  
<sup>8</sup> the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Of course, everyone knows Psalm 23, but here it is from the Concordant Version:

Yahweh is my Shepherd; nothing shall I lack.

In verdant oases, He is making me recline; beside restful waters, He is conducting me.

He is restoring my soul; He is guiding me in the routes of righteousness, on account of His Name.

Even though I should walk in the ravine of blackest shadow, I shall not fear evil, for You are with me; Your club and Your staff, they are comforting me.

You are arranging a table before me in front of my foes; You have sleeked my head with oil; my cup is satiated.

Yea, goodness and benignity, they shall pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the House of Yahweh for the length of my days.

**Psalm 22:3 (this is the psalm Jesus quoted the 1<sup>st</sup> verse of as He was dying:**

“My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?”

Verse 3 – But You are holy, the One dwelling *among the praises of Israel*.

Do a word search for PRAISE on Bible Gateway, just in the NIV, and you’ll find 363 references...182 of those are in Psalms alone.

**ACTS 16:** This is the story of Paul casting out a python spirit from a woman in Thyatira because she was basically harassing Paul and his companions. The woman earned money for guys who hired her as a diviner, and they laid hold of Paul and Silas because they saw the source of their income had disappeared. We pick up the story in **verse 22:**

22 And the throng assailed them, and the officers, tearing off their garments, ordered them to be flogged with rods.

23 Besides, placing on them many blows, they cast them into jail, charging the warden to keep them securely,

24 who, getting such a charge, casts them into the interior jail, and secures their feet in the stocks.

Let’s stop here a moment: Paul and Silas had been flogged with rods – many blows – they HAD to be hurting! Then they were thrown in prison and shackled either to the

floor or a wall...in the darkest and probably the dankest, stinkiest part of the prison. And what do Paul and Silas do...in the middle of the night!?

***25 Now at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and sang hymns to God. Now the prisoners listened to them.***

26 Now suddenly a great quake occurred, so that the foundations of the prison are shaken. Now instantly all the doors were opened, and the bonds of all were slacked.

27 Now the warden, coming out of his sleep, and perceiving the doors of the jail open, pulling his sword, was about to **despatch himself**, inferring that the prisoners have escaped.

In those days, a roman charged with a prisoner who lost him was killed, slowly and painfully, to assure strict compliance!

28 Yet Paul shouts with a loud voice, saying, "You should commit nothing evil to yourself, for we are all in this place."

29 Now, requesting lights, he springs in, and, coming to be in a tremor, prostrates to Paul and Silas,

30 and, preceding them out, averred, "Masters, what must I be doing that I may be saved?"

31 Now they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."

32 And they speak to him the word of the Lord, together with all those in his house.

33 And, taking them aside, in that hour of the night he bathes off their blows, and is baptized, he and all his family, instantly.

34 Besides, leading them up into his house, he sets a table before them, and exults with all his household, having believed God.

There's nothing written here about Paul or Silas complaining about their wounds, let alone their imprisonment. NO! They prayed and sang hymns to God, and all the prisoners listened to them. In fact, Paul goes on to evangelize the warden and his whole family – in the wee hours of the morning now! The warden himself bathed off their blows.

Paul even wears his scars like medals pinned on the uniform of a valiant soldier by his commanding officer:

**2 Corinthians 11: Paul is busting the Corinthians chops here. He's about had it with others claiming to be somebody and hearing that the ecclesia in Corinth has been paying attention after Paul established them in what he called, "My evangel" – the one he received not from a man but frm the Lord!**

21 By way of dishonor am I saying this, as that we are weakened. Now in whatever anyone is daring (in imprudence am I saying it), I also am daring.

22 Hebrews are they? I also! Israelites are they? I also! The seed of Abraham are they? I also!

23 Servants of Christ are they? (Being insane, I am speaking.) Above them am I! In weariness more exceedingly, in jails more exceedingly, in blows inordinately, in deaths often.

24 By Jews five times I got forty save one.

25 Thrice am I flogged with rods, once am I stoned, thrice am I shipwrecked, a night and a day have I spent in a swamp,

26 in journeys often, in dangers of rivers, in dangers of robbers, in dangers of my race, in dangers of the nations, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers in the sea, in dangers among false brethren;

27 in toil and labor, in vigils often, in famine and thirst, in fasts often, in cold and nakedness;

28 apart from what is outside, that which is coming upon me daily, the solicitude for all the ecclesias.

29 Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is snared and I am not on fire?

30 If I must boast, I will be boasting in that which is of my weakness.

31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, Who is blessed for the eons, is aware that I am not lying.

32 In Damascus the ethnarch of Aretas, the king, garrisoned the city of the Damascenes, wanting to arrest me,

33 and I am lowered in a wicker basket through a window through the wall, and escaped his hands.

So Now I'm asking myself, what's the lesson here? Reading all of this and considering the book we read together last week, called ***You Think YOU Have it Tough?***; knowing that Jesus paid EVERY PRICE that can be paid, and that ***"...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,"*** as Paul wrote in **Romans 5:8**, there is nothing for us to do but to be ***"...giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to our God and Father"*** – you'll remember that from **Ephesians 5:20-21**.

The greatest encouragement – which we need desperately in these days, it seems to me, is the witness of the spirit of God, living in us and confirmed in the word of God by explanation, demonstrations, and examples...and the direct words of God's most anointed sons, David, Jesus and Paul.

Let's close with

**Psalm 63, from the CLV:**

O Elohim [ Oh, God], You are my El [my God]! Early am I seeking You. My soul thirsts for You; my flesh craves for You. Like a land arid and faint, without water.

So longing, in the Sanctuary, I envisioned You, beholding Your strength and Your glory; For Your benignity [goodness, kindness, faithfulness] is better than life itself.

My lips, they shall laud You.

So shall I bless You in all my life. In Your name shall I lift up my palms,

As with fatness and richness my soul shall be satisfied, and with jubilant lips my mouth shall praise.

When I remember You on my berth [bed], In night vigils shall I soliloquize [to moan, muse, mutter, meditate, and speak] about You.

For You became my Help, and in the shadow of Your wings shall I be jubilant.

My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me.

As for those who are seeking my soul for its ruination, May they come into the nether parts of the earth.

Those who would topple him down by means of the sword, may they become as assigned portion for jackals.

Yet the king is rejoicing in Elohim. Everyone who is swearing by Him shall boast, but the mouth of those speaking falsehood shall be held in check.