

Seeing Christ through Encouragement

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. ~2 Corinthians 1:3

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Introduction: This final message completes the series: "*The Reality of God—Seeing Christ in Our Every Day Lives.*" We trust that all our messages have reminded you of the daily encouragement found in Jesus Christ. **Scripture Reading:** ~2 Corinthians 1:3-7

What is encouragement? Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines "encourage" as "to inspire with renewed courage; renewed spirit; renewed hope." Do any two elements of life go together more naturally than hope and encouragement? ~Romans 15:13

The God of All Encouragement. **Psalm 103:13-14:** It is in God's nature to show compassion and love to us every day. He is tender because He knows we are made of dust. We are frail. God knows us even better than we know ourselves. He knows how to comfort us.

The Holy Spirit's Encouragement (John 14:16-17) The Holy Spirit is none other than the Presence and Power of the risen Christ in you. The Holy Spirit abides in the believer. He is a gift from the Father in answer to the prayer of the Son. He is with you forever.

The Holy Spirit—The Encourager: "Comforter" (*parakletos*) means "to come alongside to help." Comfort (in English) means "with strength." God's comfort strengthens us to face life and keep going and not lose heart.

The Lord Jesus' Encouragement: *I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you (John 14:18).* You are never alone nor will you ever be alone, abandoned, or helpless. Wherever you go or experience, the Lord Jesus is with you through His Spirit and Presence.

Watch How Jesus Christ Will Encourage You

The Lord Jesus encourages us through SALVATION.

God Demonstrates His Love: Romans 5:8 When a sinner trusts Christ as her Savior, she is born again, and the Holy Spirit immediately enters her body and bears witness that she is a child of God. Before we were saved, God proved His love by sending Christ to die for us.

Salvation is a gift to be received—not a goal to be achieved. (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our salvation is not simply a guarantee of heaven; it is also a source of tremendous blessings that we enjoy here and now. We have a Savior who has done all, paid all, performed all that we might enjoy our abundant, encouraging life in Christ.

God's Love in Our Hearts: *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us (Romans 5:5).* One of the best ways to ease a troubled heart is to bathe in God's love for you. His love sustains us as we go through trials. Let the Spirit of God remind you of God's love.

Romans 8:31-32; 2 Corinthians 5:7 God is getting ready to come into your circumstance, dear friend. Make a way for Him by faith. **Walk by faith not by sight.** There are many who have difficult days—much heartache—and the Lord is saying, *"It's time for you to be encouraged. Will you allow Me to encourage your heart?"*

The Lord Jesus encourages us through SCRIPTURE & BIBLE STUDY.

For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him, Amen, to the glory of God through us. ~2 Corinthians 1:20

- **The promises of God are "Yes," not "No," and we say "Amen" to the glory of God.** And Jesus Christ says "Yes" to all His promises. For all promises are centered in Jesus Christ. And we say, "Amen!" The Christian life is positive, not negative.

Discouragement has been expressed as "One of Satan's Most Effective Tools against the Believer." **All discouragement is from the devil:** *The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. All encouragement is from the Lord: But I have come that they may have life, and they might have it more abundantly. ~John 10:10; 2 Cor.3:5*

- *Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. ~Isaiah 40:31* **How do you encourage yourself in the Lord? The Word—the Word—the Word!**

Many times when I could have gone insane from worry, I was at peace because my soul believed the truth of God's promises. God's Word, together with the whole character of God, as He has revealed Himself, settles all questions. ~George Muller

The Lord Jesus encourages us through His STILL, SMALL voice.

Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10). Each of us has her own set of circumstances. But whatever we are facing, may we have sensitive hearts to God's still, small voice. Almighty God is near, accompanying us, surrounding us, sharing our space, even living within us. We have never heard God speak to us audibly, but there is no mistaking His voice when He speaks. God's still, small voice changes the direction of your life. These are very precious times.

The Lord Jesus encourages us through SERMONS.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). The sermon (or message) came at the very time when you had questions, or were struggling with something in your life. And you sit up and listen. You knew it was heaven-sent. It's just the message you need for that day.

The Lord Jesus encourages us through SONGS.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ~Colossians 3:16. **Spiritual songs help us praise God.** You'll never know when a song will come back, and the Holy Spirit uses it to minister to you.

The Lord Jesus encourages us through the STORMS OF LIFE.

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in time of trouble" (Psalm 46:1). But immediately He talked with them and said to them, 'Be of good cheer! ***It is I;** do not be afraid.'* (Read Mark 6:45-52.)

- **Sometimes God allows us to face situations we never dreamed about and that we don't want to face.** Jesus knew exactly what He was doing when He sent the disciples into the storm. It was God's will for them to be in that storm. They learned more about the Lord Jesus, their faith, and His Power in that storm than they ever learned by listening to the Lord Jesus as they walked the paths of Galilee. Lessons they never forgot. ~I Peter 1:7

***"It is I."** The Lord Jesus is actually taking one of the names of God. He is saying the "**I AM**" is with you. The "**I AM**" inhabits all your situations, relationships, and locations by His grace.

"I have never been more grateful." *"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).* It's not saying that in everything **feel** grateful about your story—that's not possible. But in everything **be** grateful.

The Lord Jesus encourages us through the SAINTS.

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ (2 Corinthians 1:5). **When you have been encouraged in the Lord, your first impulse is to encourage someone else.** It's like a pebble thrown into water. While there is always an immediate impact, the ripples continue indefinitely.

How has encouragement shaped your faith story in some way? Who encouraged you in the Lord, and how did he or she encourage? ~1 Thessalonians 5:11

We can encourage by our **prayers**. When someone says, *"I've been praying for you,"* it gives me courage. Or you could be encouraged through a **book**. We can also be encouraged by a **visit**, a **text**, a **phone call**, a **card**, or simply a **greeting** at church. ~Proverbs 25:11

- **It doesn't depend on our work for the Lord, but our walk with the Lord—that's the secret of encouragement to others:** *"... that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."*

Conclusion The apostle Paul wrote: *We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.* ~2 Corinthians 4:8

Dear Friend: You can't unravel all of your problems all at once. So take the next step of faith. The Lord shows you the next step. The Lord leads you moment-by-moment, day-by-day, step-by-step. **He gives you grace for today.** That's why the Lord Jesus said, *"Don't worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself."* God will stand by you and give you encouragement and hope today and in your tomorrows. Simply trust Him.

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- 1) What Christ did for us.
- 2) What Christ does in us.
- 3) What Christ does through us.