
Sermon Notes

September 18, 2016

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Encourage One Another

1 Thessalonians 5:11-14

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

¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,

¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

House Rules

- ❖ Good homes have house rules
 - rules that prescribe and proscribe certain behaviors, conduct and words that are or are not appropriate
 - God gives rules to His family
- ❖ God's rules help the various members and parts of Jesus' body function smoothly and in good collaboration with each other
 - the "one anothers" [*i.e.* serve, love, submit to, welcome, instruct, forgive, bear with]
 - these are not suggestions from a family therapist but commands from the Lord!

Encourage One Another

- ❖ The command to encourage one another is easy to say, but putting it into practice takes thoughtful care and prayer
 - pray for the Holy Spirit to give you both the desire and the ability to be one who encourages others
 - pray that you will be a person who "drips encouragement" onto the people God puts around you
- ❖ Encourage = come right up alongside someone else
 - comfort, cheer, urge, assure, strengthen, exhort
 - "a pat on the back or a kick in the pants"
- ❖ One of the names Scripture gives the Holy Spirit is "the One who is called alongside"
 - the Holy Spirit is the consummate encourager
 - when we fulfill God's will for us by encouraging one another, we are partnering with the Holy Spirit

How Do We Encourage One Another?

- ❖ Courage
 - encourage = to have heart
 - discourage = to lack heart or be disheartened
- ❖ Having courage means we have the strength and resources we need to meet the challenge of and to persevere through whatever dangers lie ahead

- ❖ Jesus is the source of true courage
 - we encourage one another by continually pointing each other to the Lord (not ourselves!)
 - the answers, resources, strength, and courage we need come from the Lord and from the Lord alone
 - keep one another focused on the truth of God's Word, the strength of His might, His sovereign rule and authority, His grace, mercy and love for us
 - as God's children, we have a special calling, a special identity, a special protection and a special destiny

❖ Encourage one another with **good words**

- we need to guard our mouths and ask the Lord to set a watch over our lips
 - do my words build others up?
 - do my words encourage or discourage others?
- Ephesians 4:29, do I share the right words? do my words come from the right motives? are my words said in the right way?

❖ Encourage one another with **good deeds**

- our actions amplify our words
- loving deeds that make a difference in other people's lives are modeled after the way God pours out His love on us in Christ
- Romans 5:6, 8 *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly... God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

- encouraging actions come at the right time
- encouraging actions involve self-sacrifice
- encouraging actions are intentional and specific
- encouraging actions are unmerited

❖ Just as you are doing!

- keep going, keep growing
- do what you are doing and even moreso

Personal Application

1. Think of someone who has been of great encouragement to you. What made their words or actions (or both!) so significant to you? How have you put their example to you in practice when it comes to your encouragement of others?
2. In general, do you think your words are more likely to encourage or discourage others? Why? What, if anything, needs to change about the way you speak and share with others? Will you do that? If so, how will you do that?
3. When trying to encourage a fellow believer, how often do you point out their need to focus on the strength and stability we have in the Lord? Is this something you need to do more often or more regularly?
4. Are you more inclined to encourage others with words or with actions? What are some ways in which you might continue to grow in both areas and keep them in balance with each other?