

"Let Me Encourage You"

6/2/19

Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching."

How many of you have ever heard someone say, "I don't need to go to church to be a Christian..."

I see lots of heads nodding with that one.

Now, out of the folks you've heard make that statement...how many of them are truly living a Christian life that glorifies God?

That's right...it doesn't work.

Some professing Christians have given up meeting together because they were hurt in church,

or they got too busy, and have prioritized other things over God's clear word that we are not to forsake assembling together "as the habit of some is."

They are fair weather Christians...if the weather is fair...then we might see you here.

The fact is that life is too intense for us to go it alone and remain as spiritually healthy as we would if we were in fellowship.

This world will consume and destroy you.

Right when you think you're doing just fine without church life, the enemy swoops in for the kill.

Charlie Brown from the Peanuts cartoon once said, "It always looks darkest just before it gets totally black!"

And that's sometimes true, even for believers.

Troubles often come in batches—lots of things all at once strike from every direction and we feel overwhelmed.

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon described it as "Accumulated distresses increase each other's weight; they play into each other's hands, and, like bands of robbers, ruthlessly destroy our comfort."

So we need to be encouraged regularly, and that's one of the reasons God gave the local church!

Now, in 1 Peter 1 (NLT), the Apostle Peter brings us some really good, encouraging news....He says,

"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while" (1:6 NLT).

Then he gives several reasons to be encouraged.

So let me encourage you with a few of them today...

FIRST, he says:

I. We're just passing through

Verse 1 says, "To God's chosen people who are temporary residents in the world" (GWT).

Folks, when times are tough we need to remember the "temporary-ness" of this world.

This life as we know it will not last forever....This world, along with us, is passing away.

And there is going to come a time when you and I, as followers of Jesus, will go to our infinitely superior eternal home.

Paul the Apostle wrote, “What we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later” (Ro. 8:18 NLT).

That should encourage us!

Hebrews says this is the way the heroes of the faith looked at things:

“They were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland...God has prepared a heavenly city for them.” (11:16 NLT)

One day, you and I will be fully alive in a heavenly homeland, in that heavenly city.

Peter says, “So be encouraged!”

A second source of encouragement is that we have:

II. A living hope

Personally, to stay strong in a dark world I need daily doses of hope.

God wants our lives to be immersed in, covered in, baptized in hope!

So Peter gives a reason to be hopeful: “God...has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1:3 NIV).

Underline the word *LIVING*...The Christian hope is a *LIVING* hope.

The opposite of a living hope is a FALSE hope.

Every time someone buys a lottery ticket, there is the false hope they will win.

And even when they do win, they cling to the false hope that it will be the answer to their unhappiness.

But it rarely is!

Statistics show that nearly one-third of lottery winners eventually declare bankruptcy.

They also find themselves exploited by friends, and 70% of winners squander or lose it all within 5 years.

False hope! Mirages!

False religions built on false promises that create false security are everywhere!

Paul warned that in the Last Days, "You're going to find that there will be times when people will...turn their backs on the truth (of Jesus) and chase mirages" (2 Tim. 4:2 The Message).

And folks, false hope, mirages, are everywhere.

Not just false religions, but the false American hope that accumulating riches and houses and luxury cars and fame and status will bring happiness is proven wrong every day across the land.

Dave Ramsey said, "We buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like."

Millions of people spend a lifetime chasing mirages.

One author that wrote a book on happiness discovered in his research that only about 20 percent of Americans are truly happy.

And one major cause of that is when hope is placed in false promises that bring disappointing results, we lose our happiness.

But the living hope we have because we're followers of Jesus is not based on wishful thinking or false hope.

The hope Peter talks about is anchored in the resurrection of Jesus!

Peter calls it a *living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ!*

Our hope is in, not a false promise, but a Person who was dead but is now alive!

This is why one of the symbols of the Christian faith is the anchor.

The anchor symbolizes not wishful thinking, but a hope that is rooted in a historical fact—Jesus rose from the dead!

And third, Peter encourages us with the fact that:

III. Our inheritance in Christ is secure

1:4 “God...has given us...an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.” (NIV)

Catch that! Your inheritance in Christ can *never perish, spoil or fade*.

FACT: Every treasure we obtain on this earth will one day either:

rust through

wear out

burn up

waste away

be stolen

neglected

spoiled

go out of fashion

or simply be cast aside.

But the treasure laid up for us in glory will never do any of those things!

Peter says our eternal treasure can NEVER spoil, perish, or fade away.

Jesus encouraged us with these words: “Don’t store up treasures here on earth where they can erode away or may be stolen. 20 Store them in heaven where they will never lose their value and are safe from thieves” (Matt. 6:19-20 LB).

Our treasure is secure!

A fourth source of encouragement is that:

IV. God is using our trials to refine our faith

Verse 7 (LB), “These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—and your faith is much more precious to God than gold.”

Notice what Peter says—When trials come, we’re to remember that God never wastes a pain.

God uses trials to REFINE us.

He uses trouble in our life to build genuine faith which He values more than your bank account!

And finally, we can be encouraged knowing that in our trials...

V. God gives to us inexpressible joy

Verse 8 (NLT) "You love him even though you have never seen him; though not seeing him, you trust him; and even now you are happy with the inexpressible joy that comes from heaven itself."

You should underline the words "EVEN NOW."

That means today, THIS day, THIS moment in the heat of your trials, God gives joy no words can describe.

Peter says, "...even NOW you are happy with a glorious, inexpressible joy."

Now, Peter was writing to Christians who were under fierce persecution, whose jobs were on the line, whose very lives were in jeopardy solely because they were believers...

And yet Peter tells them, EVEN NOW you are happy with a glorious, inexpressible joy—EVEN NOW!

And keep in mind that Peter wasn't writing to spiritual giants.

There were both mature and young, immature believers among them.

So you don't have to be a super saint to experience encouragement and joy in trials.

All you need is Jesus to have inexpressible joy!

All you need to know is Christ is in your situation and you can be *happy with a glorious, inexpressible joy. EVEN NOW!*

1. We're just passing through, 2. we have a living hope, 3. our inheritance is secure, 4. our faith is being perfected, and 5. God sends us inexpressible joy—Be encouraged!

Let's all read together verse 6 (NLT),

"So be truly glad!...even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while."

