

ENCOURAGING WORDS

Proverbs 12:25

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** There are a lot of “negatives” in this world and many aspects of the gospel and gospel preaching are negative (e.g., false doctrine, apostasy, eternal punishment). I’m not saying it’s bad to teach and preach on the negatives...it is vital!

Acts 20:29-31: “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”; Gal. 1:6; Rev. 20:15

2. However, there are also many, many overwhelmingly “positives” in the gospel message.
3. Dwelling solely on the negatives can lead us into a state of depression.
 - A. Therefore, in our teaching and preaching we must seek a balance.
 - B. The wise man said, “Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad.” (Prov. 12:25) From time to time we all need to hear “a good word,” words of encouragement.
4. **3** In this lesson I want to look at a few of the words of encouragement the Bible offers, for example...

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **4** “**Be still, and know that I am God**”: Psalm 46:10

- A. ****** Life is not always a “bowl of cherries.”
 - (1) Life is filled with many problems and disappointments.
 - (2) The world can be downright a mean, nasty, and lonely place!
- B. In troublesome times, as the world and all of its unpleasantness presses down on our soul, we sometimes feel like throwing up our arms and shouting, “I give up!”
- C. ****** It is especially at times like this that we need to “*Be still, and know that I am God.*”
 - (1) In other words, remember that God is alive, He is in control, and He is going to win!
 - (2) Sometimes it doesn’t seem that way at all! But God and His people will ultimately be victorious! All of God’s enemies; all of the enemies of His people will be vanquished...forever! **Psalm 46**
- D. Surely these are wonderful words of encouragement!

2. **5** “[**I**]t is impossible for God to lie”: Hebrews 6:18.

- A. ****** We live in a society where truth is a very rare commodity (e.g., politicians, salesmen).
 - (1) But we can always put our complete faith and trust in God, for He does not lie nor ever change (**Mal. 3:6:** “For I am the LORD, I do not change”; **Heb. 13:8:** “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”).
 - (2) We can also rest in comfort knowing God’s will for us will never change, because “forever” is His “word settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89).
- B. ****** The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into “all truth” (Jn. 16:13) and they wrote it down for our reading and understanding (Eph. 3:3-4) and God’s divine providence has preserved it through the centuries (**1 Pet. 1:23:** “...the word of the LORD endures forever.”).

- (1) Thus we can read our Bibles with the confidence and certainty that we can come to know all there is to know about “*the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jn. 6:68).
 - (2) The IRS tax code contains about 4 million words; Bible (KJV) contains only 783,137; it takes man over 5 times the amount of words to instruct us on how to pay our taxes than it takes for God to tell us how to obtain eternal life!
- C. Surely these are wonderful words of encouragement!
3. **6** “**The Lord is...longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance**”: 2 Peter 3:9.
- A. ** Do you know why the sun came up this morning? There is only one reason: In His longsuffering God is allowing everyone another opportunity to repent and be saved!
 - B. ** God’s desire is for “*all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Tim. 2:4). God’s desire is for no one to be eternally lost!
 - C. He has proven that is true by giving us the ultimate gift! Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:6-10
 - D. Surely these are wonderful words of encouragement!
4. **7** “**God...will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**”: 1 Corinthians 10:13
- “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*
- A. ** What wonderful news to know that God will not allow us to be tempted in a way we cannot overcome. Plus, in His mercy and grace, He will always provide us a way to escape every temptation.
 - B. ** Read Heb. 4:14-16
 - (1) In this regard, Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses because He “*was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*” (Heb. 4:15).
 - (2) So, when tempted we don’t have to crawl on our knees to God, we may “*come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*” (Heb. 4:16; Eph. 3:12: “*in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.*”)
 - C. Surely these are wonderful words of encouragement!
5. **8** “**For our light affliction, which is but for a moment...**”: 2 Cor. 4:17
- A. ** Suffering is common to all men (Job 5:7: “*Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*”).
 - (1) Both Christians and non-Christians suffer.
 - (2) Some suffer more than others; some less.
 - B. However, only the faithful Christian is able to put such things in the proper perspective (2 Cor. 4:16-5:1; Explain text)
 - C. Without a strong **and** growing faith it is not possible to successfully deal with all of the “*afflictions*” life throws at us! ** Non-Christians, or Christians who are not growing as they should:
 - (1) Do not have “*hope...as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast*” (Heb. 6:19).

(2) Cannot view suffering in the proper perspective and “count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (Jas. 1:2-3).

- D. ** We need to meditate often on the glories of heaven so we can better appreciate it (e.g., Rev. 21 & 22; after giving us a glimpse of the glories of heaven Jesus said, “Surely I am coming quickly.” John then responds: “Amen: Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”) We can only put “afflictions” into the proper perspective when we come to better appreciate the glories of heaven!
- E. Surely these are wonderful words of encouragement!

6. 9 “If God is for us, who can be against us?”: Rom. 8:31

- A. We face many formidable foes in this life (e.g., economic turmoil, political turmoil, vicissitudes of life, bad weather, poor health, “the world” [e.g., “*Lot...who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked...tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds...*”]).
- B. Satan is an even more formidable foe: **Eph. 6:11**: “...stand against the wiles of the devil.”; 2 Cor. 11:14 (Satan transforms himself into an angel of light); 2 Thess. 2:9-11 (Satan has “all power, signs, and lying wonders...with all unrighteous deception...”); 1 Pet. 5:8).
- C. ** **Rom. 8:31-39** The only possible thing that can defeat us spiritually is US!
- D. Surely these are wonderful words of encouragement!

7. 10 “...for if you do these things you will never stumble...”: 2 Pet. 1:10-11

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; I I for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

- A. ** In a general way there are “no guarantees in life.” Except death and taxes!
- B. But hold on just a minute! Peter guarantees us if we “do these things we will never stumble.”
 - (1) When you think about it that’s quite a guarantee! He can deliver! Jn. 16:13; Titus 1:2
 - (2) But what are the “things” we must “do” in order for us to “never stumble”? 2 Pet. 1:3-11 (i.e., “giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue...knowledge...self-control...perseverance...godliness... brotherly kindness...love...be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble...”).
- C. Surely these are wonderful words of encouragement!

8. 11 “I will come again and receive you to Myself...”: Jn. 14:3

- A. ** For the Christian it can be discouraging to live in such a sinful world (cf. 2 Pet. 2:7: “...righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked”; Acts 17:16: “he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.” NIV; Gen. 18:16-33).
- B. ** **Jn. 14:1-4**
- C. Thus regardless of the distractions, disappointments, if we fight “the good fight” of faith and finish “the race” He promises us “the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 2:10; Acts 16:25).
- D. Once again, this is something worthy of our daily consideration and meditation (Phil. 4:8: “...think on these things.”).
- E. Surely these are words of encouragement!

III. CONCLUSION: 12

1. Don't be discouraged!
2. These words are so encouraging and there are many more right at our fingertips.
3. I offer these for your careful consideration (Phil. 4:8) and recommend you "search the Scriptures" (Acts 17:11) for many, many others (**2 Cor. 1:3-4a**: "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation...*").