

THE NEED FOR ENCOURAGEMENT

Webster defines “encouragement” as “the act of encouraging.” The verb “encourage” means “to give courage to; to inspire with courage; to embolden; to help forward; to support or countenance.” The opposite is “discourage,” and means “to check the courage of; to dishearten; to dissuade; to attempt to repress or prevent by pointing out difficulties.” Shortly after Israel left Egypt, Moses was instructed to “send...men, that they may search the land of Canaan” (Num. 13:2). Twelve men were selected, a man from each of the tribes of Israel. These were not ordinary, run-of-the-mill men. These men were the “heads of the children of Israel” (Num. 13:3). Here were men who had witnessed the mighty works of God; men who saw Pharaoh and his armies destroyed in the overwhelming flood of the Red Sea; men who stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai and gazed upon the majesty of God as He descended upon the mount. These were men who did not shirk their duty, who “went up, and searched the land,” and who witnessed the abundance of that land that could and should have been theirs for the taking more than 40 years before Israel finally crossed the Jordan to take possession.

Why is it, then, that most Bible students cannot recall the names of ten of those twelve men? It is because only two of those twelve men can be identified as encouragers; the other twelve were discouragers. After forty days of searching out the land, those twelve men returned with a glowing report of what awaited them: “We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey” (Num. 13:27). Wisdom demanded an honest evaluation of the situation. “Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great” (verse 28). Evidently the people were becoming discouraged at the news of the “giants” in the land, for the scripture says that “Caleb stilled the people before Moses...” (verse 30a). Caleb was an encourager. Hear his words: “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” But ten of those men set their sights on the obstacles rather than the

opportunity. Instead of looking to God, they focused on the giants. Without any courage of their own there was no way they could “give courage” to others. “We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we... And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (verses 31, 33). Every attempt on the part of Joshua and Caleb to encourage the people failed. “If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us... Only rebel not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not” (verses 8-9). Unfortunately the congregation sided with the ten who gave the negative report. So strong was their rebellion that they “bade stone them with stones.” And, as we are wont to say, “the rest is history.” Someone once said, “We live by encouragement, and we die without it - slowly, sadly, and angrily.” The voices of discouragement drowned out the pleas of those two faithful men. And that generation died a slow, sad, and angry death.

Now let’s flip the coin over. Solomon said, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Proverbs 25:11). An encouraging word can bring victory out of the jaws of defeat. Legion are those who, exhausted and defeated, have rebounded to great heights because of one little word of encouragement. I was reminded of the power of encouragement this week when I came across this little story in the archives of my file system. “It was the day for field trials at the grade school. Various young boys were competing with each other to excel in the various sports. The event at hand was chinning or ‘pull-ups.’ The first boy strolled up to the bars and pulled himself up ten times, rather confident he would win. His opponent, Kenneth, came with less certainty. And when he had chinned the eighth time, he thought he was beaten. Finally with much pain, he managed to slowly drag his chin above the bars for the ninth time. And with a child’s sense of tragedy, he thought he could not even tie the other boy. But from somewhere down in the depths of a child’s courage, he pulled himself up one more time to tie his opponent. As pain racked the entire upper half of his body, he lowered himself to quit.

Then a little girl’s voice from the crowd, an admirer - perhaps his best girl - said with tearful eyes and urgent throbbing voice above the shouts of the other children, ‘One more time, Kenneth!’ Her voice was like an electric shock across his face. From somewhere deep within his being there was a call as old as humanity. Reserves of strength poured through his body. And with the determined frown of a grown man he dragged himself up for the final and winning pull-up and then collapsed happily on the ground.”

Each of us has the choice. A simple word of encouragement may very well make the difference between defeat and victory, between failure and success. This is particularly true at this moment in history. Like the ten spies there is the distinct possibility that we will allow our minds to be filled with negative thinking. We often wring our hands in despair over the economy, the political liberals who seem to have the upper hand, and the biased media that fails or refuses to report only the facts. One thing we should never forget: God is still on His throne, Jesus rules at His right hand, and all things work together for the good of them that are called according to His purpose. With only a few days till the election let us not despair. Let us do what we can to promote the right and defeat the wrong, and then let us rest in God’s promises that He will do what is right and that He will promote His purpose, regardless of who might reside in the White House, or who might be Speaker of the House, or who might fill the seat of Senate Majority.

Tom Wacaster *adapted from Tom’s Pen*

FALL GOSPEL MEETING

“Jesus The Way....”

October 26-30, 2008

Darrick Shepherd

BIRTHDAYS

Kathleen Camp, 10-13; Marion Stone, 10-14.

ILL

Sunday: Millie Robertson; Debra Schleif.

Wednesday: Millie Robertson.

Tina Pflugradt is recovering at home.

Those battling cancer: David Cole, Ledgia Campbell, Betty James and Cleo Stone. Remember these in your prayers as well as Millie Robertson.

HOME BOUND

Kathleen Camp is in Room 101 at the Royal Terrace Nursing Home in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Barbara James' Aunt is in the Hoeger house. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

SYMPATHY

Our sympathy is extended to Clara Scott and her family in the passing of Allen Scott (Scotty) on Tuesday, October 7. Visitation will be from 6 PM to 8 PM on Monday, October 13 at the Bruce Funeral home in Gardner, Kansas. Funeral services will be at the same location at 10 AM on Tuesday, October 14 and interment will be at the Greenwood, Missouri cemetery at 2 PM.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Trent and Leah Thrasher who were wed in Jefferson City, MO on Saturday. We pray for them a long and happy life together!

OUT OF TOWN

Chris Edwards was out of town on business last week.

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held this Sunday, October 12 following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 44; Sunday PM, 34; Wednesday PM, 32.

Those To Serve

October 12, 2008

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nemechek

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson
SONG LEADER..... George Thomas
OPENING PRAYER Trent Thrasher
PRESIDE..... John Dodson
ASSIST..... Chris Edwards
ASSIST..... John James
CLOSING PRAYER..... Steve Brown

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Jared Nelson
CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeff Nemechek
LORD'S SUPPER..... John Dodson

WEDNESDAY Oct. 15th

SONG LEADER..... Trent Thrasher
INVITATION Ted Thrasher

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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