

## Title: Can You Be Encouraged

Grant Hill, Garden Gathering, 2/12/23

We are going to read a story about Paul and Luke on their way to Rome that really happened.

### Acts 27

My question to you with this story is can you be encouraged? Can you be encouraged? The question arises out of the story when we read in verse 20, "Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, no small tempest beat on us, and all hope that we would be saved was finally given up." The soldiers, the sailors, and the prisoners, were holding on, and holding on, and holding on, and they finally let the last string of hope go. But, God showed up and was able to encourage them. Can you be encouraged? What is encouragement?

Who was affected by the tempest of the sea? Who was affected by the tempest of the sea in the story? We read that it is the prisoners, but not Paul. We read that it is the soldiers, but not Luke. We read that it is the sailors, but not the believers in God. They hardly seem affected. They hardly seem troubled. Paul is praying, obviously, because he has been speaking to God asking that all of them would be saved. An angel finally comes and says, "All that you have asked for, I will give to you." Luke is not writing this in panic. If you have read the biographies or the diaries of Lewis and Clark or of the pilgrims on the Mayflower crossing the ocean, they do not read like this. They read of fear and of something terrible that has happened. "I gave up my own hope. I was sick as a dog," right? All of those things come through, but Luke is on this boat, and the story does not read that he is afraid. How is that so? Can you be encouraged?

Can you be encouraged? Who is not affected by perilous seas? Luke and Paul are not. They are affecting the affected. They are influencing those affected by the storm. They are in the storm. They are not floating in the air above. They are seasick, I am sure. They are not seeing the sun just as much as *everyone* else is not. They see the perilousness of their situation, but they are influencing the situation. They are in the middle of it.

This is a reminder of another story. There once was a Man who was in the middle of a storm and started walking through it. His disciples saw this Man and thought He was a ghost. They cried out, "Is that you, Lord?" It was Jesus Himself walking through the storm. We talk about this, and yet here they are. Here are His disciples doing that very thing, affecting those in the storm versus the storm affecting them. Yes, can you be encouraged?

Even when they did not heed the truth of the believer, Paul? Paul and Luke were not affected by their rebellion or their stubbornness to not listen to them. They did not grumble or complain. They expected the unbelievers to not believe them. Paul and Luke expected those that did not know God to not believe them. But, they were obedient with the word that God gave them. They were obedient with, "This is what is going to happen." But, say, "I will go through it with you anyway." If you do not want to do it. Paul does not berate them. Paul says obviously, from the word that I gave earlier, "You know that I was right. Now I am going to tell you another word from the Lord. It will be just as right as this one." It was. 'Not one of the soldiers, or prisoners, not the centurion and not Paul or Luke lost their lives in the sea. All 276 of them, on a boat that was completely destroyed by the waves, made it to land on the island of Malta. The next day the devil tried to kill Paul by a *poisonous* snake biting him on the hand. Paul shook it off. Who is affecting who? Who is affecting who? Can you be encouraged?

Sunday, February 12, 2023

Acts 27:35-37

The ones who had given up all hope. The ones who had let that last thread go away. The ones who had prayed their prayers to whatever god they were serving, saying, "I hope you take me with you into the deep." They finally were able to be encouraged. What does that look like? What does that mean? Can you be encouraged?

The Lord asked me this question, because it is sometimes easier to encourage others than it is to be encouraged. It is sometimes easier to receive bad news, than it is to receive the truth. It is easier to be discouraged than it is to be encouraged, would you agree?

But, the trait of a Christian should be one that can be encouraged. Encouragement is not something that says, "I am encouraged today. But, when I read the headlines tomorrow, it is gone." That is not real encouragement. That is not encouragement. If I am encouraged today on Sunday, but then Monday morning, I read the headlines in the news and it discourages me, that is not the encouragement I am talking about. That is not the voice of the Holy Spirit. It is not the voice of the Holy Spirit. If I am encouraged that I see land and God's going to save me, then become discouraged when the bow of the ship gets stuck on a reef 100 yards from land, what was the encouragement worth? What was the worth of the encouragement of seeing land, if I think now I am going to be busted up in the rocks? That is being up and being down. We are not going from glory to glory *going up and going down*. You are not on a roller coaster. You did not sign up for a roller coaster when you asked the Lord Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. You are supposed to be going from faith to faith, from glory to glory, from steadfast love to steadfast love. Not going up and down. So, if you are going up and down, you need to have your heart checked. He has to be the Anchor of your soul, the Lover of your heart, the Captain of your salvation. You hear me? This going up and down is of the soul, not of the Spirit. This going up and down is of the flesh, not of the Holy Ghost.

Can you be encouraged? Yes! Your future and present state is determined by this trait, how well you can be encouraged and hold it. It is the truth. Yes, hard times will come to our nation and to the world. We have heard this from Brandy, and you have heard it from me. The darkness will get darker. But, praise God when something is dark, it is easy to spot the light. It is easier to spot light in a dark room. You are attracted to it. So, praise God, I am the light of the world. I am the salt of the earth. So, if the world is going to get darker and darker, they are going to come to me. They are going to come to me, because it is easier to see the truth when you are in darkness. Praise be to God. When you actually think about what I just said, that the world is going to get darker and darker. That means you are going to see stuff you did not think you would see. You will hear things you did not think you would hear. You could show up in the store and see the shelves empty or running out of toilet paper. We have already done this three years ago. The nation has forgotten what happened three years ago. They will be shocked when it happens again. How many times how many times did Paul get shipwrecked? Do you know?

II Corinthians 11:23

Yes, they thought that Paul had died several times. The saints raised him from the dead. There is one *instance* that we know for sure after he was stoned. He was laying on the ground dead, and the saints raised him from the dead.

II Corinthians 11:24-25

We have already read one of those times. So, here he has been shipwrecked twice. One of those times, "he was floating at sea a night and a day." He is encouraged. He is affecting it. He is not traumatized. He is not quaking in his bones. What? Yes, "three times I have been shipwrecked."

Sunday, February 12, 2023

II Corinthians 11:26-28

We just did a whole lesson that sounded like this last week on spiritual disciplines. He has been going through spiritual disciplines, and has learned that “in all things, I can have the anointing of Christ that strengthens me.”

Philippians 4:12-13

“Whether I am abased or whether I abound,” that means whether I have nothing or whether I have a million dollars. “I have learned to be satisfied in both,” encourage myself in both, and be encouraged by the Holy Spirit in both. Because, encouragement is actually the building block of faith. If you are going to go from faith to faith, you go from encouragement to hope, and hope to faith. Then in faith it starts again. Your faith encourages you. Then you have encouragement to have hope. Hope builds up the faith, and it is a cycle. If you have true encouragement, it should be leading you to a greater revelation of faith with Jesus Christ. That should be the cycle. That if I am truly encouraged, then I see my future, I see “the goodness of God, and I will surely encounter the goodness of God in the land of the living. Surely goodness and mercy are ahead of me,” but they are also behind me. Because, “they will follow me all the days of my life.”

There is hope. I am encouraged in that. There is hope. I take hold of hope because when He shows up, like Danetta says, “you have a testimony.” When you do what He says, and He shows up, it gives you faith.

Paul is saying, I have done this twice. I have faith that even though I prophesied and it came true, I can receive mercy from God to save us all. Because, the first thing was true. They were all going to lose their lives. They had all given up hope, but it was true. They were all going to lose their life. Paul's prophecy came true, but he prayed on behalf of the mercy of God. There are only two believers here praying. He is praying against the wicked principalities. The rest are not praying to God, but to Zeus and Thor or whoever else they wanted to pray to and the north winds are getting worse. The storm is like a hurricane or what is called a Euroclydon. Yet, the prayers of the two believers affected it more. He said, Lord have mercy. I know that you will save me God, but I am asking for more than just me. I am asking that not one of us would be lost. Not one. That was Paul's prayer. Luke was right there with him.

Who is being affected by the storm. You are going to hear of hard times. You are going to hear doom and gloom. You are going to wake up and see things that we never thought we would see in this nation. But, you are called to walk through it. He did not ask us to join the Kingdom of Heaven for comfort. If you are expecting comfort in the Kingdom of Heaven, that would be a roller coaster experience.

But, He did say, “I will give you life, and life more abundantly.” You can experience life and joy and truth in those times that God has set before us to walk through. If you can settle it in your mind today, we are going to see some storms. We are going to see some stuff that looks like we are all lost. But, “I am going to be walking in the Kingdom of life. So, that when I go through it, I have truth. I have joy. I am living a life abundantly, in the time that I am in. I am affecting it. It is not affecting me.”

That is what Jesus did. They were about to throw Him off a cliff, but He walked right through them. There was a storm. He walks right through it. His people do the same thing. I am not here to tell you that you were born for comfort. You were born for such a time as this, to walk in the Kingdom of life and life more abundantly.

Sunday, February 12, 2023

John 10:10

That means, you do not have to wait. You can have it now. He made a way to do that. He is saying, I shed my blood, I took the beatings, and I took your sin. He said to Father, I am paying their debts so that you can bless them, you can speak to them, and you can give to them. You can pour out all that is in your heart to do, Father, because they are your children. Jesus went to Him and said, I will take the fault. I will take the guilt. I will take the shame. I will take that payment, and you can put your wrath on me. He took it to the cross where they nailed it to Him. He wrote that check for the debts we owed with His own blood. But, because the Spirit of God saw the purity of His blood, that blood could not go to the dirt, and not come back up. The blood could not touch the Earth and not have the Earth spit it back out. The unholiness of the dirt could not hold the precious blood of Jesus, it had to spit it back up. Just like the whale spit up Jonah. The unclean whale could not hold the holy prophet. Jesus, because of the Holy Spirit in Him, could not stay in the Earth. He was resurrected three days by His very own Spirit. He made His lungs breathe again.

This is my hope, that if He is in me, then He will make me breathe again in the flesh, because I am Spirit, I am one with Him. Now I am seated in heavenly places in the Spirit. My hope is that this flesh will never fight me again. This body will not ever fight me again. This body will not be at enmity with God ever again. That is the hope. Just as Jesus is in the flesh, I will be in the flesh through the blood of Jesus. His blood will go through my veins. It is, it shall be, and it will be. That is the faith. That is what you are believing in Christ Jesus. That there is no corruption in the flesh. Yes, this should be encouragement to you, that should lead you to faith. Then you can go from faith to faith to faith and glory to glory to glory, because you are partaking of that divine nature, as we read about two weeks ago.

Can you be encouraged? We are not made for comfort, but we are meant for the Kingdom full of life. We have been born again from the Father of Heaven, being alive and full of hope, truth, and joy in the midst of hard times. Hard times do not toss you, but should encourage you for more faith.

What happened in 2020 on this date, who won the Super Bowl? The Kansas City Chiefs won, and who is in the Super Bowl today, but the Kansas City Chiefs. Oh, but what about the prophet that said that when the Kansas City Chiefs win the Super Bowl, that just like the Chiefs have a kingdom, the Chiefs kingdom. The Chiefs of the Kingdom of God are going to rise and show up in the land of the living. Also, what is going to happen if the Chiefs win the Super Bowl? Guess what is going to be on Facebook tomorrow? Last time the Chiefs won the Super Bowl, all hell broke loose.

What are you going to do about it? If the Chiefs win the Super Bowl, what will the headlines say on Facebook? Fear has come in the room, because it was an encouragement in 2020, but then the devil did a number and the Church was traumatized in fear. Now, it is being said, "Should we say it again? Should we prophesy again?" Because the Lord will have a harvest for those who really want to. That is what I am talking about. Can you be encouraged when encouragement is in your face? Will you take on the discouragement of "the last time that happened? The last time I gave the word, they did not believe me. We ran aground last time I gave the word. We were shipwrecked." Can you be encouraged? Because encouragement means you cannot be discouraged.

I hope you are hearing me, because the word is true. The prophets spoke it. There are going to be leaders of the new wine of the Church. Why? Because we have a harvest, and it is going to take a huge number of people that are Chiefs in the Kingdom and are tenacious enough to believe God. That is the Bride of Christ.

Sunday, February 12, 2023

We have been talking since the beginning here, about those that have been disciplined, to encourage themselves in times like this when they hear bad news. They can look on the face of Jesus and be encouraged to see He has a plan. We have a future. It is not all doom and gloom, because the Lord has a plan and a future for me. Yet, God does this with us, because He looks at me and He sees the yuck. He sees the filth. He sees it today. He is the Lion that is looking and judging us right now. He sees the heart, and He is not afraid to get in there. He says that He vomits out of His mouth what is not of Him.

#### Revelation 3:15-16

This is that choice you are talking about. Now you can choose to be the best of the worst or the worst of the best. That is lukewarm. I am saying that God looks at us like that. He looks at us when we are even in that place. He sees us in those places of our heart where we are just not quite all the way there yet, and we are taking that rollercoaster ride. Yet, He is willing to go to the depths of your heart and get a little yucky and a little mucky in that filth to clean you up. He still says you have a hope and a future, and you are going somewhere. He says to us, "I have a destiny for you."

We can look at our country, and we can do the same thing. "You are a mess. But, I am not afraid to get in there and throw off the tackle, throw off the storage, or tomorrow's lunch, in order to see the future come into what the Lord has said will happen." Luke said he threw off with his own hands his life support. Basically, that his throwing off the ropes that could save him. They threw off all the rest of the wheat after they ate enough for that day. They gave it all up. The Church is going to have to be willing and say, "I am here for the harvest." I am not here to feed the oxen and see the oxen trough get all dirty and mucky. That is a proverb showing God does not do that with us. He goes into the storm. He goes into the yuck. He goes on to the roller coaster and He stops it. He loves you and tells you that it looks like hard times, but praise God, we are affecting it. It is not affecting us, because we are the ones that stopped the wind and the waves. Us, the Bride of Christ, the walking, living, breathing Bride of Christ with a sword in her hand, healing in her eyes, and love for everyone. Yet, rebuke for the wicked.

If you are really encouraged, it is not a fleeting feeling for today and gone with tomorrow's headlines. We are disciplining ourselves. In this House, we are disciplining ourselves. We are disciplining ourselves. A soldier does not become afraid when war is announced. A soldier is not afraid when war is announced. Right? That is that a Marine tagline saying, "When they hear the sounds of war, they start running to it." I am talking about hearing the sounds of distress, and start running to it, rather than away from it. That is what you are called to be like. Can you be encouraged? You are disciplining yourself. Stay encouraged, keep being encouraged until it turns to hope. Then this hope will turn to joy and the joy will turn into faith.

Can you be encouraged? Stay encouraged, keep being encouraged until it turns to hope, then that hope will turn to joy. That joy turns into more faith, because He shows up every time you hold on to Him. It is more than just seeing things from an optimistic place. I am not saying that we are supposed to just be thankful, happy people. But, it is more than just being optimistic and seeing things with rose colored glasses, because you have to see the ugly and the dark. But, you still can see through it to where it is going to go. You can look at your nation say, "You are ugly and are not doing things right." But, you can still see through it to the destiny and the truth of what God has said it is supposed to be. You can be in both places. That is a truth.

You still have to acknowledge. You have to acknowledge both. That is the goodness over there, and the severity over here. The Church does a really good job of one or the other. Sometimes we have people that are like one or the other. They only see the ugly or they only see the really good. You have to be wise and mature.

Sunday, February 12, 2023

You have to be able to tell your children as a parent, "This is not right. But, I know where you are going." As a parent you can easily see them being great in the future, but today he is a "stinker." We do that with our children, but we have to do it with those around us. We have to do with our future brothers and sisters in Christ. You also have to do it for your nation. Maybe where you came from, you would have to do it for the state that you live in or came from. You have to say, "That is not righteous or right. But, I see where you are supposed to go." You believe for it, because not any of your hair is going to fall to the ground if I have anything to do with it. If I have anything to say about it. If I can pray for mercy.

This is real and it is more than just seeing things from an optimistic place or with rose colored glasses type of thing. God does not see things with rose colored glasses. He sees the truth. He sees the truth. He sees the yucky and the horrible. He gets His hands dirty. He gets angry at sin, but He is compassionate, loving, and tender. He will see you through it, and get you to the truth and the love of God. He still has more than enough love for us to see a hope and a future and great plans for us.

#### Acts 11:22

Okay, so those things that came to their ears was good news.

#### Acts 11:23-24

The purpose of encouragement is that it will add to your purpose of heart. Did you see that in verse 22? When Barnabas came and had seen the grace of God in Antioch, he was glad and he encouraged them all. "That with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord."

#### II Peter 1:5-7

Encouragement gives you purpose in your spiritual discipline. When the Lord is asking you to do something, we are disciplining ourselves. We are asking the Lord, "What do you want me to do? Whether it is fasting, whether it is being quiet, whether it is listening, whether it is giving up, whether it is prayer, or whatever it is that He is asking you to do, encouragement sets that purpose in you. It keeps that purpose in your heart going. You have to have encouragement to keep doing what God asks you to do. You have to be encouraged to do the purpose of your heart that God has set for you to continue with the Lord. That is how the roller coaster of up and downs stops, because with encouragement you persevere. It gives you the purpose of your heart to go up, level to level, faith to faith, glory to glory, with encouragement.

What does discouragement do? There is the drop. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick." That is in Proverbs. The devil tries to discourage you. But, you can be disciplined to be encouraged. You can be disciplined to stay encouraged. You can be disciplined to grow in that encouragement of your heart. Where no one has to encourage you, but Holy Spirit. Paul wasn't getting any encouragement from anybody. Everybody had lost all hope. But, Paul went to the One who is the Truth and received encouragement. Then gave it, and they went from faith to faith, glory to glory, and they all were saved.

So, if the Chiefs win the Super Bowl, you better stay encouraged.

Let's stand.

"Father, here we are. You have asked us the question, can I be encouraged? Search me and know me. Let me be honest with you. Because, I am to be a son of encouragement, filled with the Holy Spirit, and always encouraged with the future. Always seeing the glory of God is my future. Yet, speaking the truth in love of what is actually happening around me. Then they can go through a storm and have it not affect them. I know that there will be storms in this life, and I choose to be encouraged through it, for the purpose of your glory to continue with you. In Jesus's mighty name we pray, amen."