

Title: Let Me Encourage Your Hearts

Passage: Acts 13:13-16

Introduction:

Book of Acts

- The Early Church grew with power but faced opposition and persecution.
- Similarly, we face trials and pressures.

Matthew 11:29-30

[Jesus says:] Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Passage: Acts 13:13-16

Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem, but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, “*Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.*” So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: “*Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen.*”

- Encouragement = exhortation and comfort (Greek word: Paraklesis)

Discouragement

- too commonly felt among society in general and continual temptation of Christians

Response: But God

Genesis 50:20

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Ephesians 2:4-7

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Key Point:

Any discouragement you may have can be replaced with joy and victory through God’s Word.

- God’s Word can bring spiritual healing where there is discouragement and pain.

Three Truths to Combat Discouragement:

1. You are a chosen child of God (v.17-18)

Acts 13:17-18

The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness.

- God intentionally chose Israel to be His people.

Ephesians 1:4-5

even as [God] chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

- If a Christian, God has chosen you and everything occurs within proper place and context of the whole.

2. Jesus is King and sits on the throne over all (v. 22-24)

- all trials are only temporary

Acts 13:22-24

And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

- As Israel was judged with various kings, God promised that from King David that a Savior would come from his line.

Luke 4:16-21

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, *“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

- Jesus quoted from Isaiah and assured God’s promises came true.

Proverbs 21:1-2

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart.

Isaiah 46:9-10

for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose"

3. The good news of the resurrected Christ (v. 26, 32, 33)

Acts 13:26

“Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation.

Acts 13:32-33

And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’”

1 Corinthians 15:19-22

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Application

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Question: Whose voice do you listen to - God's or Satan's? Discerning God's voice makes all the difference as well...

God's voice stills you, Satan's voice rushes you.

God's voice leads you, Satan's voice pushes you.

God's voice reassures you, Satan's voice frightens you.

God's voice enlightens you, Satan's voice confuses you.

God's voice encourages you, Satan's voice discourages you.

God's voice comforts you, Satan's voice worries you.

God's voice calms you, Satan's voice obsesses you.

God's voice convicts you, Satan's voice condemns you.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the LORD, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.