

EDIFYING EXHORTATION: WHO NEEDS IT?

In our modern fast paced lives far too many Christians feel distanced from their brethren. Many older members think back over their lives and miss the forgone days of yesteryear when people truly cared for each other. A time when members were involved in each other's lives, not just vague acquaintances to be waved at on Sunday.

There is absolutely no reason for a cold distant attitude to be present in the Lord's church today. Members should be close to each other. They should encourage and love each other dearly. This love and concern should not be limited to just members but to all men everywhere; "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). The Lord loved us all (John 3:16) and we should imitate His love in our own lives (Matthew 10:34).

The above subtitle, "Who Needs It?" should be self-evident: we all do. There is not a one of us who doesn't need words of encouragement on various occasions (the more often the better). The Bible is full of examples of men and women who needed exhortation from time to time.

We are familiar with the old adage, "Behind every successful man there is a great (supportive) woman." While this may not be technically true, the sentiment is correct. Rare indeed is the person who goes through life without someone spurring them on to greater deeds. We all need a voice telling us that we can succeed when the world tells us we're going to fail.

One of the greatest Old Testament exhorters was Caleb. When the Israelites faltered in their trust of God concerning the conquest of Canaan, he encouraged them to stay with God. Notice the words he offered in the face of discouragement, "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30). Caleb's words were greatly needed at that moment. And while the immediate audience did not heed his words, they (the words) still stand

as exactly what the man or women of God should have said. Preachers encourage people every week as to how better live (or at least they should).

One of the loftiest titles bestowed on a human being is that of Barnabas the son of exhortation. I fear some preachers don't believe they've preached the truth unless every member of the congregation leaves the assembly feeling badly about themselves. Barnabas reminds us of another important part of the work of a preacher. We are to be the greatest encouragers of the people of God on the Earth.

We encourage the lost to seek the way of truth; "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). We encourage them to seriously study and obey God's plan of salvation (2 Timothy 2:15). This includes hearing the message of heaven - the gospel (Romans 10:17). It also includes believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (John 3:16). Repentance from our past sins is also demanded by the Lord (Luke 13:3). We are also to confess the Lord with our mouths (Romans 10:10). And we are to be baptized in water for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38).

Once the gospel has been obeyed the preacher of God helps the members stay the course. Sometimes we hear preachers say things like, that's not "my job." I believe men who make such statements are missing the spirit of the work of a minister of Christ. Anything that helps the Lord's people reach the shores of heaven falls within the parameters of the work of an evangelist. If it's taking a pot of food to the sick, mowing the grass of the aged, or sending get well cards to the afflicted, it's all my job.

We attempt to encourage them as did Caleb and Barnabas. The message is simple: there is a God in heaven who loves us all beyond human comprehension; He gave His Son that we might be forgiven of our sins; and we can live faithfully and dwell with Him forever (Psalm 23). Read again Paul's words to the Corinthians, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

May God help us all be exhorters to those who need encouragement. May we be seen as exhorters whose one desire is to seek and save that which is lost. May we say the kind words, give the hugs and work through the darkness in order to help others see the Lord (Matthew 5:13-16). In order to be people who exhort we must be willing to look for those who need our help. We must look outside of our own lives, desires, and schedules. We must look for and reach out to those who are struggling.

We should also exhort those who are strong and active in the Lord's church. Elders, teachers, and preachers all need to be reminded of how much they are appreciated for the work they do. This type of support will help them "keep on keeping on." Remember our ultimate goal in life is to get to heaven, and help (edify, encourage, exhort) as many others as we can to do likewise.

Michael Light *from Seek Ye First...*

THE TWO WOLVES

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that was going on inside himself. He said, "My son, it is between two wolves. One is evil: Anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.... The other is good: Joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith." The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?" The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one I feed."

The apostle Paul declared, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things" (Phi. 4:8). Which wolf are you feeding with your thoughts?

Author Unknown

BIRTHDAYS

John Carter, 02-07; John James, 02-10.

ILL

Sunday: Kevin Greer, Millie Robertson. **Wednesday:** Joe Brewer, Janice Carter, Sarah Marcum and Millie Robertson. Those battling cancer: Kathleen Camp's sister-in-law, Bo Marcum's sister, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Janice Carter, Allen Scott, Kim Clark, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

AT HOME

Bob Adams is at the Del Mar Gardens, Room 229. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

The Simmon's family was in Kentucky. The Parish family was away last Sunday.

POT LUCK DINNER

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held this Sunday, February 5, 2006 following our AM worship. Please plan to come and enjoy the good food and company!

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held next Sunday, February 12, 2006 following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

SATURDAY SEMINAR

The Saturday Seminar at the 39th Street congregation will meet on February 18, 2006 at 9:30, 10:30 and 11:30 AM. The theme is: "Happiness From God." See the flyer in the foyer for details.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 62; Sunday PM, 42; Wednesday PM, 50.

Those To Serve

February 5, 2006

BUILDING AND COMMUNION.....Thomas

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas
SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson
OPENING PRAYER Jeff Nemecek
PRESIDE..... Michael Simmons
ASSIST.....David Adams
ASSIST..... John Cody Carter
CLOSING PRAYER.....Charles Tullis

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER John Carter
CLOSING PRAYER..... Gary Cole
LORD'S SUPPER..... Michael Simmons

WEDNESDAY 8th

SONG LEADER.....Jeremy Keifer
INVITATION John Cody Carter

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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