**Be Encouraged**

**(April 22, 2018, by Rev. Anthony Menzel)**

The title of today's message is "Be Encouraged."

As a pastor, it is especially important to have a strong connection with the Lord Jesus so that you can know when the congregation might need a specific Word from the Lord…

Today’s message may include some Scriptures you have heard before, but I believe the Lord gave me a message for this body: “You don’t have to be sad. Be encouraged.”

\*\*\*Even in the midst of the most dire circumstances, we should be encouraged…

Scripture 1: **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

**3**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, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Even when facing the loss of a loved one, God can bring us comfort, even if we are not sure if that loved one was right with the Lord.

Even when facing a negative medical diagnosis or extreme persecution, we should be encouraged…

Scripture 2: **Psalm 23**

The Lord *is* my shepherd;  
I shall not want.  
**2**He makes me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside the still waters.  
**3**He restores my soul;  
He leads me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name’s sake.

**4**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil;  
For You *are* with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

**5**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup runs over.  
**6**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
All the days of my life;  
And I will dwell[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+23&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-14242a)] in the house of the Lord  
Forever.

\*\*\*The only time we should be in long-term sadness or a sadness without hope is if we know we are in sin and we refuse to repent.

The answer to such sadness is to sincerely repent from the heart.

Scripture 3: **James 4:7-10**

**7**Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. **8**Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. **9**Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. **10**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

\*\*\*There is a beautiful song that I love called “Coat of Many Colors.” Some of you may have heard of Dolly Parton. She grew up very poor in the mountains of Tennessee. The song is about how her mother made her coat of rags of many colors with a lot of love and how her mother compared the coat to Joseph’s coat of many colors in the Bible. When the other children made fun of her, she declared, probably because of the love and time that went into making her coat, that her coat was worth more than all the other children’s clothes. The best line in the song is “One is only poor if you choose to be…” If your life is full of love and you enjoy your life, then how can you be poor? Two people can be in a similar situation. One can be happy, while the other is not.

Scripture 4: **Acts 5:12, 14-42 (especially v. 41)**

**12**And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch. **13**Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. **14**And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, **15**so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. **16**Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

### Imprisoned Apostles Freed

**17**Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, **18**and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. **19**But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, **20**“Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.”

**21**And when they heard *that,* they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

### Apostles on Trial Again

**22**But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, **23**saying, “Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+5&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27083a)] before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!” **24**Now when the high priest,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+5&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27084b)] the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. **25**So one came and told them, saying,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+5&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27085c)] “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!”

**26**Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. **27**And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, **28**saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!”

**29**But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. **30**The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. **31**Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. **32**And we are His witnesses to these things, and *so* also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

### Gamaliel’s Advice

**33**When they heard *this,* they were furious and plotted to kill them. **34**Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. **35**And he said to them: “Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. **36**For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. **37**After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. **38**And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; **39**but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.”

**40**And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them,* they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. **41**So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+5&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27101d)] name. **42**And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

Scripture 5: **Acts 16:16-34**

**16**Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. **17**This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” **18**And this she did for many days.

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour. **19**But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.

**20**And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; **21**and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” **22**Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. **23**And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. **24**Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

The Philippian Jailer Saved

**25**But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. **26**Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. **27**And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. **28**But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”

**29**Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. **30**And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

**31**So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” **32**Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. **33**And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his *family* were baptized. **34**Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

Scripture 6: **2 Chronicles 20:1-4, 13-30**

It happened after this *that* the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and *others* with them besides the Ammonites,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+20&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-11589a)] came to battle against Jehoshaphat. **2**Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, “A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria;[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+20&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-11590b)] and they are in Hazazon Tamar” (which *is* En Gedi). **3**And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. **4**So Judah gathered together to ask *help* from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

**13**Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord.

**14**Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. **15**And he said, “Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is*not yours, but God’s. **16**Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. **17**You will not *need* to fight in this *battle.* Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord *is* with you.”

**18**And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. **19**Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.

**20**So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.” **21**And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

“Praise the Lord,  
For His mercy *endures* forever.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+20&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-11609c)]

**22**Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. **23**For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy *them.* And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

**24**So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there *were* their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

**25**When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+20&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-11613d)] and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. **26**And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the Lord; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+20&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-11614e)]until this day. **27**Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. **28**So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the Lord. **29**And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. **30**Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

\*\*\*Always remember that your best days are ahead of you. No matter how you are, as long as you walk faithfully with the Lord Jesus, your best days are yet to come…

Scripture 7: **John 14:1-6**

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. **2**In My Father’s house are many mansions;[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26671a)] if *it were* not *so,* I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26671b)] **3**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.**4**And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

**5**Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

**6**Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Scripture 8: **Revelation 21:1-8**

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. **2**Then I, John,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-31056a)] saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3**And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. **4**And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

**5**Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-31059b)] “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

**6**And He said to me, “It is done![[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-31060c)] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. **7**He who overcomes shall inherit all things,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-31061d)] and I will be his God and he shall be My son. **8**But the cowardly, unbelieving,[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-31062e)] abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Even the existence of the Lake of Fire is good news for the follower of Christ because that means there will be absolutely nothing bad in heaven.

Scripture 9: **Revelation 22:14-15**

**14**Blessed *are* those who do His commandments,[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+22&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-31095g)] that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. **15**But[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+22&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-31096h)] outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

\*\*\*When you feel discouraged, adjust your attitude through prayer.

Scripture 10: **Philippians 4:6-7**

**6**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **7**and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

\*\*\*If you stay with the Lord Jesus, you should be encouraged because everything will be alright.

Scripture 11: **Psalm 30:5**

For His anger *is but for* a moment,  
His favor *is for* life;  
Weeping may endure for a night,  
But joy *comes* in the morning.