



Encouraging Words

Pastor Larry Vriezelaar | August 9, 2020 | First Congregational Church

Everyone you see is facing battles you don't know anything about.

Many people battle depression...addiction...alcoholism...broken relationships...and the list goes on and on. Many during these times of the pandemic are addicted to fear.

I want you to know that I do not take these tumultuous days we are in lightly...but I will not live in fear...fear is not of God. I stand by the scripture that says...**Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.** Deut 31:6

The Good Shepherd

John 10:10, 11 **The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.**

Luke 1:37 **"For nothing will be impossible with God."**

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you. Isaiah 54:10

Jesus said, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:20

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

Jesus said, Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. . . For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:25, 32-33

Jesus encourages the disciples

John 21 records an episode where some of the disciples had spent all night fishing, but in the end, caught nothing. Early in the morning Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples didn't realize that it was Jesus. He called to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

They did so and were unable to haul the net in because it was so full of fish. Then John said to Peter, "It is the Lord." After they towed the net full of fish ashore, they noticed that Jesus had his own fire with fish and bread already prepared. Then Jesus said, "Come and have breakfast."

Jesus loves to spend time with people and just talk. He's never in a hurry. Reassurance is one of his specialties. Time alone with Jesus is a great source of encouragement. If his followers had lost heart, their time alone with Jesus gave them a chance to rebuild their relationship with him and restore their hope for the future.

For I know the plans for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

You have no idea what God might do through a single word of encouragement.

So many people we see are facing battles that we know nothing about.

I want to encourage you and me to share words that give life. Fight to become an encourager

The tongue has the power of life and death. Proverbs 18:21

My words can build you faith!

Strengthen your confidence!

Help you to believe that God is for you!

Remind you that God will never leave you!

Remind you that you are chosen and called!

We need to use our words to encourage!

Everyone you see is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind...be gracious...be caring.

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. Heb. 3:13

Sin lies...it says things like "you will find happiness outside of God's will! You never will!

Satan will remind you of what you don't have...what you can't do...and why you don't matter.

We all face temptation daily...that's why we need encouragement.

You might say "I'm just not good at giving encouragement to others. It doesn't come natural to me. Neither did walking when you were a little child. The more you did it the better you did it.

The world needs more encouragers!

If you think something say it!

Why would you ever rob someone of a blessing that goes unexpressed?

If you think something good say it.

Start at home.

You have no idea what God can do through a single word.

Many people are smiling on the outside but hurting on the inside.

Many people look like they are confident...but they are horribly insecure.

Many people look like they have it all together...but they feel like they are falling apart.

Positive words are difficult to remember – Negative words are difficult to forget.

I want to close with things God says about you!

You are the righteousness of God...An overcomer by the blood of the Lamb...A child of the living God...Joint heirs in Christ...You are an Ambassador...Free from the law of sin and death...you have the mind of Christ...you are filled with the Spirit.

You are God's workmanship...created for good works...You are a New Creation...the Light of the World...the Salt of the Earth...You are more than a conqueror...You are the Head not the Tail...You are blessed in and out...You are seated in heavenly places.

God has not given me a spirit of fear...You can do all things through Christ who gives you strength.

No weapon formed against you shall prosper...YOU ARE A FRIEND OF GOD!