



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – December 5, 2023

The Lord be with you.

I've heard it said that I had on the back is only a few vertebrae removed from a kick in the pants, but miles ahead in results...

Well, most of those have probably needed a good kick in the pants a time or two, you know, you just can't say enough good about the power of the pat on the back of what I call the power of encouragement. As everybody today is facing something and need some encouragement, don't you like it when someone begins to conversation with the words, I want to encourage you. I mean, you hear those words and you start feeling better about yourself about your situation about life, the words I want to encourage you inspire hope, confidence, energy. In Thessalonians 5:11, the Apostle Paul, writes, Encourage one another and build up each other.

I can think of a few things that people are more in need of today, than encouragement... I mean, it's been a rough year, hasn't it? And so for the next few moments, I wanna think with you about encouragement as again and again, the New Testament commands, encourage one another. The Greek word translated here encourages the word parakaleo, P-A-R-A-K-A-L-E-O. Parakaleo is the word Jesus use of the Holy Spirit in calling the Holy Spirit. Paraklete, which is the noun form of parakaleo is that something special that the Holy Spirit does. As the Holy Spirit encourages you and me, Jesus promised that when he returned to Heaven, that he would send another Paraclete, another encourager, who would be to you and to me what Jesus was to his disciples as he walked the earth.

And so today, the Holy Spirit continues Christ's work with us as paraklete, to encourage us. And as the Holy Spirit encourages us, we get to work with the Holy Spirit in encouraging others. There was a man in the New Testament who so excelled at encouraging others that he was given the nickname son of encouragement, that is aramaic, Barnabass. Well, you can read all about son of encouragement, Barnabas in the Book of Acts, in the name that his parents gave him was Joseph. He was a Jew, a Levite, from the island of Cypress. And every time you see Joseph, Barnabas son of encouragement, he is encouraging someone, and he played a huge role in the lives of others in the New Testament that are better known to us that he was, but that he was the wind beneath their wings.



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All of Thanksgiving week, I was thinking about, and I was giving thanks for just many, many Barnabas that I've had in my life, people who have really encouraged me, and was so often what they said to me, the words that they used, that really encouraged me. They got me thinking back to the Book of Proverbs and everything the Book of Proverbs has to say about the power of words and the power of the tongue to encourage. And yes, it's power to discourage. Proverbs 18:21 says That, Death and life are in the power of the tongue. That means that you and I, that we can make or break a person's day with just a word. Or we might even make a break a person's life with just a word. I was in high school, I had flunked algebra, I wasn't doing well. I was down on myself, down on life, and I remember a teacher when she wasn't my teacher, but she came to me and she said to me, Tim, I believe in you, and I've found that words are such a big part of encouraging others, how you say it, when you say it, your tone of voice, so let me pass on to you in just a few other Proverbs that I think you might find helpful in thinking about encouraging others.

Proverbs 12:25, Anxiety weighs down the human heart, and there is a lot of anxiety today is there? Anxiety was down to human heart, but a good word, cheers it up. Everybody you meet is facing something, and I think about that bus boy that clears my table, or that clerk that serves me at the store, it is possible that I might encourage them, that I might speak a good word that cheers up a heart that is way down. And I find that as I seek to do that for others, it just seems to always have a way of coming back to me and encouraging me. Okay, another proverb about our words and being encourages. Proverbs 16:24, Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body. That's the two dimensions of ourselves, sweetness to the soul and health to the body. You see, our words have a psychosomatic power to heal or hurt the soul and body, one more proverb about our words and being encouragers, Proverbs 25, Verse 11, a word fittingly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Okay, can you picture that? Can you visualize this exquisite setting a fine silver and there are apples of gold right there in the center, so the wise man says, so our words spoken at the right time, spoken carefully, lovingly, with the right voice. And with the Holy Spirit, you and I have the privilege, and we do have the power to encourage, to breathe hope, confidence, life into others.

And so can you think of someone today who is discouraged and you could be their encourager? Can you think of someone struggling in their work and you can be their, encourager? Can you think of someone who is lonely and you can be their encourager? You and the Holy Spirit, you and the Holy Spirit together have the power to put encouragement in them. What you have within you to do is what many in our world today are so needing.

So let me encourage you to encourage... As a pat on the back is only a few vertebrae removed from a kick in the pants, but while miles ahead in results.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.