

“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...” (2 Peter 1:12)



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WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Where We Meet

1017 S. 2nd St. (Old Hwy. 367)
Cabot, AR 72023

When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am
Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper
Norman Kemper

Our Deacons

Troy Hunter
Kelly Kendall
Tony Ramick

Our Preacher

Alex Hale



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Word of the Week: Encouraging

By Ken Weliever (thepreachersword.com)

“We need encouraging lessons,” one of the shepherds of a local church said regarding a meeting I’m scheduled to hold this fall. He observed that not only had COVID-19 had an impact on their church family but also other events had taken their toll as well. I suspect this can be said of most local congregations. It’s pretty obvious that there is much in our world today that is discouraging. The state of our polarized nation. Racial tension. The health of our loved ones. Emotional instability. Financial concerns. The spiritual well being of Christians. Families being ripped apart by divorce. Coping with sickness, disease, and death. All of these and more can leave us dispirited and depressed.

Encouraging words are needed. But sadly some are using their platform to stir up strife, provoke arguments, and stoke divisiveness. Maybe not intentionally. But it’s the result nonetheless when we engage in useless disputes on social media over personal opinions, political allegiances, and conspiracy theories.

The word “encourage” fundamentally means to “inspire others with renewed courage; renewed spirit or renewed hope.” Encouragement is a feeling that issues itself in action. George M. Adams called encouragement “oxygen to the soul.” Nothing breathes new life into a discouraged person like an encouraging word or deed. Dr. David Jeremiah observed that “The body of Christ is a family whose members are to be mutually involved with one another. One of the one-another ministries God calls us to practice is the ministry of encouragement.” This command is found several times in Paul’s letters as succinctly stated in 1Thessalonians 5:11. “*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*” While there is a time for reproof, rebuke, and the discussion of doctrinal differences, we would presently be well served to search the Bible for encouragement. God has much to say about the importance, use and the effect of encouraging words.

First of all, our God is a God of encouragement. He desires that we live in peace, harmony, and unity with one another so that together with one voice we may glorify Him (Rom 15:5-6). Consider all the ways God has provided encouragement to us both materially but most of all spiritually through our blessings in Christ Jesus. Divine association. The privilege of prayer. Forgiveness of sins. Fellowship of like-minded believers. And eternal hope in a heavenly home that transcends any mansion in this life.

Secondly, through the Holy Spirit’s revelation to inspired men, we have God’s Word to articulate and affirms these promises. Furthermore, “everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4).

Viewed from the correct context the book of Ecclesiastes encourages us with a realistic perspective of life. Proverbs offer valuable insights into wisdom, knowledge, and practical living. Psalms provide comfort, consolation, and encouragement when we are distressed, disheartened, or depressed.

The New Testament biographies of Jesus inspire us to nobler aspirations, higher motives, and a perfect example to emulate in our lives. Acts is a thrilling narrative that reminds us of the Gospel’s power and the impact of Christianity in the world. The epistles repeatedly encourage us to steadfast faithfulness. And encourage us to “encourage one another and build one another up” (1 Ths 5:11). Hebrews is a wonderfully encouraging book that exhorts Christians whose faith is wavering not to give up. Finally, Revelation reminds us that God’s cause will be victorious. That Christians are on the right side of history. That the devil will be defeated. And that we can one day live in a world with no tears. No sorrow. No death. Wouldn’t we all be better, and the church better, if we were like Barnabas who was identified “as the Son of encouragement”? So, we read when he came to the church at Antioch “and had seen the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord” (Ac 4:36; 11:23).

In the home, the church, in the neighborhood, and on social media, be an encourager. The world already has more than enough discouragers.