

The Life Challenge

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Series: Love One Another

Title: Encourage One Another

Key Text: 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:12-14

Speaker: Mike Olynik

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WARM - UP

Tell of a time you felt authentic encouragement amid discouragement. What did this encouragement look like? How did it lift you out of discouragement?

Encouragement is a powerful tool God gives us against the enemy. Read Heb 3:12-14 and Eph 6:10-12. What stands out to you as you think about the unseen battle we face?

We live in a world of "you-do-you." If it feels good do it, be true to how you feel, and very "yes-men" responses and "encouragement." Do you think this affects our ability to bring positive exhortation/encouragement? Why?

DISCUSSION

Mike mentioned three stories of encouragement that go beyond the general view of cheerleading encouragement: uplift and exhort. Read these encouragement accounts now and answer the questions. (#1 on this page, #2 & 3 are on the next page)

Exhort: Esther 4 (3 for background if you like)

What could have happened if Mordecai didn't have the courage to exhort Esther? Sometimes an encouragement in the faith or to action needs to shake you up. Talk about experiences like this in your life. What does it feel like in the moment? What is the outcome?

It is hard to allow people to speak into your life and vice-versa like Mordecai and Esther. Do you have people who can give that honest exhortation when needed?

DISCUSSION CONTD.

Exhort: Moses and Joshua (Deu 31:1-8; 41:44-47)

Think of a time that someone gave you an exhortation either in writing or verbally. How do you think Joshua felt to receive these words from his mentor Moses? At times, there is a stopper in place that hinders us from sharing positive exhortations like this. Why is that?

Uplift: Moses, Aaron, and Hur

The picture of Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' arms and staff takes on a powerful form of encouragement. This is encouragement that goes beyond words. What would happen if Aaron and Hur weren't there?

We are seeking to live up to the standards Jesus set and make Him known in all we do. Challenging does begin to describe that life. How might this picture help us risk this seemingly impossible task? What could this brotherhood or sisterhood relationship do for your faith and the Kingdom?

APPLICATION

Here are some optional exercises to go further with the application:

- 1) Mike mentioned that worship is a good way to be exhorted and reminded of what Jesus has done. Picture a worship song and encourage each other in the faith ("*What a Beautiful Name it is*" or for a new song, "*More Than Able*" [Elevation Worship]). Afterward, talk about the experience.
- 2) Spend some time praying for each other, especially that God would reveal the ways we could be more encouraging or people that He wants us to encourage this week.
- 3) If you find yourself longing for that Triad relationship (the picture of Moses, Aaron, and Hur), spend some time praying about who in your life is/could be your Aaron and Hur and vice-versa. They might just be in the prayer circle before you. For more resources on developing a Triad, email mikeo@southabbotsford.com