

Something You Need, Something You Can Be

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the vital role of faith and the necessity of encouragement within the Christian community to withstand trials and grow spiritually.

Duration: 55:59

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 15:32, Romans 12:6, Romans 12:8

Topics: "Purpose"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of encouraging others through the Word of God. She mentions how Steve Green, a previous guest, used music and Scripture to feed the spirit and grow faith. The speaker highlights Acts 15:32, where Judas and Silas encouraged the brothers through their prophetic words. She encourages the audience to share what God has revealed to them from the Bible and to avoid idle conversations that do not edify. The speaker also references 1 Corinthians 14:3, which states that prophesying is meant to speak to men for their encouragement. She concludes by emphasizing the different gifts given by God, including the gift of encouragement, as mentioned in Romans 12:6 and 12:8.

Transcript

I want you to open your Bible to the book of 1 Thessalonians. Would you do that? That's not such an easy book to find, unless you're really familiar with your Bible. It's in the New Testament.

It's after Colossians, which is after Philipians, which is after Ephesians and Galatians. So about midpoint in the New Testament, you'll find 1 Thessalonians. And because I'm going to read a text with you, I want you to look at your Bible.

If you don't have a Bible, look on with someone next to you, but then later I'm going to use the screen to pop up some other verses, rather than just as I typically do, quote them to you. The name of this message, which you can get, go to 1 Thessalonians, the third chapter, please. 1 Thessalonians 3, and then look up at me.

The name of this message is, Something You Need, Something You Can Be. Almost like a riddle, listen. Something you need, something you can be.

Say that with me. Something you need, something you can be. 1 Thessalonians 3 verses 1 through 5. So when we could stand it no longer, Paul's away from the church at Thessalonica.

We thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith. So that no one would be unsettled by these trials.

You know quite well that we were destined for them. In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.

For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you, and our efforts might have been useless. Now the context of this, all brothers and sisters, is that 1 Thessalonians is a letter to the church at Thessalonica, where Paul had spent a relatively short period of time.

But he loved these people, and in 1 Thessalonians, if you study it carefully, you see Paul's heart revealed, and how he loves the people he ministered to. A real secret to ministry, and something that is sorely lacking in pulpits or ministries, where it's just giving out information, sermons, even if it's correct Bible doctrine, without the passion for the people that Christ died for. Now Paul now is telling them about the fact that he sent Timothy.

But let's, let's make a bypass, and look at it this way. A few months ago, a nurse who helps us here in the church, gave me a shot that I had never received before. A flu shot.

How many before the winter season ever get a flu shot? Could I see your hands? Very few. How many have never gotten a flu shot? Look at this. My wife got one, and immediately got the flu, right after she got this shot.

Well anyway, thank God, flu shot or not, I've been healthy this winter. But the reason they have flu shots is this. There are new strains of the flu, every year.

Then there's this nasty thing going around, that hit the cruise boat, hit those cruise ships. What's that thing called? I can't think of it, but it really gets you sick, for about maybe 72 hours, or a little bit less. And when a new problem arises, doctors who care about their patients, look for antidotes, or cures, or therapies, so that you can avoid a worst-case scenario.

So it's this. Problem looms. Somebody cares.

Someone understands the body. Someone administers a flu shot, or you know what, you got to change your eating regimen, or you're going to be susceptible to this. You know what, you could easily break your, one of your bones, because you're getting weakness in your bone density.

So, so then take this. So that's, that's a typical scenario. That's not only true in the physical realm, it's true as we see here, in the spiritual realm.

There's a problem that Paul sees, who's separated from the church. He's concerned about their faith. He has started the church.

He has left them to go on his missionary journeys, and he's concerned about their faith. I'm sending Timothy to strengthen and encourage you in your faith. When I could stand it no longer, I sent Timothy to

find out about your faith.

Later on in that chapter he says, and soon I want to come to you, I pray night and day that I can come to you, that I might supply that which is lacking in your faith. See this is language that we don't usually know, use, unfortunately. But we need to.

We need to think biblically, not contemporary America thinking. We think of the Bible and then apply it to our, our modern situation. Paul was away and said, I'm concerned about your faith.

I'm sending Dr. Timothy to give you a shot, to give juice to your faith, strengthen and encourage it. Later he's come back and told us, later same chapter, told us about how strong your faith is. Oh we so rejoice.

Now why does Paul, look at me everyone, why is Paul so concerned about faith, their faith? Well number one, there's three parts to that. Number one, it's the primacy or the vital importance of faith. Christians are saved by grace through faith.

What makes somebody become a Christian? What is the act? What is the mechanism? They hear the message, the truth of God's Word, the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and they believe. That's how you get saved, not by trying or joining a church. You get saved by throwing your trust and faith on the Lord totally.

The Bible says that believers are to walk not by sight, but to walk by what? Faith. Jesus said according to your faith, so be it unto you. Little faith, little blessing from God.

Great faith, great blessing from God. Don't look at me and say that's not right, God just does what He wants. That's not what Jesus said.

According to your faith, so be it unto you. When you pray, believe that you receive. What kind of prayer will raise up the sick? The prayer of faith.

What makes the power of the promises of God operational in our lives and powerful? Faith. Peter says, who are kept by the power of God through faith. Just don't hear the Word, but believe it.

The Word is working, the Bible says, in everyone who believes. It's not a dead Word, it's a living Word to those who believe. So faith is basic.

But there's another reason why he's concerned about their faith, something you haven't thought of possibly. Faith in Christ is a living thing. Faith can grow, faith can decline.

Faith has size. Remember Jesus said, if you have faith of a... So faith has size, it's like a living thing. It can grow, decline.

It needs food to grow. It can be shaken, as we're going to find out. It can be placed falsely on something.

You can have wrong faith by believing something that's a lie. So faith has to be centered on truth. It has to grow, it has to weather storms and attacks on it, or else it will grow, become shaken.

It can get weak if it's not attended to. You can lose your faith. So that's why Paul says, I send Timothy to strengthen and encourage your faith.

And he's come back to tell me what I want to know, which is, how's your faith? Notice there's this language, most people say, how's their church doing? Like, how many people are coming? What are the offerings? How's... do they have a new building? Is it nice? Paul says, no mention of where they meet, how many are coming. We know nothing of their attendance. He only wants to know one thing, how is your faith? Third reason why he's so concerned about their faith, is that faith, when you're a Christian, automatically suffers periodic attacks, which you cannot get out of.

Paul says, I know that you face trials and afflictions, I told you so. Um, here he says, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials, you know quite well that we were destined for them. So, he's concerned about their faith, because faith isn't just walking in the park, faith is attacked by things happening around us.

By afflictions, that word in the Greek means pressure, and it comes from a root word, to crowd or to press somebody. He said, I want to make sure that these afflictions and these trials don't unsettle you. That word is a very interesting word that means to wag as a dog's tail, or to be shaken.

You ever see a dog, when it especially gets nervous, it just starts wagging. So he said, no one should be unsettled by these trials, you know quite well that we were destined for them, and for this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. In other words, when, I don't care, you know, Dr. Wells, Stephen Wells here, our brother, he has good faith in the Lord, but things are going to happen in life, he can't get away from it.

Don't believe that nonsense that if you serve the Lord, you never go through difficulties or trials. That verse discounts that foolishness. What foolishness that is, that if you have real faith, you'll never go through a problem.

Just the opposite, you get real faith and strong faith because you go through a lot of problems. Mucho problema, see? How many have been through a few problems that tested your faith? Wave your hand at me if you know what I'm talking about. Tests your faith, notice.

So that word, affliction or pressure, comes from crowd or press. Things are going to come around him and start crowding him and pressing him, and it automatically, it attacks your faith. Can I keep believing? I mean, why is this happening? It's hard to trust the Lord in this situation.

In their case, which makes ours look like child's play, they were suffering persecution. Some of them might have lost their lives, lost their jobs because they were Christians. Not something we're too familiar with.

So he said, this pressing in, this pressure, these afflictions, I want to make sure that your faith doesn't start to shake like a dog's tail. I want it to be strong. That's why I'm sending Timothy to you, to strengthen and encourage your faith.

What is this faith? It's persuasion, it's a moral conviction that certain things are true, and you're going to rely on that. It's especially, denotes here, reliance on Christ, faith in Christ. Now, what's Paul's remedy to this? What is Paul, what is Paul going to do now? Let's, let's analyze this.

We know what the, what the why is. He's concerned about their faith, we understand that now. So now, what does he do? His remedy is, we sent Timothy, our brother, and God's fellow worker, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith.

I know the problem, I know how faith works, Paul says. I know what you're going through, and the remedy is this. He's a doctor that works on feet.

If you've got some bad feet, come up after the service, our brother will get caught on you right here. He knows, depending on the problem, what, what the remedy is. Paul says, for our edification, I'm sending Timothy to you to strengthen and encourage your faith.

So that tells us two things, i.e., every one of us needs strengthening and encouragement in our faith at times in our life. How many know it's true? Say amen. I don't care who you are, I don't care how long you've been going to church, don't tell me how much Bible you know.

Every one of us needs at times, notice this is what encouragement is about, it's not, it's not an emotional term of I stroke you and you stroke me, it has to do with faith. Every one of us at times needs our faith to be strengthened and encouraged. Number two, since he sent a Christian to do it, that means, this passage tells us, that every one of you, every one of us could be used by God to strengthen and encourage somebody else's faith.

Come on, come on, do I get a witness here? That's, so now we know two exciting things, interesting things, important things. I need encouragement and strengthening in my faith because I go through circumstances in life where pressures bear and try to weaken or make my faith begin to tremble. Number two, I could be used by God to strengthen your faith and you could be used to strengthen mine or someone else's.

Now, we're doing all the W's, what, why, where, when. Encouragement, the ministry of encouragement, an encourager is someone who ministers strength and encouragement to person's faith. You know, a lot of things people think encouragement is, you know, Maria's, you know, down and fighting some discouragement, so you come over and you just say, come on, sister, you can make it, go for it, girl, follow your dream and, you know, that might lift her up a little bit.

Then when you leave, she'll be back down in the, in the dumps because you just talked ba-ba. Encouragement is not emotional psyching somebody. Encouragement in the Bible is to do something that will strengthen and encourage their faith, so even when you leave, she's like, praise God, I know in whom I have believed.

Boy, that really helped me, that visit, because I'm ready to rumble now for Jesus. Now, the Bible tells us that Timothy was sent to strengthen and encourage their faith. The word strengthen there is a Greek word that is pronounced eridzo and it means to set fast or to turn resolutely in a certain direction or to fix or confirm.

It's the opposite of wavering, drifting and weakening of faith. So Timothy was to go there, and we can too, to go there and get them on the right course and settle them in that course. This is the strengthening.

It's not muscles. It's, no guys, remember what Jesus said. Remember what Paul preached to you.

Remember, come on, get going the right way and keep on trucking for Jesus. Hold on now, hold on, stay firm. Don't be drifting, don't be going off.

Don't let these pressures make you wander. Stay on the road, keep on it. That's what God wanted Timothy to do.

The other word, to encourage, is a word that means to exhort or console and the root meaning comes from a word that has to do with prayer, to call near or to implore. There's a real prayer connotation in this word. So encourage means fighting the discouragement and the depression that comes on our faith from trials and difficulty.

And that's why prayer, as we see, is going to be linked to this. It's not only setting the course and holding somebody firm and keeping them rock solid and strengthening them that way, but it's encouraging them and saying, don't be down, look up. Don't be down, look up.

Don't look at your situation, look at Jesus and let me pray for you while I do it. That's what Timothy went to do. He had one job, Dr. Timothy did.

He went there to strengthen and encourage their faith. That's all Paul was interested in. Well, this is a vital need for all of us.

Look up at the screen, Acts 14, 21, 22. We have it up there, Michael? Listen. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium, Paul and his team, and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and what? Encouraging them to what? Remain true to the faith.

Here's another verse you've got to remember. Notice it's in quotes as Paul's saying it. We must go through many what? To enter the kingdom of God.

If that's true, which it is, that we have to go through many hardships, then you could see the importance of the vitality of our faith. We must go through many hardships. Because of the positive thinking and the Norman Vincent Peale and all of that stuff invading Christianity, these verses are hard to communicate to people.

People do not want to hear this, even though it's in the Bible. And then the modern-day hyper-faith movement has ruined it even more by telling people that if you just have faith, you sail through life without any problems. In fact, if you have a problem, it means you have sin in your life or you don't have faith.

I say to all of that, fiddlesticks. How many are with me? Say amen. This is the Word of God, brothers and sisters.

Look at the Word of God. Let's read what's in quotes, starting with we. We must go through hardship.

When you go through something, when I go through something, stop looking around and saying, what's happening? The devil's attacking. No kidding, of course he's attacking, you're a Christian. Come on, somebody say amen.

Let's put our hands together. God's going to help us through every hardship. I know this sounds so simple, but it's not.

Because this is a very hard barrier to get to. I go to places that if you even read that verse, everybody would get quiet and nervous because it flies in the face of the foolishness they've been taught. Victory is not not having problems.

Victory is not the absence of problems. That's fantasy, that's not victory. Victory is going through the hardships and saying, praise God, Jesus is still Lord.

He's going to take me through. Amen. And that's how we mature.

That's how we get strong. So remember that. I could have read it to you like I usually do, but there's something about seeing the Word of God.

Isn't that good? And it saves us time turning to it. So this was his practice. Here's another one.

Look at it. Acts on the screen, Acts 16 verse 5. As they traveled the apostles from town to town, so the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. So the churches were what? Strengthened how? And grew daily in numbers.

Notice what happens. When faith grows in a church, evangelism automatically happens. That's why, brothers and sisters, you see very few, if any, after Jesus leaves the earth, you see very few encouragements or admonishments to get out there and witness, go door to door, tell everybody about Jesus.

You do not see that in any of the letters. And when Jesus, the epistles, and when Jesus writes seven letters to seven different churches in Revelation, He doesn't say to one of them, what's up with you? How come you're not witnessing? No, He talks about their faith and getting right with God, being in proper relationship. Because when your faith is strong, you start telling people about Jesus because it just comes out of your mouth, comes out of your heart.

But if you don't have a strong faith in Jesus, I could tell you a hundred times what you ought to be doing. You're not going to do it. Notice the churches were strengthened in the faith.

He didn't set up a nautilus system and say, come on, let's start working out. They were strengthened in their faith. This is the key.

The just shall live by... So the Bible tells us that Paul would even send friends. Ephesians 6.22, look at it on the screen. I am sending him, Tychicus, to you that he may, what? Encourage you.

See it? I am sending him, that's Tychicus, one of his fellow laborers, to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage you. I'm not sending him there to do an audit on your books. I'm not sending him there to tell you funny stories.

I'm sending him there because I know what you need. I know the battle of faith. I'm sending him there to encourage you.

You know what people need? Encouragement. Because there's a thousand and one things fighting our faith. So, who can do this? Who can do what? God uses people to encourage others.

I'm sending Tychicus. I'm sending Timothy. The apostles went from town to town and strengthened and encouraged the believers.

So, who can do this ministry? Who can have this privilege of encouraging other people's faith? Strengthening their faith. I want you, your Bibles are still open to 1 Thessalonians? No, we have it. We have 1 Thessalonians 5.11. Look at it.

Save time. Instead of letting our fingers do the walking, look up there. Therefore, encourage one another and what? Build each other up just as in fact you are doing.

Who is that written to? The whole church at Thessalonica. Therefore, encourage one another. Who, one another? Everyone in the church.

And build each other up. This wasn't written to the pastor. This was written to the church.

Build one another up. Encourage one another just as in fact you are doing. This church in Thessalonica was a great church.

The people were building one another up in their faith. How they did it we'll get to in a second. But they weren't just in their meetings and times together talking nonsense.

They were conscious. We've got to encourage each other in the faith. Always.

Thank you brother. Always. And they were already doing it but he said keep doing it and do it more.

When was the last time you can honestly say you encouraged somebody's faith? This morning. God bless you if you did it. You know the blessing.

Well, let me go the other way. How many ever know the joy of being down and going through a valley and God sends somebody in your life a preacher, a message, a meeting, a book, a person. Come on.

How many have ever had your faith encouraged by somebody? You go, whoa. Hallelujah. I was down and now I'm up.

I'm ready to rumble again. So everybody can do it and now we also know that there's a special ministry of it. Look at my face.

Romans chapter 12 verse 6. We have different gifts according to the grace given us and then in verse 8 if it is encouraging let him encourage. We have different gifts according to the grace given us and some people have the gift of teaching. Some have the gift of leadership.

Some have the gift of giving. They're especially used in giving and one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in that part of Romans says if it is encouraging let him encourage. Let the man or woman who has received that special ministry Oh, oh is that ministry needed today.

The ministry of encouragement. Barnabas. He was a son of encouragement.

You don't have to preach up here to be used by God. You don't have to do signs and wonders to be used by God. The longer I walk with God I find out that the people who are really 24 carat gold are the encouragers.

Because you will meet other people who are, to make up a word, they have the ministry of depression. They will pull you down. Am I right Pastor Ware? When you talk with them you actually feel yourself getting smaller as you're talking.

Come on, how many know what I'm talking about? Everything's negative. Their spirit is as heavy as lead. Nothing about God is mentioned.

No promise. Nothing. And those people have to be fought off.

Because spirits affect spirits. So, it's not only for everybody. The Bible tells us some people actually specialize in the ministry of encouragement or exhorting.

Strengthening and encouraging people's faith. Ok, let me close. This is a good study, isn't it? This is good meat from God's Word.

How can we? We learned the why. We learned the what. We learned who.

We learned Paul's practice of doing these things. Now, how can we strengthen and encourage others in the faith? In other words, how does it happen? What does it look like? What does it look like? How do you encourage somebody in their faith? Oh, Pastor Simba, you just encourage them. I know.

How? I want to know how you do it. Well, the Bible tells us the first way you can do it is by your own spirit of faith. 1 Thessalonians 3, 7 says, Paul says, we were encouraged about you because of your faith.

Now, I don't want to miss. I was praying about this last night. I don't want to misspeak on that.

Paul was saying, because I heard about your faith. Same chapter we're reading. He said, I was encouraged about you.

But it's also true that you can be encouraged by other people's spirit of faith. Like Paul says that certain people visited him and they refreshed his spirit. How did they do that? Because they were full of faith.

Just like people who have no faith and are depressed tend to pull you down. People who have a lot of faith, just being around them makes you go like, yeah, praise God. Come on, I can do that.

And before your hands were down, and just by being around a person full of faith. A minister was, I guess, going through a little time of discouragement, depression, and he called me about something different. And I didn't know what he was going through.

And we were talking this Tuesday and that was a great blessing to me. He said to me after we were talking, he said, you know what? I need to call you more often. Because you've encouraged me.

Just what you shared and the thing you just said there. And I wasn't even thinking about encouraging. I was so full of faith.

I'd just come out of a staff meeting or prayer time or whatever it was. We were just, I just was, praise God. So when you have faith running over in your own life, it lifts others up.

And when you're depressed and down, you pull others down. You can at least. Oh, how many want to have it bubbling over, your faith, so that, you never know who you meet.

Somebody's on their last leg. Just by your spirit of faith, they'll say, I can go on. And you can tell them, in Jesus' name, we press on.

In Jesus' name, we press on. So, first of all, it's your own spirit. If you're faithless, you're not going to lift anyone.

Strength ministers to weakness in God. That's why the Bible says, be strong in the Lord. The Bible doesn't say, be weak in the Lord.

It says, be strong. Why? Because there's others who are weak. And by your strength, you can lift them up.

Number two, it's by words. It's by words. Words and speech build faith when you speak God's truth with your mouth.

Listen, 1 Thessalonians 4.18. Look at my face. Therefore, encourage each other with these words. Paul is talking about the return of Christ.

And he says, here's one of the ways to encourage people who are going through persecution. Remind them about Christ's return. Jesus is coming soon.

And then it will be all over and we're going to be in heaven for billions and billions and billions of years. So, encourage each other with these words. Words can encourage.

Words can discourage. Words can be baba. Words can be whatever.

But there are words when you speak God's truth to people, they can be lifted up and encouraged and strengthened by the words you speak when you speak God's Word. Don't give them your opinion. Remind them what the Bible says.

Don't talk about nonsense. Talk about things that are important. For those of you who really want to be used by God, listen to this.

Titus 1.9. Elders, Paul says, should have certain qualifications and they should encourage others by sound doctrine. Here's another way to encourage people. By giving them the truth of the Bible.

Sound doctrine. I'm giving it to you now and I can feel you being encouraged. How many are being encouraged even by what I'm saying? Why? Because it's sound doctrine.

It's in the Word of God. It has nothing to do with me. Encourage each other.

Encourage others, elders, by sound doctrine. So when you give people the meat and the marrow of God's Word, you build up their faith because God's Word has power in it. It's truth.

And faith, remember, comes by hearing. Well, there you go. How in the world would we encourage anybody if we don't give them something from God's Word? Just don't talk about the weather.

Tell them something about the goodness of the Lord. That's what we're really missing. You see, years ago, in less hectic times, Christians used to say to each other, we need to say it more.

I'm going to start saying it more, Pastor, where to you and to Edgar, Maria, everybody. We just need to say to each other, what has God given you this week from His Word? What did God give you? Oh, I'll tell you what He gave me, but you tell me what you got first. Oh, I got something from the book of Philipians, chapter 2. Oh, it was so good.

Tell me. It builds your faith. What did you get? Oh, here's what God made real to me.

And then you repeat what God gave you from the Word of God. Boy, when you get through. Otherwise, you know, you can talk about what... I was sitting, where was I? I was in a diner by myself, and I heard the conversation in the booth next to me.

I'll tell you what, it's just sad how people talk. The whole lunch, two women were talking about one of these ridiculous programs on TV, you know, the bachelor or the millionaire or something were there. Which girl is he going to pick? I don't know which one he should pick, you know, because, I mean, there's nothing better you could talk about at lunch than what someone else is doing on TV.

And we wonder why we're weak. Courage by sound doctrine. At the very end now, 1 Corinthians 14, 3. Look at it.

This is what the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit are. Listen. But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their what? Next word.

And prophetic utterances in the New Testament are not that you dazzle people, but you strengthen and encourage them. That's one of the rules. Sometimes you have to make a judgment when somebody feels they're being moved on by the Holy Spirit.

The question a leader has to ask is God help me? Is this strengthening and encouraging the Church? If it's not, stop it. Because God doesn't do anything except to strengthen and encourage people's faith and comfort them. And sometimes people can use, or a preacher, can use this forum not to strengthen people, but to show off to people.

People don't need a show. They need encouragement. They need strengthening.

When you hear Damaris sing this afternoon, if you listen to the words and you listen to the way she talks, she strengthens people. She encourages them. Last time Steve Green was here, remember he sang and then he just had memorized large portions of Scripture and he just gave us the Word of God.

And then he went to a song and then he gave the Word of God. He didn't even talk for about 15 minutes. Just music and the Bible.

But praise God. Starts feeding your spirit. Starts feeding your soul.

Your faith grows. Finally Acts 15, 32, we see here that God uses people through words and speech. Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to what? Encourage and what? The brother.

Brothers, if you play, listen. It's open to all of us. Some people have the special gift of it.

It has to come from your own heart being full of faith. And it comes through words, speaking words of God's truth, God's Word. And you don't have to memorize all the verses.

There's a lot of ways that God can use this. Look how prophets were used. You learn all the Bible you can and you give it to people but God will help you.

If you want to encourage people you can say the simplest thing and help somebody through a battle that nobody knows. I regret the times I have missed encouraging people who I later found out. I missed one just recently.

I later learned that the devil was all over this person. But you can be so preoccupied with what you're going through you forget that the other guy, the other girl, they need encouragement. Come on, how many know what I'm talking about? I won't look but how many know what I'm talking about? Oh, I missed it.

God forgive me, I missed it. See, every interaction, every meeting, you don't know what God could be up to and you don't know, trust me, you don't know what's going on with the person next to you. I don't care how good they look.

They could be going through a valley that you can't believe. They could be going through one of these times of persecution and hardship that Paul talked about. Lastly, we can encourage people especially when we're separated from them and when we're with them by prayer.

Ephesians 3.16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Paul was apart from the church at Ephesus but he said, I pray for you that God will strengthen your heart because it takes strength by the Holy Spirit to keep on believing. One last one.

You can encourage people by collective worship, by bringing people to church. Hebrews 10.25 Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the day approaching. How many have found that coming to church and singing with other people and mingling and praying and hearing God's word from a minister how many know that encourages your faith? Of course.

And some people, the devil gets in them and they go on some weird tack of God's leading me not to go to church anymore or I worship God in my kitchen and all this other business. Don't ever believe any of that. When you see people not wanting to be in God's house, listen, they're always in trouble.

Listen. Listen to me. They're always in trouble.

People who can find no problem not being in God's house, they're always in spiritual trouble. There's something about coming here that your faith is strengthened and encouraged. So by prayer, by being with other believers, by words, by our own spirit of faith, close your eyes with me.

I've got prayer band people in the front and I've got pastors ready to pray, lay hands on you. Millie and Alex are going to help me and Edgar and his wife are going to help. Maria, they're going to help.

Because you could have come this morning and say, Pastor Simba, how could you possibly have known that although that was good for the whole church and for the speaker himself, but Pastor Simba, I'm going through such a challenge to my faith. I am going through, I need strengthening and encouragement in my faith. See, when your faith weakens, you can get shaky, you can start giving in to sin, you can start giving in to depression and fear, a lot of manifestations of it.

But if you're here today and you say, Pastor, thank you for the word that you gave, but now let's do it. You said that one of the ways encouragement and strengthening is imparted is not just through the speaking of God's word, which I've done, but through prayer and other people being around you and praying for you. If you're here today, on the balcony or downstairs, and you say, Pastor, I want God to strengthen and encourage my faith.

I need it. Stand right where you are. I need it.

I need strengthening today, encouragement. I love the Lord, but I need strengthening and encouragement. As you've been talking, I know I need it.

Maybe your first time visiting. God brought you even a long way just to hear this. Just play what we were singing.

Encouragement, strength. Come on, if your faith has been faltering, shaky, if you're suffering from malnutrition, just bring it to the Lord today and say, I'm going to let people pray. I'm going to have...

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2404.mp3>

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