

He has made everything
Beautiful
in its time. *Ecclesiastes 3:11*

BIBLICAL ENCOURAGEMENT

LUKE 1:39-45

Biblical Encouragement

- Missionary and author William Ward once said, “Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you.”
 - Encouragement - to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope
 - Challenging you to see you and your circumstances differently
 - Changing your focus
 - Encouragement must rest upon something true and solid or the effects will quickly dissipate
 - It can't be just words without some basis of truth

Biblical Encouragement

- Secular encouragement and Christian encouragement are rooted in vastly different worldviews
 - In secular encouragement you hear phrases like
 - “You got this”
 - “Everything will work out”
 - “Things will get better just hang on”
 - “You are worth it”
 - The focus is on the person’s self-esteem, abilities, training or education, wisdom, grit
 - Think of a coach trying to fill their team with confidence to play the next half of the game with heart and courage

Biblical Encouragement

- Secular encouragement and Christian encouragement are rooted in vastly different worldviews
 - Biblical encouragement always points up, away from us
 - Points toward a source of unquenchable strength,
 - ❖ Absolute truth in our darkness,
 - ❖ Infinite wisdom,
 - ❖ And a never-ending love that is far superior to who we are or what we can work up
 - That encouragement can overcome our feebleness, fears, hopelessness

Biblical Encouragement

- You hear this kind of encouragement in the words Moses spoke to the Nation of Israel
 - **Deuteronomy 1:1-2 NIV**, 1 Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: 2 “I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The Lord has said to me, ‘You shall not cross the Jordan.’”
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 - How discouraging would those words have been for Israel to hear?
 - Moses was the face of God’s leadership to Israel, but God was the true leader
 - God knew a different lead would be needed for the next phase of bringing His people into the Promised Land

Biblical Encouragement

- You hear this kind of encouragement in the words Moses spoke to the Nation of Israel
 - With such a large task in front of them, Moses gone, unsure about the details, what the people needed was true, powerful encouragement
 - **Deuteronomy 1:3 NIV**, “3 The Lord your God himself will cross over ahead of you.”
 - **Deuteronomy 1:6 NIV**, “6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Biblical Encouragement

- Now think about a young teenage virgin girl hearing the message from God through His angel that she would become pregnant through a work of God's Holy Spirit and give birth to the Messiah, the Savior of the world
 - Can you envision the adrenalin flowing in her mind and emotions with the Holy Spirit filling her
 - **Luke 1:38 NIV**, 38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.
 - No further guidance on what to do, no answers to the gazillion questions rushing at her, just poof and gone
 - Can you hear the question, "What do I do now?" floating in her mind

Biblical Encouragement

- As she rehearsed the Angel's words (*words from God*), she remembered **Luke 1:36-37 NIV**, "36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."
- God did give her a path when she stopped and really listened
 - As it is for us today when we stop and really listen and accept God's Word of encouragement to us
 - It allows the Holy Spirit to move close to our emotions and thoughts providing clarity, guidance and encouragement
 - If anyone could understand Mary's condition it would be Elizabeth and Mary was encouraged by that thought and planned a trip

Scripture

- **Luke 1:39-45 NIV**, 39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Biblical Encouragement

- **Acts 9:31 NIV**, 31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened (*How?*). Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.
 - They were strengthened by the fear of the Lord
 - Giving God your Undivided Attention
 - ❖ **Psalm 86:11 NIV**, Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.
 - ❖ Coming upon a copperhead lying on your path

Biblical Encouragement

- **Acts 9:31 NIV**, 31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.
 - They were strengthened by the fear of the Lord
 - Giving God your Unrivaled Awe and respect
 - ❖ **Psalm 47:2 NIV**, For the Lord Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth.

Biblical Encouragement

- **Acts 9:31 NIV**, 31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.
 - They were strengthened by the fear of the Lord
 - Giving God your Unparalleled Allegiance
 - ❖ **Deuteronomy 10:12-13 NIV**, 12 And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

Biblical Encouragement

- **Acts 9:31 NIV**, 31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.
 - These three mindsets will bring a peace and strength into your circumstances
 - Giving God your Undivided Attention
 - Giving God your Unrivaled Awe and respect
 - Giving God your Unparalleled Allegiance

Biblical Encouragement

- **Acts 9:31 NIV**, 31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.
 - They were encouraged by the Holy Spirit
 - **John 14:16-17 NIV**, 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.
 - ❖ Advocate – one who walks along beside to encourage, comfort, give wisdom, strength, and hope
- What does Biblical Encouragement look like?

Biblical encouragement focuses on the presence of Christ

- What brought the filling of the Holy Spirit in Elizabeth and the baby John leaping for joy in Elizabeth's womb?
 - The voice of Mary or Mary's first words of greeting entering the home
 - Why?
 - Because of whom she was carrying in her womb
 - ❖ Jesus the Messiah, the Son of the Most High God
 - Even in His embryotic state the presence of Jesus was felt

Biblical encouragement focuses on the presence of Christ

- Both Elizabeth and baby John received knowledge from the Lord about what was true, but not yet seen or proven, only held onto by faith
 - Jesus had not even been born yet, nor proven by His works, nor accepted for His great teaching
 - He is not the Messiah because of what He has done, but simply because He is
 - God was in their presence in the form of what the world calls a simple, not really important embryo

Biblical encouragement focuses on the presence of Christ

- Both Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were identifiable in their present state
 - Jesus being only a few weeks past conception and John being 6 months
 - The two were already alive, active, identifiable, and individual

Biblical encouragement focuses on the presence of Christ

- Encouragement came when identifying Messiah was in their midst
- When do you get discouraged?
 - Is it not when your focus gets onto you and your circumstances
 - But everything changes when our focus is placed on Jesus Christ, our deliverer
- What does it mean to focus on Jesus?
 - Who He is
 - What He has done
 - What He has promised
 - Jesus promises never to leave us nor forsake us, never to leave us as orphans – not even for a second

Biblical encouragement focuses on the presence of Christ

- This is what Moses was stating to the Nation of Israel
 - Don't focus on all the enemy over there, God will go before you preparing the way – Trust Him
 - Don't focus what you don't know, focus on who you know and who has ahold of you – Trust Him
 - “for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Deut. 1:6)
 - And since God never changes, He goes before us as well when we allow Him to lead
 - Instead of bringing Christ down into where you are at, let Christ take you up to where He is

Biblical encouragement focuses on what the Holy Spirit is doing in and through us

- Identify that the Holy Spirit is working out God's will in your life, even if it hard to see now
- Both Elizabeth and Mary identified the Holy Spirit's work in their lives
 - Both pregnancies were miracles
 - Both were instruments in God's plan of salvation
 - Both were blessed

Biblical encouragement focuses on what the Holy Spirit is doing in and through us

- Elizabeth did not pronounce a blessing upon Mary, but simply stated a spiritual fact
 - **Vs. 42** In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
 - This blessedness is coming from God with lasting power and effect

Biblical encouragement focuses on what the Holy Spirit is doing in and through us

- Mary you are blessed right now where God has you, with all your questions, concerns, needs
 - Mary, you know the truth of whom you are carrying
 - You know God is at work in you working out His plan for you and salvation
 - Can this not be said of us today?

Biblical encouragement focuses on what the Holy Spirit is doing in and through us

- God is working out His plan for you and His work for you in His kingdom
 - **Philippians 2:12-13 NIV**, 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.
 - God is at work in you Christian, though His Holy Spirit, to will and the living out His will to fulfill His good (*blessed*) purpose in you
 - Even though your world looks crazy at times, grasp the meaning of this promise, and let it loose in your life – **You are blessed!**

Biblical encouragement is being reminded of the solid truths found in God's Word

- **Vs. 45**, “Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises (*Word*) to her!”
 - Elizabeth pointed Mary back to the words of Gabriel which came from the throne of God
 - Mary you are most blessed because you believed what the Lord said He would do in and through you
 - **Luke 1:30-31 NIV**, 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.”

Biblical encouragement is being reminded of the solid truths found in God's Word

- What word has God given every born-again child of God?
 - **1st John 5:4 ESV**, “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”
 - **John 16:33 ESV**, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”
 - **Isaiah 6:23 ESV**, “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”

Biblical encouragement is being reminded of the solid truths found in God's Word

- What word has god given every born-again child of God?
 - **2nd Peter 1:3-4 NIV**, “3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly (*blessed*) life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”
 - **Psalm 19:10-11, NIV**, “The words of the Lord are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. 11 By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.” – Peace of soul

Biblical Encouragement

- I believe Jesus in His human form needed encouragement, He understands
 - **Matthew 4:11 ESV**, Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.
 - Ministering - in the New Testament refers to the Lord inspiring His servants to carry out His plan for His people
 - It carries the idea of coming quickly like a servant responding to his master's command
 - No doubt they provided nourishment, maybe rest
 - But I also hear them speaking encouragement to Jesus as He begins His journey to the cross in His human form, in His weakened state

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