

"Be Of Good Cheer"

Introduction. Someone once said, "A great deal of talent is lost to the world for the want of a little courage." That statement is very profound because it reflects the situation with so many children of God. They do not have the courage they ought; therefore, they are powerless. Someone else once said, "We fear men so much, because we fear God so little."

The expression, "Be of good cheer," occurs seven times in five instances in the KJV. On the surface, it may seem as if the Bible is telling us to just put on a happy face no matter what happens. However, that is not the meaning of the phrase. The word means "courage; to be bold; to be confident." Courage means "the capacity to meet danger without giving way to fear." This definition holds true whether it be circumstances or convictions.

Even though we are assailed by fearful and unhappy events in our lives, the Christian can maintain strength and valor. Our lives will probably never be exactly as they should be, or as we would want them to be; but in spite of this, we can take courage. True fortitude comes from a relationship with one's Creator. We are going to examine the instances of "Be of good cheer" and see how the gospel gives us confidence and chases away anxiety.

I. ***"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid" (Matthew 14:27; Mark 6:50)***

- A. This is the assurance of God's proximity. The account of Matthew 14:23-33 is the instance of the storm on the sea. The disciples were fearful when they saw the Lord walking to them on the sea. Jesus spoke the words, "Be of good cheer" to take away the fear out of their troubled hearts.
- B. There is much that can trouble us in our day. Any who walk the troubled sea of life will have hardships. However, the same Jesus who by His presence and word spoke peace in the hearts of the disciples wishes to come to us in the restless turbulence of our lives and say, "Be of good cheer" or "Take courage" (Psalm 46:1-3; Isaiah 41:10).
- C. In the day of adversity we are to consider that God allows these different situations in our life so that we will draw near to Him (Ecclesiastes 7:14; Psalm 145:18; James 4:8).
- D. God is not far from any of us. The process of "drawing near" is a step of faith which demonstrates to us that God is approachable and that He desires a relationship with us (James 4:5; Revelation 3:20).

II. ***"Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25)***

- A. This is the assurance of God's pronouncements. In Acts 27:21-26, the apostle Paul was trying to calm his traveling companions. They were at

the mercy of a long and vicious storm. He finally convinced them in vss. 33-36.

- B. When Paul expressed his confidence in that which was told him, he was expressing confidence not in hearsay or mere conjectures and speculations of men, but in a specific message from God.
- C. We today have a special message from God -- His revealed written word. We can have the courage or confidence that matters will always be as described therein.
 - 1. For example, we are told that when we pray in faith, we will have the peace of God (Philippians 4:4-6).
 - 2. No confidence I have in my own plans, powers or promises can give me the kind peace which will be imparted to me by a simple trust in God.
- D. I can only trust in God through His word. I cannot know God apart from what is revealed (Psalm 119:27, 38, 52, 66, 130). A child of God can take courage every day from what they learn in God's holy word. Do not you let anyone shake your studied convictions in God's word by wrangling and wresting the scriptures. False doctrine destroys the confidence in God's word, reducing it to a jumble of opinions and misrepresentations.

III. ***"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matthew 9:2)***

- A. This is the assurance of God's propitiation. Sin has broken fellowship with God (Isaiah 59:1-2). However, we can be of good cheer because there is a fountain flowing from Calvary's tide. It is a matter of great rejoicing when sins are forgiven (Luke 15:10, 32; Acts 8:39; Romans 4:6-8; 5:11). Under the Old Law, sins were atoned by animal sacrifices (Leviticus 4:28-35), but they could not fully remove sin (Hebrews 10:1, 4).
- B. The propitiation of Christ has redeemed us from the bondage of sin (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17). It is an appeasement or covering which atones for sins. Christ has procured forgiveness for our sins and removed every tinge of guilt from the sinner's heart. This is His primary function as high priest, a function which in itself inspires confidence.
- C. Your debts may not be paid to creditor's satisfaction, your physical health may not be good, your responsibilities at work may be a heavy load and your family may be a burden to your heart, but we can always take courage because our sins have been forgiven.
- D. In order for you to be in Christ, you must have faith in God (Hebrews 11:6), you must repent of your sins (Acts 17:30), confess your faith in Christ (Roman 10:10) and be baptized into Christ for the remission of you sins (Acts 2:38). Thereafter, you must maintain fellowship with

God through faithful obedience (Revelation 2:10; 22:14). This means growing in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18), worshiping God regularly (Hebrews 10:25) and rendering service to the Lord's cause (Galatians 1:10).

IV. **"Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11)**

- A. This is the assurance of God's protection. On the night of Paul's appearance before the Sanhedrin, the Lord appeared to Paul and uttered the above statement. Imagine the comfort this must have brought to Paul. He knew what awaited him as he journeyed to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-23; 21:10-12).
- B. God has likewise promised to be with us in our afflictions and hardships (Hebrews 13:5-6; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4). God has promised that He will never leave us without support or in distress. Because of this we have great confidence or boldness to assert that God will bring us help in time of need. God comforts us and that word means to "call beside" or to have God beside us for encouragement when we are undergoing severe testing. The word "comfort" in 2 Corinthians 1:4 is a present tense verb which means there is a continual action of comfort by God every time trouble and afflictions arise.
- C. How does God comfort?
 - 1. God comforts through His word. Romans 15:4 assures us that the Old Testament exists for our encouragement. A perfect example of this would be Psalm 23:4.
 - 2. God comforts through His providential care (2 Corinthians 7:5-7). Titus' arrival calmed Paul's fears concerning Titus' safety and the condition at Corinth.
- D. Whatever the instrumentality, Paul was willing to acknowledge God as the source of consolation. Let us trust implicitly in God. We, too, can be comforted in Him.

V. **"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)**

- A. This is the assurance of God's provision of victory. Even as Jesus spoke these words, He was in the shadow of an excruciating death. He was able to face it by looking at the joy that was to follow (Hebrews 12:3; John 17:5).
- B. We know that when we go among men, we will be persecuted, afflicted and tormented (Matthew 10:22; John 15:18-19). However, Christ vanquished the great foe of man and triumphed over all that would work our ruin.
- C. What will it be like to die? No human being on the earth can tell us. Jesus has experienced it; we can learn about it through the Bible.

1. It is viewed as a peaceful sleep (Acts 7:60).
 2. It is viewed as a departure to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23).
 3. It is viewed as going to a homeland (Hebrews 11:13-16).
 4. It is viewed as a new life with a new body (1 Corinthians 15:44; 2 Corinthians 5:1-9).
- D. Jesus said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We, too, can overcome (1 John 5:4-5; Revelation 3:21). All we have to do is put our trust in the captain of our salvation and put on the whole armor of God (Hebrews 2:10; Ephesians 6:13-17).

Conclusion. With these confidences and words of encouragement, the Christian can be of good cheer. There is no reason for complaining, self-pity, feeling sorry for ourselves, sadness or depression. Why? First, Jesus is near (Matthew 14:27). Second, God's word is sure (Acts 27:25). Third, our sins are forgiven (Matthew 9:2). Fourth, God's protection comforts us (Acts 23:11). Finally, we have overcome the world (John 16:33).