

Sermon Series: “Strengthening Your Grip” ----Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—5/19/2002

Title: “Strengthening Your Grip on Encouragement”

Text: Hebrews 10: 19-25

Intro.: *Ills.: A Pat on the Back*

Theme: Encouragement is not only a vital part of our personal well-being but it is also a indispensable part of our ministry with and among each other as Christ’s body.

The Source of our encouragement (PRINT AND READ HEBREWS 10: 19-20)

?? Grounded on a restored relationship to the Father through Jesus

1. Understanding the analogy to the Old Testament worship that was kept outside the curtain
 1. A sense of separation and distance
 2. A sacrifice that was never enough and depended on a future better sacrifice
2. Now that the “way is opened” in Jesus, the Father and we can have a “**fresh**” view of each other
 1. **Love is the reason** for what he and we do
 2. **Loyalty is the motivator** for our “renewed” actions for God

?? The heart of encouragement to and for each other finds its starting point and power in Jesus

1. Encouraging others not for God or for each other
 1. If we do it “**for**” as a payment, down the line we’ll stop because we don’t think they deserve it or we ought to
 2. “*Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*” Rom.4: 4-5
2. Encouraging others as we are part of Jesus’ team together (“**let us**” used 5 x’s in this passage)
 1. **Ills.: A good job pat on the rear**
 2. “*Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*” Romans 12:15

The ministry of encouragement (PRINT AND READ HEBREWS 10: 21-25)

Since we have encouragement from in God in Jesus . . .

?? Be a **SPIRITUAL MOTIVATOR** (vs. 22)

1. Possibility thinking because of our grace confidence through Christ
 1. **Ills.: Story of Joshua, Caleb, and the 10 spies**
 2. We all see the fallenness in each other and in our world; can we see the God of salvation who has given us a rescue
2. Not allowing evil thoughts to pollute and direct my advice or action
 1. “*Finally, brothers and sisters, keep your thoughts on whatever is right or deserves praise: things that are true, honorable, fair, pure, acceptable, or commendable.*” Philip. 4:8
 2. **Ills.: A Look on the Positive Side**
 3. Washed in Baptisms waters we are Spirit empower to . . . “*never offer any part of your body to sin’s power . . . Offer all the parts of your body to God. Use them to do everything that God approves of.*” Romans 6: 13

?? Be a **SPIRITUAL ROCK FOR OTHERS** to lean on (vs. 23)

3. To comfort and encourage others you and I need to know and believe the promises
 1. Hebrews writer uses the word “**to tenaciously hold onto**” as if we have a treasure in God’s word
 2. Jesus tells us that if we “ **dwell in his word**” we will “**know the truth and it will set us free**”
 3. “*We can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.*” 2 Cor 1: 4-5
4. Point others to God’s faithfulness not yours or mine
 1. “*If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful because he cannot be untrue to himself.*” 2 Tim. 2:13
 2. Often, well-meaning Christians put others back under bondage by pointing others to obedience not grace
 - ?? Try harder, be more spiritual, get more involved are good spiritual disciplines but they are not our

hope

3. The good news about our Christian faith is that we let God's faithfulness in Christ motivate our faithfulness

?? **Ills.: Play like Yankees**

?? Be a ***SPIRITUAL CHEERLEADER*** (vss. 24-25)

5. Cheer each other on in the "*noble tasks*" we attempt and do for the Lord
 1. Easy to find fault in what and how each of us served the Lord; rather let us encourage God at work in each other
6. Cheer each other on to faithful, regular attendance and gathering together in the Lord's name for worship and service
7. Cheer each other on not to give up because the best is yet to come (what perspective on the *Last Day* do we have)
 1. **Ills.: "The best is yet to be!" F.B. Meyer in *Our Daily Walk***

Pat on the Back Works Best

A pat on the back is only a few vertebrae removed from a kick in the pants, but is miles ahead in results.

A good job pat on the rear

One of my preschool students had a habit of patting me on the seat of my pants. I tried several things to make him stop, but nothing worked. Finally, I resorted to a time-out chair. Later, when his father came to pick him up, I quietly mentioned the problem, asking whether he had any insight on the situation. Smiling, the father explained his son's fascination with football--and his curiosity as to why the players "spanked" each other: "I told my son that they were telling each other what a good job they were doing." It seems the same applied to me.

A Look on the Positive Side

Gladys Thornapple is fixing lunch when in walks her son, Wilberforce, all decked out in his baseball outfit. Mom asks, "How did Little League go?" Wilberforce growls, "Terrible, I struck out three times." Trying to console her son, Mom says, "That's all part of the game, honey." Wilberforce exploded with exasperation, "Mom, it's T-ball!"

Play like Yankees

Twenty-five years ago, when the New York Yankees were the dominant team in major league baseball, the manager would say to the rookies, "Boys, it's an honor just to put on the New York pinstripes. So when you put them on, play like world champions. Play like Yankees. Play proud."

The "best is yet to be!"

It is a mistake to be always turning back to recover the past. The law for Christian living is not backward, but forward; not for experiences that lie behind, but for doing the will of God, which is always ahead and beckoning us to follow. Leave the things that are behind, and reach forward to those that are before, for on each new height to which we attain, there are the appropriate joys that befit the new experience. Don't fret because life's joys are fled. There are more in front. Look up, press forward, the best is yet to be!

F. B. Meyer in *Our Daily Walk*

Chosen to Clap and Cheer

Jamie Scott tried out for the play at his elementary school. He had his heart set on being one of the main characters, but his mother feared he would not be chosen. On the day the parts were awarded to the children, Jamie's mother and a friend went to pick him up, just in case he was terribly disappointed. When Jamie saw his mother, he rushed up to her, his eyes shining with pride and excitement, and said, "Guess what, Mom. I've been chosen to clap and cheer."

In similar fashion, the apostle Paul is attempting to inspire and to motivate the believers at Philippi by challenging them to walk worthy of the name by which they are called.

Hebrews 10:19-25

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.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. [NIV]