

Encourage One Another (part 1)

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[0:00] Paul to the Thessalonians, his first letter, chapter 2 and verse 17, and I'll read on into chapter 3 and verse 13.

But brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time in person, not in thought, out of our intense longing, we made every effort to see you.

For we wanted to come to you, certainly I, Paul, did again and again. But Satan stopped us. For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes?

Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy. So when we could stand it no longer, 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.

[1:13] 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.

But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us just as we also long to see you.

Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution, we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live since you are standing firm in the Lord.

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

[2:35] Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else just as ours does for you.

And may he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

George Gipp lay in the hospital bed dying. He had just rallied Notre Dame past Northwestern when he contracted pneumonia and strep throat.

And it was 1920, so there were no antibiotics, and so he was dying. And as he lay in his hospital bed, Newt Rockne, his coach, sat next to him, and Gipp supposedly said these words.

Though if he had pneumonia and strep throat, I don't know how he did it. But he said these words. I've got to go, Rock. It's all right. I'm not afraid. Sometime, Rock, when the team is up against it.

[3:51] When things are wrong and the brakes are beating the boys, ask them to go out there with all they've got and win just one for the Gipper. Rockne kept that speech in his back pocket for eight years.

And then 1928, an injury-riddled underdog Notre Dame team came into Yankee Stadium to face an unbeaten Army team.

And before the game, Rockne gathered his team, and he said this. The day before he died, George Gipp asked me to wait until the situation seemed hopeless.

Then asked a Notre Dame team to go out and beat Army for him. This is the day, and you are the team. Of course, no one can resist a dying man's wish.

And the deflated Notre Dame team suddenly had the heart put right back into him. And they found encouragement to do that, what no one thought that they could do.

[5:00] They came back with two touchdowns in the second half and beat Army. Well, they found encouragement in an apparently hopeless situation. Isn't it amazing what a strong dose of encouragement will do for you?

It's going to put stride in your step. It's going to put a song in your mouth that makes a mighty Army team that's unbeatable, beatable. It makes the Christian stronger.

It makes him more holy. It gives him life when this world is like a parasite draining him of his strength. Well, Paul is writing to the Thessalonians.

And they're baby believers. And they're in the first throes of first love. But something is happening. They're running into persecution.

And they're facing trials. Satan has turned his attention on them. And what was easy before has become, is becoming hard.

[6:09] And what was a joy in the beginning is starting to become more like climbing up a hill. And they're facing what all Christians face. That's trial, persecution, and difficulty.

And they need what all Christians need. And that is encouragement. And encouragement is what this passage is all about. Paul is telling them of his deep longing to see them.

He wants to see them. But why does he want to see them? So he can encourage them. He wants to be with them so he can encourage them. But he can't. He can't come.

So he sent Timothy. Well, why did he send Timothy? Look at chapter 3, verse 2. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker, and spreading the gospel of God, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith.

So Timothy went. And he came back. He encouraged them. And he visited them. And he's come back to Paul. And the encourager, Paul, has now become the encouraged.

[7:17] Look at verse 7 of chapter 3. Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution, we were encouraged about you because of your faith.

So Paul is talking about encouragement. And even as he's talking about encouragement, he's trying to encourage them even more. And as we look at this passage more closely this evening, we're going to see how we can encourage one another.

How we can encourage one another. Our memory verse this week was 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as, in fact, you are doing.

We need to be encouraging one another. But the question is, how do we do that? How do we encourage one another? And that's what we're going to see. But before we get to the how, let's talk about motivation.

Why should we be encouraging one another? It's going to be some hard work. And so we're going to need some motivation to get us up and get us going. But why is it so important to be building each other up?

[8:28] We have three reasons. Reason number one, because our enemy is Satan. Our enemy is Satan. The Israelites were on one side of the valley.

And the Philistines were on the other side of the valley. And the Philistines had a nine-foot, freakish, giant killing machine named Goliath.

And every day he came out and he taunted the Israelites. Day after day, it was the same taunting from the Philistine side. And day after day, it was the same silence from the Israelite side of the valley.

Well, day after day takes its toll. And the resolve, the encouragement that the Israelites had was breaking down. They never left the battlefield.

But they really lost their will to fight. And we face a more difficult enemy than Goliath. Goliath's a mere man.

[9:30] He's a giant. He's a killing machine, all that. He's just a man. But what does Paul say? Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

So we're not facing a nine-foot giant. We're facing demons. We're facing Satan. And we're facing all the powers of a dark world.

And that, brothers and sisters, can be discouraging. When we think about what's in front of us, that could be very discouraging.

And so we need encouragement if we're going to resist Satan. Now let me ask you. Is Satan going to encourage your brothers and sisters to fight?

Will he encourage your brothers and sisters to holiness? And if he won't, who will? Well, second reason we need to learn how to encourage one another.

[10 : 39] Because we live in a world ruled by Satan. Satan rules this world. He's the ruler of the kingdom of air, the kingdom of darkness. And so he's behind this great cosmic revolt against God and his anointed one.

And so this world that we live in beats with a demonic heartbeat. And it exudes satanic gases that we live in.

And this world affects every part of our lives. Of every part of our culture and our environment. Every government. Every business. Every school. Every university. Every family. Is infected with sin and rebellion.

So the same governments that we live in. The same government we live in. The same businesses where we work in. The same schools and universities that we attend. The same families that we live in.

[11 : 45] They're all some part of the world. Satan is behind them. So let me ask you. The hymnist asked. Is this dark world a friend to grace?

To help me on to God? Is this world going to help you on to God? The answer is of course no. Well your brothers and sisters. They live in the same world that you do.

And if they're going to make it. If they're going to stand in this horrible environment. Then they need encouragement. The world's not going to encourage them. So who's going to encourage them?

It's going to have to be you. Number three. Why we have to know how to encourage one another.

Because it protects against the power of indwelling sin.

It protects against the power of indwelling sin. Hebrews 3.13. But encourage one another daily. As long as it is called today. So that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. Do you ever feel like your heart is being hardened?

[12 : 51] Do you ever feel like there's a callus growing around your heart? Well what do you need? What do you need when that's going on? The author of the Hebrews says. You need your brother and sister to encourage you.

You need them to encourage you. And that is a ministry that God has called every single one of us here to do. If we're going to protect one another. Against the hardening effects of sin and its deceitfulness.

Then we have to learn to encourage one another. And that means that your brother, your sister, they need you. They're desperately in need of you.

If you don't help them, they are going to be hardened. If you don't encourage them, you take away their protection. You take away their shield. So you're not only disobeying God when you don't encourage your brother and sister.

You endanger your brother. Well that's why we need to encourage one another. That's the why. Because we have great enemies. We're living in a horrible world and the enemy we find is inside of us.

[13 : 59] And encouragement is the answer to all three of those enemies. Well that's why we need to learn how to encourage one another. Now let's see what Paul says and does to encourage the Thessalonians.

If we're going to encourage one another, this is how we'll do it. We'll do it the way that Paul does it here in this chapter to the Thessalonians.

First, it will require heartfelt involvement with them. Heartfelt involvement. As Pastor John was reading this, did you pick up the idea that this passage exudes, is oozing with emotion.

It is radiating with Paul's affection and love for these believers. He begins in verse 17, chapter 2, verse 17. But brothers, when we were torn away from you, we were torn away from you.

That torn away, it means to be orphaned. When we were orphaned, when we were drug away from you, we felt like children who lost their parents. When we were torn away from you for a short time in person, not in thought.

[15 : 19] He's saying, our bodies, we were forced to leave Thessalonica, but we left our heart there. We left our heart in Thessalonica.

So Paul was fully engaged with them. His heart was wrapped up with them. How they were doing was how he was doing. So when he was torn away, he was desperate to get back to them.

Can you imagine a little girl who's torn away from her parents and she's desperate to get back to them? Out of our intense longing, we made every effort to see you. We tried and we tried, but Satan stopped us. Satan himself stopped us. It's as if Paul's saying there was only one person that could stop us from getting from where we are back to you, and it was Satan.

He was blocking the road and we could not move him out of the path. Well, why, Paul? Why are you so desperate? Why are you making every effort to get back there?

[16:27] Well, because you are our joy and our crown. Do you hear Paul's heartbeat? Do you hear his heartfelt involvement with these Thessalonians?

He's saying, I don't care what anyone says. And there's probably these people saying this, that, you know, as soon as it got tough there, you just bailed and you ran and left town.

And Paul's saying, I don't care what anyone says. That is not how it was. We were desperate. We are desperate to see you. We felt orphaned without you.

We were desperate to get back. But Satan blocked our path. We love you. You're our joy. You're our hope. You're our crown, which we will glory in when Jesus Christ comes back.

When Jesus Christ comes back, all of our glory will be in you. It will be you. Our hope will be you. Our joy will be you.

[17:29] You've become a very, the very part of us. And without you, we would be sad. Without you, our hope would grow dim.

And without you to be our crown of glory, we would have nothing to boast in when Christ comes back. So we don't rejoice in ourselves.

We rejoice in you. And we will say when Jesus, when we appear before Jesus, look at these Thessalonians. Look at their faith. Look at their hope.

Look at their joy. And that will be our crown. That will be our glory. That will be our joy. They will be, you will be our magnum opus, our masterpiece when Christ comes back.

Now, every great artist has his masterpiece. The one piece that defines him and is his greatest piece of work. Recently, the Mechlens went to Rome and they saw the Sistine Chapel where Michelangelo, you know, painted that beautiful fresco.

[18:34] And it's legendary. And they will, if you talk to them, they will attest to its wonder. But that wasn't Michelangelo's masterpiece. Painting for Michelangelo was a hobby.

He thought it was a lesser form of artwork. His masterpiece was the 18-foot tall statue of David. That was his greatest piece of work.

Or think of da Vinci's Mona Lisa. He did lots of remarkable work in his time, lots of wonderful things. But the Mona Lisa is his masterpiece.

Somehow, he's captured something of that woman when he painted her. And if you look at her, she captures you.

And you just look and you wonder what she's thinking. What is she smiling at? I don't know. You don't know. And Paul... So no one knows.

[19:36] Okay, we're good with that now. And Paul is saying to the Thessalonians, you Thessalonians, you're our masterpiece. You're our magnum opus.

When Christ comes back, we won't be showing ourselves. We'll be saying, look at these. He is so proud of them. And he's proud of them in a good way. Like a mom or a dad is proud of her children. His heart was all wrapped up in them. And out of that heartfelt involvement, out of his affection for them, that's the spring.

That's the fountain of encouragement. Look at chapter 3, verses 1 and 2. Well, when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens.

We sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage you. So do you see it? We couldn't stand it any longer. We had to do something. Our hearts are boiling up and our hearts are writhing inside of us.

[20:34] And we're so agitated that we have to do something. And we couldn't go, so we sent Timothy. We sent the next best thing. We sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker.

And if, brothers and sisters, if we're going to encourage one another, like Paul encouraged them, then we have to have that same kind of heartfelt involvement with one another.

This is a horrible, horrible, superficial world and culture that we live in.

But we are called to something different in the body of Christ. We're not called to be like the world.

We're called to be different. In the world, families spend hours of time in front of the TV, right next to

each other on the same couch.

And yet, relationally, they're miles apart. And it seems like most conversations are mired in absolute superficiality.

[21:39] It's absolute surface issues. Hello, how are you? I'm fine, thank you. Did you see the Notre Dame game? Yes, it was good. It was good for me. And on and on it goes.

Meanwhile, our souls starve. We have the superficial give and take, but there's nothing deeper. We talk about our kids.

We talk about our families. We talk about movies. But we don't talk about Jesus Christ. And all of our heartaches get stowed underneath, put underneath.

All our secret fears are kept in the closet. And what happens is the cancer of discouragement starts growing on us. It starts weakening us, like mold in a house, eating away the framing.

So discouragement and sin festers in our hearts. And brothers and sisters, if that sort of thing is your relationship with your brothers and sisters, then it has to go.

[22:45] You have to get past that if you're going to encourage one another. Encouragement can only come by speaking. You just being here, that's maybe of some minor encouragement.

But encouragement comes mainly when you speak. But how can we speak? How can we build each other up if we don't open our mouths and talk about the things that are important to us?

And how can we encourage one another if we don't know each other? If we aren't committed to learning more about each other? How can we build each other up if we're so wrapped up in our own lives, in our own agenda?

Much of the isolation that we feel in our culture, in our lives, really, it's just the effect of selfishness. I am so interested in myself, I do not have time to share with you.

And so we grow discouraged. Well, examine yourself. Examine yourself. Is that the way you are? Is that describe the dynamic that you have with your brothers and sisters?

[23:51] Have you really avoided the world's insatiable drive inwards? To go deeper and deeper into myself. So the tide in our culture is inwards.

It's always navel-gazing, looking to see how you're doing. But we must fight against the tide. The grain is going this way, and we're called to go against the grain.

And so that's going to mean difficulty. But we have committed this. We have committed to one another to do this. When you joined Grace Fellowship Church, you took certain commitments.

You said, I do to certain things. Like this, we have committed to one another to cultivate acquaintance with one another so that we may be better able to pray for one another, love, comfort, and encourage one another.

That was your commitment to your brothers and sisters. You said, I do to that like you said, I do to your husband or your wife. And so we have to take those things seriously to get to know one another.

[24:52] To risk involvement with your brothers and sisters. To enlarge your circle of friends. Not just your two or three best friends. But to have many friends.

Many people that you can encourage. And to go deeper into certain friendships. To go deeper in their relationships. To open your mouth. To risk saying something.

To encourage them. That's how Paul encouraged. He bore his heart to them. He exposed himself. And he let himself love them. And that's how he was able to encourage them.

And that's how we must too do it. Well, how can we encourage our brothers and sisters? Through heartfelt involvement. Secondly, by confronting trials head on.

By confronting trials head on. Look at verse 3. Chapter 3, verse 3. We sent Timothy to encourage you in your faith. So that no one would be unsettled by these trials.

[25:55] 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. The Thessalonians were beginning to be persecuted.

So dads and moms were turning against their children. And children were turning against their dads and moms. Husbands were turning and abandoning their wives.

And vice versa. And this is exactly what Paul said would happen. It's turning out just like how Paul told them. Just like Jesus said it would.

Remember, Jesus said, I've come. Not to bring peace. But to bring a sword. And so that was their particular trial at the time.

Now all of us, most of us aren't facing that kind of persecution. Someday, I'm sure it probably will happen. But we each have our own trial. This was their trial.

[26 : 53] And Paul confronted it head on. He sent Timothy up to Thessalonica for a particular purpose. For this very purpose. He was there to specifically to strengthen them in their faith.

He was there to help them. To give them some balance. To help them get through this one trial.

This particular trial. And so Paul was all about confronting the trial head on.

He says, you know quite well. You know quite well we were destined for them. You knew this going into it. When you came to Christ, we didn't hide it. We told you up front that this is the way it's going to be.

And now it's turned out that way. Paul knew that if he was going to encourage them. He had to deal with this issue.

There was no point in trying to encourage them. If he didn't address the elephant in the room. And the elephant in the room was this persecution. Well isn't that the worst?

[27 : 56] When people ignore the trial that is hurting you. So you're going through a really difficult time. You've lost a loved one.

You're injured. You're sick. And people know that. Your brothers and sisters may even know it. And you go into some situation. And for whatever reason.

Maybe they just don't want to bring it up. Because they think it will hurt you again. But for whatever reason. They act like nothing's wrong.

They don't address your problem. And so you go away. And you're saying. What is wrong with those people? What is wrong with those people?

Don't they care about me? I'm hurting. And they just pretended like nothing was happening. Well we want our sorrows addressed. Don't we?

[28 : 48] We want people to acknowledge them. To take them seriously. And we don't want them belittled or ignored. We want people to understand and empathize with us.

And understand how difficult it is. And then if they will fairly address. They will understand what we're going through. It's only then that we can be encouraged.

So it was June 4th, 1940. And Winston Churchill was just made Prime Minister the month before of Great Britain.

And he is addressing Parliament. And it was the height of the Battle of Britain. And what was going on was every night hundreds of German bombers were flying over England decimating whole cities. And France had fallen. It was no longer really a country. Poland had fallen. Norway had fallen. The threat of invasion was real.

[29 : 55] It was real. It could be any time now. It was real. And everything was dark. So what is Churchill going to say to encourage his country?

Fear is starting to set in. And it's really going to be a problem. Well what is he going to say? He said this. And this is a quote. I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this government, I have nothing, listen to this, I have nothing to offer you but blood, toil, tears, and sweat.

We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering.

And you ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word, victory. Victory at all costs. Victory in spite of terror. Victory however long and hard the road may be.

For without victory, there is no survival. Well, what Churchill did that night was he made Britain look at reality.

[31 : 10] And he said, I have nothing to offer you except for blood, toil, tears, and sweat. And that was real. That was reality. Victory would only come by going through many months of hardship.

Well, it was that speech that really encouraged and inspired the nation to endure through this very difficult, very dark, very dangerous time of the whole, the most dangerous time of the whole war.

And Paul is doing the same thing. He said to the Thessalonians, we were destined for persecution. We told you that this would come.

We were destined for these trials. This is reality. We're not playing around. This isn't pretend. You're going to suffer. And it's only when we look the suffering, the trial, and the face that we can actually encourage our brother and sister.

So let me ask you, is that your mentality? Do you see trials as your destiny? And Paul wasn't saying, oh, doom and gloom.

[32:17] We're fated to this. We're going to suffer. This is our sad lot in life. Oh, pity us. Well, he wasn't saying that. He was saying God is controlling this whole world.

He's controlling our lives in this situation. And he, God, has destined these trials and this persecution. And only when we see trials and persecution in that light, that God is in control, God is sovereign, that we can have a hope to keep standing during that time.

So is that your mentality? Is that your mentality? Are you surprised? Or are you surprised by suffering? Suffering is coming.

It's coming for every single one of us, like it or not. The question is, how will we react when it gets here? You can ignore it. You can bury it deep inside and pretend like nothing's happening.

You can call into question God's goodness. You can call into question God's wisdom. You can call into question his sovereignty. That's what Rabbi Kushner did in his book, When Bad Things Happen to Good People.

[33:26] He said sometimes bad things happen to good people. There's no such good thing as a good person. But these bad things happen. Well, whose fault is it? Well, it's definitely not God's problem.

God didn't have anything to do with it. It must be something else. God didn't mean for this to happen. Well, if we go that route, if you go down that way, what hope do you have?

What hope do you have? If God has lost control of the trial, then what hope can you have in the trial? He can't do anything to help you. Well, we can't ignore God's sovereignty.

God's predestining work of predestining trials for us. Or there's no way to encourage ourselves.

There's no way to encourage anyone else if we throw God's sovereignty out.

So we must confront the trial head on. And we have to say, this is God's work. This is God's work in your life. And you don't say it coldly to your brother or sister.

[34:34] You don't say, well, you know, I'm sorry you're sick, but it is God's will after all. And expect that to make everything better. Because knowing that God is sovereign over the trial, it doesn't make the trial necessarily feel any better.

It doesn't make the trial go away. But it does provide a foundation where we can encourage them and have hope. And so you don't do it coldly. But you don't let go of the truth either.

You take God's sovereignty. And you join it with his promises. And you say, yes. You are destined for this. This is God's will in your life.

That is true. But you know that trial oftentimes is God's way of purifying us, of disciplining us. And he loves us.

And so he disciplines us. He says that in Hebrews 12. And we say, you know, you are destined for this trial. But remember, trials work in us perseverance.

[35:36] It gives us the strength to keep going on and on to endure to the end, according to Romans 5.3. And this trial is the way that we can suffer for Christ in some situations.

That we can suffer for Christ's sake, according to 2 Corinthians 4.11. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake.

Jesus is actually glorified as we show the world that he is more important to us than our comfort.

When we suffer and when we still go on exalting him, we say that Christ is more precious to us than our own comfort.

We can say, yes, you're destined for this trial. This is from God. But God has a way of taking trials in our lives and the pain and the suffering in our lives and using them to call his elect.

2 Timothy says this, Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. So, through our suffering, the faith, the elect come to faith.

[36:53] And we can say, you know what? You were destined for this trial. Say, brother, you, this, God has traced this on your dial. But remember, this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

2 Corinthians 4.17. Yes, there is suffering. There is pain. There is persecution. And God has planned it. But it is preparing for us. It has a purpose that God would give us on that day an eternal weight of glory that's beyond comparison.

We're going to put the two things on the scale. And the trial and the pain is going to be nothing compared to the glory that will be given to us. And we can say, you know what?

You were destined for this trial. But Jesus Christ also had a trial and a suffering that he was destined for. And through that trial, God worked amazing good.

He saved you. And so, if God can do that, if God can take the most horrible crime and turn it to great good, to the greatest good, then he can work good in your life.

[38 : 15] He loves you that much that he makes everything work out together for your good. Well, we encourage one another by taking the trials head on and saying, it's real.

It hurts. I know. But God means it for good. There's a reason to hope even now. Because God is at work. He means them to do you good.

And so he is doing good in them. Well, there is more to say in this passage about encouragement. And Lord willing, next week we'll look at that. But we've seen two key points.

If we're going to be actively encouraging one another, we have to be involved with each other.

However that will work out in your life, we have to have that heartfelt involvement.

And we have to be able to confront a trial head on. We have to answer the problem, the pain that is going on in that person's life with scripture. And so what a happier place Grace Fellowship would be if we could just do these two things better than what we do them.

[39 : 23] We do encourage one another, and I'm not saying we don't. But if we did these two things better, if we all took our responsibility seriously to be encouraging one another, to be fully engaged in this work, if we had more love for one another, and more involvement, and more of a hold on God's purposes and suffering, then what a happier place this would be.

The brokenhearted would come, and they would be bandaged. And the fearful and the doubting would never leave here saying, I don't know if my brothers and sisters really understand what I'm going through.

I don't really know if God's love and grace can really fix this problem. Because we would wrap our arms around them and show them how God's love and grace can help them in their problem.

And those who are tempted, they're horribly tempted, they would never go away saying, I can't relate to those people. They don't know what it's like to go and be tempted in the way that I am being tempted.

No, they would be strengthened. The weak would be strengthened and built up. Those who are lagging would be carried and picked up. And all of us would be more holy if we could encourage one another better.

[40 : 49] We would all be in more love with Jesus Christ. And so moms would be better moms. And dads would be better dads. And Christian boys and girls would be better boys and girls.

And pastors would be better pastors. And deacons would be better deacons. And we would fight Satan more earnestly.

And we would cut out right eyes and we would lop off right hands more frequently if we were all encouraging each other more. If we were all better encouragers, then think about how much encouragement we would be getting every day.

Well, Grace Fellowship could be a better church. A more God-glorifying church. A more Christ-exalting church. If we could just do these two things better.

Of being involved with each other's lives. And being able to confront trials head on. And so let's continue to encourage and build each other up.

[41 : 50] Just as in fact you are doing. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we love you. We thank you for this passage of scripture that teaches us how to encourage one another.

Father, I pray that we would not leave it in the realm of head knowledge and abstract thought. But that we would put hands and feet to it.

That we would be faithful in encouraging one another. Even as we go on our way tonight. Father, will you give us wisdom.

And knowledge to know what to say. In the hour of trial and difficulty. Will you help us to be more in love with each other. To have deeper affection and deeper relationships with one another.

And that out of that affection. That encouragement would flow into each other's lives. Thank you that in the gospel. Of Jesus dying for sinners.

[42 : 54] We have such an abundant field. An abundant tree to pick encouragement from. That we find in the gospel.

Such things that would encourage us and build each other up. Will you help us to be faithful in preaching the gospel to one another. Even as we preach it to ourselves. Father, I pray that you would do your work in us.

That you would keep sanctifying your people. Thank you that you love them. That you take care of them. And I pray that you would go on doing that this week. For Jesus' sake. Amen.
Amen. Amen.