ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE 90'S

Text: Hebs. 13:5-9

Intro. In the last issue we discussed 4 things that should encourage us. The sinner still sins, The Saviour still saves. The Spirit still shows. And the scriptures are still sure. We have so much to do and so little time to do it in. Our world is changing fast, but take heart the things of God remain the same. Man's basic need is still the same. God help us to be faithful and true to Him. God help us to continue faithfully in His service. We see in Hebrews 10:25, we need to be more faithful and exhort more than ever.

I. THE SHEPHERD STILL SUPPLIES.

A. He supplies daily.
1. He is our Shepherd and we shall not want or go lacking. Psa. 23:1
2. We are taught to ask Him for our daily needs. Matt. 6:9-11
3. The Shepherd found the green grass and the still waters for the sheep.
4. The Shepherd watched over the sheep and protected them. He went after the wandering sheep.
5. Read Phil. 4:19. The principle of God taking care of us is true.

B. He supplies diligently.
1. He watches over us daily and He knows of what we stand in need of.
2. He seeks to meet our mental, moral, material, and marital needs.
3. Our Lord is diligent. He knows what we need better than we know ourselves.
4. He has taken care of us this far and we know that He will in the future.
5. He takes care of the lilies and sparrows and we are more valuable to Him than them. Matt. 6
6. The Lord is willing to do more for us than we will allow Him to do.

II. THE SALVATION STILL SATISFIES.

A. We are cleansed.

C. He supplies delightfully.
1. When the children of Israel went into the wilderness God rained down manna every day except the sabbath.
2. When they needed water the Lord let it flow thru a rock.
3. God knows how to supply our needs at just the right time and in the right way.
4. It amazes us and delights us to see the way the Lord works things out.
5. He is a good Shepherd, a great Shepherd, and a glorious Shepherd.
1. We repented of our sins. Eph. 1:7 He forgave us of sin.
2. All of our sins are gone, He removed them as far as the East is from the West. Psa. 103:12
3. His forgiveness is like giving us a spiritual bath and taking away the filth and corruption.
4. In salvation we have the answer to the sin problem. I John 1:9 is God’s answer to sin.

B. We are changed.
1. We were born again and changed according to II Cor. 5:17.
2. He changed us when we were saved and God is still working on us. Eph. 2:1-3
3. His ultimate goal which will be carried out is to conform us to the image of His Son.
4. The Word of God helps perfect us or mature us. II Tim. 3:17 He causes us to live sane, sensible, settled, and spiritual lives.

C. We are calmed.
1. He calmed us down when He saved our souls. We don't have to worry about facing God. It is settled.
2. He is in the business of calming the storms in your life or calming you in the storms of life.
3. In times of trouble He will calm you.
4. In times of need He will calm you. Read Matt. 11:28-30

III. THE SOVEREIGN STILL SOLVES.
A. The solution of problems.
1. The Bible is an answer book about the problems of life.
2. We will have to face problems. Study Job 14:1
3. Each decade brings on progress which brings on problems which must be solved.
4. We are to carry our problems and burdens to the Lord in prayer.
B. The solution of peace.
1. Problems destroy our peace of heart and mind.
2. We do not rest. We worry. We are unsettled.
3. Peace is found and enjoyed as we obey Prov. 3:5, 6.
4. Peace is received as we tell the Lord about our troubles, continue to live for Him, and seek His advice about our problems.

5. The Lord is our peace. Eph. 2:14 We have peace with God in salvation. Rom. 5:1 We can enjoy the peace of God after salvation. Col. 3:15

C. The solution of pardon.
1. Sin is a disregard for the will of God.
2. Sin is a disrespect for the word of God.
3. Sin is a defying of the person of God.
4. The result of sin is guilt, misery, doubts, fears, etc.
5. God's answer to our sins is confession and cleansing. I John 1:9

IV. THE SAINT STILL SINGS.
A. Sing of redemption.
1. Our songs of praise praise the great and wonderful Redeemer.
2. He left glory. He lived gracially. He laid His life down gently.
3. Jesus is our Saviour. All of our hymns lift Him up and point men to Jesus.
4. Jesus is our all in all. He is our everything.
B. Sing of resurrection.
1. We know and realize, we are not going to live forever in this flesh.
2. We sing about that resurrection morning when the dead in Christ shall rise. I Thess. 4:13-18
3. We praise God for His wonderful plan of redemption and the hope we have in Him. Job 19:25
C. Sing of reservation.
1. We have a home that awaits us. John 14:1-3
2. We have made our reservation which cannot be cancelled.
3. The mind has marvelled endlessly about that beautiful home.

V. THE SECOND COMING IS STILL SOON.
A. The Saviour.
1. The Saviour has promised to return for us. John 14:1-3
2. The angel said He would return even as Jesus left us. Acts 1:11
3. John closed the revelation out with, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20
4. The end time events show how dark and sinful the last days will be. II Tim. 3:1-7 Our hope is in the Lord.
B. The scoffers.
1. Scoffers will come in the last
days walking after their own lusts. II Pet. 3:3
2. They will mock us. They will deny the Bible.
3. They will scoff. We have heard that before they will say.
4. All through the ages men have believed what they wanted to, but it hasn't changed God or His word.

C. The second coming.
1. Jesus will return, just like He promised He would.
2. Open your eyes. Examine the things that are taking place.
3. This world cannot continue on like it is now.
4. May we look for the Son each day.

THE HOLY SPIRIT
By Neal Clark

Text: John 16:1-16
Intro. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He has always existed and has guided the children of God in all ages. In this age, He is the administrator of the Lord's church, plus the many other activities He does with the sinner and the Christian.

I. THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
John 16:5-7,13-15
A. He will reprove the world.
B. He will reveal the Christ.
C. He will remind the Christian.

II. THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
John 16:13-15
A. He will guide us.
B. He will guard us.
C. He will guard us.

III. THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
John 16:8;15,26,27
A. He draws us to Christ.
B. He directs us to Christ.
C. He dwells in the Christian.

IV. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
John 16:8-11
A. He convicts the sinner of sin.
B. He converts the sinner to Christ.
C. He condemns the sinner in judgment.

V. THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
John 16:13
A. Administers the church.
B. Admonishes the Christian.
C. Advances the cause.

BEHOLD THE LAMB
By Kenneth Click

Text: John 1:29
Intro. We can behold the Lamb in two ways today, in our hearts and in our minds. The need to see the Lamb cannot be overemphasized. Without the Lamb all is lost. To behold the Lamb is to behold the love of God!

I. BEHOLD THE PICTURE OF THE LAMB.
B. Displayed by the passover. Exod. 12:1-7, 12,13

II. BEHOLD THE POWER OF THE LAMB.
A. Power over creation. Col. 1:16-18
B. Power over nature. Luke 8:25
C. Power over His own life. John 10:18
D. Power over sin. Matt. 9:6

III. BEHOLD THE PRIORITIES OF THE LAMB.
A. To fulfill the law. Matt. 5:17
B. To preach the Word of God. Luke 4:43
C. To bear witness unto the truth. John 18:37
D. To give His life in ransom for many. Matt 20:28
E. To seek and save the lost. Luke 19:10; John 3:17
F. To please the Father. John 8:29

IV. BEHOLD THE PAIN OF THE LAMB.
A. Isaiah 53
B. I Peter 3:18

V. BEHOLD THE PROVISION OF THE LAMB.
A. The Lamb provides forgiveness to all who will believe.
B. The Lamb provides strength to all who will trust.
C. The Lamb provides hope to all who are saved.

Con. Because of the Lamb of God bled and died you can be saved today. Because the Lamb of God lives for evermore you can have eternal life. "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD THAT TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD."

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WHAT IF THE PRODIGAL SON HADN'T RETURNED?
By Marc Shultz

Text: Luke 15:18

I. HE WOULD HAVE STAYED IN THE PIG PEN.
A. Self confidence destroyed. I John 3:21,22
B. Would learned nothing from mistakes. Phil. 4:11-13
C. Never known extent of father's love. Prov. 1:7,8
D. The prodigal would never learned how important it was to ask forgiveness. Luke 6:37
E. He would never have reached his potential.

II. THE FATHER WOULD HAVE LOOKED FOR HIM IN VAIN.
A. Love must sometimes be tough. I Cor. 13:7
B. Love must always be willing to forgive. Eph. 4:32
C. Restoration between father and son would never be accomplished. Dan. 5:20

III. THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN AN EMPTY PLACE AT THE TABLE.
A. The family would remain incomplete. Eph. 6:1-4
B. He would be without family fellowship. Josh. 24:15
C. He would never find peace of mind. Rom. 8:6
D. There would always be sorrow of lost son.

RIGHTeousness

Text: I Tim. 6:1-11, V11

Intro.
A. The REVIEW.
   1. The way to blessedness.
      a. Submissive to the Lord.
      b. Sensitive to the Spirit.
      c. Settled on some goals.
   2. Establishing the goal of LOVE and pursuing it relentlessly.
   3. Establishing the goal of PEACE and pursuing it relentlessly.
B. The REASONING. We have noticed that in regards to these goals two predominant elements are needed.
   1. Obedience
   2. Dependence.
C. The REVELATION. Establishing righteousness as a goal and pursuing it relentlessly. (Note V 11 - the terms FOLLOW and RIGHTeousness.)
   1. Righteousness is a legal term based upon the judgment of God whereby He declares what is right as opposed to what is wrong.
   2. The 2 fold understanding of this concept is as follows:
      a. Receiving the righteousness of God.
      b. Reflecting the righteousness of God.
   3. Righteousness is to be understood in a 3-fold sense.

RIGHTeousness in the Sense of Being Right with God - the Legal Connotation.

A. The righteousness of RELIGIOUS people. Rom. 10:1-4
   1. Note specifically verse 3.
   2. They were trying to find out ways whereby they might be righteous before God - self righteousness.
   3. This attitude is very faulty and extremely dangerous.
   4. They were unenlightened about God's righteousness.
      a. God's righteousness revealed to us in His law.
      b. God's righteousness revealed to us through His Son.
   5. If you want to look at what's righteous, LOOK AT JESUS.

B. The RIGHTeousness of the REPENTANT. Rom. 3:10-12, 20-24
   1. I can never be righteous on the basis of what I do or refuse to do.
   2. God does something - He declares sinners to be right with Him on this basis and what Christ has done for us.
   3. Illus. - The Judge passing judgment and then coming down and taking care of your debt.

II. RIGHTeousness in the Sense of Doing That Which Is Right Before God - the Moral Connotation.

A. The CHALLENGE of doing the right thing. II Tim. 3:16,17
   1. Discovering what is right and doing what is right.
   2. Living right because I have been declared righteous with God by God.
   3. How do I know what is right? THE SCRIPTURE.
   4. His Word is to be the final authority on what's right.
B. The CHOICE of doing the right thing. Rom. 6:10-15
   1. Say "no" to the old way of life - do not yield to sin.
   2. Say "yes" to that which is right - yield to that which is right.
   3. IMPORTANT - turn FROM wrong to something right (get involved in something right.)
C. The COST of doing the right thing. Matt. 5:10
   1. When you start living right - you will cause those who are not living right to be embarrassed.
   2. The result will be that they will either IGNORE you or become so IRRITATED that they will persecute you.
   3. The path of righteousness will encounter persecution or problems.

III. RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE SENSE OF SEEING PEOPLE TREATED RIGHTLY - SOCIAL CONNOTATION.
   A. A REALITY to realize - imposing christian ethics on an unchristian society is unrealistic.
   B. A REASONING - The Bible does instruct us however to treat people rightly.

Con. The thrust again is seen in identifying the goal - being obedient and dependent.

CHRISTIAN LOVE

By D. B. Wright

Text: John 13:1-5,12-17,34,35; Gal. 5:13;6:10; I John 3:16-18

Intro.
   A. Christian love is one of the greatest needs in the world today.
   B. Christian love is one of the most needed things among believers today.
   C. Christian love is one of the church's greatest assets.
   D. Christian love is Christ like love.
   E. Christian love is an inborn quality of the believers in Christ. Rom. 5:5
   F. Christian love is at the top of the list of the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. Gal. 5:22
   G. Paul teaches the church that one may have excellent speaking ability, prophetic knowledge, faith in abundance, a benevolent attitude, and even sacrif-
WHEN CONTRARY WINDS BLOW

By Joe Stevens

Text: Matt. 14:22-27

Intro. We are all aware of the many difficulties that one must face in this life here below. We are often perplexed over the problems that the Lord’s people face. Why should we, God’s children, faithful workers, have to experience contrary winds? This question has perplexed Christians in all generations. The psalmist spoke of his difficulty with this problem. Psa. 72

Since it is a fact of life that we are going to experience contrary winds, maybe we need to better understand them and learn better how to deal with them. From our text we learn some important lessons.

I. CONTRARY WINDS ARE NOT PROOF THAT ONE IS OUT OF THE WILL OF GOD.

A. It is easy to pre-judge a situation and wonder, “What has he done or not done to bring this upon himself.”

B. Our text teaches us that a person can be doing exactly what the Lord says and still have unpleasant experiences.
   1. Jesus specifically instructed His disciples what to do. V22 Nature does not change just because we are in His will.
   2. Other examples from the Scriptures.
      a. Daniel
      b. Three Hebrews
      c. Joseph
   3. Being in the will of God does not keep the sins of others from effecting our lives.

C. On the other hand, many people create their own contrary winds.
   1. Trouble comes because of willful disobedience to the revealed will of God.
   2. The contrary winds that blew Jonah off course were of his own making.

D. So we find both the disciples and Jonah in a storm, but under different circumstances.

II. CONTRARY WINDS ARE NOT GOING TO DESTROY GOD’S PEOPLE OR HIS PLAN.

A. The disciples were commanded to go before Him to the other side.
   1. Contrary winds were making this difficult and was impeeding their progress.
   2. Just because they were not progressing did not mean they were not of His will.

B. Jonah was also commanded to go and do, but he rebelled.
   1. Contrary winds rose up to detour him.
   2. He was out of the will of God.

C. The Lord knows when and why we are experiencing contrary winds and is praying for us. Not that we be spared, but that our faith fail not.

III. CONTRARY WINDS ARE NEVER OUT OF THE CONTROL OF THE MASTER.

A. Jonah knew exactly who was in control of the storm.
   1. It behoves us to examine our relationship to His will when contrary winds blow.
   2. When Jonah was cast overboard, the winds ceased.

B. Jesus came to the aid of the disciples when they needed Him the most. At the fourth watch, 3-6 A.M.
   1. He may not come early in the storm, but in the darkest hour.
   2. It maybe that we need to come to realize our utter hopelessness without Him.

IV. CONTRARY WINDS MAY BE ALLOWED TO BLOW AGAINST US TO STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH.

A. It seems that the disciples may have had a little doubt about His deity, but all doubt was erased. Matt. 14:33

B. If we recognize the Lord in the winds, our faith will be strengthened when He brings us safely through it.

Con. When contrary winds are blowing against you, just remember that the Lord has not forgotten where He told you to go and what He told you to do. Have you?

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WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT OLD TIME RELIGION?
By Rodney Stevens

Text: II Thess. 2:1-3

Intro. There seems to have been a certain amount of panic concerning the second coming of Christ. Paul assures them that there are still a few things that will come to pass before this time. One of these events is the falling away. V3 You don't have to be very old to have noticed a falling away even in our own time. We talk about that old time religion and wonder where it has gone. Let's face it, Christianity isn't what it used to be even 50 years ago. Should we just live with the fact that there has been a falling away, or is there something we can do about it? What happened to that Old Time Religion?

I. WHAT WAS THAT OLD TIME RELIGION?
A. A time when church houses were packed.
B. A time of spiritual and moving services.
C. A time where many were saved.
D. A time where people prayed.
E. A time where people studied the Bible.
F. A time where people lived by the Bible.
G. A time where people openly spoke of God.

II. WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT OLD TIME RELIGION?
A. Church houses are not packed because:
   1. Of other activities of the world.
   2. The stress of life leaves people exhausted at church time.
   3. Religion has gotten a bad name.
   4. Commitment is a thing of the past.
B. Church services don't seem to be as spiritual and moving as they were.
   1. Church is seen as a responsibility only and not as a privilege.
   2. Many come with the improper attitude.
   3. Many come for the wrong reason.
   4. Modern technology has made preaching seem dull.
C. People are not being saved like they once were because:
   1. Of ruined testimonies of hypocritical christians.
   2. Christians are not as concerned as they should be.
   3. Few christians are actively seeking the lost.
D. People don't pray like they use to because:
   1. Of crowded daily schedules.
   2. Of personal wealth and self sufficiency.
   3. Of unwillingness to repent of personal sin.
   4. Many have forgotten the power of prayer.
E. People don't study the Bible like they use to because:
   1. Of a busy schedule.
   2. We live in a world of hand out information.
   3. The Bible demands change.
F. People don't live by the Bible like they use to because:
   1. It is not popular.
   2. It will exclude one from some worldly pleasure.
   3. It is so easy to compromise.
   4. Few know what the Bible teaches.
G. People don't openly speak about God like they use to because:
   1. It is not popular.
   2. The fear of having to defend their belief.
   3. It would label them as christians and would mean that people were watching for them to mess up.

III. HOW CAN WE BRING BACK THAT OLD TIME RELIGION?
A. We can bring back filled church houses by making church services a priority. Hebs. 10:25
B. We can bring back spiritual and moving services by having our hearts prepared before church.
C. We can see people saved and added to the church by actively seeking the lost and boldly telling them about Christ. Rom. 10:14
D. We can bring back a time of prayer by seeing it's great blessing and by humbling ourselves before God. Make prayer a practice. Luke 18:1
E. We can bring back a time of Bible study by making time for it and determining to work at learning God's word.
F. We can bring back days of living by the Bible by acknowledging it's authority and personal worth and by denying self and giving all to God. Psa. 119:105
G. We can see a time where people openly speak of God by dedicating our conduct and speech to God. Psa. 107:2

Con. That Old Time Religion is not gone forever. It can be brought back. God has not changed, man has. Let's return to that Old Time Religion.

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THE MESSIAH'S FIRST MESSengers
By Wesley Waldrum

Text: John 1:35-51

I. THE COMPREHENSION. V35-40
   A. The identification. V36
   B. The interest. V37,38
   C. The invitation. V39
   D. The impact. V40

II. THE CONCERN. V41,42
   A. The desire. V41
   B. The discovery. V41
   C. The delivery. V42
   D. The decision. V42

III. THE CALL. V43,44
   A. The plan. V43
   B. The person. V43
   C. The participation. V43
   D. The place. V44

IV. THE CONFIRMATION. V. 45-57
   A. The finding. V45
   B. The former writings. V45
   C. The foolishness. V46
   D. The fact. V46
   E. The friendliness. V47

V. THE CONSIDERATION. V48-51
   A. The wondering. V48
   B. The watching. V48
   C. The wisdom. V49
   D. The wonder. V50
   E. The witness. V51

TWELVE SIMPLE RULES FOR HAPPINESS

1. LIVE A SIMPLE LIFE. Do not plan too many things for each day. Be temperate and moderate in your lifestyle.

2. SPEND LESS THAN YOU EARN. This may be difficult to do, but it pays big dividends in contentment and peace of mind.

3. THINK CONSTRUCTIVELY. Store useful thoughts in your mind.

4. CULTIVATE A FLEXIBLE DISPOSITION. Resist the tendency to want your own way. Try to see another person's point of view. Listen.

5. BE GRATEFUL. Begin each day with a prayer of thanksgiving for all your blessings.

6. RULE YOUR MOODS. Your mental attitude is all-important in living at peace with others.

7. GIVE GENEROUSLY. Intelligent giving of your time, talents, personality, and money will bring great joy.

8. WORK WITH RIGHT MOTIVES. Seek to grow in favor with God and man, seeking His will first in your life.

9. BE INTERESTED IN OTHERS. As we serve others, we reap happiness as a by product of a life of self-giving.

10. MAKE THE MOST OF TODAY. Use it wisely so you may look back on it without regret.

11. TAKE TIME FOR A HOBBY. Time spent on leisure interests should bring you diversion and relaxation.

12. STAY CLOSE TO GOD. Enduring happiness depends on continuing spiritual nourishment. As God's children, we have His promise of constant love and care.

JESUS IN THE SCRIPTURES

JESUS IS PROMISED IN GENESIS
JESUS IS PICTURED IN THE LAW
JESUS IS RAISED IN THE PSALMS
JESUS IS PROPHESIED IN THE PROPHETS
JESUS IS PRESENTED IN THE GOSPELS
JESUS IS PREACHED IN THE EPITAPHS
JESUS IS PROCLAIMED KING IN REVELATION

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