

The Encouragement Of Christmas

Isaiah 9:1-2 (NIV)

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan – The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

John 1:4-9 (NIV)

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

This past year of 2020 has been a year of many many discouraging things. As believers we have had to fight discouragement on a daily basis.

The word discouraged means to be curtailed or docked off... like to dock a dog's tail off.

The Lord is building His Church and the darkness will not overcome it.

Satan uses many tricks to try and trip up the Church. The two greatest tricks seem to be filling a person with pride and the other is to bring a person into a deep discouragement.

As the word discouragement means to cut off, the word encouragement means to spur, to impel, to give confidence to, and to inspire hope.

The Coming of Christ at Christmas is the ultimate encouraging message for us.

Four Sources of Encouragement

1. The Great Lord Himself – The Encourager

Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 43:1-3 (NIV)

But now, this is what the LORD says – he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.

Isaiah 44:1-3 (NIV)

But now listen, Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen. This is what the LORD says – he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

Isaiah 45:24a (NIV)

They will say of me, ‘In the LORD alone are deliverance and strength.’

2. The Word of the Lord

Psalms 119:89-93 (MSG)

What you say goes, GOD, and *stays*, as permanent as the heavens. Your truth never goes out of fashion; it’s as up-to-date as the earth when the sun comes up. Your Word and truth are dependable as ever; that’s what you ordered – you set the earth going. If your revelation hadn’t delighted me so, I would have given up when the hard times came. But I’ll never forget the advice you gave me; you saved my life with those wise words.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

3. The Encouragement from the Body of Christ

1 Samuel 23:15-16 (NIV)

While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.

Romans 14:19 (MSG)

So let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. Help others with encouraging words; don't drag them down by finding fault.

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Hebrews 12:12-13 (NLT)

So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.

Job 16:4-5 (NIV)

I also could speak like you, if you were in my place; I could make fine speeches against you and shake my head at you. But my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief.

4. Encouraging Yourself In God

1 Samuel 30:6 (KJV)

And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

Jude 1:20-21 (MSG)

But you, dear friends, carefully build yourselves up in this most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit, staying right at the center of God's love, keeping your arms open and outstretched, ready for the mercy of our Master, Jesus Christ. This is the unending life, the *real* life!

Here is a simple prayer:

A Prayer to be said when the world has gotten you down, and when you are too tired to pray, and you're in a big hurry, and besides, you're mad at everybody...
HELP!

Psalm 73:26 (NIV)

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.