Sermon Summary: The Habit of Encouragement

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:11–18

Sermon Summary

Encouragement is one of the most beautiful and accessible ways we can serve others as followers of Jesus. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11–18, Paul reminds believers to encourage one another, build each other up, live in peace, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, and be patient with everyone.

Encouragement is more than offering compliments or telling someone they're doing a good job. It is the intentional practice of building others up through both grace and truth. Sometimes encouragement means showing up, sending a thoughtful message, making a phone call, or simply reminding someone that they are not alone. Other times, it means lovingly speaking difficult truths that help someone recognize when they've become distracted from God and need to refocus their priorities.

We don't have to be naturally outgoing or gifted with words to encourage others. Each of us can practice this habit in ways that reflect how God has uniquely made us. Even setting aside five minutes a day to pray about someone who might need encouragement and then reaching out can make a profound difference.

As we grow in the habit of encouragement, we strengthen one another, deepen our relationships, and become more Christlike. Encouragement isn't just a spiritual gift for a few people; it is a calling for all of us. Together, we can create a community where people are supported when they are doing well, lifted when they stumble, and continually encouraged to grow in their faith.

Main Points

1. Encouragement Is an Act of Service

- Encouragement is building others up through grace and truth.
- Following Jesus means serving others in our everyday words and actions.
- Encouragement is something everyone can practice, regardless of experience or spiritual gifts.
- A simple word of encouragement can have a profound impact on someone's life.

2. Sometimes the Best Encouragement Is Simply Showing Up

- Being present at someone's event, ministry, or activity shows that you care.
- Encouragement can also look like a text message, phone call, handwritten note, or invitation to coffee.
- Small gestures can make a big difference to someone who is struggling.

- Consider setting aside five minutes each day to pray about someone you can encourage.

3. True Encouragement Requires Both Grace and Truth

- Encouragement isn't always about praise or positive words.
- Sometimes loving someone means helping them recognize when they've lost focus or drifted away from God.
- Speaking truth with love can help others realign their priorities and return to the path God has called them to follow.
- Our relationships should be built on trust, love, and a genuine desire to help one another grow.

4. Encouragement Is for Everyone

- Some people have a natural spiritual gift of encouragement, but everyone is called to practice it.
- Introverts, extroverts, leaders, and behind-the-scenes servants can all encourage others.
- We can learn from people who demonstrate encouragement well and ask them to share their practices.
- God can help us take the next faithful step, even when encouraging someone feels uncomfortable.

5. We Grow Together as the Body of Christ

- Some of us are learning how to encourage, while others can serve as examples and mentors.
- We are called to support one another both when we succeed and when we stumble.
- As we develop habits that reflect Jesus, we grow together in faith and become more effective in loving and serving our neighbors.

Scripture to Remember

1 Thessalonians 5:11

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

Other important verses from the passage:

- **Verse 14:** Comfort the discouraged, help the weak, and be patient with everyone.
- **Verse 15:** Don't repay wrong with wrong, but pursue what is good for everyone.
- **Verse 16–18:** Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in every situation.

Putting the Habit into Practice

This week's challenge is to make encouragement an intentional daily habit.

1. **Take five minutes.** Pray and ask God to bring someone to mind who needs encouragement.

2. **Show up.** Make the phone call, send the text, write the note, or attend the event.
3. **Speak truth in love.** Don't be afraid to lovingly help someone refocus when they need it.
4. **Learn from others.** Think about someone who encourages you well and consider what you can learn from them.
5. **Take the next faithful step.** Find a way to encourage someone, even if it feels outside your comfort zone.

A Question to Reflect On

Who has God placed in your life that needs encouragement today, and what is one small thing you can do to build them up?

The Big Takeaway

Encouragement isn't just something nice we do for others. It is a spiritual habit and an act of service that helps us live more like Jesus. A simple word, a thoughtful gesture, or a loving reminder of God's truth can change someone's day—and sometimes their life.

We are called not only to follow Jesus, but to help one another along the way.