

# FirstFruits Gathering At Harvest Christian Church

## Encouragement June 13, 2023 Suzi Armstrong

Encouragement builds you up and makes you strong – urges and persuades you as to who you are. Encouragement instills confidence and hope and has to do with the heart. Words of encouragement give counsel and stimulate you forward. It is about advancing, not losing focus, remembering why you are doing something or what the vision is. Encouragement speaks into your identity, who God made you to be. Encouragement is connected to tenacity and being resilient and having the ability to go the distance. Encouragement brings the future into focus and reiterates that God has a plan to prosper you and to give you a future. Hope and joy are closely linked with encouragement. And encouragement emboldens your stance and faith to dream big dreams and go after those dreams. Encouragement solidifies and reinforces that doing the right thing – especially in difficult circumstances – matters.

Many of the verses in the Book of Proverbs are written to encourage us on how to live. Proverbs 1 says, “Here are words to live by, and words of wisdom given to empower you to reign in life...within these sayings (many of which are words of encouragement) will be found the revelation of wisdom and the impartation of Spiritual understanding. Use them to unlock the treasures of true knowledge.”  
**Encouragement helps us to succeed in life.**

Encourage yourself and others with your enthusiasm, gratitude, and belief. The Bible says that this is the day that the Lord has made – let us rejoice and be glad in it. Let your self-talk and your outward conversation be filled with joy, thankfulness, and faith that God is for us and He supplies our every need. In fact, Psalm 23 says that the Lord is our Shepherd, and we shall not lack. He will lead us and refresh us. He is with us and will set a table in the midst of our enemies. We do not need to be in fear because God is with us. The opposite of encouragement is discouragement. Discouragement drains you of strength and joy. It is a downer that can lead to depression if you dwell on it. It is encouragement that reverses discouragement. Encouragement brings the light, life and breath of God back into the lungs of your future.

One of the most encouraging verses in the bible is found in Ephesians 6 where the Bible tells us to put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground and after having done everything to stand – stand firm and keep standing.

### Isaiah 41.10 NIV

<sup>10</sup> 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.

### Hebrews 10.19-25 NIV

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, since **we have confidence** to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> **let us draw near to God** with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> **Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.** <sup>24</sup> And let us **consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,** <sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but **encouraging one another**—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- Consider how you might be an encouragement to others.
- Consider how to encourage other family members, work associates, neighbors, and even strangers.

### 1 Thessalonians 5.11 NIV

<sup>11</sup> Therefore **encourage one another and build each other up**, just as in fact you are doing.

### Romans 15.13 NIV

<sup>13</sup> May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace **as you trust in him**, so that you may **overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit**.

### Deuteronomy 3.28 NIV

<sup>28</sup> But commission Joshua, and **encourage and strengthen** him, for he will lead this people across and will cause them to inherit the land that you will see.

### Romans 15.5-6 NIV

<sup>5</sup> May the **God who gives endurance and encouragement** give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, <sup>6</sup> so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Romans 12.6-8 NIV

<sup>6</sup> **We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us**. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; <sup>7</sup> if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup> **if it is to encourage, then give encouragement...**

- Encouragement is so important that it is listed as a gift.
  - Paul encouraged the church.
  - David encouraged a nation.
  - Jesus encouraged all of creation.
  - We can encourage our city and nation.

Words of encouragement are the fuel of passion. Out of encouragement, faith is strengthened and the fruit of that is boldness, certainty, stamina, and creativity. Trust in the Lord increases. Reliance on what the Lord is stirring in your heart overcomes reliance upon men and their opinions. Artificial boundaries and self-imposed limitations are broken. Paul tells the church to speak to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and to make music to the Lord in your heart. **This is encouragement!**

### Colossians 2.2 NIV

<sup>2</sup> **My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love**, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,

### PRAYER AND DECLARATION:

Father, we are so thankful for the words and work of encouragement that You do in our hearts and lives. Truly, encouragement builds strength and vision and hope in our inner being. Thank You for the encouragers that You send into our lives that speak words of life.

In the name of Jesus, **we speak encouragement over Detroit and Michigan**. We speak encouragement over the people, especially over the children. Every place of discouragement be uprooted from the hearts and minds of the people. We speak hope and the grace of God over our state. We declare the blessing and strength and favor of God over our cities. **God's transforming power is at work** in our cities – even when we can't see it, He is working. The King of Glory who is mighty in battle has come into Detroit. The gates of the city are open to the Lord and His angel armies.

As the Church in Detroit, we declare that **the King is here!** Who is this King? He is the Lord Almighty! He is the possessor of Detroit and all who live in Detroit. **Detroit has been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light**. Revival and awakening have broken out in the city. God's kingdom is expanding in Detroit. Detroit is rising up in its God-given destiny. Detroit is the trumpet of the Lord, releasing and reverberating the sound of Heaven into the earth.