

“Be of Good Cheer”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Matt. 9:2; John 16:33;

1. Jesus stated two great facts that enable Christians to be of good cheer regardless of any and all circumstances:
 - a. Our sins are forgiven in Jesus Christ
 - b. Jesus Christ has given us the ultimate victory over this world

B. Phil. 3:12-16

1. From a worldly perspective, Paul had every reason to be unhappy; but, he was forgiven, and that made all of the difference
2. Therefore, he went forward doing what was right without letting the past interfere with his work.
3. God gives power to do this through His word - Rom. 1:16; Eph. 3:20-21

C. Holding onto yesterday's pain, bearing grudges, and remembering losses make memories of the past unhappy, paralyses the present, and steals away the future.

1. “You will find that it is necessary to let things go; simply for the reason that they are heavy. So let them go, let go of them. I tie no weights to my ankles.” (C. JoyBell C.)
2. “When we forgive, the slave we free is ourselves.” (Edward Hallowell)
3. “Getting angry is like burning yourself with other people's fires. Sometimes forgiving someone is not because he's really sorry and deserved it, but because we were worthy of tranquility.” (D. Mridha)

I. BURY THE PAST

A. This does not mean we cannot learn from the past - Rom. 15:4; 1Cor. 10:11

B. However, since we cannot change the past, we should not try to live in it

1. Joshua 1:1-2, 6, 9; Daniel 1:8-12

C. Paul could have dwelled on the past and destroyed his present and future

1. He could have regretted what he lost in Judaism to gain Christ
 - a. Phil. 3:4-8 - He could not think that without his past, he had no present or future
2. He could have allowed regret over his past sins rob him of joy and zeal in the present - Acts 26:9-11
3. Forgiveness is dealing positively with a negative past - Matt. 18:21-22
 1. Forgiveness is not just for our penitent brother; it is for our own forgiveness as well - Matt. 18:35
 2. Forgiveness and forgetting is for our own well-being; God forgives us for His own sake - Isa. 43:25

D. We need to remember that we still have the potential and power to do good

1. 2Cor. 6:2; Phil. 4:13
2. Our decisions occur in the present.
3. Our actions occur in the present.
4. We live in the present.

II. TO LOOK AHEAD

- A. We must run the race - 1Cor. 9:24-27
 - 1. Run to obtain, run with conviction, run with determination
 - 2. There is no one here today who has finished the race
 - a. Heb. 12:1; 1Cor. 15:58
- B. Look toward the future - Phil. 3:13-14; 2Cor. 4:16

III. PUT COMPLETE TRUST IN GOD

- A. Christ makes all things new - 2Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:5
- B. Christ makes all things possible - Phil. 4:13; John 15:4-8
- C. God has given us a place in an unshakeable kingdom - Heb. 12:28
- D. God has given us the perfect pattern for life - 2Peter 1:3; 2Tim. 3:16-17
- E. Since God has done His part, with whom lies the variable? With us
 - 1. "Be optimistic. To the pessimist doors have locks and latches; but, to the optimist, doors have handles and hinges." (William Arthur Ward)
 - 2. Phil. 3:13-16

IV. WORK AS IF TODAY WAS OUR LAST DAY

- A. What would we do if this were our last Sunday as a congregation?
 - 1. Would it put everything into perspective? Would we end our disputes, disregard our differences, and dispense with our dislikes?
 - 2. Would we sing a little louder, "Amen" a bit more often, remember the Savior more reverently, honor God more wholeheartedly, greet one another more affectionately?
- B. We need to do that with ourselves; get rid of all excuses.
 - 1. "No one is perfect."
 - 2. "I don't have any ability or talent."
 - 3. "I have failed too many times."
 - 4. "Others won't listen to me."
 - 5. "Too many people and/or circumstances are working against me."
- C. Learn from Moses; God took away all of his excuses. - Ex. 3:11, 4:1, 10
 - 1. Moses said, "What will I tell them?" "What if they won't listen to me?" "I am slow of tongue."
 - 2. God said, "I will be with you." "Tell them the great "I AM" sent you." "Show them the miracles." "Take Aaron with you."
 - 3. God accepted no excuses from Moses. He is no respecter of persons. What makes us think he will accept any excuses from us?
- D. Let us work cheerfully, heartily, and with all of our might.
 - 1. Col. 3:23-24; Ecc. 9:10
 - 2. We are only here a little while; we must avoid wasting time on things we can do nothing about - James 4:13-14

Conclusion:

- A. "God would not bring you through the Red Sea only to allow you to perish in a fish pond." (John Dent, Jr.)
- B. 2Tim. 4:7-8