

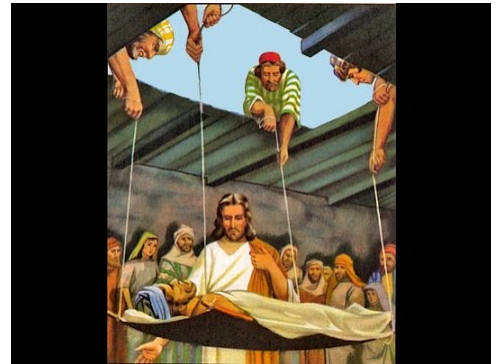
Be of Good Cheer

It is not uncommon for someone to say, "Cheer up" and maybe they add these words, "Things can't be that bad." In the midst of a pandemic and an uncertain economic future there is not much, humanly speaking to bring us cheer. On five occasions, the Lord Jesus said these words to individuals along with reasons why they should be of "good cheer." The NIV renders this phrase as "have courage" or "take heart" which has the thought of "be encouraged." Each usage exposes realities that should encourage us in difficult days.

Vine's Expository Dictionary defines the word used in these five accounts as; "to be of good courage, of good cheer...courage, confidence". Vine also states that in each of these passages the phrase is in an "imperative mood". Imperative means that it is something we are to obey, to make part of our life and experience.

The Healing of the Paralytic (Matt.9:1-8)

This is a wonderful illustration of the power of the gospel. Four friends brought the paralytic to Jesus displaying faith in His healing power. The Lord Jesus first dealt with the inner and greater issue that cripples all of humanity, sin. His first words to the paralytic were, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."



Knowing what the scribes were thinking, the Lord also said to the man, "Arise and walk." In healing the man's infirmity, the Lord was demonstrating His power to forgive sins, a divine prerogative. This man's life was forever changed; he walked away from that encounter as a wonderful testimony to the power of Christ seen in his new condition. Those that saw the man walking after the encounter were full of wonder and they gave glory to God.

The Healing of the Woman with the Issue of Blood (Matt.9:20-22)

Here is another illustration of God's grace. The woman's ailment was not visible like the paralytic but she was getting progressively worse. Mark's account says she "suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better." Someone told her about the Lord Jesus and His power to heal. There was a crowd around the Lord but it seems that she alone reached out to touch the hem of his garment.



Luke states the woman gave a public testimony as to why she had touched Him and "how she was healed immediately." (Luke 8:47). The Lord's words to her were, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." She had every reason to be of good cheer, to be comforted because of this divine encounter.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt.14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52)

This serves as an illustration of the Lord's care and of His High Priestly ministry as He meets the disciples in a time of need. The disciples were in a raging storm, "straining at rowing for the wind was against them," and they were "tossed by the waves." Mark states that "He saw them straining." The Lord was on a mountain looking down at them and was completely aware of what His loved ones were experiencing.



The Lord Jesus came to them at the darkest hour of the night. As the Lord came near the boat, his appearance caused them to cry out in terror. He responded to their cry with these words, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." When the Lord got into the boat the wind ceased, there was calm on the sea and in their hearts. The response in Mt.14:33 was, "those who were in the boat...worshipped Him." This would be one of the most significant events in their time with the Lord and would fortify them for future storms.

Words of the Overcomer (John 16:33)

In John 13 and 14, the Lord spoke to his disciples of their relationship with the Father as they sat around the table. At the end of chapter 14, the scene shifts as they, depart or are ready to leave the Upper Room. For the next two chapters the Lord deals with their responsibility to Christ and their walk in a world that is hostile to the Lord and His people. The Lord Jesus reminds them (and us) that in this world you will have tribulation (NIV *trouble*), (John 16:33).



Regardless of the troubles, we may face and the opposition we might find in the world, He says, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Chapter 17 contains "The Prayer of the Overcomer." It outlines His and our relationship to this world and details the triumph of the Lord Jesus.

The Word to Paul in Prison (Acts 23:11)

The Lord Jesus speaks to Paul from heaven with the same words, "Be of good cheer." Paul's situation was less than ideal and his future unknown. The Jews wanted to kill him and he faced trials before Felix and Agrippa. Paul had no guarantees of income, no possessions, and no security. We might expect a great revelation, more than these words, "Be encouraged". What was encouraging to Paul was the assurance that his times were in God's hands. He was not going to die at the hands of the Jews but would go to Rome to bear witness to the gospel of grace.



Application for us today

We will not likely be in similar situations to these, but these scenes illustrate what we have in Christ and why we should "Be of Good Cheer."

Like the paralytic, our life and our walk changed when we met the Lord Jesus as our personal Savior. In addition, like the woman whom the Lord healed, there was a transformation from the inside because of faith. One unchanging reason to be of "good cheer" is that we have forgiveness of sins and we a new life in Christ.

We will face storms in life that may be due to weather but they could also be health, family or economic storms. We can be encouraged in that the Lord Jesus came to them in their time of need and ministered peace. That is also His promise to us.

No matter what the world does with opposition or persecution, with trials or temptations, we can be of good cheer because He has overcome the world. As a result, we too are overcomers positionally and have the resources to be so experientially.

The last story of the Lord encouraging Paul in prison, tells us that the Lord knows the future and that nothing can happen to us that does not pass through His hand. We may not know what the future holds but we can be of good cheer because we know Who holds the future.

If the Lord were to speak to us audibly from heaven He might say to us "Be of good cheer."

Remember this is an "imperative" and if we love Him, we will keep His commandments - so be of good cheer (be encouraged in Christ) whatever may come our way.