

Adam Sandiford

The message this week is entitled "New Testament Encouragement – Part One." The scripture reading as Romans 15 verse four: for everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through the endurance taught in the scriptures and the encouragement they provide, we might have hope.

Don Smith

Hi, everyone, thanks for tuning in. As you can tell, I'm sitting in my office, but I'm not alone. I'm surrounded by all kinds of people. I'm looking at a photograph of the beams Ville Church of Christ that was taken in 1940. So it's a men and women dressed up in their finery, but of course, it's black and white, but I kind of feel surrounded by them today. I'm also looking at a picture of Glynnis and John's granddaughter Keela She and Barb put together a life size photograph of her. So I'm looking at her. And then beside Keela, I'm looking at a variety of our grandchildren, and of course a couple of pictures of Barb, and everybody's laughing and having a good time. And that's what we want to do today to be really positive with all kinds of things going on. Over on my right, I have my hockey wall. I have a picture of Greg de Burgh, she was a wonderful friend played. Playing the all star game and Peterborough won the memorial cup with the Peterborough peaks and has done well Greg birch, and is also a commentator at the North Bay team.

And above him is his father, his grandfather did clapper who played in the 20s 30s and 40s for the Boston Bruins and won the Stanley Cup three times. And then over on my left, I'm surrounded by more people, good friends from Ohio and Indiana in different places around the world Pepperdine University, and real special picture of my mom and my dad. So I feel like even though I'm sitting here in the office, by myself, I'm not by myself. And the reality is, no one is by themselves that we are surrounded by a myriad of angels.

The Bible reminds us, and I know that we're going through a difficult time. And there was a passage of scripture that grabbed my attention about a week or so ago. And I think it's very appropriate for today. As you know, the apostle Paul wrote most of the New Testament and in his wonderful powerful book of the book of Romans in chapter 15, he says this The things that were written in the past, were written to teach us through the encouragement, and the endurance of Scripture, that we might have hope. But actually, he put it this way that we are surrounded by all of God's people. And that everything that was written, that was written in the past, was written to teach us that through the endurance, and the encouragement of Scripture, we might have hope, that it's our endurance, that will also bring us encouragement. So I got thinking about that. And I got thinking, Well, you know, there's 27 books in the New Testament. Wouldn't it be a good idea to just take one scripture from each of those 27 bucks and see if we can find passages that have Have an enduring quality to them that will last forever, that are really encouraging. And you know, it was as easy as can be. I just opened up my Bible last week, and I started going through it. And I thought, wow, there's just so many in every single book in the New Testament that are powerful. So I'm just going to take a look at a couple of them today. 27 books, of course, in the New Testament, so I don't think we're gonna get through all 27 books today. But we'll just go for a while, and then maybe we'll pick it up a bit later. So if you're following along, you can open your Bibles or you can write these scriptures down or just listen to these if you if they're helpful to you.

So the first New Testament book, of course, is Matthew and one scripture that came to me that for me had this enduring quality to it that no matter what is going on in our life, it works. It always works. And there's encouragement in this as well. And as soon as I begin reading this, you'll know what it is. Matthew 11:28, Jesus says this. He talks to weary people come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke. What's a better way of putting it for today's society is my teaching. Take my yoke my teaching upon you, and learn from me. for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Not just our mind, but every part of us that even right now, when there's a great deal of worry with the pandemic. And difficult financially, it's difficult in every way for so many people all around the world, the teaching of Jesus remains constant. It has an enduring factor to it. But it's also an encouragement that we can find rest in our souls, we can come to him and find rest with him. Because his teaching is easy. The burden that he puts on us is light. And that burden simply is to accept Him, to love him to know him as he pours out His love into our hearts. So when you begin to worry, when your dreams aren't so nice, there's a lot of stuff happening in the world and maybe in your home and maybe in your life. Maybe you're experiencing nervousness You've never had before worry that you've never heard before. Just come and give it all to him, lay it at his feet. He promises all of us, I am with you always. I will never leave you, I will never forsake you. And if you're weary, and you're burdened, come to me, I am humbled and heart, and He will give us what we need.

So that's just the one scripture in Matthew, I want to turn now to the book of Mark, and Mark's passage that I want to share is a very, very brief one. It's found in verse 50. Mark chapter six. And this is the remarkable story of Jesus being in the boat with his disciples, and he's demonstrating to him to them that he is bigger than life. He's even bigger than nature, that he is all human but he's Also all of God. And so he gets out of the boat, and he begins to walk on the water. Talk about amazing, and they're terrified. They think he is a ghost, which is interesting. They think he's a ghost. And Jesus, as soon as they say that, Jesus says to them, Take courage and there's an exclamation point there. Take courage. It is I don't be afraid. exclamation point again. So no matter how you're feeling, especially based on what's going on in our world, or in your world today. The same holds true for us, as it did for them. Take courage. It is I don't be afraid. So when you look at the passage we read in Matthew, in this passage in Mark, they both have an enduring quality to them. And they're also very encouraging, very optimistic. And this is one of the ways that we can help people around us today by not allowing ourselves to be so burdened that we can't demonstrate endurance and encouragement.

Okay, so I want to go to another passage, we're going to go to Luke. And there are two passages in Luke that I'd like to share. In Luke, chapter five, in verse four. This is a unique passage of scripture. Jesus is calling his disciples. And in verse four, he says this, the Simon Peter, because they're out in the boat, he says to Simon Peter, Simon, put out into deep water and let's down the nets for a catch. Someone says, well, what's so big about that? What's, where's the enduring quality here? Where's the encouragement here? I don't think he's talking about water. He's saying to Peter, I want you to go out into deep water. I want you to go to a place that you've never gone before. I want you to start fishing for people. And not just people of your own kind, not just people from your home town, not just your Jewish friends. I want you to go out into deep water. I want you to share the gospel to Pharisees to sad gypsies, to Gentiles, to Jews. I want you to share to everyone I want you to go off into deepwater places you've never dreamt of going remember? But I am always with you. It's a beautiful passage of scripture. And so much so that Luke carries it in chapter 13 and verse 29. And I love this passage as well. People will come from the

east, and the West, and the north and the south. And they will take their places at the feast of the kingdom of heaven.

So maybe some of you remember the movie Field of Dreams. And Kevin Costner starred in it. He had a troublesome relationship with his father. And at the end of the movie, he's built this huge baseball diamond. And there are ghosts that come out of the cornfield, to play and then they go back in at night. And as the story unfolds, and the story reaches its climax, There's a man who is putting on a mask catcher's mask, picking up a glove. And Kevin Costner looks at him and says, that's my father. That's my father. And when they get talking, they're asking each other the question the father asks Kevin Costner is this is this heaven. And Kevin Costner goes, No, this is Iowa. And if you remember that story, it brings everything it brings, it brings the physical, and the mystical, and the spiritual all together. And at the end of it all, they have a game of catch, they're throwing the ball back and forth. And then in the background. You can see streams and streams and streams of cars. coming all the way to watch this ballgame. If you Build it was what he heard. If you build it, they will come. And if you build it, he will come. This passage in Luke, where Luke tells Peter, to go out into deep water, you're going to go off into areas you'd never thought you'd go. And people are going to come from the east, and the West and the north and the south. And they're not even sure why. But they're going to come to the kingdom of God for a brand new experience. And this is the gospel that you and I are still part of it. If we preach it, they will come. If we build our life on Christ, they will come and as they come, they himself embrace what I said to Peter go off into deep water. For many of us as Christians, we never thought we would be in it this far as Christians that were deep in Christ. And as the years have gone by, we're not only amazed that we're Christians, but that we're growing in our faith, and that more and more people can be part of that faith. We never dreamed some of the things that God has done and is doing and will do. If you build it, they will come. And so Jesus says to Peter, go out into deep water. And then he says, And when you do, people will come from the east and the west and the north and the south. And they'll take their seats, they'll take their places at the feast of the kingdom of God. Well, Luke has a marvelous book. It's a book of inclusion. It's a book of welcome. It's a book of feasting. And, and Luke makes it very clear, he's not alone. exaggerating. He says this is a very reliable testimony. So we go back to what Paul said, when he said everything that was written in the past was written to teach us that through the endurance and the encouragement of Scripture that we might have hope. And so even though we've only read a couple of passages of Scripture, and even though they're written thousands of years ago, they're just as relevant for us today. They give us endurance, and encouragement, even this very day.

Okay, so then we get to John, there's just no way in my mind that we can escape. JOHN three verses 16 and 17. Probably the most understood and the most quoted New Testament scripture in all of the Bible, For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. And then it says, this gives us the nature of God, for God did not send His Son, God did not send Jesus into the world, to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Now, when you read John's Gospel, he has a global view. In fact, when you read first, John, again, there is this global view that everyone is welcome to the kingdom of God. That in first John two, I think it's around verse two, he talks about the Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, but not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world. I didn't have time to do it this week, but I wanted to notice how often John uses the word world, in the Gospel of John, and also the epistles of John. It is this concept of everyone is welcome. Everyone's invited. It is not what Luke said, people will come from the east in the West and the north and the south. And they will take their places at the feast of the kingdom of God.

And Peter, don't just go the same way you're going go out into the world, go out into deep water, people are going to be coming from all places. So when we read what Paul says, that everything that was written in the past, was written to teach us so that through the endurance in the encouragement of Scripture, that we can have hope, and I just do pray that right now with a lot of difficulties going on in our world. That will take some time to look at some of these passages of Scripture. I suppose. We could do this every week for years, not looking at the same scripture in every single book of the New Testament alone, and there would be so many more things that we can be encouraged by.

Okay, so we've looked in Matthew, we've looked in Mark, we've looked in Luke and John, I want to take a look at a passage in the book of Acts. And just to bring everything up to date in Acts chapter 10. It's this remarkable story of a Gentile who comes to Christ. And this is what Jesus was saying to Luke. People will come from the east and the west in the north and the south. It's outside of Israel. All people are welcome to come. And of course, the church begins in Acts chapter two 3000 3000 people are baptized and then more are baptized some 5000 people in the church is exploding with growth, Jew and Gentile all coming together. But not quite true. In word, yes, that everyone's welcome to come to the kingdom of God. But then there's the story of Cornelius, who is a Gentile. And he in all of his household, come to Christ, and Cornelius and all of his family are baptized. And the leaders of the church, hear about it. And you would think they would be overjoyed. But the reality was, they weren't quite caught up on what Jesus was saying about going into the whole world and welcome everyone to come to the kingdom of God on paper. It looks good. Sounds good, real good thing to say. But when a Gentile and his family come into the church, there is a lot of prejudice. There is a lot of difficulty dealing with all of this. Even though Jesus said, people will come from the east and the west and the north in the south, and they will take their places at the feast of the kingdom of God, when Cornelius and his family come, it becomes such an uproar that the leaders of the church have to come together and say, what are we going to do about all of this? And it's Peter, in his wisdom, who comes along, and reminds them, that it's the Holy Spirit, who welcomes all into the kingdom of God. And not only are they welcome, but they're first class citizens in the kingdom of God. And so Peter begins to speak. And he says, I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism. The things that were written in the past were written to teach us that through the insurance and the encouragement Bunch of Scripture that we may have hope. And it's true for all of us. He accepts people from every nation who fear Him and do what's right. And then he says, you know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, and then all of his family are welcomed into the kingdom of God. And later, there's this big discussion in Acts chapter 15. And again, Peter calms everyone down to say, everyone is welcome into the kingdom. So Acts chapter 10, has this marvelous passage of scripture.

Okay, so let's make our way over to the book of Romans. And just starting in chapter one. Now for the congregation, of course that I preach if you're not part of our church, we started in January. Looking at Romans chapter one, verses 16, and 17. And even though it's been a while, we really haven't gotten much further than this because Romans 16 and 17 are powerful. It fits in with everything that we've been saying today. And here's what Paul says, I am not ashamed of the gospel. Now we just have to stop here for a moment. And remember what Paul's life was, before he became the Apostle Paul, his name was saw, and he believed strongly in God, but he had nothing to do with Christianity. So much so that he did everything he could to get rid of Christians, having some of them killed, having some many of them put into jail. And of course, this man doing all this, he himself becomes a Christian, and he becomes obligated based on what he's done. I'm sure to do everything he could To not only ask for forgiveness,

but to demonstrate how welcoming he is for all people to come to Christ. And so he says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, because it's the power of God, for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jews, and then for the Gentile, for in the Gospel, a righteousness which basically means just being right with God, that we're right with God, God's right with us, that are so righteousness from God that is revealed. And it's a righteousness that is by faith, from first to last. Just as it's written, the righteous will live by faith. Faith is that word that we want to clean to? I don't have all the answers, but I have faith in the one who loves us, either. Before we love you, we have faith in the one who promises endurance and encouragement, even in difficult times. We have faith in this wonderful God through Jesus Christ and through His Spirit. That brings us to him. Well, I think we'll just stop where we are right now, and pick it up again next week. And we're just going to look at some more scriptures that I hope will bring some peace to you if you're worried. If you're if you're anxious. If you're having some sleeping problems, if you're feeling like you've never felt before you just feel unsure, uncertain, that, that we can remember that everything that was written in the past was written to teach us that through the endurance and the encouragement of Scripture that we might have hope. Thanks for listening. Have a great week. We'll see you next week.

Bye for now.

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