

Exhort

- Today's program is more of a word study
- We will define and describe a word we often hear in the New Testament
- That word is "exhort"
- We will examine the word "exhort" based on its Biblical definition
- Use Bible examples of exhortation
- And, perhaps, exhort one another - to be an exhorter!

- The place we will begin is Acts 27

There are three general understandings of "exhort" in the New Testament scriptures:

1. to call to one's side, to urge one to pursue a course of action
2. to speak of near, to advise (warn, admonish)
3. to impel morally, to urge forward, to encourage

With these definitions in mind, let's try to sum the word up:

"To exhort is to call someone to your side, to advise them, so they can be propelled forward."

We find an example in Acts 27:21-25:

- 21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.
- 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.
- 23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,
- 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.
- 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

- Paul is on his way to Rome as a prisoner
- Those aboard are in the midst of a storm
- They have tried many things to avoid or fight the storm
- After a long pause, Paul speaks up
- He exhorts them
- That means to advise or to admonish
- There is good news and bad news here:
 - Bad = you should have listened to me
See Acts 27:9-10: "Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives."
 - Good = there will be no loss of life
- This may have brought a twinge of guilt
- But it also brought comfort - "be of good cheer"

- It did not prevent, or take away, or even lessen the impact of the storm
- But it pointed their attention to God
- It was based on belief in God
- And urged them forward
- It is in perfect accord with our definition

Another example can be found in Acts 14:21-23:

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

- After the gospel was presented and the believers were strengthened
- They were also exhorted
- Paul and Barnabas called them to their sides
- They presented a future ministry that would include "much tribulation"
- But both those doing the exhorting and those being exhorted, trusted God
- The proof of this - their ordination
- They intended to continue in the ministry, despite the difficulty
- Paul and Barnabas would certainly also continue in ministry
- We find a good and bad, positive and negative in this exhortation as well
 - Negative = you will go through much tribulation
 - Positive = they had been strengthened

This is verse 22 in the ESV: "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

- They would go through tribulations, no doubt
- But they had been strengthened - as much as possible
- And they were left in the hands of God
- This exhortation concluded with much unity in Christ
- Praying and fasting

Hebrews 10:23-25 makes things clear on the topic of exhortation as we continue:

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

- Consider one another, this passage urges!
- We, together, must hold fast
- We must not waver
- We are facing, together, difficult days
- And we have a responsibility to stir one another up

- As we meet together (this is a requirement, by the way)
- In the time that we do - we are to exhort
- And we are to do it more and more

- We have example and instruction to be exhorters
- Remember our definition...

"To exhort is to call someone to your side, to advise them, so they can be propelled forward."

- This is one of the tools God uses to perfect His church
- To mold us into the people He intends for us to be

- We both need exhortation
- And need to exhort others

- The scriptures are our guide
- The Holy Spirit will empower us
- But we must go forward, exhorting and accepting exhortation
- For we need to grow stronger in Him

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2024