

Words of Encouragement from God

With comments by
Verna Kwiatkowski
(One whom God has encouraged)

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*“Let us encourage one another—and all the more
as you see the Day approaching.” – Hebrews 10:25*

*“Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today,
so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.”
– Hebrews 3:13*


*“Encourage one another and build each other up, just as
in fact you are doing.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:11*




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WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

 *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.* – Galatians 5:1

How good of God to set his people free! The cost was tremendously high: Jesus Christ *died* to give us freedom. It is understandable, then, that God would not want us to give up our freedom. And why would we want to be under the control of others, of sin or of our own selfishness, all of which lead to slavery, when we could be under God's control? He wants us to be his loyal, obedient servants; to lovingly trust him to the point of saying, "Not my will, but yours be done." Service because of gratitude is far different from slavery. Our God will *not* enslave us. Good news! ☺


 *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* – Hebrews 12:2

Jesus looked *beyond* his present difficulties, which were far more severe than anything we are asked to go through. Really? Yes, for we who are his blood-bought children will never have to die as a sacrifice for sin. Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, did that for us, praise God! When we think of all that was involved in the death of Jesus, any trials we must face seem small in comparison. We need to look beyond our daily troubles to the joy God has set before *us*. We have a marvelous inheritance laid up for us in glory! Focus on that, as Jesus did, and take courage. ☺


 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* – Galatians 3:28

What encouragement for anyone who has been considered "second class" for any reason. Equality! In Christ Jesus, we are equal. We live in an imperfect world where people often find their own worth by putting others down. How important it is for God's people to know that in *his* family we are all *one*! His point of view should matter to us much more than the opinions of those around us. Let's lift up our heads, believers. We are equal! And let's treat all others as equals. We need to reflect God's thinking in our daily lives. ☺


WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

 *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you, on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him, who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
– 2 Corinthians 5:20,21

If you feel that your job on this earth is not very important, think again. We have the job of being Christ's ambassadors! Like ambassadors in this world, we represent our country (Heaven) and our king (God) in a foreign land (wherever we live on this earth). We have a life-changing message to bring to the unbelievers around us: "Jesus Christ died for your sins. God has made a way for you to be reconciled to him. He will take away your unrighteousness and give you his righteousness in exchange. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved!" Go about your work today knowing that you are an ambassador for Christ. Smile! ☺


 *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*
– Matthew 11:28-30

Who said that? Jesus did! What a tender invitation this is: our Savior says that we may come to him in our tiredness, our weariness, and he will give us rest. No, he will not scold us for being tired, for he knows exactly what it feels like to be weary. He will be gentle with us and teach us how to find rest for our souls. How will he do that? By offering to let us link our lives with his, as two animals might be yoked together to plow a field. Don't worry; he would not *think* of mistreating us. Linked to Jesus, who treats us gently...how restful! ☺

 *He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*
– Isaiah 40:11

Those who are undershepherds in God's family (parents and pastors, for example) know the work can be very tiring and demanding, as well as exhilarating. We can all be encouraged by the truth that our God is shepherding *us*, for we need it. The gentle way he treats us is also the pattern we should copy in doing our work on this earth. He is so loving! And he is careful with those who have young. In God's work any of us can have spiritual young ones in our care. We take heart in the fact that these spiritual lambs are not totally our responsibility. We can let go and let the Great Shepherd carry them. He loves them too! ☺


WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

 *Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fares.*
– Isaiah 55:1,2

It is not only the body that needs water and food to survive; the soul does as well. God has a banquet full of soul food prepared for anyone who wants it. And he not only invites us all to come to his table, but also gives us a line of reasoning that deflates any objections we might have to accepting his gracious offer. It is so encouraging to know that we can freely and happily eat our fill and be satisfied with our God, especially while living in a world that is costly and does not always satisfy. Are you thirsty today? Are you hungry? God says, “Come!” ☺

 *The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?*
– Psalm 27:1

Is it possible to live without fear? David seemed to think so. He did not need to fear darkness, he implied, for the Lord was light to him. Nor did he fear eternal damnation, for the Lord was his salvation. And he was not afraid of his enemies, for the Lord was a stronghold to him where he could go for safety. Notice how personal God was to David: he’s *my* light, salvation and stronghold, David said. And he can be ours, too! It is encouraging to know that the more we center our lives, our minds and our hearts on our God, the more we can live without fear. Let’s concentrate on *our* Lord today. ☺

 *Christ has indeed been raised from the dead; the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
– 1 Corinthians 15:20,55-57

Oh, how wonderful it is to know that, because of Jesus, the sting has been removed from death! We can really live, once we get past the fear of death. This passage makes death seem so powerless, certainly nothing to fear! How clearly it shows that death is not the end for us. Christ continued living after his death and that is the guarantee that we, his children, will also go on living. Death is just a stepping stone in the life of the believer; it is not the final destination! Be encouraged. Christ has conquered death. ☺

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

📖 *“Am I only a God nearby,” declares the Lord, “and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?” declares the Lord. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the Lord.*
– Jeremiah 23:23,24

How good it is to know that God is everywhere! He is both nearby and far away, so he has all possible vantage points from which to view us. It is absurd for any of us to think we could hide from God, so we may as well not try. How freeing this is! We can be completely open and honest with God. He is far enough away to see the whole picture, including the end of the matter, and close enough to help us in our current situation as we go through it. He has a plentiful supply of strength, courage, comfort, peace, love, joy, etc., from which we may draw. Take courage! God knows and he cares. 😊


📖 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*
– Romans 8:28

This verse, perhaps more than any other, has given me courage throughout my Christian life. God knows how to take the bad things that happen to us, the foolish things we do and say, all our pains and hurts and turn them into something good, even useful! What a mighty God we have—and so personal! He knows who loves him. He also knows the purpose he wants to work out in our lives and what we need to experience to accomplish it. Remember, we can trust God not only for our own lives, but also for our loved ones. We must not try to shield everyone from pain, because God is working out his purpose in them, too. Do not be afraid. God can do wonders with the broken pieces of our lives. 😊


📖 *“Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”*
– Psalm 46:10

It may look at times as if the evil one will be the victor on this earth. He certainly has many followers and has caused much damage. But never for a moment should we believe him to be the ultimate winner, for we would be believing a lie! God *will* be exalted among the nations. He *will* be exalted in the earth. This assurance is so comforting to those of us who believe it. God is in control. This truth allows us to calm down, to be still, even in the midst of turmoil. The Lord is God. That’s all we need to know. 😊


WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

 *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*
– Romans 8:18

What makes this verse so encouraging is that it was written by one who suffered very much and in many ways: the apostle Paul. His relationship with God was such that he saw things from an eternal perspective. Paul expressed a similar thought in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” Let’s fix our eyes on the unseen today and take courage! ☺

 *For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.*
– Isaiah 41:13

What is more comforting in a stressful time than to have someone we love at our side, holding our hands? But sometimes we are in situations where we must leave our loved ones behind, such as when we are being wheeled into the operating room for surgery. I have faced surgery many times, but never alone. My God has always been there, holding my hand. Sometimes I squeeze my hand just to remind myself that I have nothing to fear; my God is with me. He is my courage. Pass on the good news! Many could use the encouragement that this verse gives us. ☺

 *Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.*
– Psalm 37:4

Imagine living so close to the Lord that he puts into our heart the desires he wishes to be there! It’s possible—and exciting. Why? Because when *God* puts the desires into us he will also bring them to pass, for they are part of his plan for us. We may not realize at first that those desires we have are from him. We may think they came from *us*, for they seem to be in line with our abilities and dreams. When the desires come true, and we finally catch on that God was involved in the process from the start, it is such a happy experience! Then we delight *more* in our Lord and give him praise while he gives us more *desires* that he will fulfill. A delightful cycle! Be encouraged by this. God knows the plans he has for us. ☺

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

📖 *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.* – John 14:27

Jesus was about to leave his disciples and go to the cross to die. He wanted to give them a gift before he left; what could it be? He had very few material possessions, but there was one thing he had in abundance. There would be enough for all of them and for all who believed in him down through the ages, including us: his peace. What a legacy! He had already been with his Father in the Garden of Gethsemane where he made the choice to do whatever was God's will. After that he really was in *perfect* peace, no longer troubled and certainly not afraid! And this is the gift he passes on to us: his peace! Who could ask for anything better? Take courage. And do not be afraid. 😊

📖 *The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.* – Romans 13:11,12

Perhaps we need the same encouragement that Paul gave to the Roman believers. After the first euphoria of their becoming Christians, they may have become lax, even getting mixed up with the deeds of darkness. Paul tells them that the world will not always be as it is now (pictured as *night*). Before we know it Jesus will come back for us and *day* will be here! The hope of the return of Jesus should be enough to make us behave appropriately for the glory of God. Yes, we *can* stop the actions that are not fitting for God's children and yes, we *can* do the positive deeds that God asks us to do, for he will be our strength. 😊


📖 *Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.* – Habakkuk 3:17,18

I am so encouraged when I read the great statements of faith made by God's people in hard circumstances. Habakkuk had some interesting questions to ask God. As he listened to the answers he became more and more convinced that God was in control—and awesome! He then concluded that he would rejoice in the Lord, no matter *what* happened around him. Oh, may we do the same! Habakkuk did reveal the secret of how he could do this: "The sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights" (Habakkuk 3:19). The sovereign Lord has strength for us, too! Let's do as the prophet did. Let's rejoice in the Lord, no matter what happens. 😊


WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

 *Whoever does the will of my Father in Heaven is my brother and sister and mother.*
– Matthew 12:50

What an amazing statement Jesus made on this occasion! And what encouraging opportunities he opens up to us here! He says there is a relationship we can have with him that is just as close—or closer!—than the ones found in physical families. The core of this relationship is doing the will of God the Father. Jesus said, “My father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life” (John 6:40). That is how we enter God’s family. With relationship comes privilege: “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...” (Romans 8:17) and responsibility: “Live as children of light and find out what pleases the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8,10). Let’s do just that. Our Father is worthy! ☺


 *Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*
– Luke 12:6,7

Let’s put away all thoughts of worthlessness, and get rid of the nagging feeling that nobody knows us; nobody cares. Jesus made it very clear, with his encouraging words recorded by Luke, that God knows us intimately and cares for us as well! On the reverse side, how much does God mean to us? If God is relatively unimportant in our thinking and others take a much higher place, then, even knowing what Jesus said, we may continue to feel worthless and unnoticed. Let’s set our minds to getting to know God as intimately as he knows us. This is life-changing. Known and loved by our Creator: what comfort! ☺


 *I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*
– Philippians 1:3-6

The Philippian believers must have been really encouraged by this letter from Paul, the one who had brought them the gospel and with whom they were now partners in spreading the Good News. He remembered them and prayed for them *with joy*! Are there people you pray for and remember in the same way? Why not let them know so that they may be encouraged? And thank God for those you know who are praying for you. I am also encouraged by the last part of this passage which takes away the fear of failing to continue on until the end. That’s *God’s* work. He finishes what he starts. It’s my job to cooperate with him and obey. ☺


WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

 *I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.* – John 16:33

It was the night before Jesus died and he had indeed told his followers many things, including the fact that he was going to be leaving them. Truth sets us free, Jesus said on another occasion. Does the truth that we will have trouble in the world give us freedom? I think it does, for when the problems come we do not have to be shocked or have to figure out who is to blame or what we did wrong, etc. Instead we can draw on the peace that Jesus gives, even through the troubles. Notice the parallel themes running through our lives on earth: in Jesus, peace; in this world, trouble. But be encouraged! Jesus has overcome the world! In him we can be overcomers also. ☺


 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*
– Romans 8:35-37

We all know what a conqueror is: someone who by force wins the battle. Victory won by power can be short-lived and not as sweet as we had thought it would be. What is a "more than conqueror"? I think it is one who does not fight at all, one who lets God control the battle and have the victory. God's ways are not our ways. He can win the battles without leaving as many wounded victims around as we would if we were in charge. Be encouraged! We don't need to fight. "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still" (Exodus 14:13,14). ☺


 *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
– Romans 8:38,39

Sometimes the above does not seem reasonable to our human minds. We seem to think that something we do or say or fail to do or say may cut us off from God and his salvation. What a dreadful thing to live in such fear and despair! What a needless expenditure of emotional energy! And what a victory for our enemy, for such belief hinders us from freely working for Jesus and the Kingdom of God. The gospel is really not such good news if it turns out to be temporary. But take heart! Be encouraged by Paul's conviction: *nothing—absolutely nothing!*—will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord! ☺


WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

 *My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving.*
– Psalm 62:1,2,11,12

I'm glad that David, who loved God so much, was able to express himself with words and that those words were preserved for us in the Bible. If God has given *you* the ability and the desire, write! Your words also may encourage others long after you are home in Heaven. I like David's balanced view of God. He knew God as both strong and loving. If we focus only on God's strength, we may be afraid to approach him. After all, God *is* awesome! If we see him only as loving, we may not take him seriously. But to David (and to me) God is both strong (he is my fortress and stability) and loving (he is my salvation; I can rest in him). Learning about God is an uplifting experience! ☺

 *The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, "The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."*
– Psalm 92:12-15

In God's family we do not ever have to pass the age of child bearing, nor wither away, but can stay fresh and green (young). And we can continue to give a good strong testimony for the Lord. Caleb was one who flourished in old age. He said to Joshua, "Here I am...85 years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then." He asked Joshua to give him hill country inhabited by strong people as an inheritance. "The Lord helping me, I will drive them out," he said, and he did! (See Joshua 14:10-14.) Take courage. With God, aging can be an adventure! ☺

 *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.* – Romans 15:13

The God of Hope: what a beautiful name for our Lord! Hope is such a positive quality, deeply tied to trust. The person of faith believes God, draws near to God. In that closeness God's characteristics are picked up. That's why, for example, such people have comfort enough to give others: they've received it from the God of All Comfort. And that's why they are so positive and hopeful, even in the face of difficulties: they've received hope from the God of Hope. It's wonderful to be around people who are overflowing with hope. Happy, joyful and serene, they have a calming effect on others. May this be true of you and me. It's possible! ☺

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

📖 *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* – Matthew 6:19-21


This passage contains much encouragement. First, it teaches that our home country, Heaven, is different from our earthly country. There is no destruction of any kind in Heaven! Also, it is possible to send our treasures before us to our heavenly home. In fact, Jesus invites us to do just that! Don't worry; Heaven is large enough to contain anything we might want to send there. What kinds of things? The full extent of our treasure awaits a future revelation, but surely it includes the people we have influenced for God on the earth. Let's hold our earthly possessions lightly, for they are temporary, and concentrate on the permanence of Heaven. ☺

📖 *Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.* – Isaiah 49:15,16


Every time I read the question in this passage, I want to answer, "No! A mother could not possibly forget or harm her baby." But I know that God is right. Mothers do sometimes neglect or destroy their children. But then comes some tremendous encouragement. God is not like the forgetful mothers. He will *never* forget his children. Do you want proof? Look at the outstretched hand. Do you see a name on the palm? Is it yours? It will never be erased, for it is *engraved* there! Remember, too, that on the cross that hand was stretched out and wounded for you. Yes, God loves you and will always remember you. What a good parent! ☺

📖 *I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by name.* – Isaiah 45:2,3


This is a huge offer from God—to clear the way for us, even if it means taking down mountains and breaking through bronze and iron structures. Besides that, he will go into the dark, secret places and bring out treasures for us! Why would God go to all that trouble? So that we might *know him*! So that we will realize that he knows our name and wants and calls us. Oh, how our God longs for intimacy with his children! Isn't that encouraging? "...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith..." (Hebrews 10:22). Then we will see what treasures, what riches he has for us. ☺

 *Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.*
– Isaiah 43:18,19

Sometimes God wants us to remember the former things, those of long ago; for he is God and there is no other; he makes known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. God's purpose will surely stand (see Isaiah 46:9,10). Yes, looking back can help us see what God has done in our lives, causing us to break out in praise to him. But God does not want us to *dwell* on the past. Instead, let's focus on what our Lord is doing *now*. The Christian experience should never grow stale; there is always something new going on! Are you concerned or embarrassed about your past? As a believer, your sins are forgiven! And God is good at making a way through the deserts and wastelands of our lives. Take courage! ☺


 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to all. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*
– 1 Corinthians 10:13

How I appreciate this verse! The fact that all human beings undergo the same sorts of temptations should remove some of our embarrassment and help us to understand and support each other. Here, too, we find out God's part in temptation. He does not tempt us; instead, he is right there in our weak moments, giving us a way to avoid sinning. Now *that* is encouraging! God's involvement takes away any excuse we may want to offer for yielding to temptation. We could have resisted! If we chose to sin anyway, it was not God's fault! Think of some times when you noticed God's way of escape and took it. Exhilarating, wasn't it? Do it again! ☺


 *Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here..." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*
– 1 Samuel 16:6,7

The person God wanted Samuel to anoint as king was David, the youngest in the family, who was out in the fields tending the sheep. His father had not even bothered inviting him to stand before Samuel. But God knew where David was and taught Samuel—and us—a very practical lesson: God looks past outside details right into our hearts. He knows if our hearts beat for him and it does not matter what is the condition of the body that holds those hearts. That is encouraging for any of us who do not quite measure up to the world's standard of beauty. We also need to practice seeing each other as God does. We can do it! ☺


WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

 *If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.* – Psalm 130:3,4


Many of God's children live as though God still has a record of their sins that he will hold against them some day. If God really kept such records, all of us would be doomed! Be encouraged! God has no listing of our sins on hand. All who belong to God have been *forgiven!* Our record has been erased, cleared; it's gone forever, washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ. This is so amazing that it caused the Psalmist to add: "Therefore you are *feared.*" Why *feared?* Because the fact that God, the Perfect One, forgives and forgets the sins of his children is beyond human comprehension. Our jaws drop, our eyes pop open, we shake our heads: we are in awe of God! Now what? Pass on that forgiveness to others. "Love keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Corinthians 13:5). ☺

 *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.* – John 14:1-3


These words of peace, hope and encouragement were spoken by One who was himself at peace: Jesus Christ. The timing is important: they were spoken the night before he died. He did not want his loved ones to be overcome with grief after his departure, so he spoke about life after death and a coming reunion. If Jesus was going to come back and escort them to his Father's house, he was obviously going to be alive! This is *great* encouragement for us, as well as for the disciples. As we, God's children, approach our own death, or the death of our loved ones, let's encourage each other with these thoughts. We *will* meet again! Praise God! ☺

 *Serve the Lord with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts.* – 1 Chronicles 28:9

Misunderstandings are part of the painful fabric of life. We try to figure out why someone said what they said, or did what they did. Jesus told us not to do that: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matthew 7:1). We cannot always know what is in our own hearts, much less someone else's. This is where good communication helps. But we can take courage in this: our God understands us! He knows us intimately, even to the point of knowing the motives behind our thoughts! He searched the heart of David, the author of the above verse, and found it to be devoted to God. Now David was giving advice to Solomon, who would soon be king. It is good advice and encouragement for us, too. ☺

 *He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.* – Isaiah 40:29-31

Who gives strength to the weary? The One who never grows weary, who never gives up on us. Isaiah said, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.” (Isaiah 40:28). We limit the possibilities when we think only of physical tiredness. The main emphasis here, I think, is on soul weariness and spiritual tiredness. A good night’s sleep or a vacation can take care of our physical needs. God renews us in other ways. We can soar like eagles, be vigorous and full of strength inwardly even if our bodies are limited and confined. Good news! ☺


 *But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.* – 2 Chronicles 15:7

God gave these words to King Asa through the prophet Azariah. What was the result? “When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah..., he took courage” (verse 8). He went on to remove idols from Judah and to repair the altar at the temple. People noticed that “the Lord his God was with him” (verse 9). Encouragement from God, which can come through his people, is so important. And so is the thought of reward. Here is more on the subject: “Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58). “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9). Keep on doing the work God has given you! ☺


 *I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.* – Isaiah 43:25

The fact that God blots out our transgressions and remembers them no more is foundational to our Christian lives. What a cause for gratitude! Why do you suppose God says he forgives us for his own sake? Can you imagine what would happen if God held even one sin against each of us? Gone would be the intimacy he desires with his children. Ultimately that one sin would keep us out of his presence forever. What can we learn from this verse? We need to forgive those who trespass against us *for our own sake* as well as theirs. An unforgiving spirit is not appropriate for God’s children. Often the one who is unforgiven is not even aware of the problem, while the unforgiver becomes more and more hardened. If this is your case, it’s not too late to change! Let go of the things you are holding against others. Learn from God; be free! ☺


WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

 *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*
– Revelation 22:20

People have endured patiently all sorts of hardships by focusing on the thought: "It will soon be over. Why be upset when it will soon be over?" Jesus says he is coming soon. If "soon" refers to the passage of time, remember that "with the Lord a thousand years are like a day" (2 Peter 3:8). In that regard, just think: in a few days he'll be here! If "soon" means he'll come quickly, "in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52), doesn't that add hope to the trials we are asked to endure patiently? At any moment our troubles and the turmoil of this world could end: it will soon be over. "For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:52). Come, Lord Jesus! And thank you for this encouraging promise. ☺

 *Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"*
– Matthew 21:42

We often read today of Jesus being rejected by individuals or groups, but that does not change the fact that he is the Capstone! His worth does not depend on what people think of him. Nor can people do anything to get rid of or diminish him. When he was on earth some tried to push him over a cliff, but he eluded their grasp (Luke 4:29,30); they tried to stone him (John 10:31) but could not. He was despised and rejected (Isaiah 53:3) but he loved and died for us all, even for those who rejected him! What a Savior! "His own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him...he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:11,12). Child of God, are you feeling rejected? Draw near to the Rejected One. He understands. He loves his own with an everlasting love and would *never* reject us! ☺

 *The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.*
– Psalm 25:14

That God should want any kind of relationship with people, imperfect as we are, is amazing. But then, God *is* amazing! He desires that everyone be saved and become his children. To those who respond to his call, he gives the opportunity to draw closer. He wants us to be his servants ... his friends ... his lovers ... his confidants. God found a friend and confidant in Abraham. On Mt. Moriah, after a ram was sacrificed in place of Isaac, God confided to Abraham that one day there would be a new covenant put into effect in that very place, when God would sacrifice his Son for the sins of the world. Jesus said, "Abraham rejoiced to see the day of the Lord; he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56). God's offer still stands: "Come near to God and he will come near to you" (James 4:8). ☺

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

OLD TESTAMENT	Page	NEW TESTAMENT	Page
Exodus 14:13,14	8	Matthew 6:19-21	10
Joshua 14:10-14	9	Matthew 7:1	12
1 Samuel 16:6,7	11	Matthew 11:28-30	2
1 Chronicles 28:9	12	Matthew 12:50	7
2 Chronicles 15:7-9	13	Matthew 21:42	14
Psalms 25:14	14	Luke 4:29,30	14
Psalms 27:1	3	Luke 12:6,7	7
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Psalms 46:10	4	John 6:40	7
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Isaiah 40:29-31	13	Romans 8:17	7
Isaiah 41:13	5	Romans 8:18	5
Isaiah 43:18,19	11	Romans 8:28	4
Isaiah 43:25	13	Romans 8:35-37	8
Isaiah 45:2,3	10	Romans 8:38,39	8
Isaiah 46:9,10	11	Romans 13:11,12	6
Isaiah 49:15,16	10	Romans 15:13	9
Isaiah 53:3	14	1 Corinthians 10:13	11
Isaiah 55:1,2	3	1 Corinthians 13:5	12
Jeremiah 23:23,24	4	1 Corinthians 15:20,55-57	3
Habakkuk 3:17,18	6	1 Corinthians 15:52	14
Habakkuk 3:19	6	1 Corinthians 15:58	13
		2 Corinthians 4:16-18	5
		2 Corinthians 5:20,21	2
		Galatians 3:28	1
		Galatians 5:1	1
		Galatians 6:9	13
		Ephesians 5:8,10	7
		Philippians 1:3-6	7
		Hebrews 10:22	10
		Hebrews 12:2	1
		James 4:8	14
		2 Peter 3:8	14
		Revelation 22:20	14

SUBJECT INDEX

Christ's Ambassadors	2A	Our worth	7B
Comparing sufferings with glory	5A	Peace	6A; 8A
Completion of our salvation	7C	Perseverance	13B
Delight and desires	5C	Praying for others	7C
Equality	1C	Rejoicing, no matter what	6C
Exchanging slavery for freedom	1A	Remembered by God	10B
Family relationship with Jesus	7A	Rest for our souls	2B
Fear of the Lord	12A	Reward	13B
Flourishing in old age	9B	Shepherding the flock	2C
Forgetting the past	11A	Strength for the weary	13A
Forgiveness	12A; 13C	Treasures in Heaven	10A
Friendship with God	14C	Trouble in this world	8A
God: faithful in our times of temptation	11B	Understood by God	12C
God: looking at the heart	11C	Working all things for good	4B
God: nearby and far away	4A		
God: our comfort	5B		
God: strong and loving	9A		
God: supreme	4C		
Hope	9C		
Invitation to the thirsty and hungry	3A		
Jesus: coming back	14A		
Jesus: rejected	14B		
Jesus: the capstone	14B		
Knowing God	10C		
Life after death	3C; 12B		
Living without fear	3B		
Looking beyond our difficulties	1B		
More than conquerors	8B		
Night and day; Darkness and light	6B		
No separation from God	8C		