

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 15 Jan 2023

**Sermon Title** : Encouraging = Loving

**Speaker** : Rev Peter Koh

**Text** : Ephesians 4:29

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## **INTRODUCTION**

To encourage someone is to edify and lift someone up and give them courage. It is also one of the 5 Love Languages where we express love through words of affirmation. Often, we may not know how to lift each other up, and may brush each other off without taking time to encourage sincerely and specifically.

Proverbs 18:21 says that “The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” Hence, we need to be careful with our words, as words have the power to hurt someone. Instead, we need to consider what is in our hearts and whether we know how to encourage another person.

## **Ephesians Chapters 1 to 3**

Paul explains what God has done for us and outlines the key areas that demonstrate how God has taken the following initiatives:

- God has taken away our sins
- God has given us salvation
- God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit
- God has given us His love

In response to God’s initiative and His demonstration of love, Paul urges us to right living,

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”  
(Ephesians 4:29)

Paul tells us to put away unwholesomeness and to build each other up in the truth. We can do this in response to what God has given us and because God has given us courage to do so. By building up and encouraging another person, we increase the worth of the person, their potential and significance, and this gives them confidence to be the person God wants them to be.

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*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

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## **How best to encourage someone?**

1. Put off falsehood (tear down)
  - Tear down anything that is unwholesome: rotten, corrupt, poor quality, unfit for use, in our lives.

God has saved and transformed us, hence we should let go of such falsehood. We may carry falsehood as we may be afraid to lose out to others. We think that looking good means making someone else look bad.

2. Put on truth (build up)
  - To edify, build up and promote others.

Barnabas is a good example of what it means to be a good encourager and edify others. Barnabas chose to take Paul in even though no one trusted Paul as he had persecuted and tortured many Christians. Barnabas showed his encouragement to Paul when he welcomed the unwelcomed, and was even willing to humble himself when Paul became his superior.

Encouragement builds others up and shows that we value them. Without encouragement, we will not be able to achieve what God wants us to. We all need encouragement but often we neglect encouraging others because we are selfish and do not want others to look good and excel. Although it is common in our society, marketplace and in schools to 'cancel' or 'thumb' people down, Paul encourages us to do the opposite as God has initiated, and we should live rightly by encouraging others around us.

A careless word may kindle strife,  
A cruel word may wreck a life;  
A timely word may lessen stress,  
A loving word may heal and bless.

- Anonymous

## **How can we encourage each other?**

In order to learn how to encourage each other, we need to:

- See people as God's creation and not as objects to be used. As people fearfully and wonderfully made, and that each one of us has a purpose.
- We need to appreciate each other and make effort to encourage our spouse, children, family members and fellow church members through our actions and words daily. We can do so by speaking to each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to edify, build and comfort. (Ephesians 5)

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**While Ephesians Chapters 1-3 talk about God's initiatives, Ephesians Chapters 4 and 5 tell us how we should respond to God:**

- Encouragement is a gift from God that we are to pass on to others.
- We all need encouragement, in the form of a push or courage to achieve a task.
- Encouragement also brings comfort to our soul and the souls of others, and may be expressed through our words, presence or physical touch.
- Encouragement excludes selfish motives and concentrates on helping others.
- Encouragement can also be expressed in the form of counselling, by listening and understanding and building up/edifying others.

Another way of showing encouragement is to be patient even when we are frustrated or feeling impatient with the other person. God wants us to be an encourager by being patient, understanding and willing to help.

**We can build up/edify others:**

- Specifically – showing encouragement in what they do well
- Sincerely – valuing them for who they are and appreciating them for what they do in life

## **CONCLUSION**

Since God has taken initiatives to demonstrate and encourage us with His love, let us put aside our fear of losing out and respond to Him by showing appreciation to encourage each other sincerely and specifically, so as to build one another up to be the person God wants us to be.

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## **A. Review Sermon Application**

***Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.***

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read Ephesians 4:29 aloud slowly.
  - a. What is one specific thing this verse is telling you to stop doing in your daily life?
  - b. What is one specific thing this verse is telling you to do more?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

3a. Compare the frequency in which you engage in unwholesome talk that diminish the worth of others and the frequency you say things that build others up:

- (i) In your family
- (ii) In your workplace
- (iii) In your small group or church

Which is more frequent at each of these places? Why?

3b. (i) Why is it important to see people (including our subordinates or those who are different from us) as God's creation, fearfully and wonderfully made, each with a purpose, instead of as someone to be used?

(ii) How can you start relating to people in this way if you have not?

4a. (i) Is there someone at your home, workplace or church whom you find challenging to show encouragement to?

(ii) What prevents you from showing encouragement to this person?

4b. For the following week(s) till your next meeting, intentionally look for something you can specifically encourage this person sincerely. Do something such as write a note/whatsapp/email or be patient towards the person etc, to encourage him/her and share the response you receive at your next meeting.

4c. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 4b above, in the following week(s), until your next meeting?

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## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

5. Share an experience where you received a much-needed encouragement from someone or God. What impact did that encouragement have on you and your situation? How did that motivate you to be an encouragement to others?

OR

Give thanks to God for initiating love and encouraging us so that we may encourage others.

6. With a prayer partner, pray for the action steps/changes you have committed to in Questions 3 and 4 above, surrendering your fears and challenges to God. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you as an individual and a group to commit to keeping each other accountable in this spiritual journey to “Love People Genuinely” by encouraging one another just as God has shown His love to and encouraged us.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Here For You – Matt Redman ([2121 Here For You - Matt Redman \(Worship Song with lyrics\) - YouTube](#))
2. I Will Trust – Malaysia Collective (<https://youtu.be/b8POUHEXyTk>)
3. Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace – (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihhvm6eLWZI>)

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