

A Word of Encouragement

The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary... -- Isaiah 50:4

This cursed world will bring its down days for each of us. Circumstances, disappointments, and frustrations can and sometimes will apex in our lives, causing a temporary but very real emotional crisis. Moments like these always call for prayer and reciting of God's promises. We can encourage ourselves in the Lord. But there are times where the struggle is so strong that even these, though helpful, are not entirely remedial. We need human interaction – a messenger from our Lord who can bring hope with just a few words or a sympathetic heart that ensures us that all will be well.

I was recently reminded of the power of encouragement. I was having one of the moments described above – cast down in spirit and seeking the Lord. I had specifically asked Him to send me some encouragement, albeit I wasn't quite sure what form I needed. I was puttering about something in my front yard when my neighbor (himself a Christian) came over – just to shoot the breeze. I don't know how else to describe it, but our interaction was exactly what I needed in that moment. As we stood talking, I knew the Lord had prompted him to come over in response to my prayer. We conversed for a relatively short time – ten minutes or so – but it was just what the doctor ordered. Neighborly fellowship was the medicine that strengthened my heart and pulled me from my funk. I was the one who was weary, and he arrived there on my lawn with the tongue of the learned. He is quite likely unaware as to how much his friendly visit served that day as the balm of Gilead to my forlorn spirit.

I got to wondering after the incident – how frequently do I miss opportunities to unknowingly encourage the weary? They are all around us, folks who are trodden and cast down, wrestling with silent yet enormous burdens and heavy hearts. These things afflict both the saved and the lost. It is part of living in a fallen world. The paths we tread through this cursed place can often lead us through the Slough of Despond. As a redeemed son of the living God, I have been gifted with the tongue of the learned, as well as an empathetic heart, to speak a word in season. Demeanor and genuineness matter, and they can be the precise ingredients to birth hope in the heart of the downcast.

Let us not forget that wherever we are today, our unpretentious warmth could very well be the answer to someone's prayers. Let us carry ourselves in the genuineness of our Christ, touching each life with whom we come in contact. In so doing, we are likely to lighten an invisible yet burdensome load that our fellow travelers may be carrying. Such a spirit will not only be helpful earthside but will also undoubtedly be remembered in Heaven. -- *D. Murcek*