



Where Can We Find Encouragement?

Pastor Mike Ennis

Christians in America are living in a very discouraging time. The direction that our nation is going is very discouraging. Open sin is being promoted and paraded and encouraged by our leaders. We are being ravaged by a disease that is making many people sick, some are dying. It is disrupting virtually every aspect of our economy. The church, as a whole, is leaving the safe foundations of the Word



of God and embracing a more experience-based way of living. Homes are being torn apart by easy divorce, schools are failing at teaching the basics of education and are more about social reform. Violence on the streets and

violence against the unborn. I could go on and on, these are not encouraging times. King David faced a discouraging time. The Bible tells us of this time in 1 Samuel 30:6 (AV) ⁶ And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. David was distressed (discouraged) and he found no encouragement around him. He could not be encouraged by his neighbors because he was living in enemy territory, the Philistine city of Ziklag. (1 Samuel 30:1) He could not receive encouragement from his men. They wanted to stone him, verse 6. He could not receive encouragement from his family because they had been taken captive by the Amalekites. Likewise, it is hard for us to find encouragement from those around us in these days. We must do what David did, we must encourage ourselves in the Lord our God. How exactly are we to do that?

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Mike Ennis – Senior Pastor

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"Where Did It Fall?"

“The man of God asked, ‘Where did it fall?’ When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float” (2 Kings 6:6).

“The company of the prophets” (or theological students of Elisha) faced a problem of lack of space for their training, so they tried to find a way of solving the problem. They suggested that they should relocate to Jordan where they would have a lot of space. They thought they could solve the problem on their own. We should not be surprised when Elisha gave them up to their arrogance. However, one of the students realized their folly and humbly invited their master to follow them. Surprisingly, Elisha agreed to follow them.

The students with their master went near River Jordan to prepare another place for themselves. As they were working, the axe head of one of the students fell into the river. He could use the opportunity to rest or pretend as if nothing had happened, but he cried out for help instantly. Elisha asked the most important question from the embattled student, “Where did it fall?” He did not ask him how it fell or the cause of the problem. He asked him about the exact place where the axe head was. God is not interested in the trivial detail of your problem. His interest is in the problem and how it will be solved. The blind Bartimaeus was crying for help to Jesus, but Jesus seemed to be telling him, “Man, be specific. Do not bother me with the detail of your problem. What exactly do you want me to do for you?” (Mark 10:51). As if he also got the message, he declared, “Rabbi, I want to see.” When you are in any problem, instead of grumbling, specifically make your request known unto God, and a miracle is waiting at your doorstep. Hannah was childless, she went to God and specifically told Him about her predicament, and she was blessed with Samuel

(1 Samuel 1:9-20). Jabez cried out to God for a particular problem in his life, and He bailed him out of the big mess (1 Chronicles 4:9-10). The Bible says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6), and “cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

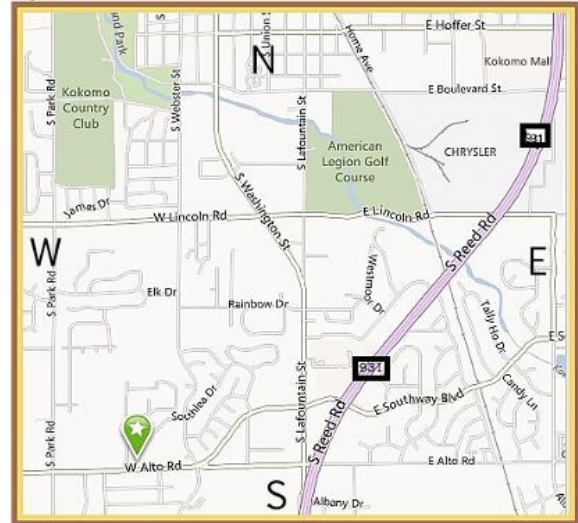
Do you involve God in your day-to-day activities, or you are thinking that you can do without Him? Are you using your problems as an excuse not to serve God? Who do you turn to when you are in trouble? Only God can help you. Call upon Him; He is ready to help you. However, you have to be SPECIFIC. Tell Him exactly what you want, and He will surprise you.

(Bayo Afolaranmi)



Join us on Sunday at Victory Baptist Church

Map to Church



610 West Alto Road. Kokomo.

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By remembering. 1. Remember the **purpose** of God. Notice in 1 Samuel 30:8 David asked the Lord what to do. Here is the thing, God's purpose is often bigger than our understanding or desires. The question that we need to ask is not what in the world is God doing? Instead, we should ask, "Lord what do you want me to do in light of what is happening and what you want to accomplish." It seems like things are spiraling out of control, they are as far as our control but not His. He has a plan and purpose and is working it. He is moving the world like one big drama and the final scene is coming where He will destroy all sin and sinners. As far as our personal lives His purpose is to prepare us for eternity with Him by making us like Jesus. Romans 8:28–29 (AV) ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to *his* purpose. ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 2. Remember the **power** of God. God is working His plan in the world and your life, and nothing will stop its completion. "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?" Genesis 18:14. Isaiah 46:8–11 (AV) ⁸ Remember this and shew yourselves men: bring *it* again to mind, O

ye transgressors. ⁹ Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: ¹¹ Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it. 3. Remember the **presence** of God. Isaiah 41:10 (AV) ¹⁰ Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. No matter what happens in the world or our personal lives, God is with us and will help us. Hebrews 13:5–6 (AV) ⁵ *Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. ⁶ So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. 4. Remember the **promises** of God. John 16:33 (AV) ³³ **These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the** (See Encouragement Page 4)

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world. Philippians 4:6–7 (AV) ⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Romans 8:28 (AV) ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. “When nothing else will work, encourage yourself in the Lord. Do it with the word of God. Be assured if your walk with Him and look to Him and expect help from Him. He will never fail you.” – George Mueller



A New Creation IN Christ

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"! (2Cor 5:17). But the New Creation is ONLY In Christ, nowhere else, and we MUST BEHOLD IT! From being found In Him, as Paul said in Philippians, we have Good News. In Him there IS Good News. The verse I am thinking of is Isaiah 52:7, "How beautiful upon the mountain... ." This Mountain represents Mount Zion, and Mount Zion represents believers found In Christ, and here is where they are being changed into that same image from glory to glory/strength to strength, from one creation to an altogether Other "New Creation"! (2Cor 3:18; Ps 84:7). From being In Zion, In Christ, we have Good News, because Here (and only Here in Christ) there is only Good News, there is only the New Creation to behold. And this is what we declare, speak, publish, etc... .

2Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Isa 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

2 Cor 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Ps 84:7 They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

J. N. Collins

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“She Closed Only One Eye!”

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5).

Although it is not specifically stated in the Scriptures that we have to close our eyes when we are praying, but it has become a general norm. This norm made my five-year old son to accuse his two-year old sister immediately we finished our morning devotion one day that she closed only one eye when we were praying. The question that his mother and I asked him was that how did he know that she did not close her two eyes when we were praying. Definitely, he did not close his eyes when we were praying. He could not deny this fact.

This incident reminded me of the words Jesus Christ quoted above. Many people are quick to see the weakness and wrongdoing of others while they find it difficult to identify theirs. Actually, it is easier to see the faults of other people around us, but failure to see our own faults would be an act of hypocrisy.

Therefore, let us learn to always look inward to ourselves before we look outward to others to point an accusing finger for anything done wrong. Even when it is glaring that the other people are at fault, let us be slow and wise in pointing this out, remembering that we also are not perfect.

King David fell into this act of quick judgment when Prophet Nathan came to accuse him about Bathsheba affair. He was quick to see the wrongdoing of a rich man that had cheated a poor man, and even pronounced judgment on

the rich man immediately. Nathan's response was, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7).

(Bayo Afolaranmi)



<https://vcakokomo.com/contact>

“The Gates”

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Matthew 7:13-14

Wouldn't it be pleasing if the roads leading to destruction were labeled, perhaps one might state, "hey, you do not desire this one it merely leads to heartache and uncertainty, turn around take the one to the left" or maybe "Satan dwells here, you want to seek the road to the right." The signs are present possibly not that direct however if we open our eyes and listen to the cries of the Lord we will hear him calling and guiding us to the road that is narrow. The Lord desires us to follow him, even when we believe the road we are choosing is the absolute best, remember he knows the outcome. When we feel that tugging saying not yet this is not entirely what I have designed for you, listen and follow the path to the narrow road. Sometimes sin can feel so right, but the ways of the Lord are so much more magnificent.\

(Melanie Lankford)

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10 Things God Will Not Ask Of You

1. God will NOT ask you how much money and wealth you amassed...

„« He will ask you if you fed the poor and clothed the naked.

2. God will NOT ask you how many friends you had...

„« He will ask you if you visited the sick, the imprisoned, the dying and if you were a friend to those without one.

3. God will NOT ask you about the color of your skin or what your gender was...

„« He will ask you with regards to the content of your character and how you treated the least of your brothers and sisters.

4. God will NOT ask you how big of a house you had...

„« He will ask you if your house was a welcoming place for all who came in it.

5. God will NOT ask about how much education you obtained...

„« He will ask you what principles you ignored or denied in obtaining it.

6. God will NOT ask you what occupation you held...

„« He will ask if you performed your tasks to the best of your ability and with integrity.

7. God will NOT ask you how much power you had...

„« He will ask you if you were meek and humble of heart.

8. God will NOT ask you if you were a peace activist...

„« He will ask you if you were a peacemaker.

9. God will NOT ask you why it took you so long to accept Him as Savior by faith in your life...

„« He will, with open arms, take you to the place He has prepared for you!

10. God will NOT ask you if you revealed His "Good News" to others as He commanded...

„« He will ask why not and why you were ashamed of Him.

9Stephen A. Peterson)

SCHEDULE
Prayer Time 9:00 am
Sunday School 10:00 am
Worship Hour 11:00 am
(Early Worship is at 10:00 am)
Come out, bring your friends
and family and worship the
Lord with the people at Victory!

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'My Husband's Wreck'

(On Being A Control Freak)

by Kelly Meredith-Henson

I travel a lot for work. I've been to Virginia five times in 7 months and already know the dates I will be going back. Each time I prepare to leave anxiety consumes me. I get so worried about what will happen while I'm gone. I have control issues that are beyond understanding. There have been bad situations in my life that brought this on. When my brother died in 2001 I was supposed to be in Florida visiting him that week. I'm not sure I've ever gotten over the, "if I had been there it wouldn't have happened" scenario that plays out in my head often. Somehow I have convinced myself that if I am watching the every move of my loved ones nothing could happen to them. We all know that's not true, even I know. I think it's a fear of the unknowing that I allow to take control of me.

Honestly, something generally does happen when I'm gone. It is usually a form of deceit. I don't even know that I can blame them with as tight a leash as I keep my loved ones on when I'm home. It's like a breath of fresh air for them when I'm away I'm sure. They always make it though. They're always there smiling when I return. Well sometimes smiling, sometimes frowning while grounded but still breathing none less. The world still goes on without me, it's true.

This time something major happened. Something that will never leave my heart or mind. My husband, Jason, was in a bad car accident on his way to work. Generally I don't answer phone numbers I don't know but because the form of deceit I mentioned happened 15 minutes prior I did. The first time I've ever thanked God for my child being in trouble! The only words I remember from that call are, "you don't know me but your husband has been in a

bad car accident and wants to talk to you. His car flipped four times so he is disoriented". He could hardly talk and what he was saying I couldn't understand. I think my heart stopped for a moment but know my brain did not. Every possible worst case scenario started running through it. My panic was uncontrollable! I prayed. Oh I prayed like I never prayed before! Then I called my dad. I knew he would know what to say to calm me down and he would go to Jason's side. He reminded me that Jason had to give the man my phone number so had to be somewhat coherent. I asked the church to pray and they did even more. They showed up at Jason's side too.



Now it is true the car rolled and he was upside down in a ditch but as it turned out he hardly had a scratch on his body. He was a bit disoriented at first and extremely sore after but that is to be expected. When I saw the car there was bad damage to every part except the driver's seat. The entire car was destroyed except where he was sitting. I failed to remember that God does much better at "controlling" things than me. In fact, had I been home Jason would have (See "Wreck" Page 8)

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been in his truck with no airbags that proved to provide the very protection needed. Thank God this was not his time to go!

When we emptied out the car a couple days later I found my Bible. It had been destroyed. It was soaking wet, torn, and damaged beyond repair. It was stuck open on II Chronicles 20 I read this over and over to try and figure out what God was telling me. I just couldn't grasp it until I sat to write this story. As I wrote about my control issues and fears I realized it is not my battle, it is his. "Don't be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's" 2 Chronicles 20:15 He will take it when I ask. I never thought to remind myself of that.

I always pray before I go away that he keep my family safe. I just never took to heart that these weren't just empty words, they are actually heard. King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles wasn't defeated by the enemy even though to the eyes he would have been. The odds were against him, the same as they were my husband on this day. The King poured his heart out to God before the battle and this proved to be a powerful weapon against his attackers. He trusted God and praised him because of it. Trusting God led him to where he was meant to be. "If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us" 2Chronicles 20:9

Had this accident turned out differently I know I would have still known and felt the mercy of God through it all. How quickly I would have allowed myself to feel this I can't say, but it would have been there regardless. I prepared myself for the worst in that hotel room. I was on my knees talking to him, wrapped in his love the

entire time. Even while I was doubtful, and there were those moments, he sent his love to surround me in the form of actions and words of others to get me through the night.

I spent many years in sin rebelling against God after my brother's death. Those years led to very bad things. He was there waiting for me when I returned. Just as I trust my dad to know how to care for me as I said earlier, I have learned to trust that the Father knows best for me. That if it were my husband's time than he would have had a reason for it. I am so very grateful that it wasn't Jason's time but even with my brother, I know that God knew the situation better than I and I've come to terms with it. Maybe more so right now writing this than ever before, I've come to terms with it. It is God's will that is best for us. I know that my best interest is his will, and he is showing me to trust in that alone! "Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful" 2 Chronicles 20:20

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