

2 Corinthians 1:3 (James (Jim) Hyland) 206791

Pella Conference: 2013, Scriptures to Encourage Us (1:3)

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I'd like to start this afternoon with 312. Lead on, Almighty Lord, lead on to victory. Encouraged by Thy blessed word with joy, we follow thee. 312 If someone will please start it. Turn with me first of all, please, to First Samuel, Chapter 30. First Samuel, Chapter 30. And verse 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. And then I want to go back to a verse in Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy chapter one. Deuteronomy chapter one and verse 28. Whither shall we go Up, our brethren have discouraged our hearts saying. The people is greater and taller than we. The cities are great and walled up to heaven. And moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakims there and then one more portion for now in the New Testament in Second Corinthians. Chapter One. 2nd Corinthians, chapter one and verse three. Blessed be the God, be God, even the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Father of mercy, and the God of all comfort. Or perhaps another translation, the God of all encouragement, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves. Are comforted of God. It's on my heart this afternoon. Not to speak of some line of doctrine, or bring out some outline of a certain portion or subject. But to take up some scriptures in a very simple way, brethren, that I trust we will find for our encouragement. I have on my heart that word encouragement. You know we all need encouragement, don't we? I've been struck in attending conferences recently and visiting amongst the Lord's people and hearing different circumstances in connection with what the Lord's people are going through to realize that these are difficult times and there is much to discourage us today if we just look at present circumstances, if we look at the thing that the condition of things outwardly amongst the people of God and the testimony. There's plenty to discourage us if we let it, but I believe also there's much to encourage as well. And I believe that every heart here, including my own this afternoon, needs encouragement. Yes, we need the truth of God before us. We need the outlines of Scripture. We need to have sound doctrine, sound teaching. But we need to be encouraged and refreshed in our hearts and in our spirit if we're going to go on for the Lord's glory until he comes.

In these difficult times, and in meditating on this subject recently, I've been struck. With how many times through the word of God, particularly in difficult days for the people of God? God encourages his people because God is greater than our failure. God is greater than our circumstances, and so we need to be encouraged. And I was thinking first of all of David here. You know, when we read the life of David from his introduction to us, when he was brought from feeding those few sheep of his father's to be anointed to be the next king over Israel in place of Saul. From that point on, it just seemed like he had one problem and difficulty after another. And even after he got his Kingdom, it was a Kingdom that was plagued with upheaval of every kind. He had wars from his enemies around him. He had domestic problems, He had family problems. He knew what it was to lose loved ones in death. And when you read the Psalms of David, you find sometimes David did get discouraged when you read his life. Sometimes he did get pretty down. But you know, it's wonderful to realize that at those times, David always eventually came back to what he had. In and of the Lord and if we were to read the context here of these chapters. In First Samuel, we would find that's exactly what happened. If we were to back up, we would find that David had become discouraged. And David had got away from the Lord, and he had done some things and gone some places he ought not to have gone and done. He had made some been in some associations that he had not ought not to have been in. But we find here that in this very extreme situation, David finally turns back to the Lord. He realized if there was going to be any blessing for himself and the people that were with him, that it was only going to come from the Lord himself and brethren, that's a good point for us to come to. Again, the Lord is allowing many things amongst us, many things in our personal lives. Often in the family, sometimes in the assembly, things that perhaps we have to say in the language of the word of God. We've not passed this way heretofore, but if those things drive us closer to the Lord, if those things restore us when we get away from the Lord, they'll be true blessing following, because He doesn't afflict willingly, and there are many reasons why He causes various circumstances in His life, in our lives. I realize it's not always in our His chastening, but sometimes it is, and even in His chastening. If we profit by it, they'll be true blessing and encouragement following. And so we find here David was in a very tight spot. Their wives and their children had been taken captive. Victoria had been burnt with fire. The Amalekites, it seemed, had got the upper hand, but David knew where to turn in his extremity. I just make a comment or two in connection again with the setting, because we find that when they come to Ziklag, the Amalekites, as I say, had got the upper hand. And Amalek in the Old Testament is invariably a picture to us of the enemy. The enemy is working on the flesh and seeking to hinder our walk with God. Through this world. The reason I say that is because Amalek was a grandson of Esau, a man who sold his birthright for momentary gratification, and I believe it follows through the history of Amalek that its Amalek is the enemies working on the flesh. Not only that, but we find that it was with Amalek that the children of Israel fought with in the wilderness. Amalek came and sought to hinder their progress. Their walk with God through the wilderness. And so this is the work of the enemy. The enemy is seeking to discourage everyone of us. We have a powerful enemy, and I don't want to underestimate the work of the enemy, because not only do the circumstances of life perhaps drag us down and discourage us, but it says your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. I realize that often when we think of the roaring lion character of Satan.

We think of persecution, and certainly that's been true and is still true of many of our brethren today. There are many dear believers who are passing through physical persecution this very hour. Those who are in prison for their faith and testimony, and those who are facing martyrdom as well. But for us, I believe, at least in application, we can apply the roaring lion character of Satan to discouragement. If you're a discouraged Christian here today, you didn't get that from the Lord. You got that from the enemy. He's walking about seeking whom he may devour. Or if I can paraphrase it for our purposes, he's walking about seeking whom he may discourage. That's what the enemy wants us to do. He wants us to let the feeble, the feeble hands hang down. He wants the feeble knees to tremble so that we just give up. We say it's not worth it. I can't go on, because natural strength isn't enough to go on in the path of faith. And for the Lord. David had to learn that in his life. David was a man of war. He was a mighty man. But that in itself was not enough for the battles of life, it says in Isaiah, even the

youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. There's a lot of youths giving up today. There's a lot of young people who are saying I just can't do it. The battle is too great. But as David found, there was one who was greater than the enemy. It's interesting too that you find with the work of Amalek. It is to weary and discourage those who are faint hearted because in connection with that battle that I mentioned in the 17th chapter of Exodus. In the book of Deuteronomy, I think it's the 25th chapter, there's a further comment made about that battle. It says that Amalek smoked behind her, most of them, and those that were faint and weary. And that's what the enemy seeks to do. He wants to wear us down. He wants to weary us. I believe it's a great work of the enemy today to weary us, and not just with that which is sinful in itself, but just with the daily grind of life. Again, there's a lot of people who are saying I just can't do it just to survive in the work, a day world or at school or in business. It's just too great. I know it's a little different thought, but it says of the man of sin. In a future day, he will wear out the Saints of the Most High, and that's what the enemy is seeking to do. You ever watch a cat with its prey? You know, a cat with its prey doesn't usually kill its prey right away. It will play with that mouse or that bird, let it go a few feet, let the mouse run off, and then it'll pounce on it again. It'll torment that mouse till finally that mouse or bird just drops with sheer exhaustion. And I say again, that's the work of the enemy today, to wear out the Saints of the Most High. And that was what Amalek sought to do, to get those who were weary and faint when they went out to battle in the 17th of Exodus. And then it says he smoked behind her, most of them those that were farthest from the Captain Joshua. There is a picture of the Lord Jesus. As the captain of our salvation, bringing many sons to glory. And it was those that were out on the fringes, those who were farthest from Joshua, that the enemy got. And if you're not walking close to the Lord, the enemy is going to get you too. He can't take your salvation, of course, thank God, that's secure in Christ, but he can get you discouraged. So you just give up. And so we find that David, What does he do? He first of all encourages himself in the Lord. And that's the first thing, isn't it? Maybe there's someone and you've come to these meetings and you say, well, I've been discouraged. Life has been pretty tough in various ways. Well, our prayer is that during these meetings, as the word of God is before us, you'll be encouraged that you'll get back in company with the Lord. Maybe you've been like Peter. Peter followed a fire off, and the enemy had a temporary victory in Peter's life. Peter was real and there was restoration, but the enemy got the upper hand, and Peter denied his Lord three times with oaths and curses. Oh, I want to encourage you. Don't follow a far off. Don't follow the Lord, but leave those things that you want to do something between you and the Lord. No, David got into the presence of the Lord, and he encouraged himself and the Lord.

And then what was he able to do? He was able to encourage the men that were with him. Many of them were faint and weary as well, but he was able to encourage them. But he had to encourage himself first. You'll never be an encouragement to your brother or sister in Christ. If you're not encouraged in your own soul, it starts with the individual. Why is it sometimes we're together? Maybe it's just a visit in a home. Maybe we meet another believer somewhere. Maybe it's sad to say even in me in uh local meetings and we say, well, it just doesn't seem to be much encouragement. You know, we can be no more collectively than what we are individually. If we're not allowing the Lord to encourage our souls, we're not going to be able to encourage one another. And so I want to exhort my own heart especially, but yours too. Get into the presence of the Lord. Be encouraged. You can't help but be in the presence of the Lord and be encouraged. He's the great encourager, as we we will notice in a moment. But I want to, before we pass on, just mention what we read in Deuteronomy chapter One. Because in contrast to David who encouraged himself in the Lord and encouraged the men that were with him, and there was a great victory in Israel as a result. What did the 10 spies do? Isn't it solemn to read they discourage the hearts of their brethren? Isn't that solemn? When those spies came up it with Joshua and Caleb, and the 10 spies brought an evil report and stirred up the people and discouraged their hearts, little did they realize it would be recorded in God's eternal record for you and I to read today that they discourage the hearts of their brethren. You know we either at this moment are an encourager or a discourager. You know when you put the prefix EN in front of a word, in English it means to put in. Or to put on what Are we putting in or on our brethren? Are we putting courage? We need courage. Are we putting that in or on our brethren? We need injections of encouragement of courage, don't we? And so it's one or the other. We're either encouragers or we're discouragers. And I believe everyone of us need to examine our own hearts. Which are we today? Are we those who seek to encourage the people of God? You know, there we don't have to look for things to discourage. Today, there's plenty on every hand, and we can get together and we can talk about that which discourages now. Brethren, don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying there aren't times when things need to be taken up and discussed and dealt with for the Lord's glory. And we see that in Scripture. When there was sin allowed and so on, things had to be taken up and discussed and dealt with. But when we're together, we're going to have a number of opportunities this weekend. To commune one with another during the breaks and over the meals and in the evening. Are we going to talk about those things that discourage or encourage? You know, if we were to go to the 64th Psalm, I think it's the fifth verse, we would find there another very solemn statement. And there we find that they we can encourage in an evil way. I think that's very solemn too. You know it. It says of those in Isaiah, I know sometimes it's taken out of context, but it says that they encouraged one another in certain ways. But if you read the context, it was not in a good way. They weren't encouraging one another in the proper godly way. They were encouraging one another in evil and forming their idols and all that kind of thing. And the Lord had to deal with them in His governmental ways because of it. We can encourage in a bad way, and to encourage in a bad way is going to end up completely discouraged in a good way, in in a in a wrong way. But. Discouraging in that which we ought to be encouraging in and so we want to be very careful and as I say, even in our conversations. And interactions one with another. Let's pray to the Lord that we will be encouragers. And not say and discuss those things that will discourage There was an elderly sister at home. And she used to say this, that when we speak of something, there's some criteria that we need to consider. Is it true? Is it? And is it? Is it necessary? Is it true And is it necessary? You know, sometimes things are true, but they're not necessary. And if it's not necessary, the best thing is to say nothing at all. And then we found, where we read in First Corinthians, that we have the God of all comfort. But I would like to point out that often in the New Testament the word comforter, consolation, is perhaps better translated encouragement or to encourage.

If you notice Mr. Darby's translation in this chapter in Second Corinthians chapter one and other places. That's the way he often. Often translates it, and I know the 2 words comfort and consolation and Encouragement and courage. They're very similar. But I want to look at it in the light of what we're taking up this afternoon. We have the Father of mercies and the God of all encouragement. And if you go through these verses from verse 3 to the end of verse seven, you will find. And again, if you go to Mr. Darby's translation, you will find the word courage or encouragement. Uh, ten times in these verses, 10 times. In contrast to that, you'll find suffering or tribulation or some derivative of the word only seven times. Because there's a lot of suffering, there's a lot of trials, there's a lot of difficulties, but there's more encouragement than there is trials. God is greater, as I say, than our trials, or greater than our than our failure. And so we find here the Apostle Paul speaks of the God of all encouragement. Isn't that wonderful? Again, you can't be in the presence of God or the presence of the Lord Jesus and not be encouraged and refreshed. You can't be in the presence of God and not be strengthened to go on. In the path of faith and service. And so we find that he encourages them. And he says, who verse four who comforteth or encourages us in all our tribulation. So

a lot of tribulation in our lives and amongst the people of God there is but notice it says in all isn't that wonderful? In all there isn't a trial. There isn't a difficulty that you and I pass through that we can't find some encouragement. In it. Well, I'd like to move on now, and I would like to just look quickly at a few other scriptures. But bring before us this thought of encouragement and what it is that really God uses to encourage our hearts in the path of faith. Let's go back for a moment to Romans chapter 15. Romans, chapter 15. And verse 4. And whatsoever things were written before time were written for our learning that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope. Or if you notice that word patience and comfort, it could be translated endurance. And encouragement. So we, through endurance and encouragement of the scriptures, might have hope. I want to stress this for a moment because we have a book in our hands. That is going to encourage us. We have the holy scriptures. We have the complete word of God. And I want to ask a question to all of us this afternoon. If we were to go back over the past week, how much time have we spent reading the Word of God? I'm not at this juncture going to ask you how much time you read, you spent reading written ministry, how many block calendars you read, how many meetings you came to. That's all good. I don't want to take away from those things. Good to read. Good written ministry. A block calendar is sometimes helpful. To give us a little spoonful before we go out the door in the morning or when we come at home at night, Wonderful to be at meetings for ministry of the word. But what I want to ask our hearts this afternoon is how much time did you and I spend reading the word of God? Because if our hearts were encouraged this week, it's going to be at least partly in the measure in which we spent reading the word of God. It's the encouragement of the scriptures. This book we hold in our hands this afternoon is a living book. It's the only book in this world that's living. That's why you'll never exhaust it. Just a comment or two on that regard. In that regard, it's a little aside from our subject this afternoon. But you know every other book written by man you can eventually exhaust.

No matter how deep or profound it may be, and it may take several readings. But after a while you set it aside and you say we've got everything we can. Out of that, but we have a book in our hands that we can take up every day of our lives. And we're always going to get something fresh. We're going to get if we're, if we are walking in the Spirit and allowing the Spirit of God to have its proper place in the power of the Spirit. We're going to be fed. We're going to be encouraged. We're going to have Christ ministered to us. We're going to be corrected and admonished as the as the need may be, We're going to be taught by the spirit of God. It is the only book that's living. Some of us were at a conference last weekend and we took up a chapter at that conference that we've often taken up the weekend before somewhere at a conference. And there again, a very familiar chapter was taken up. But, you know, it seemed that there was fresh ministry and things brought out that perhaps hadn't been presented quite in that way. The truth of God ever changes, it remains the same, but from a living book He ministers to us according to the need, according to our state of soul, and according to the day in which we find ourselves in it wonderful to have the word of God. Do we really value the word of God? I was in a country recently with a young brother and when we left that country, a very, very poor country in South America. When we left that country, this young brother turned to me with his first time in that particular part of the world. And he said, Jim, he said, I could hardly believe it. He said I believed it because you and others have told us. But he said it really shook me to be in a country in 2013 where Bibles haven't been accessible to believers who've desired their own copy of the word of God, he said. It really shook me. And yet we sit here this afternoon and if we were to go home from these meetings and go through the bookshelves at home. How many Bibles, How many copies of the word of God would we find on our shelf? And Bibles can be purchased at a very reasonable price by our standard. But how much of the word of God do we really read with prayerful exercise? And so Paul exhorted the Saints at Rome that it was through endurance and comfort of the scriptures that we were going to have hope. And you know, it's remarkable too, that this book that is living. Is as relevant today as when it was penned by divine inspiration. This book is actually more up to date than the daily newspaper. If we were to back up a day and go to the newspaper stand and pick up a copy of the of USA TODAY or the New York Times and read it a day late, we'd say, well, much of that is out of date. We've moved on. There are other things that the media is focusing on now, but this book we hold in our hands, I say is more up to date than the daily newspaper. I'm not that old, but I'm getting older. And if I were to pull out some of the school books that we studied when we were young people, why you young people? You'd laugh. You'd say we've left those things behind long ago. We've moved on. Men change their opinions and their methods of teaching. But this book is relevant. It fits what's happening today, and if we're left here tomorrow, it will do the same. And so I want to encourage you. You want to encouragement, You want encouragement. You've got to read God's Word, meditate on it, take it in, and then seek by grace. To be doers of the word and not hearers only. Now let's turn to 1St Thessalonians. First Thessalonians chapter 4. And verse 17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord, Wherefore comfort, or again wherefore encourage. One another with these words. Let's notice a verse in Second Thessalonians, couple of verses, Second Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 16. Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God even our Father, which hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation and Good Hope through grace, comfort, or again encourage your hearts.

And establish you in every good word and work. And in this regard, I would like to read one more portion in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 6. Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 18. That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we may have strong consolation, or again encouragement, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. And we're generous into that within the veil wherein the whether the forerunner is for us entered. Even Jesus made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Well, here we have something else to encourage our hearts, and that's the hope of the Lords coming. Paul was writing to these Thessalonians believers. They were going through some very difficult circumstances, and not only that, but they'd lost loved ones in death. Some of their number had passed away. In the first chapter we find that they had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven. And then some of their number had died, and they wondered how all this was going to play out in the purposes of God. And the Apostle Paul writes this epistle. And leaves nothing unexplained as to how it's all going to take place. And in the end of this chapter, if we had backed up a little bit, we'd find. That he explains very carefully the truth of the Lord's coming, what we often refer to as the rapture. And explains that those who have died in faith, they haven't missed out in any way. But that they're going to be raised 1St and then we, which are alive and remain, are going to be caught up together with them in the clouds. To meet the Lord in the air. And we're ever going to be with the Lord, you know, I like that little expression ever with the Lord. When he's in the Father's house, we're with him. When he comes back to reign over the earth, we're with him. We're going to be ever with the Lord. We're never going to leave his side again. And then he says, Wherefore encourage one another with these words, Brethren, what encouragement would we have today in the world in which we live if we didn't have something beyond the horizons of planet Earth? This world is in a sad condition. It's an absolute turmoil politically, socially and morally. People in high places are realizing they're dealing with an interplay of economic, political and social forces. That are far beyond their control. They know the elastic is being stretched further and further and further and it's got to snap. Something's got to give somewhere. And men's hearts are failing them for fear. If ever there was a proof that were in the last days, to me it is to watch those that we rub shoulders with of the corporate and political world look at the fear

written in their faces. Their their, their struggling. Their hearts are failing them for fear. They know something's got to give. But you and I, we can sit here this afternoon in perfect calm. Not that we're callous or indifferent to what's going on around us. No, we need to be aware. But I often have said aware but not overwhelmed. How can that be? Because we have this precious truth of the Lord's coming. We're looking for him at any moment. And you know, when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he says here we which are alive and remain, you know, he was looking for the Lord's coming. He was including himself. I realized later on he realized that he was going to lay down his life for his testimony and for the truth he had. Been getting the ministry he'd been given, but at this point he says to the Thessalonians We which are alive and remain because it has been the proper hope of the believer all down through the ages. And if Paul could say we which are alive and remain, how much more you and I? You know we are. We have never been closer to the Lord's coming than we are right now. Never have we been closer. And I believe it's about to take place. We're just on the eve of the return of the Lord Jesus. And can't we echo with the Apostle Paul? Wherefore encourage one another with these words? Again, it is so easy. And again, we don't want to be indifferent to what's going on about us. But it is so easy to talk about the news and what's going on in various pockets of the world and right here. In North America, in the United States and Canada, and certainly things are deteriorating and deteriorating fast. But if that's all we talk about, we're going to get discouraged. If that's all we talk about, we're going to be cast down. And so it's if we talk about those things, let's remind our hearts before we separate before the subject changes that we can't have the Lord's coming. That's what's going to encourage us. And when Paul wrote the second epistle.

To the Thessalonians he re echoes this. He reminds them that they have not just a hope, but a Good Hope. Don't we have a Good Hope? You know, there's a lot of people that have hope in this world. There's a lot of people that have. Hope for the betterment of things down here. But it's not a Good Hope. And if they're honest with themselves, they realize that their hopes are fading, and they're fading fast. But we have a Good Hope. When I read this expression, Good Hope, I'm always reminded of something we learned back in history when I was in high school. And that was about an explorer by the name of Bartholomew Diaz. And in 1488, Bartholomew Diaz was the first European explorer on record. To round the southern tip of Africa, the Europeans were looking for a trade route to India and the Far East, so that they could bring the teas and the silks and those things that they thought would add to the comforts and nicety of culture in Western Europe. And Bartholomew Diaz. When he rounded the tip of southern Africa, he rounded it under such adverse circumstances that he aptly named it. The Cape of Storms. But when he returned and reported to King John, two of Portugal, under whose auspices he had sailed. King John felt that the Cape of Storms was a name that would hinder and not encourage further exploration, and so he renamed it the Cape of Good Hope. Even so, it was nine years before another European, Vasco da Gama, attempted to round the tip of southern Africa. But I've often thought of that and if you look on a map today, the southern tip of Africa still retains that name, the Cape of Good Hope. But was it really the hope that the Europeans had anticipated? Oh, sure, they enjoyed the niceties of the things and comforts of the things that they brought from the Far East, but was it really the Good Hope that they anticipated? Later on, other overland routes and different things were discovered, and that route didn't become as important, became less important than it had been. But when we talk about the Lord's coming as a Good Hope, that's exactly what it is. And not only is it a Good Hope, but we found in Hebrews where we read. That it's a sure and steadfast hope. And that's why he speaks of it as strong encouragement. Not just encouragement, but strong encouragement. Because we have a sure and a steadfast hope. You know, the hope of the Lord's coming is really the only hope that we can speak of as being sure. Instead, fast hope and connection with the first man and this life is uncertainty at best. We hope to do many things after these meetings. We have hopes and plans. But wouldn't we be presumptuous if we sat in these seats this afternoon and spoke of some plan we have for the the for next week after these meetings end? And we said beyond the shadow of a doubt, we're going to carry out this plan. Why you'd say that's presumptuous. Anything could happen to interfere with that hope, to hinder it or cancel it altogether. But not the hope of the Lord's coming, it says. It says here it's a hope that is sure and steadfast, because hope and connection with Christ and the new man is not hope. And as far as uncertainty, it is only hope in the sense that we're not in the full reality of it yet We speak of the hope of the Lord's coming because it hasn't happened yet, but not because it's uncertain, and so again at any moment. The Lord Jesus may come, does that encourage your heart every man that hath this hope in him? Purifieth himself, even as he is pure, in the measure in which the hope of the Lord's coming is a living reality in your soul. This afternoon it's going to encourage you and have a practical purifying effect on your life. I'd like in closing then, to look at one more scripture. It's back in First Thessalonians, this time in Chapter 5.

First Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 11. Wherefore, comfort yourself, or again encourage yourselves together. And edify one another, even as also ye do. I want to, just at the end of this meeting, bring us back to what we have said a number of times during the last 45 minutes. And that is how necessary it is to encourage one another. We need that. You know, I've been struck in visiting various individuals that have perhaps been discouraged for in one way or another, to find that the natural tendency of the heart is. When we get away from the Lord or we get discouraged, we tend then to separate ourselves from our fellow believer. Or we don't attend the meetings for ministry and other things, the assembly meetings like we should. When we get discouraged, that's the very time that we need one another. We need one another more than ever. Yes, like David, we need to get into the presence of the Lord and encourage ourselves in the Lord. I don't want to take away from that, but perhaps there's someone here today and you haven't been coming out to the meetings. You have. You've been avoiding your brethren, you say I'm just too discouraged. Oh, I say there's nothing will warm you up like getting back with your brethren. Coming to the assembly meetings, sitting in the presence of the Lord. I know sometimes in the local assembly, things are carried on in a very feeble way. It's wonderful to come to meetings like this. We have a large number, We look to the Lord for ministry and so on. But when you go home, I know things are feeble. I know things are carried on in weakness. But the Lord is there. The Spirit of God is there. The word of God is the same. You're with those of like precious faith, other of the children of God and members of the body of Christ. Isn't that enough to encourage your heart, to warm you up? And so I just as I said this afternoon, I just wanted to encourage our hearts that we might seek to press on. I don't want to minimize the days in which we live. They're difficult. But there's more to encourage than to discourage. You know, we don't have time, but there are two men in the New Testament who are particularly brought before us as encouragers and who were sent by the apostle Paul. On occasion to encourage the Brethren One with Tipicus, and in Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 22 we find that Paul. Every confidence to send to the brethren in Ephesus because he knew he would encourage them. He also, as we read in Colossians chapter four, I think it's verse eight. He also sent him to the assembly at Colossi and he said, I know when he comes, he'll encourage your heart. There was another man, Timothy, and he was sent to the Thessalonians. Why? Because as we have in first Thessalonians, chapter 3 and verse two, he'll encourage you. If if there was discouragement in a certain assembly and the brethren in another assembly, we're gonna send someone to encourage the brethren, would you be the one they chose? Or would they say, well, we better not send that brother. He he won't be any help. Would you be the brother? Would you be the sister that would be chosen to go and visit someone who was going through a time of discouragement? Are you encouraging yourself and the Lord? Is there that spirit about you that encourages others? Well, brethren, I find

these things very exercising to my own soul, and perhaps they'll exercise you. We need encouragement, and we do have the God of all encouragement.

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