

## Transcript – Satan’s Death Knell – The Gift of Encouragement

All righty. Shabbat shalom, and good to see everybody on this wonderful Sabbath day.

We live in a very dark, satanic, evil world. In **Revelation 18:23** it talks about Babylon making *slaves* of the souls of men. And I think when you look at that you could see ... because even work today ... I believe in the Garden of Eden that work was meant to be a blessing. Work was meant to be something that was ... you enjoy doing. You’re producing something.

And yet today, at least in most of the world—and I’m not even going to say just in Western world—but in most of the world ... because in the third world countries people work as slaves. They make virtually no money. In India they have children that putting these matchbox things together, and their hands get all crinkled. So, even work today is bondage. Third world countries’ people, like I said, are actually human slaves to the system. And in the first world it’s so unnatural to just sit behind a desk and a computer screen for eight to twelve hours a day.

And there’s a lot of stress in the world today—paying rent, paying taxes, paying bills, families being torn apart, mother in the workforce, divorce rates skyrocketing, wars everywhere. And many are depressed, and even many committing suicide. So that’s the way I’m starting out with the message, but the message is actually called *Satan’s Death Knell—The Gift of Encouragement*. Because I don’t want to talk about all those bad things today. We talk about them a lot.

But, really, what I want to talk today about is the gift of encouragement. Because I think in the world we live in, and how dark and satanic it is, that sometimes we forget how powerful the gift of encouragement is. But it really is Satan’s death knell. I want to start in Galatians 5 and verse 22 and 23, talking about the fruits of the Spirit.

**Galatians 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control. Against such things there is no instruction.*

We’ve talked about this a lot lately, particularly at Pesach. But it’s amazing to think about it. In such a dark, depressive world, that with the Spirit of Yahweh, though, that we *can be* loving and happy, and have joy and peace, and all these things in our life. And *unless* somebody has surrendered their life to Yahweh and has come into the truth and gets the Holy Spirit, they really can’t understand it. Because it’s something that is not even natural, but yet it’s the Spirit of Yahweh that gives these things to us. I want to go to Acts 4 and verse 36. And it says:

**Acts 4:36-37** *And Joseph, ... Yosef ... the one surnamed Barnabas by the apostles, which being translated is, Son of Comfort, ... or Son of Encouragement—the word for comfort and encouragement is basically the same meaning ... a Levite, a Cypriot by race, a field being his, selling it, he brought the proceeds and placed them at the feet of the apostles.*

So here it is, Barnabas a famous apostle and disciple, his name being Yosef ... which maybe a lot of people don’t realize that ... but here it is, he was one of the early ones. And we’re going to see how even his encouragement what it did to the Apostle Paul. That you just see when you look ... and there’s not a whole lot said about Barnabas. But his very name—the fact that they surnamed him Son of Encouragement—has to tell you something about him. That he was a very encouraging person. Let’s go to Acts 11 and verse 21. It says:

**Acts 11:21-23** *And the hand of Adonai was on them, ... talking about the believers ... and a great number believing, they turned to the Almighty. And the Word was heard in the ears of the assembly in Jerusalem concerning them. And they sent out Barnabas ... Son of Encouragement ... to go through as far as Antioch; And when he arrived there and saw the grace of Elohim, he rejoiced and was beseeching ... encouraging ... them that they should be followers of our Master with all their heart.*

**Acts 11:24-26** *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and faith. And a considerable crowd was added to the Master. And Barnabas went out to Tarsus to seek Shaul ... the Apostle Paul ... And finding him, he brought him to Antioch. And it happened that many of them were gathered to them in the assembly a whole year. And they taught a considerable crowd. And the disciples were first called Kristyane at Antioch.*

So, really interesting that I think a lot of people don't realize this fact either, that, actually, when you look at Paul first being converted ... remember, Shaul is *against* the believers. He's out there persecuting them, even consenting to the death of some. And how does he change so quickly? We do know that it was three years from the time he was converted, and he went to even Mount Sinai ... but in the beginning, that first year, he spends with the Son of Encouragement.

And then after that, him and Barnabas go back out. And then, all of a sudden, what happens? It's no more Barnabas and Shaul, it's the Apostle Paul and Barnabas. That, literally, Paul becomes the leader through the encouragement and the teaching of Barnabas. So, it shows something. It shows that he had to have a lot of humility that he had in him. And it also shows that many people come into faith through encouragement.

And I think what happens sometimes in the world we live in today, we're very cut and dry. "Oh, he didn't believe in this." or "He didn't accept this." and "Okay, he believes in the Sabbath, and he believes in this, but he doesn't believe in that. So, we just have to write him off." And yet, Yahweh is Elohim of, like we say, not *condemnation* but *restoration*. And Yahweh doesn't write off anybody. It doesn't mean that, of course, if people are not walking a certain way of life that we shouldn't have a certain amount of separation.

But what it *does* mean is that *sometimes* all somebody needs is encouragement. Sometimes maybe that's all they need for a new person there, maybe to ask them, "Why aren't you using this name?" And sometimes we feel like, "Ooh, I don't want to offend them. So, I don't want to say this." And then, all of a sudden, I'll see somebody else that will be telling them. And then, all of a sudden, now they're using the name all the time. And I'll say, "Wow, how did that happen?" "Well, I was talking to so-and-so and he was telling me the importance of this." **And sometimes maybe all they need is a little bit of encouragement.**

But we see this here with Barnabas, who was a great encouragement to maybe one if not *the* greatest apostle in the New Testament. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 7 and verse 4 says:

**2 Corinthians 7:4** *I am familiar enough to speak boldly with you, and I am very proud of you. I have been filled with comfort; ... with encouragement ... I overflow with joy in all our troubles. For, indeed, we coming into Macedonia, in our flesh no one had rest, but being troubled in every way, with fighters on the outside and fears on the inside. Nevertheless, YAHWEH who comforts the meek comforted with us by the coming of Titus. And not only by his coming, but also by the encouragement with which he was comforted over you, relating to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal on our behalf, so that for me to rejoice even the more.*

So, here, we see Titus being a great source of encouragement. Paul is writing this, that they needed encouragement at the time. And we see at this point not only is he encouraging them, but we're seeing that other congregations are being encouraged by their example. Now if this was like this 2,000 years ago, think how it is today, right?

Now, I always get letters from people. And people that come to the Feast *always* telling how they're encouraged by the brethren in Israel and in Jerusalem. And yet, we know we don't have a big congregation here. Some people think we have a gigantic congregation. We *would* if it was possible. But, unfortunately, it's not possible. And we've always had a very small remnant of believers that is in Israel—at Feast time it becomes more. But it's an encouragement to people.

Because for people that are living in diaspora, and they're having that hope of one day coming here, and they're knowing that there *are* people here already, it gives encouragement. The same way recently in the last year with the kibbutzes starting. And the brethren that are living in kibbutz and living in common, *in* Philippines and in Africa, that's an encouragement to all of us. That we see, "Wow, they're doing it. It's working."

And they're literally ... what I've been talking about for 25 years, saying we need to get to this point so this can happen, is now happening with some. So, that's a great source of encouragement. And, again, it's not something I think that as brethren we talk about enough. I think we need to talk about it more. But, face it, **everybody needs encouragement.**

And whether it's just in our prayer closet, when we're doing study, that we think about these things. But without encouragement ... think in your walk with Yahweh. If you never had *any* encouragement **at all**, think where you would be. Because no man is an island. **We all get discouraged. And it's these times of encouragement that help us to get through. And it helps us to be unified more as a body.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:3.** 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3 is all the things about the end time—in the end-time people will be this and this. But I only want to hit on one point, where it says: *people will be without natural affection*. And, again, we know. We know in the day and age we're living in, even women having babies throwing them in the garbage pail. But, really, **appreciation and encouragement should be a normal affection**. It should be as normal as showing love to your child. It should be something that is normal. And yet, because we're living in an un-normal world, it's become un-normal.

So I think it is something we need to think about more, and we need to really focus on more. And, again, **the more we're getting our mind off of ourself and serving others, the more that we can encourage people and have a spirit of appreciation. Because the spirit of appreciation gives us the spirit of encouragement.** So if we're not appreciative to Yahweh, we're never going to have the gift of encouragement to other people.

I was looking up in the dictionary the word *appreciation* and *encouragement*. It means a *sensitive awareness of others*. So, it's a sensitive awareness of others. It's where we're not just focusing on ourself. And I'll tell you, through the years I've counseled hundreds and hundreds of people through the years that have went through depression, that have had certain problems. And *most* of the time I tell them the same thing.

Whether it's a single person who's depressed because they're not married, or maybe it's a married person that's depressed because they don't have a child, or maybe it's a widow that's depressed because her husband died. It could be anything. But the answer's always the same. That I say, "Look, if you go out there and you serve other people, you'll get your mind off yourself and you won't be depressed."

Like we do at the school, we tell people to smile. "Stand up and smile." And when you're smiling, now I say, "Now get depressed ... now get depressed." **You can't get depressed while you're smiling. It's impossible. Because when you're smiling, your mind is thinking happiness. It's not thinking depression. And what makes you smile? What makes you smile is when you're serving somebody else, when you bring something to give to somebody and they say, "Wow. I've been praying for this, and now you gave it to me."**

So, that's the thing that ... to be able to encourage somebody, we have to get our mind off ourselves. We have to be thinking on others. Book of Jacob, chapter 1 and verse 17 says:

**Jacob 1:17** *every act of good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Heavenly lights, with whom is no change or shifting shadow.*

Wow. See, Yahweh never changes. Yahweh is Elohim of encouragement, as we're going to see. Yahshua was a Messiah of encouragement. And like it says ... I love how they put it sometimes in the Aramaic, because it's very idiomatic. And like it says, *with whom there is no change or shifting shadow*. Because if you ever ... like doing something and you need the sun or you don't need the sun, right? You have to always move it because of the shadow. The shadow's always moving, so you have to move the thing.

But Yahweh's not a shifting shadow. He's never changing. He's constant. And that's why when the Kingdom comes, there'll only be light. There'll never be darkness. And we don't have to worry about that. But **if we don't fully appreciate what Yahweh is doing for us, we'll never appreciate other people.** That's the key to it. That we have to get away from that spirit of "woe is me" and that spirit of "Ugh, why did this go wrong?" and always thinking, like we say, *Yahweh is my Shepherd*. And if He's really our Shepherd, then there's nothing we're going to want.

That when anything comes up ... and like when I'm writing to elders, we have ... let's say with the kibbutz, I'll say, "Well, send me a plan of action." And a plan of action means it's a goal that's written out, how we're going to do this. And then, of course, there's going to be things we're going to have to overcome with it. So, I don't like to say, "Here are potential

problems." I say, "Here are potential *challenges*." Wording means a lot. And a problem is something that ... uh, oh ... something that's wrong. But a *challenge* is something where I can ride over this.

**And a challenge is a good thing. Because if we don't have in our life challenges, then what is our life? We're never going to grow. We're never going to overcome.** So that's the key. **In life we want to look at when something doesn't go right, it's not a problem. It's a challenge.** It's something that we need to overcome with. And, again, when we have that spirit of appreciation, even thanking Yahweh for these challenges ... because it's those very challenges that are making us more like Him ... then we're going to be more appreciative.

And when you're appreciative ... **the very definition of Yahweh's grace is ... we want to share it with other people. And what can be more encouraging than the very grace that He gives us in our life?** 1<sup>st</sup> John 4 and verse 10 says:

**1 John 4:10-12** *In this is love, not that we loved YAHWEH, but He loved us, and sent His Son to be the atonement for our sins. Beloved, if YAHWEH so loved us, we ought to love one another. No one has seen YAHWEH (The Father) at any time. If we love one another, YAHWEH abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.*

So, again, Yahweh unconditionally loved us *in* our defiled state because He saw our potential, and He encourages us to be like Him. So, we have to see the same thing. And when we look at brethren, we don't want to ... that may be 99% is good, and maybe there's one challenge that they're having in their life. And we don't want to look at that one challenge and say, "Oh, I don't want to help this person." and forget the 99 good part. No, we want to *help* them. See the 99 good part and help them in the challenge.

So, we have to think of what Yahweh did to us. Because, like I said, even when we were in our *unconverted* state ... I mean, before any of this. And all of us came from wherever we were before. But He loved us, and He saw some kind of potential. So that's encouraging, that He was ... He sees ... He has the spirit of encouragement, and He sees that. Romans 15 and verse 6 says:

**Romans 15:6** *that with one accord and with one mouth you may glorify the Elohim and Father of our Master Yahshua Messiah.*

*With one accord and with one mouth you may glorify the Elohim and Father of our Master Yahshua Messiah.* So, we're seeing here that, again, Yahweh is Elohim. Yahweh is a great encourager, and we need to be like Him. Matthew 11:28 through 30. This is where Yahshua says:

**Matthew 11:28-30** *Come to Me, all those laboring and being burdened, and I will give you rest. Bear My yoke upon you and learn from Me. That I am tranquil and I am meek, and in My heart you will find tranquility to your souls. For My yoke is pleasant, and My burden is light.*

So Yahshua has great compassion, and He's a great encourager. And, again, if you don't have compassion, you're not really going to be an encourager. Because without compassion, you know what happens? Without compassion you look at somebody that needs encouragement and you get frustrated with them. And you're like, "Ah, come on. Just get over it. Come on, he died over three days ago. What on earth are you still worried about? Just get over it." And it's like without that compassion, feeling that compassion for people what they're going through, we'll never be able to encourage them.

And what I always say, in any situation that happens, I try to take myself and put myself in that person's position. And even if I don't agree with it, if it's someone that's doing something that I would never do, I try to understand **why** he's doing it at least. And even though I wouldn't *do* it, it helps me to understand and to have some sort of pity or compassion on the person for doing that. Philippians 5 and verse—I mean, Philippians 2 and verse 1 ... Philippians the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter. He says:

**Philippians 2:1-3** *So, then, if there is any comfort ... any encouragement ... in Messiah, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any mercies and compassions, complete my joy, as being in one accord, and one love, and one*

soul, and one mind. Doing nothing according to strife or self-glory, but in humility, let each regard his neighbor as better than himself;

**Comment:** So, again, this is the way we encourage each other. When we have pride, when we think we're better than somebody or our worth is more than them, you're never going to be an encouragement—the opposite. You're going to ... it's going to discourage people.

**Philippians 2:4-5** *let no one be mindful only of his own things, but let each one also be mindful of the things of his neighbor. For think this within you, which mind was also in Messiah Yahshua,*

**So if we want to have the mind of Messiah, if we want to be like Yahshua, then we need to have the compassion He has. And we need to use that compassion to encourage**—to encourage each other for what's coming, for good works, and all these things. Proverbs 18 and verse 21 says:

**Proverbs 18:21** *Death and life are in the hand of the tongue, and those who love it shall eat its fruit.*

I really, really like that Scripture. *Death and life are in the hand of the tongue.* That, here it is, right? When you think about it, you look at wars that are fought, right? And last week we gave that sermon on *Sheep and Goats*. And like I said, when David goes to fight Goliath he didn't come out with this big sword. He comes out with a shepherd's staff and the shepherd's bag. And that's the way.

When Moses goes to fight against Pharaoh, and in the *Ten Commandments* movie Joshua's there and saying, "Let's stop over here, and we'll get all the swords." And he's like "Not by a sword, but by a shepherd's staff," that Yahweh will free His people.

And with us life and death are in the hand of the tongue. That, do we realize the power that we have with our words? The power that comes out? We have the power to give life. You have the power to take life. We have the power to rebuke. We have the power to bless. **We have the power of Yahweh that's living in us, and 99% of the time we should be using that power for good.** We shouldn't be using that power to malign, to gossip, to put down. It should be used for encouragement, and it should be used for lifting up. It should be used for giving life.

I always say that Scripture in Corinthians about the difference between Adam and Yahshua. Where Adam *became* a living soul, but Yahshua was a *life-giving spirit*. Two totally different things. Like as a human being, are we just a living soul? Are we just here counting down our days to die, where our flesh dies every day? Or are we a life-giving spirit? Everywhere we go, everyone we talk to, are you a magnet that people want to be around because you're giving those words of eternal life? You're over here telling these words and how we can be?

And every single believer ... you don't have to be ordained, you don't have to be an elder or a deacon ... every single believer has that. Some of the greatest encouragements I've ever seen are widows or older men that are sitting there with someone in the congregation and telling them the maturity of their years. And your ear is just sitting there because you want to listen to this story that happened. And you're just like, "Wow. That person has so much wisdom. He has so much encouragement that he's giving."

So by our words we can give life, and by our words we can take life. If you go to verse 19 of the same chapter. Proverbs 18:19 says:

**Proverbs 18:19** *An offended brother is worse than a fortified city; yea, their contentions are like the bars of a castle.*

And just like we know from Romans 14, right? Which is not about what meat you're to eat. It's not about the Sabbath day. Romans 14 is all about not judging each other in things that don't pertain to the Torah. Because we do have to judge each other in things that pertain to the Torah. If someone is violating the Torah and sinning, if you love them, you better come to them and share with them what they're doing wrong. And if they don't listen, you have to bring witnesses and then bring it before the elders.

But I'm talking about things that don't pertain to the Torah, that we want to build our righteousness above others. And sometimes we can offend people by this. Because they're not as clean as we want them to be, or they're not eating what we want them to eat. Or they're not doing this the way we want, or they're believing too much this way and not that way. And yet, like it says here, *an offended brother is worse than a fortified city*.

There's a saying that is in English, I don't know if you've heard of this saying, but it says "Sticks and stones may break your bones, but names will never hurt me." Do you have something like that? But as a child ... and a matter of fact, that's what parents tell their children when they go to school and the children are being bullied. They say, "Well, if they say this to you, you tell them 'Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me.'"

And yet, in reality, it's really not true. Because we know that words *do* hurt. Words hurt very, very hard. And probably, if most of us are honest with yourself, and I'll say with myself, I would much rather have my bones broken than have my heart broken. I would much rather have somebody ... because, you know what? A bone can mend. A broken foot can mend. But when people that you care about, or people that you love, that hurt you with words—that mock you, that say things—it really is very hurtful.

And that's why I say we need to think to ourself that the words we're giving, are they words of life, or are they words ... And too much in society today, particularly Western society but I think it's everywhere, that people like to rib. They like to joke the wrong way.

Like I always say, here somebody may come and they're going to do something really nice. And they're going to make popcorn for everybody, and then he burns the popcorn or whatever. Instead of saying, "Wow, thank you brother." or "Thank you, sister. Thank you for thinking of me and being so kind to think of this. No, it's no problem." they're "Oh, I'd expect that from *you*. Ha ha ha ha. Oh, he can't even make *popcorn*." to try to get a laugh at the expense of somebody else. And that's not good. That's not the way it is.

And when you really think about it, in the body of Messiah, more than anything ... like it says, we're one body; we're one spirit; there's one faith; there's one Master ... that we all of have to get that one mind of Messiah. And if we get that one mind of Messiah, like I was reading in Philippians, and we *really* are loving our neighbor as much as ourselves, then we would never do that. Because nobody would want to be humiliated himself. So why would we want to humiliate somebody else?

So when we're looking at encouragement, more than anything ... there's a lot of things you can do to encourage somebody. I'm sure like if you were a widow and you had weeds and all this outside your house, and you couldn't afford to pay someone to fix it. And all of a sudden, when the widow was out shopping or at the doctor, you came and cleaned the house and she came back and saw it. That would be very, very encouraging for that widow.

But I think in a general sense we can say that the greatest way to encourage is by our words. Because our words are something that we can encourage every day of our life. Every day of our life we can be encouraging by our words. Proverbs 12 and verse 25 says:

**Proverbs 12:25** *Heaviness in a man's heart makes it droop, but a good word makes it glad.*

*Heaviness in a man's heart makes it droop, but a good word makes it glad.* So, again, **positive words can change a person's life**. And sometimes people that ... we all come from different circumstances. We all come from different backgrounds ... And somebody who may have come from a situation where his parents were always putting him down, or in school he was always being put down, that one word of encouragement may be the thing that can change that whole person's life. That somebody actually *believed* in him. Somebody actually trusted in him.

So we might not need that personally, but, you never know, maybe that other person really does need that. Jacob the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter starting in verse 1. It says:

**Jacob 3:1-2** *My brothers do not be many teachers, but know that we shall receive a greater judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If any one does not stumble in word, this one is a mature man, also able to subdue the whole body.*

**Comment:** And like I say, it's like we joke with the internet, that once something is out there on the internet it's in cyber eternity. These cyber black holes that just keep going. You can't get rid of it. We have misinformation on our website from ten years ago. But somehow, if someone went to the right thing, they'd wind up getting it: where we're meeting, or where somebody is having a congregation somewhere that doesn't ... hasn't existed in years.

So, it's the same with words. Yes, we can repent. Yes, we can apologize. Yes, Yahweh forgives us. We need to forgive each other. But at the end of the day, once that word is out, it will never come back. It's part of history. It's what's written. So wouldn't it be much better then, knowing that as words come out of our mouth and you can't take them back, that I only want to bring words, then, that are positive? I want to bring words that are encouraging. I want to bring words that on Judgment Day all these words that Yahweh will show me I said are *good* words and not bad words. Continue here. He says:

**Jacob 3:3-4** *Behold, we put bits in the mouths of horses, for them to obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold, the ships also, being so great, and being driven by violent winds, they are directed by a very small rudder, wherever the one steering wishes.*

**Comment:** And it is interesting when you see these gigantic boats and just this little rudder that's telling where it's going. It says:

**Jacob 3:5-6** *So also the tongue it's a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how a little fire sets ablaze large forests! Now the tongue is a fire, and the world of sin is like a forest. And this very tongue, while it is among our members, can defile our entire body; and rolls down like a wheel and set on fire the course of our entire life; and in the end it is consumed by fire.*

**Jacob 3:7-10** *For every species of beasts, both indeed of birds, of creeping things, of sea animals, is tamed, and has been tamed by the will of man; but no one of men is able to tame the tongue; it is an unrestrainable evil, full of death-dealing poison. By this we bless YAHWEH, even the Father; and by this we curse men having come into being according to the image of Elohim. Out of the same mouth comes forth blessing and cursing. My brothers, it is not fitting for these things to be so.*

And how Yahweh must look at the world to see this. To see one minute people saying something good, and the next minute saying something bad. And Yahweh look and shake His head and just thinking how double minded as human beings we are. But with the Spirit of Yahweh we don't want to be that way. **We have to have self-discipline if you're going to have the gift of encouragement.** Because face it, **you can't encourage someone one day and then criticize them the rest.**

Can you imagine? You go to somebody's house for dinner. And maybe the person's just learning cooking, and you come in and you tell them, "Wow, that was a great dinner. That was wonderful. It was terrific." And all of a sudden, they're feeling really good. And now you leave there and you go to someone else, saying, "Ugh, was that terrible. Ugh, did that taste ... that was the worst ..." And then it gets back to that person.

And now, not only are they feeling horrible, but they're also saying, "Wow. Well, this person is double minded. I can't believe anything they're going to say." So the next time you try to encourage somebody, what good is your words going to be? Your words aren't going to mean anything. Because one day you're saying one thing, and one day you're saying something else.

Matthew 12 and verse 33. So, again, we have to discipline our lives if we want to have the gift of encouragement, as well as many other gifts. But discipline ... like it says, the Spirit of Yahweh is not the spirit of fear, but the spirit of love, discipline, and a sound mind. So, we need discipline in our life. Matthew 12 and verse 33. He says:

**Matthew 12:33-37** *Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by the fruit. Generation of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of the good treasure of the heart puts forth good things. And the evil man out of the evil treasure puts forth evil things. But I say to you, that **every vain word**, whatever men may speak, they shall give an account of it in Judgment Day. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*

Wow. **Every vain word.** Every word that comes out of our mouth. That's why I said, once it's out there you can apologize, you can say 'I'm sorry', but you can never get it back. And what I say is I would much rather show self-discipline and not say the word to begin with than have to keep coming back and saying 'I'm sorry'. And the thing is if somebody does have a sharp mouth, and every week they have to keep apologizing and apologizing, there hits a point where the apology really doesn't mean anything anymore because the person's doing the same thing.

What apologizing—or repentance—is, is turning away from it. So I know in situations, particularly as an elder and the leader of the congregation from here, that when situations have come up and maybe even I was being attacked, that I really ... I held back and I waited. Because I didn't want to have to go back and eat my words, or go back and say, "Oh, no. I didn't mean this."

And I can think of one situation with somebody in particular that wasn't a good situation. And in my mind I said to myself, "I know this person. And I know sometime down the line—it might be one year; it might be two years; it might be five years—but I know this person is going to contact me and want to get together to work this out." And it did happen that way. And when we did work it out, and the person had to apologize for some of the things he said, I said to him ... I said, "You know, I knew this day would come. And that's why I never said a bad word about you. I never wrote a bad word about you. I never said anything about you that was untrue."

So, we really, we need to have that discipline to understand this. That *by our words we'll be justified; by our words we'll be condemned*. And take it serious enough to consciously be thinking about it. That's why it says *be swift to hear, slow to speak*, you have two ears, you have one mouth. That we don't want to be speaking quicker ... then before you know it, all these words are coming back. And then you have to backtrack half of your words. So when we're looking at the gift of encouragement: words. That words can really be a point of encouragement, or they can really be a point of venom.

And it's interesting when you're looking at that, and you think: everybody in life, they go through tough situations in time. And when you think of how powerful the gift of encouragement is ... I'm sure if anybody had to sit there and think about it ... when you're going through that tough time, if you'd said—if you say to yourself, "If only so-and-so was here." or "Wow, if I can just contact so-and-so." And then by that person being there, or that person giving encouragement, it changes the whole situation.

I know *years and years* ago, when we were first leaving Babylon and we hit a very, very bad point of discouragement, in our life there was somebody like that. That we said, "I don't know what's going to happen from here. We're out of money, all these things are going wrong. But we've just have to be near so-and-so. If we can get near so-and-so, everything will be fine." So, it shows you how powerful that sometimes the encouragement of another person can pull that person from death to life.

When we're looking at words, how often do we say *please* and *thank you*? Right? How often do we send a card of encouragement to somebody? And like I always say, probably 90% of the time I'm very upbeat. I condition myself to be that way. I don't let myself get into depression. But I'm a human being like anything else. And there *is* that 10% or less where you do feel depressed, or you are down. And I can say, during those times, by getting a nice card of encouragement or a letter of encouragement, it can lift you right out of the situation.

And sometimes if in your mind you might be saying, "You know what? I haven't heard from so-and-so in a long time. Let me send them a card." that could be the Holy Spirit inspiring you. So don't just put it off and then, all of a sudden, four months later, the card never went out and that person might have needed the encouragement. And then, like I said, saying *please*, saying *thank you*, showing encouragement to people that are working with you. I do it all the time.



I've worked in businesses my whole life. And I didn't look at my employees as my *slaves*—that these are my slaves making me rich. No, I looked at it as, "Wow, these people are working for *me*. And they're the ones making my business prosper." And I looked at it as indebted to them. So, I would do *anything* for people that work with me. I looked at them as my family members. So I always wanted to encourage them. Every week we would have meetings and go over, and I'd lift them up in how they're doing. I'd help them in any way. I'd loan them money if they needed ... and rent. I'd give them whatever they were because I wanted to keep them encouraged as they're working with me.

And sometimes when people say, "Oh, no, no. You don't have to say that. You don't have to say 'thank you.'" I say, "Yes, but that's what makes it important because you *don't* have to say it. If I had to say it, then *of course* it wouldn't mean anything." If it's a reaction, like when you see somebody. "Well, good morning." And what do they say back? "Good morning." You *have* to say it. That's just what we do. There's no other *choice* you have.

But when it's a *choice*, and you're making that choice to say, "Hey, you know what? I really appreciate you're really doing a good job." that's what makes it special. Because you don't have to say it. And that's what makes it *real*. Because if you're just saying it to say it and it's not real, then that's not encouragement. That's just basically a protocol, I guess, or whatever you could say.

So when we were at the Feast a few years back ... and, as you know, we do the testimonies—one of my favorite part of the Feast. And we have people coming in from all over the world. A lot of these people I've never met in my life. So I'm always excited. I want to hear what do these people have to say. And by the time we do it, it's usually four, five, six days into the Feast. I've spoken enough, and I just want to sit here and hear their testimonies.

And I tell the people during testimonies, I always say, "Don't feel inhibited that you don't want to get up and speak." A lot of people ... believe it or not, but it's a fact, that next to *death* ... Right? Next to death ... public speaking is the biggest fear that people have in the world—to get up in front of a group and speak. I don't know why. My mind is totally conditioned the opposite.

Like here we are with a small group in a room, but this is being filmed and will go out to thousands of people all over the world. You hear back from people from China, from Papua New Guinea, from all these places. And to *me*, that's a rush. Because I'm not thinking of myself. I'm not worried, "What if I say something wrong? Is there a stain on my tie?" I could care less. I'm thinking, "Wow, I can affect somebody positively." And that's a rush for me that I can give encouragement. I can help people.

And that's what I try to tell people during testimony, "You have no idea how your testimony can affect somebody else, and how Yahweh is inspiring you to give that." But there was one year that we were there, and somebody gave a real powerful testimony. And a person came up to me afterwards ... I didn't know them. They were new. They were just there at the Feast ... and they said, "You know something?" They said, "I want you to tell that person that gave the testimony—don't tell them it was me—but let them know that I've been going through this trial. And I was actually *thinking* of committing suicide—of killing myself—and their testimony *changed* me."

Wow, can you imagine the power then? So that's why I say, you have to get rid of you. You have to put you to the side. It's not about *you*. It's about Yahweh. And if you really want to have the gift of encouragement, you have to look past you, like it says, *you have to look on the things of others more than the things of yourself*. Because if we're self-consumed with our own problems ... **every one of us** has problems everyday of the year, that's the life we live in ... and we'll never encourage people. How could we encourage people if we're self-consumed?

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1 and verse 3. Because you know something? And this is in most cases. People normally aren't going to tell you when they're down. I've been trained, because I've dealt with human relationships for years. It was part of what I did doing seminars and stuff. So, I can tell by body language. I can tell by the way that people are speaking. I can tell if there's a problem. Not all the time, but a lot of times I can tell. But for most people they're not trained that way. So somebody can come to services and they can really, really be depressed, and you have no idea of it.

And, over here, when you look at it, that's why you have to be *thinking* about it. You have to be looking and praying to the Holy Spirit of before—every time before we come together, you should be praying and saying, “If there's somebody there that needs encouragement, Father, put the words in my mouth or whatever's needed.” But, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1 and verse 3, look what Paul is saying here. He says:

**2 Corinthians 1:3-5** *Blessed be the Elohim and Father of our Master Yahshua Messiah, the Father of compassions and Elohim of all comfort, ... of all encouragement ... the One encouraging us on all our affliction, for us to be able to comfort those in every affliction, through the comfort ... or encouragement ... by which we ourselves are encouraged by Elohim. Because even as the sufferings of Messiah abound in us, so also our comfort abounds through Messiah.*

**2 Corinthians 1:6-8** *But if we are troubled, it is for your ... encouragement or ... comfort and salvation, being worked out in the endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer. If we are ... encouraged or ... comforted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and our hope for you is certain, knowing that even as you are sharers of the sufferings, so also are partakers of the comfort. For, brothers, we do want you to know as to our affliction having happened to us in Asia, that we were excessively oppressed ... this is the Apostle Paul saying this ... we were **excessively oppressed** ... you know, down ... **beyond our strength, so as for us to even be despaired for our lives.***

**Comment:** They were to the point where they didn't even want to live anymore.

**2 Corinthians 1:9-11** *And we decided to die, not trusting on ourselves, but on YAHWEH, the One raising the dead, who rescued us from so great a peril of death, and does rescue; in whom we have hope that He will still deliver us, **you also laboring together for us in prayer, that the gracious gift by many persons be the cause of thanksgiving through many of us.***

And like we said, the gift is the grace. It's the same thing. It means the same thing. **So here he's saying, he's telling them, that their prayers actually saved these people from depression where they didn't even want to live anymore—the Apostle Paul with the group.** So, they're human beings. Peter is a human being. Paul was a human being. All of them were human beings. And all of them go through times of heights and times of lows, as we all do. And that's why ... what a gift that Yahweh gives.

Sometimes when we're going over ... in the Bible school we go over people's spiritual gifts. And if you have the gift of healing, or you have the gift of miracles, or some of these bigger gifts, everyone's like, “Wow, look what he can do.” But then, sometimes there'll be somebody ... and you'll go over the gifts ... and they'll say, “Well, yeah. I guess he has the gift of encouragement because of this.” And they make it like it's like a lesser gift. But the gift of encouragement is above the top of the gifts because *this* is the gift that can change other people's lives. It's the gift that is foundational.

The gift of language—that's a great gift to have if you can speak several languages and you can help there—but it's not an emotional gift. Being able to speak in two or three languages isn't necessarily going to change somebody's life. If you're bringing the good news in a different language, that's something different. But, I mean, as far as to be able to, like here, take somebody out of very great despair and to be able to lift them out of that. Wow, what a great gift. What a great gift, and above the top of the gifts we see there. John 14 and verse 25. He says:

**John 14:25-27** *I have spoken these things to you, abiding in you; But the Redeemer, ... the Comforter—it's the same word—the Redeemer; the Comforter; the Encourager ... the Holy Spirit, whom My Father will send in My name will teach you everything. And it will remind you of everything that I have said to you. I leave peace to you; My peace I give you. Not as the world gives I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, nor let it be timid.*

And that's why I said ... that's why I started out talking about how *bad* the world is today. And yet, in that world that's so bad, we have so much peace and joy. Why do we have it? Because of this. Because Yahweh ... Yahshua said “I will not leave you comfortless. I will send you the Encourager.” The Comforter; the Holy Spirit; the Redeemer. That's literally ... that redeems us. How could you be redeemed without encouragement, without comfort?

So here it is that in each of us that have been baptized in the name of Yahshua, had hands laid on us, each of us that has the Spirit of Yahshua living in us, *literally* we have a spirit of encouragement. So like I said, where it should be even natural in the world for people to encourage each other, for us it should be magnified. That this should ... it's the fruits of the Spirit. It should be magnified that *everything* we do in our life should be with the premise of being an encouragement to others. 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4 and verse 1 says:

**2 Timothy 4:1-2** *I solemnly charge you before YAHWEH and the Master Yahshua Messiah, He being about to judge the living and the dead at His appearance and His kingdom: Preach the Word! Stand by it in season and out of season. Convict, warn, encourage with all patience and teaching.*

And when someone is ordained ... because, again, the epistles of Timothy, they are pastoral epistles of how the congregation should be run, the qualifications of an elder. And here is *literally* the charge that I read to the person who's being ordained here. **But as an elder, you can't even qualify to be an elder if you don't have the gift of encouragement. You have to be able to encourage.** There's no way that you can go about it.

It was a story of an elder from Church of God from years ago that was a very young elder. He was just starting out. And there was an older woman that had ... her husband died. And it was the first funeral this man was doing. And he was very, very nervous. And the relatives said to the elder, they said, "No, you don't have to come to the house. Just come to where the funeral is." And the man was very nervous. He didn't know what to say. Because you don't want to be too emotional, or you'll make the family more emotional. And you don't want to be too cold because then you're going to seem callous. And he really didn't know what to do.

And when he got there and he was walking past the widow, the only words that came out of his mouth is "Don't worry. Everything will be okay." He went home after that. And the next week he got a letter from the woman, who was very, very depressed, and said, "You have *no idea* how much that encouraged me." She said, "When my husband died, I had all this guilt. And I was thinking somehow I could have done something different." And she said, "I kept praying to Yahweh, and the only thing I kept saying is, 'Will it be okay?' And when you walked by me and said, 'Everything is okay,' it was Yahweh speaking to me from your words."

And that's why sometimes we don't have to *think* we have to say the most elegant thing. Sometimes just a hug. Sometimes just a pat on the shoulder. Sometimes just letting the Holy Spirit say that: *Everything will be okay*. And that's why, like I said, **when the Holy Spirit is in us what we need to do is just allow it to work.** The Holy Spirit knows. We don't know. Remember the Scripture that says sometimes when we're praying, and we don't know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf. And, all of a sudden, you start praying and words are coming out of your mouth that you have no idea what you're saying. Because you're allowing the Holy Spirit to do that.

So, again, it really shows encouragement. And, like I said, particular for the leaders. 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4 and verse 13. He says:

**1 Thessalonians 4:13** *But I want you to know, my brethren, concerning those who sleep, ... those who are dead ... that you should not grieve, as the rest do who have no hope.*

**Comment:** Right? Of course, when someone dies, we're going to grieve. We're going to miss the person, but we know they made it. We know they're happier. We know they're just waiting in the split of a second, right? So we don't grieve like the world, because we know there is a tomorrow. We know the Kingdom is as sure as anything. He says:

**1 Thessalonians 4:14-16** *For if we believe that Yahshua died and rose again, even so Elohim through Yahshua, will also bring with Him all those who have fallen asleep. ... who have died ... For we say this to you in the Word of Elohim, that we the living who remain to the coming of our Master will not at all go before those who have fallen asleep. Because the Master Himself ... Yahshua ... shall come down from Heaven with a commanding shout of an archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of YAHWEH. And the dead in Messiah will rise again first.*

**1 Thessalonians 4:17-18** *Then we who remain alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet our Master in the air. And so we will **always** be with our Master. ... Wow. What can be better than that, right? ... So, then, ... encourage ... comfort each other with these words.*

These are words the world doesn't have. And this is the thing. Sometimes when somebody dies maybe that's non-converted, that's an opportunity where we can *bring* the words of encouragement. We can *bring* the real words that are there. Because, again, funerals are not for the dead. They're for the living. The dead is already ... the books are closed. Whatever he did, he did. Whatever he didn't do, he didn't do.

But here we see it. That **we have the most powerful encouragement**. Because, as a human being, we know one thing. We all know we're going to die. We all know we're going to be born, and we all know we're going to die. And yet, **we have words to share with someone how to live forever—how to never die; about the resurrection, how they can live forever**. Isaiah 61 and verse 1 and 2. And this is the very Scripture that Yahshua reads for the very first time He goes in the synagogue in Nazareth. Isaiah 61 and verse 1.

**Isaiah 61:1-2** *The Spirit of Adonai YAHWEH is on Me, because YAHWEH has anointed Me to preach the good news to the meek. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and complete opening to the bound ones; to proclaim the acceptable year of YAHWEH, ... the Jubilee ... and the day of vengeance of our Elohim; to comfort all who mourn;*

To comfort, to encourage. So here it is, when you think ... I always say, boy, I would have given anything to be a fly on the wall just one day in Galilee when Yahshua was alive. To be there at the sermon on the mount as thousands of people are coming to hear the words of eternal life from the carpenter from Nazareth. And how encouraging His words were. How much in compassion He had, even for the children. How much the children *loved* Yahshua.

And here it is, when the disciples are coming, "No, we have bigger business to do. Keep the children away." And what does Yahshua say? "No, no, no. Let the children come unto Me. For such is the Kingdom of Yahweh." So what an encourager, and the example He gives us. **And the same spirit of encouragement that was in Him is in us**. It's the same Spirit. Yahweh has one Spirit. And the same Spirit that was in the Father is the same Spirit in the Son and the same Spirit that's in us. Matthew 25 and verse 31—and this is when Yahshua returns, right? It says:

**Matthew 25:31-34** *But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy cherubs with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory ... praise Yahweh ... And before Him shall be gathered all the nations; and He will separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats ... talked about this last week ... And indeed He will set the sheep off to the right, but the goats to the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, **Come, the blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.***

**Matthew 25:35-40** *For I hungered, and you gave Me food to eat; I thirsted, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me. Then the righteous will answer, saying, Master, when did we see You hungry, and fed You; or thirsting, and gave You drink? When did we see You a stranger, and took You in; or naked, and clothed You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and came to You? And answering, the King will say to them, Truly I say to you, In so far as you did it to one of these, the least of My brothers, you did it to Me.*

So, what is He saying? This is all encouraging. When someone's in prison, right? And they say about ... praise Yahweh our prison ministry in the States is going unbelievable. Brother Lawrence is doing an amazing job over there with it. And we're ... I think we're in now 49 out of 50 states in the prisons. And here it is, because they say in the first year, maybe some people visit the person in prison. They say, but usually by the second or third year—particularly if you're on a life sentence—nobody ever visits. And how discouraging is that to be locked in a cage with nobody around? You're totally out of your element.

And here he's saying ... or when somebody's sick. How discouraged are you when you're sick? You can't get up. And yet, when somebody comes to visit, right? And sometimes that's all somebody needs. They just need that encouragement.

And who are the ones that He's rewarding? The ones who were encouraging, that were helping when someone was either poor, or hungry, or sick, or in prison. **They were doing it. It's not the hearers of the Word that will be justified by Yahweh, but the doers of the Word.**

And the great part—why I love this Scripture more than anything—is they say to Him, “When did we do this?” **It's such a part of their character and their life that they automatically did it.** It wasn't “Okay, let's meet here tomorrow at 11:00, and we will go for one hour and *help the homeless*. And then, after that, we'll forget that they're ever there.” That's the way it is. That's self-righteousness. No, these people, it was in them. No matter where they were going, no matter what they were doing, this was in their heart. And whenever there was need, they would help, they would serve. Praise Yahweh for that.

We'll be rewarded by how we encouraged and help others. **Many who have this gift don't even recognize it's a gift, because it's so natural to them.** And that's why I said, when we're going over the gifts of the Spirit sometimes, and someone will say, “Yeah, well, I guess I have the gift of encouragement.” It's like, what do you mean you *guess* you have the gift? Say that ... no, no, no. Say, **“I have the gift of encouragement!”** Say it *strong*. Say it *good*. Because that's an important gift. It's not “Well, I guess I have that gift.”

No, **this is something that you may think it's nothing, because you do it all the time. But, wow, it's something.** Because not everybody can encourage. Everybody may want to encourage, but not everybody can. And when it's a gift, praise Yahweh for that. Luke 19 and verse 15. Because this is the greatest encouragement any of us can ever hear. It says:

**Luke 19:15** *And it happened as he returned, ... this is the king that goes away on a journey and he gives the minas to the ambassadors; and then he says ... And it happened when he ... the king ... returned, having received the kingdom, he even said for those servants to be called to him, whom he gave the silver, that he may know what each had gained by trading. And the first came, saying, Master, your mina has gained ten minas. And he said to him, Well done, good slave! Because you were faithful in a least thing, have authority over ten cities.*

So when you think of encouragement, like I said, there's a million ways that can be encouraged. But, wow, there is **nothing** that can be more encouraging than those words. To have Yahshua return and have Him ... like I said, He has an envelope with your name on it. You open it up, and it's: “You will be the king of China,” or “You're going to be the king of Japan.” And He's shaking your hand and hugging you and saying, “Well done. Well done My brother. Inherit the Kingdom our Father has prepared for us.”

So, that's the greatest encouragement we can see. Our whole calling is about encouragement, and our whole ministry should be one of encouragement. Like I said, we're the ministry of reconciliation not condemnation. The gift of encouragement is one of the greatest gifts of the Spirit to have.

I have owned many businesses throughout the years. Now I work with roughly 240, or so, elders and deacons in this branch of Yahweh's congregation. And I see as a leader how much my encouragement to the men means. I do an Elder to Elder newsletter every now and then, and I get great feedback on how it encourages the other men to work even harder. As a leader, *you need to lift up the other people*. You need to love them. You need to show them you really care. And it will bring loyalty, commitment, and strong leaders who will encourage others.

Yahweh and Yahshua are encouragers. They're comforters. His Spirit is a spirit of comfort. We need to also be encouragers in our families, in our congregations, and wherever we go. One of the greatest times for me is when I get mail from a new person telling me how much I've encouraged them in their walk and in their life.

It's really interesting because at the school every year, when we're going over how an ambassador of Yahweh writes, the assignment that everybody gets is: Okay, you have to write a letter of encouragement to whoever—to write it to another person. Everybody's thinking “Okay, okay.” And then they write it. And when we come to the next class, everyone's so excited because you're asking them about ... “Wow, when I got so-and-so's letter, I couldn't *believe* he said all these nice things.” And it's one of the greatest days of the school. When you see everybody—how that *tiny* little letter changed everybody's attitude and everybody over there. So, it really means a lot.

So, let us pray and strive to also be encouragers. We need to forget about ourselves and *always* be thinking of the brethren. The last Scripture I'm going to read, and we'll end on this Scripture, is Philippians 4. Philippians the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, verse 6 through 9.

**Philippians 4:6-9** *Don't worry about anything, but in **everything** by prayer and by petition with thanksgiving, ... and, again, without a spirit of thanksgiving, we'll never have the spirit of encouragement ... let your requests be made known to Elohim; and the peace of Elohim which surpasses **all understanding** will keep your hearts and your minds through Messiah Yahshua. And finally, my brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there is any virtue, or any praise, think on these things. And what things you learned and received and heard and saw in me, practice these things, and the Elohim of peace will be with you.*

Yahweh bless. Shabbat shalom.