



JOHNSON AVENUE
Church of Christ
WHERE *God's Family* BUILDS ETERNAL HOMES

A Spiritual Encouragement Message April 29, 2020

Lean On Me

One of the greatest challenges we face as we endure these life-altering changes going on around us is maintaining an attitude of contentment, joy, and positivity. I am sure you have seen the posts on social media regarding what stage of mind people are in, how they are having bad days, and cries for relief from this very different lifestyle that we are not accustomed to. What a blessing it is that we have within our homes a book that is able to equip us for this situation, these obstacles, and these changes. Let us look to God's word as the source of life during this draining time (2Tim. 3:16-17).

During his two years under house arrest in Rome Paul referred to himself as "the prisoner of Christ" (Eph. 3:1), "the prisoner of the Lord" (Eph. 4:1), and an "ambassador in chains" (Eph. 6:20). Due to his service to the Lord Paul was confined to live at his home for two years and understood the magnitude of his affliction. To make matters worse, there were teachers in Rome that were proclaiming the gospel of Christ out of envy, rivalry, and selfish ambition, motivated by the desire to afflict Paul while he was under house arrest (Phil. 1:15-18). Talk about pouring salt into an open wound.

How can a man under such stress, challenges, and persecution maintain a positive attitude and endure such tremendous trials? One reason he was able to endure was due to his faithful friends that were there for him. Luke, Aristarchus, Timothy, Tychicus, Onesimus, Mark, Jesus Justus, Epaphras, Epaphroditus, and Demas were men Paul turned to for encouragement, care, and joy during his time under house arrest. As a result of these relationships Paul was provided for, uplifted, and able to continue the work God set out for him. Paul endured and maintained a positive attitude of contentment because of his Christian family.



Brothers and sisters, we are not much different than our brother Paul. It was relationships that helped sustain him through trials and it is relationships that can help us today. We all can use a Luke that checks on our physical well being (Col. 4:14), an Aristarchus that is with us in our confinement (Col. 4:10), an Timothy that can help us in doing good (Phil. 2:19-20), and an Onesimus that can provide

hope in a challenging time (Philemon 1:15). As the family of God we need to make sure that we are leaning on our siblings in Christ to help us maintain our faith, especially when we are struggling.

As my wife and I were driving down the freeway yesterday we started talking about those saints at Johnson Avenue that have reached out to their Christian brothers and sisters during this unique time to build them up, lend their support, and to help them to remain faithful. Like the men who rallied around Paul to sustain him, men and women of Johnson Avenue are rallying around the saints to serve them. Let us continue to follow in the footprints of those that came before us and continue to utilize our talents as a member of the Lord's body to build up the saints around us. Who knows, at the end of all this your name might be written on a brother or sisters heart as a sibling in Christ that helped them keep a positive attitude and persevere during a challenging time.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him - a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Solomon (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

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